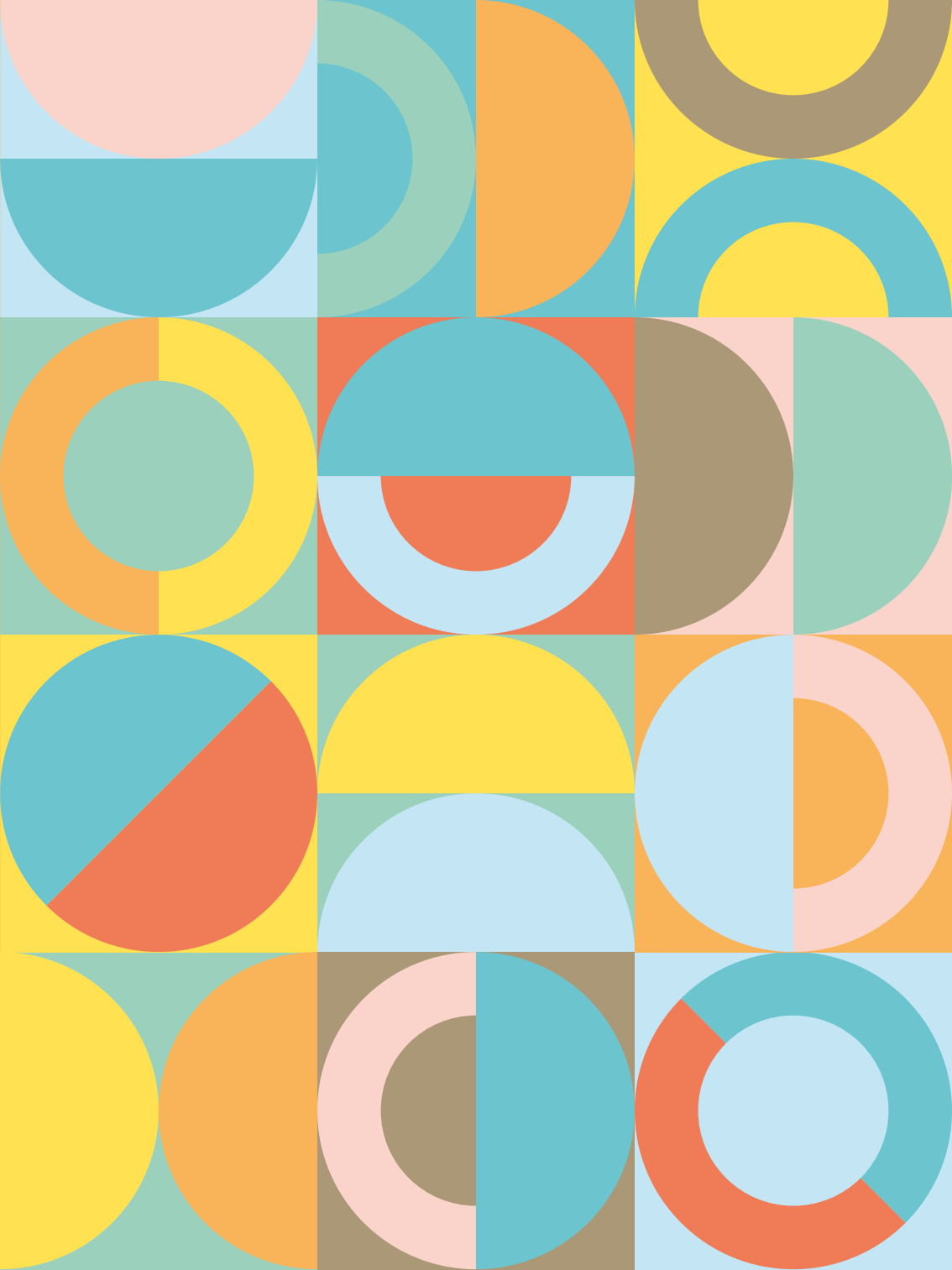




2025 Impact Report

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Letter from the president

There comes a moment in the life of an organisation when it pauses to ask itself: have we become what we set out to be? For me, and for Isola, 2025 has been the year of that question.

We are living in a time in which many of the collective certainties that once held our societies together have begun to weaken. The multilateral order that for decades has underpinned relations between countries, economies and communities is showing deep fractures: ongoing wars, unresolved conflicts, international agreements being called into question, and growing fragmentation that fuels distrust and isolation. In this context, the greatest risk, beyond the suffering affecting entire populations, is becoming accustomed to all this and accepting it as inevitable.

And yet, it is precisely within this fragmentation that the role of those who build cohesion from the ground up becomes increasingly evident. The Third Sector and social entrepreneurship are no longer simply responses to the failures of the market or the state. They are infrastructures of trust, places where broken ties are rebuilt and where models are developed that seek to bring together economic sustainability and social justice. This is a responsibility we feel deeply, with the awareness that Sicily, with all its contradictions and extraordinary energy, is a place where this responsibility takes on a particularly concrete meaning.

2025 marks the end of Isola's first three-year cycle. Over these three years, we have moved from listening to experimentation, and from experimentation to a first stage of maturity. Each impact area has developed structured programmes, nearly three thousand young people have taken part in our initiatives, and an ecosystem of more than one hundred organisations has grown around our mission.

The most significant aspect of 2025, however, is not a single result, but the way in which we have chosen to look ahead. We devoted considerable energy to a participatory process that involved our team, the Board of Directors, the companies within the Coalitions, our partners, institutions, and the wider network of stakeholders in shaping the 2026–2028 Strategic Plan. This is not a document defined from above, but the outcome of a shared effort: more than four hundred and fifty contributions, a renewed Theory of Change, and a system of around one hundred indicators that further integrates economic sustainability and the generation of social impact within a single framework.

At the centre of this new strategy is a concept that is particularly important to us. Agency, understood as the ability of individuals to make informed choices and to shape their own professional pathways. It reflects the core of our work: reducing the informational, relational and skills-related barriers that separate young people in our territory from the opportunities that Catania can offer, or that they can create themselves.

2025 was also the year in which Isola achieved B Corp certification, with a score of 107.2 against a minimum threshold of 80. This represents a public and verified commitment, placing us among the very first certified organisations in Sicily. We also launched strategic programmes that will form the pillars of our future work, including *Energie con il Sud*, dedicated to NEETs, and *Hack the Gap*, aimed at fostering entrepreneurship and self-employment, with particular attention to women.

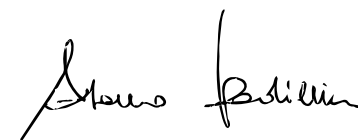
These are not isolated results. They are the outcome of a process built over time, rooted in the relational, cultural and organisational infrastructure that we have patiently developed over the years. This is perhaps the most important lesson of our first cycle. Social change does not arise from isolated actions, but from the continuous effort to create the conditions in which opportunities can take root.

I would like to thank all those who make this possible: the Isola team, the Board of Directors, our shareholders, the companies within the Coalitions, our institutional and project partners, grantmakers, the media, our communities, and the many young people who place their trust in us. It is a trust we never take for granted.

The second three-year cycle begins now. We approach it with greater awareness, stronger tools, and the same determination to contribute to a model of development in which no one is forced to leave Sicily for lack of opportunity.

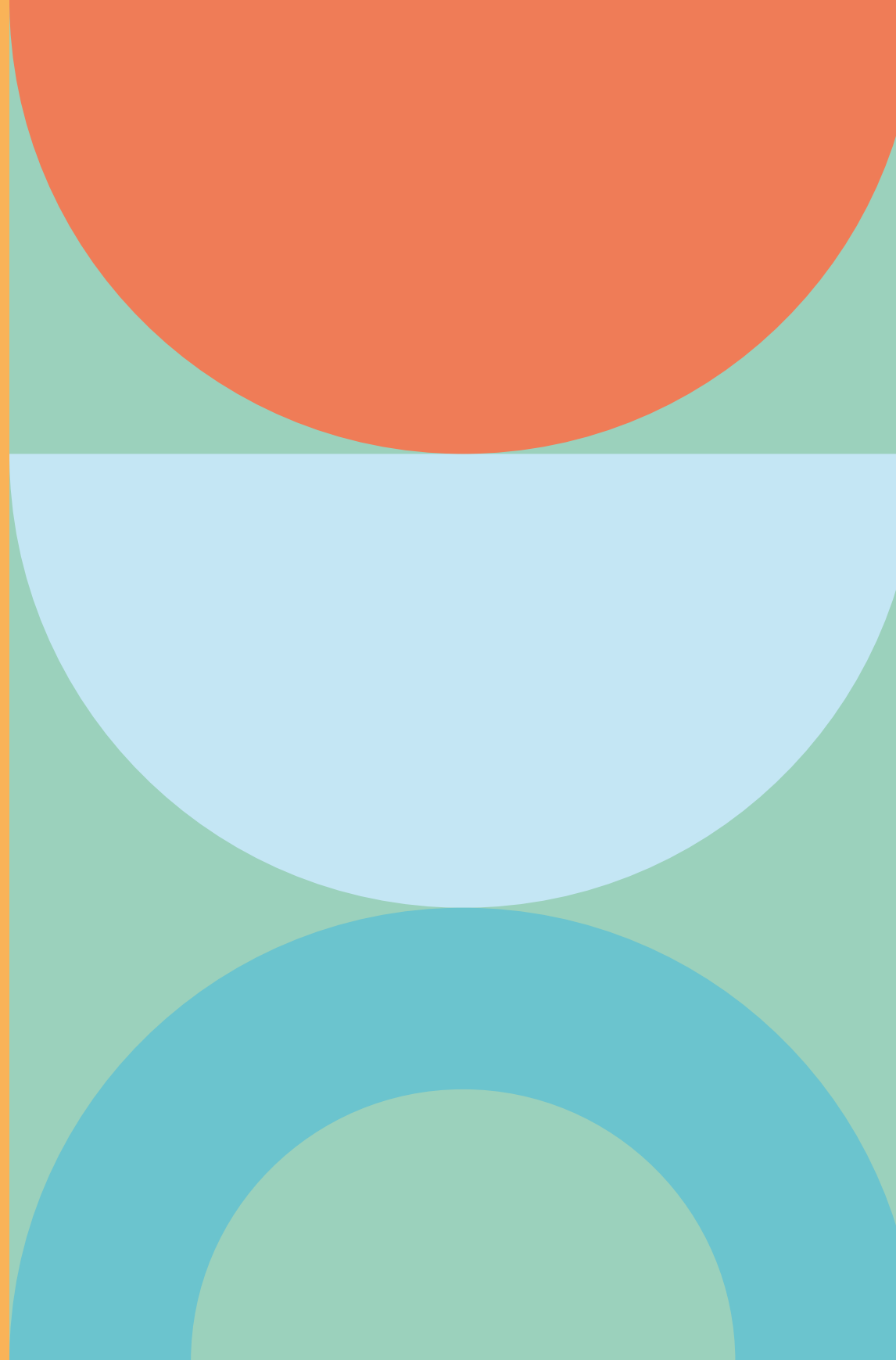
Antonio Perdichizzi

President Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l.



01

Reading Guide



1.1

Document Structure

This Impact Report marks the conclusion of the 2023–2025 three-year period, representing the first phase in the development of Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l. (hereinafter referred to as “Isola”). This initial cycle has been characterised by experimentation, collective construction and continuous learning, with the active involvement of all stakeholders from the first quarter of 2023. From the outset, each area of impact was defined collaboratively with members, staff, partners and beneficiaries, reflecting a model of participatory governance that lies at the core of the organisation’s identity. By 2025, this process had reached its first stage of maturity. All areas of impact had developed structured pilot programmes, engaging nearly 3,000 beneficiaries. During the same year, and with a view to the next three-year cycle, Isola initiated a collective process of strategic reflection, referred to as the “strategic workshop”. This led to the development of the organisation’s first three-year Strategic Plan. As in previous years, the preparation of this Report goes well beyond a formal regulatory obligation. In line with the ministerial guidelines¹, it has supported the strengthening of internal processes for reporting, evaluation and performance monitoring, contributing to a more effective management approach aligned with the organisation’s mission and values. The Report presents information on social, environmental and economic outcomes, enables comparison over time and with similar organisations, and supports an assessment of the effectiveness of the actions undertaken in relation to target beneficiaries.

Section 1 sets out the methodological and regulatory framework, outlining the relevant legislative references and the approach adopted, in order to provide the reader with a clear point of reference.

Section 2 places the organisation within its broader context, beginning with an analysis of the challenges of the territory in which Isola operates, followed by an overview of its general profile, values and mission. While the strategic direction defined in 2024 was confirmed, 2025 functioned primarily as a testing phase for pilot programmes. It was not yet a year of consolidation, but rather the first in which the organisation’s impact hypotheses were fully tested.

Section 3 presents the organisation’s activities through its three social business units, *Spaces, Coalitions and Projects*. Projects are organised across four areas of impact: *School; Skills and Employment; Entrepreneurship and Innovation; and Culture, Creativity and*

1. (Decree of 4 July 2019, §4)

1.2

Regulatory References and Objectives of the Document

Art. The section concludes with subsection 3.4, which focuses on the collective co-design process that, building on the experience of the first three-year cycle, has laid the foundations for a second cycle oriented towards consolidation.

Section 4 outlines the organisational structure and the approach to responsible governance. Particular attention this year is given to the certifications obtained, B Corp, EcoVadis and the annual UNI/PdR 125 monitoring on gender equality, as well as to the networks and alliances joined by Isola during 2025. These partnerships reflect a shared mission and vision, and connect the organisation to wider communities, good practices, and national and international partners.

Sections 5 and 6 are devoted, respectively, to the financial position and to the report of the supervisory body, ensuring transparency, accountability and compliance with applicable regulations.

This Impact Report, covering the financial year from 1 January to 31 December 2025, has been prepared by Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l., a social enterprise incorporated as a limited liability company, in compliance with Article 9(2) of Italian Legislative Decree No. 112 of 3 July 2017², which reformed the regulation of social enterprises. Its preparation follows the *Guidelines for the Drafting of Impact Reports by Third Sector Entities*, adopted by the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies on 4 July 2019 and published in the Official Gazette No. 186 of 9 August 2019³.

In particular, this Report reflects the provisions set out in Article 7, paragraph 3, of Law No. 106 of 6 June 2016⁴, 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 Official Gazette No. 214 of 12 September 2019⁵, Isola has developed a structured measurement framework 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 approach reflects a deliberate choice to adopt a recognised and structured

2. Article 9(2) of Italian Legislative Decree No. 112# of 3 July 2017

3. Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies on 4 July 2019 and published in the Official Gazette No. 186 of 9 August 2019

4. Article 7, paragraph 3, of Law No. 106 of 6 June 2016

5. Decree of the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies on 23 July 2019 and published in Official Gazette No. 214 of 12 September 2019

framework for assessing the social value generated by the organisation. This approach reflects the concept of accountability. As clarified in the ministerial guidelines, with reference to the Dizionario di Economia e Finanza Treccani (2012)⁶, the term “encompasses, and presupposes, in addition to the concept of responsibility, those of ‘transparency’ and ‘compliance’. The former is understood as access to information concerning all aspects of the organisation, including management indicators and the preparation of financial statements and communication tools designed to make decisions, activities and results visible [...] the latter refers to compliance with applicable rules [...] both as a guarantee of the legitimacy of actions and as alignment with standards established by laws, regulations, ethical guidelines or codes of conduct”⁷. For Isola, transparency and compliance are not merely formal obligations, but a conscious choice consistent with the organisation’s mission.

The Impact Report is a public document intended for all those interested in understanding Isola’s work, including members, partners, institutions, beneficiaries, donors and the wider community. It provides a comprehensive overview of activities and results, enabling comparison over time and with similar organisations. It does not coincide with the mission report required under Article 13 of the Third Sector Code. The two documents are distinct but complementary and are prepared and published in parallel in order to provide an integrated and transparent account of the organisation’s activities.

This Impact Report is based on a clear commitment to providing an account of the organisation that is honest, verifiable and accessible to all readers, regardless of their level of familiarity with Third Sector terminology.

No significant changes in scope or measurement methods have been introduced compared to the previous reporting period. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)⁸ continue to provide the international framework through which Isola interprets and communicates its impact. The targets and SDGs identified in 2023 and confirmed in 2024 remain unchanged for 2025, reflecting a consistent strategic approach across the entire first three-year cycle. The mapping of the relevant SDGs is illustrated in the following graphic.

1.3

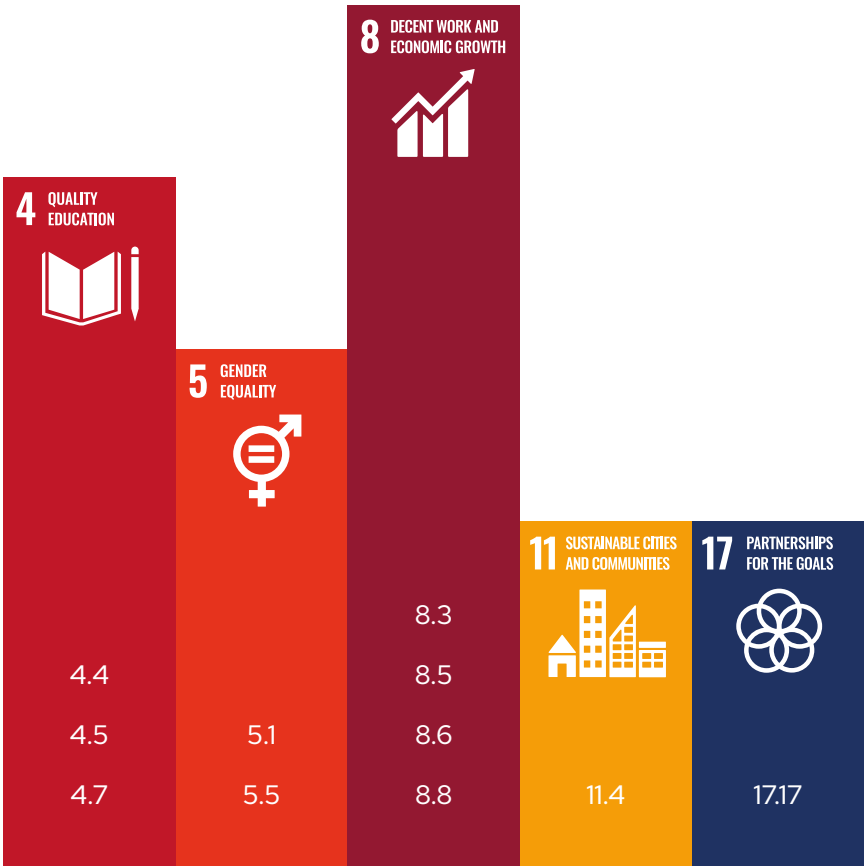
Methodological Note

6. Dizionario di Economia e Finanza Treccani (2012)

7. Ministerial Decree of 4 July 2019, §2, fifth paragraph, note 2

8. United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

SDGs supported by Isola



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

REFERENCE TARGETS



The preparation of this document follows the ten reporting principles set out in the applicable regulatory framework⁹. Relevance has guided the selection of information, prioritising what is most useful in forming an informed assessment of Isola's activities. Completeness has required the identification of key stakeholders, both internal and external, and the inclusion of all information necessary to enable an evaluation of the organisation's social, economic and environmental results. Transparency has been ensured by clearly setting out the criteria used in data collection and organisation, with reference to the methodological tools underpinning the measurement system, including the Theory of Change and the Social Business Model. Neutrality has required reporting both achievements and challenges encountered.

Accrual has ensured that all activities, projects and data reported relate to the 2025 financial year. Comparability has been achieved by integrating 2025 data with references to the previous two years, 2023 and 2024, as well as through territorial comparisons within the Sicilian and Southern Italian context, particularly in the contextual analysis. Clarity has informed linguistic choices, aiming to ensure accessibility without compromising precision. Accuracy and verifiability have been supported through the citation of sources and the documentation of key data. Reliability has required a cautious presentation of results, avoiding overestimation and explicitly acknowledging the limitations of measurement, particularly in relation to capturing long-term impact indicators on beneficiaries. Finally, the independence of third parties has been ensured: the drafting process has been coordinated internally, preserving independence of judgement and methodological consistency throughout.

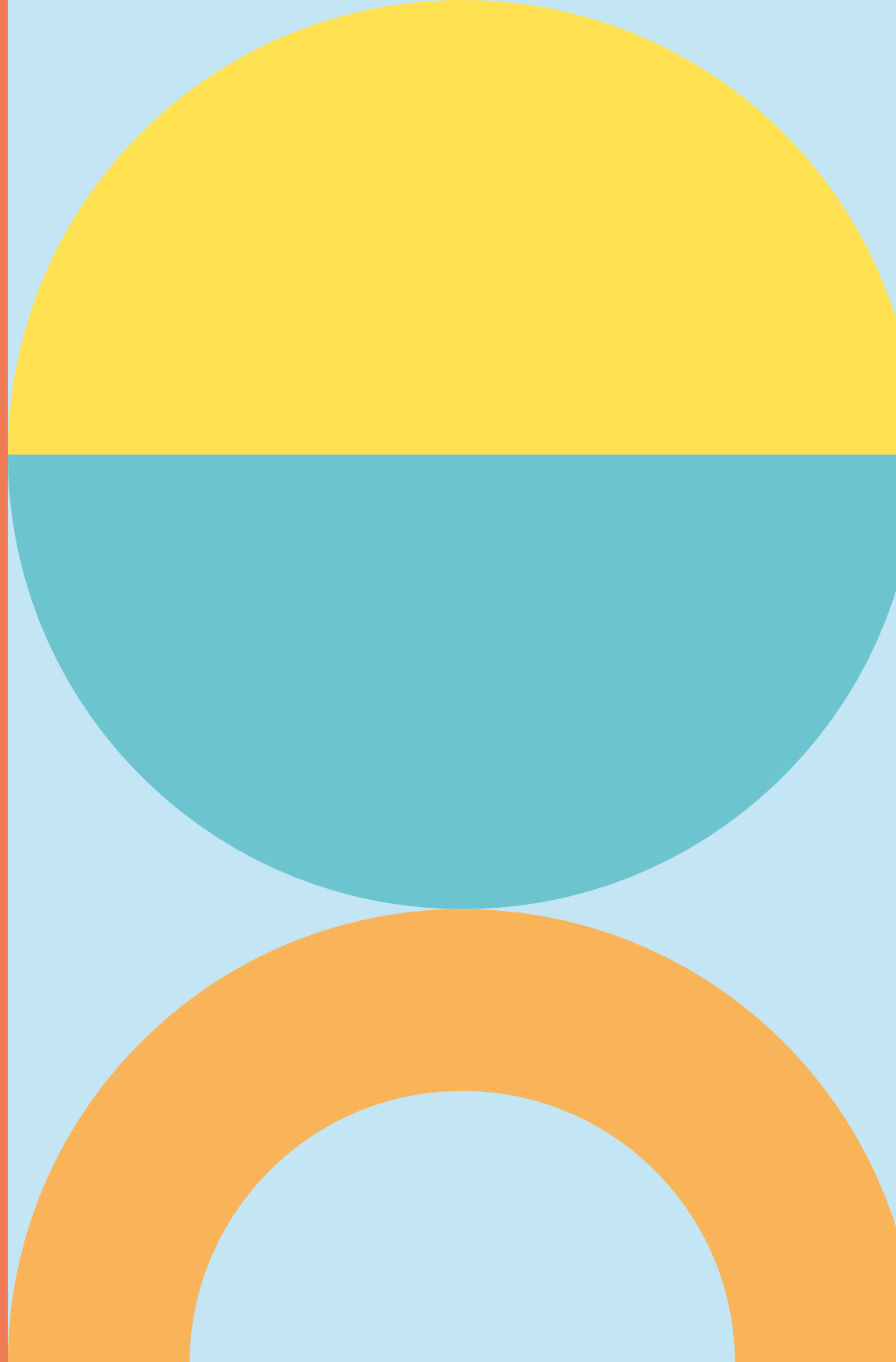
The quantitative and qualitative data used are drawn from a range of sources, including management software databases, administrative checks, financial statements, project management tools, individual project reports, insights from social media, newsletters and the website, internal meetings, focus groups, qualitative analyses, and mentorship and advisory sessions. Some data relating to project effectiveness and beneficiary satisfaction have been collected through questionnaires, in the vast majority of cases, administered anonymously. In this regard, it should be noted that in Section 3.3, relating to Isola's "Projects", some initiative profiles are followed by qualitative feedback collected through these questionnaires. As the questionnaires were anonymous, such feedback is attributed to fictional names, with rare exceptions explicitly indicated. Partial personal data, namely age and geographical origin, are always real, as they are systematically collected.

9. Decree of the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies of 4 July 2019, *Guidelines for the Preparation of Impact Reports by Third Sector Entities*



02

Isola



2.1

Key Challenges in the Local Context

10. Il Sole 24 Ore. (2025). *Qualità della vita 2025: indagine annuale sulla qualità della vita nelle province italiane*. lab24. ilsole24ore.com

11. Il Sole 24 Ore. (2025). *La qualità della vita nel 2025: indice per fasce d'età*. lab24. ilsole24ore.com

12. CNEL. (2025). *L'attrattività dell'Italia per i giovani*. cnel.it

13. Istat. (2025). *Benessere equo e sostenibile dei territori - Sicilia 2025*. istat.it

14. Assessorato Regionale delle Autonomie Locali e della Funzione Pubblica. (2023). *Elezioni Amministrative del 28-29 maggio 2023 - Report Affluenza*. elezioni.regione.sicilia.it

15. INVALSI - Servizio Statistico. (2025). *Rapporto prove INVALSI 2025*. invalsi.it

16. Istat. (2025). *Indagine conoscitiva su povertà educativa, abbandono e dispersione scolastica*. istat.it

The year 2025 marks a reversal in trend for Catania. Following the improvement recorded in the previous edition, the province fell 13 places in the annual *Quality of Life* ranking published by Il Sole 24 Ore, declining from 83rd to 96th place out of 107 provinces¹⁰.

A more detailed analysis of the local context reveals a clear divergence between apparently positive economic trends, with both employment and GDP showing steady growth, and persistent structural weaknesses within the social fabric, which continue to have a significant impact on residents' quality of life. When disaggregated by age group, the picture is markedly more critical. The province ranks 101st for quality of life among children, defined as individuals aged between 0 and 14, and 102nd for young people, those aged between 18 and 35¹¹. This consistent positioning among the lowest ranked provinces in Italy is not incidental. Rather, it constitutes clear statistical evidence of an intergenerational sustainability crisis, contributing to youth out migration and the progressive erosion of human and productive capital.

Between 2011 and 2024, approximately 116,000 young people from Sicily, aged between 18 and 34, moved to other parts of Italy, while a further 163,000 chose to relocate abroad. This represents a loss of capital equivalent to 15.1 per cent of regional GDP¹², reflecting an investment in education and skills that the territory is unlikely to recover in terms of local productivity. This trend is also evident in declining civic life engagement. Voter turnout in Sicily at the 2024 European elections stood at 38.0 per cent, signi-



ficantly below the national average of 49.7 per cent¹³. Similarly, turnout in the 2023 local elections, at 52.85 per cent, a decrease of 0.28 per cent compared to the previous round¹⁴, points to a broader decline in participation that extends to the local level.

Since its establishment, Isola has chosen to engage directly with the most pressing challenges facing the local context, structuring its work around four priority areas: educational poverty, labour market dynamics, the development of new enterprises, and the cultural and creative industries. Each of these challenges is examined below in terms of its scale and characteristics, in order to provide a clear understanding of the issues addressed by Isola in its commitment to fostering more equitable, inclusive and sustainable local development. The Metropolitan City of Catania has

2.1.1

Educational Poverty



Sicily represents one of the most critical contexts at national level in terms of the quality of education and access to learning opportunities. According to the 2025 National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education and Training System (INVALSI) Report¹⁵, the region ranks among the weakest across almost all assessments and age groups. With 53.3 per cent of low performers in reading, it records the highest share of students with limited literacy skills among all Italian regions¹⁶. The proportion of young people in Sicily aged between 25 and 39 holding a university degree or other tertiary qualification stands at 21.8 per cent, 8.2 percentage points below the national average¹⁷. Early school leaving also remains a persistent issue, closely intertwined with educational poverty in a self-reinforcing cycle. This condition extends beyond limited access to education and includes the lack of social and territorial opportunities necessary to support the cognitive and social development of students. Alongside this, the phenomenon of implicit school dropout remains significant. This refers to students who formally complete upper secondary education and obtain a diploma, yet fail to acquire the expected level of competencies. According to INVALSI 2025 data, 23.6 per cent of students in the third year of lower secondary education in Sicily are at risk of implicit dropout¹⁸, the highest figure among all Italian regions. In terms of explicit dropout, Sicily continues to record the highest rate of early school leaving, at 15.2 per cent, despite the improvement observed at national level, where the rate fell below 10 per cent for the first time in 2024¹⁹.

Educational poverty extends beyond the

17. Istat. (2024). *Benessere equo e sostenibile dei territori: Sicilia 2024*. istat.it

18. Istat. (2025). *Indagine conoscitiva su povertà educativa, abbandono e dispersione scolastica*. istat.it

19. Openpolis - *Con i bambini*. (2025). *Elaborazione su dati Eurostat*. openpolis.it

school system and affects access to basic services and cultural participation. In 2022, only 6.6 per cent of children aged 0 to 2 in Sicily had access to municipal early childhood services, a figure broadly unchanged from the previous year and more than 10 percentage points below the national average. The Metropolitan City of Catania is among the areas with the lowest provision of early childhood services at national level, with nursery places for children under the age of three remaining far below the European target of 33 per cent²⁰. This shortage limits early access to essential cultural and social stimuli, reinforcing conditions of disadvantage from the very first stages of development.

This process of cultural and educational deprivation is further compounded by a widespread lack of confidence among young people in the opportunities available within the local context. An internal analysis found that 73 per cent of students approaching their



final secondary school examinations do not consider Sicily a suitable environment in which to pursue further study or build a professional career, viewing educational and employment opportunities as more accessible elsewhere²¹. This perception is reflected in patterns of graduate mobility, which point to the region's structural disadvantage and to the tendency of more highly qualified young people to leave their place of residence. In the absence of high quality education and adequate local opportunities, the likelihood of accessing educational and professional pathways is significantly reduced, particularly for those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. This, in turn, perpetuates a cycle of inequality that constrains social mobility.

20. Openpolis. (2019). *Le mappe della povertà educativa* - al 5.5%. openpolis.it

21. Internal analysis based on questionnaires administered to students from secondary schools in Catania at the end of an orientation programme.

2.1.2

Labour Market



The labour market in Sicily and in Catania continues to display structural weaknesses that no recent signs of economic recovery have yet addressed. The unemployment rate in the province of Catania stands at 12.7 per cent and becomes even more significant when considered alongside the high inactivity rate of 46.1 per cent²². The combined share of unemployed and inactive individuals highlights a substantial reserve of underutilised human capital, which represents both a major constraint and a significant opportunity for local development.

Gender disparities further exacerbate the situation. Female inactivity reaches 59.3 per cent, compared to 32.7 per cent for men, while youth employment among those aged 15 to 24 remains particularly low, with an employment rate of 12.7 per cent²³, highlighting the difficulty young people face in entering the labour market. At European level, the region records one of the weakest performances in terms of youth employment, ranking last among the 228 regions of the European Union for which data are available. According to Eurostat, in 2024, 31.4 per cent of young people in Sicily aged between 18 and 29 were classified as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training), an increase of 3.5 percentage points compared to 2023. This figure is significantly higher than the European average of 13.1 per cent and exceeds the national average by 11.8 percentage points²⁴.

The issue concerns not only the quantity of employment, but also its quality. A low rate of transition to permanent contracts, combined with limited levels of bank deposits per capita, suggests that the economic growth generated within the territory does not translate into adequate purchasing power or sufficient levels of savings. Catania ranks 76th among Italian cities in terms of average annual earnings for employees, while rising costs, particularly those associated with rental housing, contribute to a pattern of economic and social vulnerability that affects the population as a whole, but disproportionately impacts more vulnerable groups, including single income households, young people and older individuals²⁵. Finally, wage levels remain one of the primary drivers of brain drain. Average net earnings three years after graduation stand at €1,549 per month, with a marked gender pay gap, as men earn on average €207 more per month than women²⁶. This disparity helps to explain the increasingly selective emigration of highly qualified women.

22. InfoCamere. (2025). *Elaborazione su dati Registro Imprese, Inps, Istat e Banca d'Italia*. ctrgsr.camcom.gov.it

23. InfoCamere. (2025).

24. Eurostat. (2024). Database LFSE_22. ec.europa.eu/eurostat

25. Il Sole 24 Ore. (2025).

26. SVIMEZ. (2026). *Rapporto SVIMEZ sulle migrazioni dei laureati*. svimez.it

2.1.3

New Enterprises

27. CCIAA Marche su dati InfoCamere. (2026). opendata.marche.camcom.it

28. InfoCamere. (2025).

29. Il Sole 24 Ore. (2025).

30. Banca d'Italia. (2025). N. 40 – *L'economia della Sicilia. Aggiornamento congiunturale*. bancaditalia.it

31. Banca d'Italia. (2025).

32. "Core cultura" refers to the set of sectors that generate economic value and employment through the creation and dissemination of cultural and creative goods and services. These sectors are identified through the aggregation of Ateco 2007 classification codes into seven domains: architecture and design; communication; audiovisual and music; software and video games; publishing and print; performing arts and visual arts; and cultural heritage.

33. Fondazione Symbola, Unioncamere, Centro Studi Tagliacarne & Deloitte. (2025). *Io sono Cultura 2025: L'Italia della qualità e della bellezza sfida la crisi*.

recorded a broadly stable number of active enterprises. Between early 2025 and early 2026, the number of firms declined by approximately 66 units, corresponding to a marginal decrease of 0.1 per cent²⁷. At the same time, the total value of production generated by companies filing accounts in Catania amounts to nearly €21 billion, placing the city among the leading economic centres in Southern Italy, alongside Naples, Bari and Palermo. This stability is further supported by a significant presence of youth led enterprises. Approximately 9,200 such businesses are active in Catania, representing around 8 per cent of the total²⁸ and placing the city 14th in Italy for youth entrepreneurship²⁹. However, this positive feature has yet to translate into a critical mass capable of generating substantial economic value and stable employment. The economic system remains structurally unbalanced, with growth driven by a limited number of stronger actors, while the wider base of small and medium sized enterprises continues to face persistent constraints in a challenging economic environment.

Innovative start-ups constitute a further test of this structure. Between 2012 and 2024, Sicily recorded 1,251 limited companies registered in the special section of the business register dedicated to innovative start-ups, corresponding to 2.9 start-ups per 10,000 working age residents. This figure remains below both the Southern Italian average (4.0) and the national average (6.0)³⁰. The metropolitan provinces of Catania, Messina and Palermo show higher levels of concentration, largely driven by the presence of universities. However, long-term survival rates remain comparatively low. Eight years after establishment, innovative start-ups in Sicily record survival rates 2.9 percentage points below those of other limited companies³¹.

Sicily shows signs of growth in the cultural and creative sector. Over the period 2021–2024, cultural employment increased by 14.9 per cent, one of the highest rates in Italy. In 2024 alone, growth remained above the national average, with an increase of 3.4 per cent in employment and 2.9 per cent in Core cultura³² enterprises, alongside a three-year growth rate of 9.8 per cent for the latter. These trends indicate a sector that is expanding and gradually consolidating³³.

However, the gap with more developed regions remains significant. Sicily generates €3.5 billion in cul-



tural value added, equivalent to 3.5 per cent of the regional economy, while the share of Core enterprises remains among the lowest in Italy. Employment is concentrated in sectors closely linked to the territory's identity. Cultural heritage accounts for 21.0 per cent of total cultural employment, almost three times the national average of 6.8 per cent, whereas digital and technology based sectors, which drive growth in Northern Italy, remain marginal³⁴. The main constraint does not relate to the availability of talent or cultural assets, but in the limited development of enabling ecosystems, including business networks, professional networks and specialised training, which elsewhere have supported the growth of the sector. While employment in heritage related activities is increasing, this is not matched by a corresponding level of public engagement. In 2024, only 24 per cent of residents in Southern Italy visited museums or exhibitions, compared to 38.5 per cent in Central and Northern regions³⁵. In Catania, the overall context is particularly challenging. According to Il Sole 24 Ore, the province ranks 96th out of 107 in the 2025 quality of life index, with culture and leisure among the weakest dimensions and a decline of thirteen positions compared to the previous year. In this context, non-profit organisations play a critical role. In the Islands, the ratio between non-profit cultural organisations and for-profit enterprises in the sector reaches 12.3 per cent, the highest figure in Italy and well above the national average of 8.7 per cent³⁶. These organisations address gaps in provision, sustain cultural activity where market mechanisms are insufficient, and promote participation in contexts where it would otherwise remain limited.

Despite these structural weaknesses, cultural tourism continues to demonstrate significant and partly untapped potential. In Sicily, over 51 per cent of tourist expenditure is linked to cultural consumption, a figure above the national average and largely driven by international demand. This highlights the need to consider how such flows can be translated into sustainable opportunities for the local economy and workforce.

34. Fondazione Symbola. (2025).

35. Istat. (2025). *Annuario Statistico 2025*.

36. Fondazione Symbola. (2025).

2.1.4

Cultural and Creative Industries Sector

2.2

General information,
Statutory purpose and
Values

Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l. is a limited liability company with social enterprise status, registered in the National Third Sector Register (RUNTS). The decision to establish the organisation as a social enterprise reflects a deliberate intention to combine the sustainability and flexibility of an entrepreneurial model with the social value creation mission typical of the Third Sector. Isola operates as a hybrid organisation, combining the growth capacity of the for-profit sector with the mission driven approach of the non-profit sector, in order to develop a model capable of addressing the structural challenges of the local context through education, employment and social entrepreneurship.



The activities undertaken by Isola are presented below in the form of an accessible narrative summary. The official and full wording is provided in Article 4.2 of the Statute³⁷ and in points d), f), g), h), i), k), l), m), n), o), p), q) and v) of the Regulation³⁸.

- enhancement, management and valorisation of historical assets and cultural heritage, with particular reference to the spaces of Palazzo Biscari, a historic site and cultural landmark recognised as part of UNESCO World Heritage (point f);
- design and management of multi-functional spaces for work, training, innovation and culture, including co-working spaces, meeting and event rooms, and business domiciliation services (point i);
- development and management of communities, partnerships and Coalitions aimed at fostering networking, open innovation and capacity building, with the objective of promoting and disseminating a culture of social impact and sustainability (point i);
- organisation and management of cultural, artistic, creative and recreational activities of social interest, including events, exhibitions, festivals and performances (point i);

37. Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l. (2023). *Statuto*. www.isola.catania.it

38. Decreto Legislativo 3 luglio 2017, n. 112. *Revisione della disciplina in materia di impresa sociale, a norma dell'articolo 1, comma 2, lettera c) della legge 6 giugno 2016, n. 106.*

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) APPLIED	Federculture
LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE	Antonio Perdichizzi
SECTOR	Tertiary
PRIMARY ATECO CODE	91.22.00
SECONDARY ATECO CODES	68.20.02 – 85.59.20



- education, instruction and vocational training, as well as cultural activities with an educational purpose and extra-curricular training aimed at addressing educational poverty and early school leaving, with a particular focus on young people, students, NEETs and disadvantaged groups (points d, l);
- support for business creation and innovative start-ups through acceleration, incubation, mentorship and specialised advisory programmes, with the aim of fostering new enterprises and employment opportunities (point d);
- project design and advisory services to support access to public and private funding, calls and grants at local, national, European and international level, for social enterprises and other organisations (point i);
- production and commercialisation of cultural, artistic and creative products, including in digital formats (point i);
- provision of food and beverage services as an integral part of Isola's cultural and community experience (point k);
- design and delivery of accredited training activities, both in person and online (points d, l);
- provision of employment services for young people and disadvantaged groups, including guidance, support for labour market integration and assistance to employers (point p).

The year 2025 marks the conclusion of Isola's first three-year cycle, confirming the values that have guided its development since its establishment: Responsibility, Innovation, Sharing and Equality brought together under the acronym RISE. These values were not defined top down, but emerged through a process of internal and external co-design initiated during the first year of activity, involving staff, members and stakeholders. They are formalised in the Charter of Values and in the Code of Ethics and Conduct, the organisation's founding documents, and continue to underpin both daily practice and its approach to social change.

For Isola, RISE represents more than an acronym. As a term, it reflects a broader cultural orientation, a guiding organisational principle, and an approach to addressing shared challenges together with the Community. It remains the common thread running through the organisation's work for the territory and for the people who live within it.

Sharing defines the way in which Isola addresses local challenges, by building long-term relationships and positioning itself as an open platform that connects diverse actors around shared objectives. *Equality* guides all organisational choices, ensuring equal opportunities regardless of origin, identity or background. *Responsibility* is expressed through a commitment to fostering a local context in which new generations can envision and realise their future without being compelled to leave. *Innovation* represents the organisation's forward looking dimension, driving the exploration of new models and the use of technological, methodological and organisational innovation as tools for meaningful change.

2.3

Mission, Social
Business Model and Impact
Objectives

The mission of Isola is to facilitate the development of high impact programmes at local level across four areas: School; Skills and Employment; Entrepreneurship and Innovation; and Culture, Creativity and Art.

To operationalise this mission, translating it into concrete, measurable and sustainable actions over time, Isola has developed its own operating model, referred to internally as the *Social Business Model*. This concept has been developed by Isola to describe a system in which economic activities and impact driven initiatives are not treated as separate, but are mutually reinforcing. Each component of the model plays a specific role within the value chain and contributes, through distinct mechanisms and channels, to the generation of social impact at local level. The *Social Business Model* is structured around three social business units: Spaces, Coalitions and Projects.

Projects

Projects represent the concrete expression of the impact Isola aims to generate. They arise from the integration of physical and relational infrastructure and address challenges in the areas of School, Skills and Employment, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, and Culture, Creativity and Art. Funded through calls, internal resources and fundraising, they operate according to a B2B2C model. The B2B component refers to the phase in which Isola mobilises resources to deliver its programmes, while the B2C component corresponds to the stage at which beneficiaries access these activities free of charge. Within the value chain, Projects generate the most significant outputs and the outcomes that contribute directly to Isola's social impact objectives.

Coalitions

Coalitions constitute the core of Isola's relational infrastructure. Through this programme, the organisation develops and formalises its network of private sector partners, translating relationships into collective action and territorial impact. Given that systemic challenges, such as the lack of opportunities for young people in Southern Italy, cannot be addressed by a single actor, Isola operates as a multi stakeholder platform, connecting businesses, public authorities, universities, Third Sector organisations and the local community. Companies participating in Coalitions are not passive supporters. They contribute actively to the organisation's governance and play a measurable role in the delivery of social impact projects. Within the value chain, Coalitions function as an enabling component. They create the relational and economic conditions necessary for the development of Projects and strengthen Isola's capacity to generate impact at local level.

Spaces

Spaces represent Isola's physical infrastructure, the tangible asset through which people, ideas and resources circulate. Training rooms, event spaces, meeting rooms, co-working facilities and domiciliation services generate financial sustainability and enable connections between different communities, making the organisation's presence visible at local level. Within the revenue model, Spaces operate both in a B2C dimension, serving freelancers, digital nomads and students, and in a B2B dimension, serving companies and institutions. In the value chain, they represent the foundational inputs on which the entire model is built.

In 2025, Isola chose to maintain the impact objectives defined in the previous two year period without revision, in order to conclude the first three-year cycle in line with the approach set out in 2023 and 2024. Any scope for improvement or strategic adjustment was addressed within the strategic process, which led to the development of the 2026–2028 Strategic Plan and is presented in subsection 3.4 of this Impact Report. The impact objectives that guided activities in 2025 are as follows:

- School: to address educational poverty and early school leaving by promoting formal and non formal education pathways that strengthen both core competences and soft skills among students;
- Skills and Employment: to reduce the gap between labour supply and demand at local level by providing orientation, vocational training and support for labour market integration, with a particular focus on young people and disadvantaged groups;
- Entrepreneurship and Innovation: to support the creation and development of new enterprises and start-ups, promoting a culture of responsible entrepreneurship and social innovation as drivers of local development;
- Culture, Creativity and Art: to strengthen the role of culture as a driver of social cohesion and economic development, by enhancing local cultural and creative value chains and fostering connections between organisations, professionals and communities.

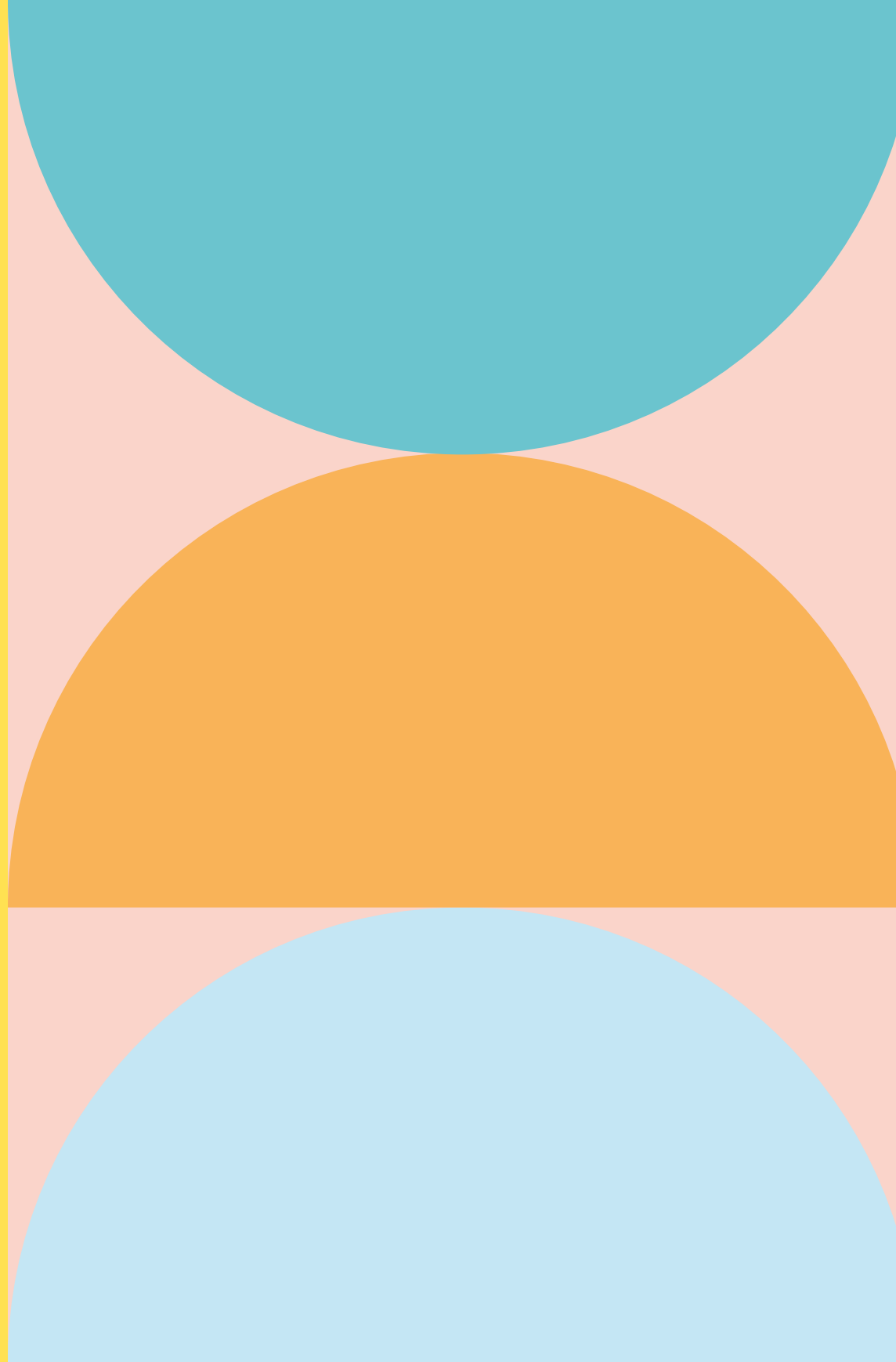


Social business model



03

Activities



Section 3 outlines Isola's activities in 2025 through the three components of its Social Business Model, providing both qualitative and quantitative information on the actions carried out, the beneficiaries reached, the outputs produced and, where possible, the effects generated for key stakeholders.

The subsections dedicated to Spaces and Coalitions set out the organisation's work in activating the local context and in building the preconditions for social impact. These are enabling activities that create the conditions for collective action and support the development of subsequent interventions. The subsection on Projects, by contrast, focuses on transformative activities, structured across the four thematic areas of School, Skills and Employment, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, and Culture, Creativity and Art. These are the areas in which Isola's direct impact on beneficiaries and the local context is most evident.

The section concludes with subsection 3.4, which presents the participatory process of strategic redefinition involving the team, the Board of Directors and the wider Isola ecosystem. This collective process, carried out at the end of the first three-year cycle, led to the development of the 2026–2028 Strategic Plan and marked the beginning of a new phase.



Key Milestones in 2025

JANUARY	Completion of the B-Lab tutoring programme by Fondazione Snam ETS
MARCH	Fempreneurs Bootcamp for women's entrepreneurship
	EMIMSEB Bootcamp on social entrepreneurship
JULY	Start-up Weekend Women Edition
AUGUST	Achievement of B Corp Certification
OCTOBER	Demo Day – EIT Food Accelerator Network
NOVEMBER	Demo Day of the Hack the Gap programme
DECEMBER	Isola featured as a case study at Social Enterprise Open Camp 2025



3.1

Spaces

Isa Spaces

Isola's *Spaces* represent the first point of engagement with the local context and the setting in which relationships, ideas and projects take shape. Over the past three years, *Isola Life* and *Isola Work* have ensured the availability of training rooms, event spaces, co-working facilities, private offices and business address services, generating both financial sustainability and social value. *The Spaces* social business unit constitutes the first enabling layer of the ecosystem.

It provides the physical infrastructure that makes it possible to deliver all transformative activities aimed at the territory, and operates as a stable reference point for the local community. In shaping the collaborations that take place within these spaces, particular attention is given to alignment of values and to a shared vision of impact. This approach is guided by the principle that each initiative hosted can contribute to collective value, either by strengthening the social and cultural fabric of the local community or by positioning Catania and Sicily within a broader network of relationships, exchanges and opportunities. Whether in the form of events, training activities or networking initiatives, the objective is to ensure that the spaces host activities that inspire, connect and generate lasting impact. In 2025, the social business unit *Spaces* placed particular emphasis on activities linked to Isola's projects and beneficiaries, making its facilities available primarily for training and knowledge dissemination. At the same time, the spaces continued to host a range of other activities, with a focus on strengthening both technical and transversal skills, including workshops, open days and networking events promoted by both new and established partners. These included sessions delivered as part of the *Pathways for Transversal Skills and Orientation* for two third year classes of the Liceo delle Scienze Umane Turrisi Colonna; graduation days organised by Be Academy; the *Prometeo Programme*; a meeting between students from Northeastern University and the University of Catania; the *Journalism Workshop* organised by Sicilian Post, now a recurring initiative; the IED open day; and the *itWikiCon* conference organised by Wikimedia, hosted in Sicily for the first time.



SPACES

itWikiCon/2025

From 7 to 9 November 2025, *itWikiCon*, the annual conference of the Italian speaking Wikimedia community, was held for the first time in Sicily, in Catania, and hosted within Isola's spaces. *itWikiCon* brings together each year volunteers, contributors, researchers and enthusiasts around the shared principle of free, accessible and collectively produced knowledge. The programme, developed through a bottom up process based on proposals submitted by the community and selected by a dedicated committee, was structured over three days of talks, workshops, round tables and training sessions, with the participation of cultural practitioners and representatives from museums, libraries, archives and universities. Hosting an event of this nature provided the opportunity to engage with one of the most active and coherent digital communities within the Italian cultural landscape, committed to advancing knowledge as a common good.



SPACES

Prometeo Programme



led by entrepreneurs, university lecturers and professionals. Topics range from leadership and teamwork to marketing and communication, as well as entrepreneurship, start-ups, personal finance and wellbeing. This model does not aim to replace formal education, but to complement it. It brings into the classroom individuals with direct professional experience and provides a pathway that combines skills development, practical application and engagement, placing personal growth at the centre of the learning process.



From 30 June to 6 July, Isola hosted the third edition of the *Prometeo Programme* Campus, an intensive training programme developed by Associazione Prometeo ETS. The initiative consisted of a seven day fully immersion experience for young people aged between 15 and 20, selected through a process that assesses academic performance, socio economic background and potential for development. Participation is fully funded through scholarships supported by partner companies and sponsors. The programme offers over 60 hours of training, including lectures, testimonials and practical workshops



SPACES

Laboratori di Imprenditorialità Sociale: PCTO Liceo di Scienze Umane Turrisi Colonna

The *Social Entrepreneurship Workshops* form part of the *PCTO programme* (Pathways for Transversal Skills and Orientation), designed and hosted by Isola for two third year classes of the Liceo delle Scienze Umane Turrisi Colonna, socio economic track. The programme involved a total of 44 students, supported by the teaching tutors Maria Antonietta Chiavaro and Maria Grazia Sanfilippo.



Delivered between February and April 2025, the programme was structured in three phases. The first introduced participants to the concept of social enterprise, exploring how it differs from traditional business models, the values that underpin it, and how Isola interprets this organisational form within the local context of Catania. This initial phase took place within Isola's spaces, providing a direct and practical point of reference for the learning process.

The second phase, the most extensive, with a total duration of 15.5 hours, enabled parti-

cipants to design a social enterprise project. This included identifying social challenges, developing an idea, and producing a simplified business model canvas, alongside a communication strategy and a final presentation delivered through a pitch. Projects were first assessed by peers and subsequently evaluated by a panel composed of the Isola team and teaching staff. This phase proved particularly engaging, with participants actively developing project ideas addressing challenges related to culture, education, employment and active citizenship.

The third phase focused on environmental sustainability, the circular economy and responsible consumption. It included a practical simulation assessing the environmental impact of the projects developed in the previous phase and concluded with the award ceremony of the *AWorld* challenge introduced at the beginning of the programme.

Each session combined structured teaching with interactive elements and practical individual and group activities, encouraging participants not only to engage with key societal challenges but also to collaborate in working towards concrete outcomes.

Dialogue of Civilizations – Northeastern University and University of Catania

Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l. hosted the kick off of the international *Dialogue of Civilizations* programme, selected as the first point of engagement with the city's entrepreneurial and social ecosystem, following the official welcome at the university and the municipality.

The programme, promoted by the Department of Economics and Business of the University of Catania and coordinated by Professor Giorgia D'Allura, Professor of Business Administration, welcomed 23 students from Northeastern University to Sicily from 19 May to 8 June for an immersive experience within the local entrepreneurial, cultural and institutional

context. The 2025 edition, the most extensive to date, extended from two to three weeks and combined business and cultural case studies, site visits, and opportunities for exchange with students and academic staff from the University of Catania. Among the organisations included in the programme was Farm Cultural Park in Favara, a recognised example of urban regeneration and social innovation.

Collaboration with the academic sector represents a core pillar of the Spaces offer. Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l. works closely with public universities, including the University of Catania, University of Messina and University of Palermo, with which formal cooperation agreements are in place as well as with private institutions such as ABADIR Academy and Syracuse Academy. These partnerships contribute to activating the spaces through shared activities, events and initiatives. This has led to the development of a network of relationships that creates regular opportunities for exchange between universities, businesses and the local context, supported by applied research and a shared commitment to the development of human capital in Sicily. Among the initiatives



hosted, the *Crescere Insieme* workshop series, promoted by the University of Palermo within the framework of *Enterprise Europe Network* activities in Sicily and in collaboration with Sicindustria, provided SMEs with information, awareness raising and advisory support to strengthen innovation driven growth strategies. The Spaces also hosted the opening event of *Rethinking Culture and Creativity*, the fifth international workshop on cultural innovation and regeneration processes, curated by Professor Anna Mignosa of the University of Catania. The event brought together European academics and researchers through plenary and parallel sessions. The choice of Isola as host venue reflected the intention to strengthen ongoing collaborations and to maintain a focus on cultural and creative enterprises.

Over the first three-year cycle, Isola has consolidated its role as a hub for innovation and entrepreneurship, recognising this area as a key driver of social change. The objective is to position the Spaces as a place of possibility where ideas, people and

organisations come together and take shape. In this context, in 2025 a two year agreement was signed with Plug and Play Tech Center and Infratech, which established their start-up accelerator within Isola, delivering activities and events throughout the year and creating a stable presence dedicated to high potential entrepreneurship within the hub. The *EIT Food Demo Day* also took place, marking the launch of the partnership between Isola and *EIT Food* for the development of a local hub. Among the entrepreneurship related activities hosted, particular attention was given to the gender gap and women's entrepreneurship. In line with the objective of reducing gender disparities in access to digital and entrepreneurial opportunities, Isola increased its investment in this area throughout 2025. Key initiatives included the final event of the third edition of *Tech by Her*, the programme promoted by Huawei Italy through Shels Academy, and the press conference launching the international *Lympha – Raffaella Mandarano* award, dedicated to youth and women's entrepreneurship and to engagement in sustainable development and technological innovation. In the broader field of entrepreneurship, the spaces hosted the award ceremony for the five winning ideas from the entrepreneurial bootcamp of the *Amazon Supply Chain and Technology Incubator* programme, organised by Develhope in collaboration with Amazon. They also hosted the *Salesforce in Tour* roadshow, focused on the latest digital innovations in CRM, artificial intelligence and Agentforce, as well as a series of networking events that strengthened connections between the local ecosystem and national and international networks.



SPACES

EIT Food Accelerator Network

DEMO DAY 2025

Sicily is currently facing an unprecedented water crisis, characterised by prolonged periods of drought, rising temperatures and outdated infrastructure, which are placing increasing pressure on agriculture, ecosystems and water supply for entire communities. This environmental challenge is accompanied by long-term social and economic consequences, making an integrated approach essential, one that connects innovation, research and entrepreneurship.

Against this backdrop, the partnership between Isola and EIT Food, the European Institute of Innovation and Technology's Knowledge and Innovation Community for the agri food sector, was established. This strategic collaboration aims to develop in Sicily an international hub dedicated to innovation in sustainable water management, designed to connect start-ups, businesses, universities, institutions and local



communities on a long-term basis. In 2025, activities focused on the public launch of the initiative. On 26 June, Isola hosted a *Demo Day*, bringing together representatives from EIT Food, the research community, large companies, banking foundations and investors to address water management from a systemic perspective. The issue was framed not only as an environmental challenge, but also as a driver of economic development, regional competitiveness and social cohesion across Mediterranean regions. Through keynote speeches, thematic panels and pitch sessions, innovative solutions were presented for the circular use of water in agriculture and the agri food sector. The *Demo Day* marked the formal launch of a partnership that, in the coming years, will develop into a structured start-up acceleration programme focused on optimising water use, with tangible effects on the entrepreneurial ecosystem and the skilled labour market in Sicily.



SPACES

CrossConnect

CrossConnect is an Italian start-up accelerator focused on the infrastructure sector, with its operational base located within the Spaces of Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l. The programme is promoted by CDP Venture Capital and managed by Plug and Play Tech Center, one of the leading global investors in start-ups, in partnership with ELIS Consortium. It operates with the strategic support of major national and international industrial players, including Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane, Eni, Saipem, Acea (a.Quantum), Sonatrach and Pirelli.

The choice of Catania as the programme's base is deliberate. *CrossConnect* was established with a clear territorial regeneration ambition, aiming to position the city as a recognised node within the global technological innovation ecosystem. The decision to locate the programme within Isola reflects the role that the organisation has developed over time as a meeting point between entrepreneurial ambition and the local context.

The thematic areas addressed by *CrossConnect*, namely physical infrastructure, ener-

gy transition, mobility and environmental monitoring, expand in concrete terms the range of opportunities available to those engaging with Isola. By bringing investors, mentors and start-ups from across Italy and internationally to Catania, the programme generates a continuous flow of connections and knowledge exchange that extends beyond the spaces and into the wider ecosystem.

During its first year of operation, the programme invested €3.6 million in 15 start-ups



accelerated in Catania, launched seven proof of concept initiatives with industrial partners, established collaborations with two universities, and organised 12 national level events, attracting over 500 experts, investors and international mentors to the city.



SPACES

La Tornanza Camp

La Tornanza is an initiative based in Southern Italy dedicated to enhancing local territories through the return, both physical and project based, of individuals who wish to build their future there. Among its activities, the *Tornanza Camp* is a free training programme, delivered across villages and hubs in Southern Italy, aimed at eight selected women seeking to develop their ideas into start-ups. The programme combines managerial training, mentorship, pitch practice and visits to local enterprises, with the objective of supporting the development of initiatives rooted in the territory.

From 27 to 29 May, the programme was hosted at Isola's Spaces in Catania. It involved three days of intensive work, including leadership training sessions, pitch practice and a final presentation during the *Tech by Her* event. This closing moment enabled participants to present their projects to a wider audience, opening the programme to the city. Isola's role as a partner, and the involvement of Antonio Perdichizzi as a mentor, reflect a shared vision: to reduce gender disparities in access to entrepreneurial opportunities, to enhance the territories of Southern Italy, and to create the conditions in which choosing to remain, or to return, becomes a viable and attractive option.

SPACES

Tech by Her – Shells Academy, Huawei Italy

On 29 May 2025, Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l. hosted the final event of the third edition of *Tech by Her*, a programme promoted by Shells Academy of Huawei Italy and dedicated to reducing the gender digital divide in Southern Italy. The event brought together representatives from public institutions, businesses and the local entrepreneurial ecosystem, with the patronage of the Municipality of Catania and the Women's Entrepreneurship Committee of Confindustria Catania.

Eight young women from Campania, Puglia and Sicily, participants in the *Tornanza Camp*, presented their business projects through a pitch session. Their ideas reflected diverse experiences, all rooted in their territories of ori-

gin and aimed at building sustainable initiatives locally. The event also included a panel on women's innovation in Sicily and concluded with the public recognition of twenty Sicilian enterprises distinguished for their commitment to gender equality. For Isola, hosting an event of this nature was part of a deliberate commitment to creating spaces in which young people can envision and build their future, and to strengthening the quality of training pathways as a concrete lever to address the outflow of talent from Southern Italy.

Having a physical space in the heart of a city is a privilege. Isola conceives its *Spaces* as places of cultural dissemination, open to collaboration with organisations that promote reflection on contemporary issues. The challenge, one that remains complex but central to Isola's approach, is to engage diverse audiences and to foster exchange among those who use the *Spaces*, so that each initiative becomes an opportunity for encounters between worlds that would not otherwise interact. In 2025, this orientation took different forms. For the first time, Isola joined the *Le Vie dei Tesori* circuit, a festival that transforms Sicilian cities into open museums. Over three weekends, Isola opened its doors to the public as a space where history, works and memories were connected with ideas and perspectives for the future. As part of the programme, it also hosted the open day *A scuola di bellezza*, an initiative promoted by Fondazione *Le Vie dei Tesori* in collaboration with the Regional School Office of Sicily, aimed at bringing schools closer to the island's cultural and artistic heritage. Isola also continued its collaboration with the *Catania Contemporanea FIC - Festival*, curated by Scenario Pubblico, through the presentation of the book *Tecnologia della rivoluzione* by Diletta Huyskes, a reflection on artificial intelligence and its relationship with humanity, and hosted the *Festival delle Narrazioni Sonore*.

Part of the cultural life of the *Spaces* unfolds in a more informal setting, aimed at those who engage with them on a daily basis. In this context, Isola hosted the presentation of the album by Katadeo, a band from Catania that has long been part of its ecosystem, as well as a meeting with Robin Blaser, founder of Vinokilo, the largest kilo sale of vintage and second hand clothing in Europe and a certified B Corp. During the event, he shared his entrepreneurial journey with the co-working community, offering practical insights into the circular economy and responsible entrepreneurship.





SPACES

Tecnologia della Rivoluzione – Catania Contemporanea FIC Festival

The collaboration with the *Catania Contemporanea FIC Festival* has become a recurring feature in Isola's cultural calendar. While in previous years it took the form of hosting exhibitions and installations, in 2025 it evolved into a more active contribution. Isola chose to play a more direct role, creating a moment of reflection aligned with the themes that inform its day to day work. The sixth edition of the festival, held in Catania from 29 April to 11 May, explored the relationship

on technology as a tool for social change, from artificial intelligence to movements for inclusion and identity. The discussion also engaged with the theme of the *Intelligenza Artificiale* season by Roberto Zappalà, which emphasises the body and in person encounter as essential forms of expression. Together, these perspectives offered complementary reflections on what it means to be human in a time when algorithms are reshaping relationships and trajectories. This represents one of the directions Isola is pursuing: engaging with the themes of its work through different forms of expression, and drawing on literature and dialogue with authors as additional tools for understanding the present.



between technology, artificial intelligence and creativity, examining the impact of innovation on human experience and contemporary arts. Over ten days, 25 events across different venues in the city involved more than 150 artists.

On 9 May, Isola hosted and curated a conversation with Diletta Huyskes around her book *Tecnologia della Rivoluzione*, which reflects



SPACES

European Youth Energy Forum

The *European Youth Energy Forum* is the annual event organised by the European Youth Energy Network and is held each year in a different European city. In 2025, Italy was selected to host the Forum. Rather than choosing the capital (Rome), the network opted for Catania, recognising Sicily as a strategic energy hub. Its proximity to North Africa, its central position in the Mediterranean, and its alignment with the network's geographic and cultural composition led to this decision. Isola played a key role in securing the event. As Strategic Regional Partner, it supported the selection of the city and helped establish the necessary institutional and operational con-



nections. The Forum took place at Palazzo della Cultura from 6 to 10 October 2025 and brought together 150 participants from across Europe, the highest number recorded to date. The event was supported by Fondazione Enel and held under the patronage of the Italian Ministry of the Environment, the Sicilian Regional Government and the Municipality of Catania.

Isola's contribution extended beyond organisation. During the Forum, it curated the panel *Sicily in Transition: Local Paths to a Sustainable Future*, which focused on local approaches to ecological transition. The panel brought together a range of experiences, including Isola's *Green Skills Academy* pilot project, the work of the Fondazione di Comunità di Messina on community empowerment, and the energy commu-

nity initiatives of the Ferla Municipality. These examples showed how sustainable innovation can emerge from Southern Italy and contribute to the wider European debate. At the end of the Forum, Isola hosted a side event for the international, European and local business community. The event aimed to strengthen links between the European network and the local entrepreneurial ecosystem, while also creating opportunities for the exchange of best practices and the development of new partnerships.



SPACES

Isola. From 1693 to 2224 - Le Vie dei Tesori



For the first time in 2025, Isola took part in the *Le Vie dei Tesori* festival, which opens sites that are usually inaccessible to the public and transforms Sicilian cities into open museums. As Isola is based in Palazzo Biscari, one of the most significant Baroque buildings in Catania also recognised as part of UNESCO heritage, participation in the festival was a natural step. Over three consecutive weekends, guided by Agatino Zappalà, Isola opened its doors through a tour designed and developed internally, titled *From 1693 to 2224*. These two dates define a symbolic time frame. The year 1693 marks the earthquake that devastated eastern Sicily and initiated the Baroque reconstruction of the region.

The year 2224 refers to *Sicilia 2224*, a work commissioned by Isola that projects the Sicilian diaspora into a speculative future, inviting the audience to reflect on the present. The tour moves through rooms, corridors and narratives, connecting three temporal dimensions. It explores the past of the palace, with references to Ignazio Paternò Castello, an enlightened patron who transformed his residence into a centre of culture and intellectual exchange. It reflects the present of Isola, whose co-working, training

and social innovation activities now inhabit the same spaces. It also evokes an imagined future, expressed through contemporary artworks commissioned by Isola from emerging local artists, displayed throughout the palace in dialogue with its history.

This narrative approach is intentional. The openness and cultural vision of Prince Ignazio resonate with Isola's own values. In the same way that he opened his residence to knowledge and to the community, Isola chooses to open its spaces, and its story, to all who wish to engage with them.



Access to dedicated spaces represents a significant asset, which Isola makes available to third sector organisations and youth communities active in the local context. As part of its space management approach, Isola allocates each year a defined number of hours for free use, largely reserved for non-profit organisations requiring a venue for meetings, collaborative work or events. Organisations such as *Destinazione Sicilia* and *Fermento Urbano* are now regular users of the Spaces, reflecting relationships that have developed over time. In 2025, this network was further expanded to include ESN, Rete al Femminile - LEA, EYEF and the Fondazione Le Vie dei Tesori. These collaborations are guided by alignment with Isola's core areas of work. They also create opportunities for exchange, mutual learning and collaboration, generating added value for all parties involved.



Spaces Overview

IMPACT AREA	KPI	2023	2024	2025
	No. of programs designed for youth <20	0	1	3
	No. of participants aged <20 in programs hosted by Isola	0	25	71
	No. of unique entries in coworking	515	660	500
	No. of entries in coworking spaces	1871	2382	1600
	No. of unique entries in coworking spaces by residents from other areas of Italy	168	146	320
	No. of unique entries in coworking spaces by visitors from other areas of the world	163	269	180
	Occupancy rate of the <i>Hot Desk</i> in the co-working space	74%	58.87%	50%
	Occupancy rate of the <i>Fix Desk</i> in the co-working space	100%	100%	100%
	No. of university <i>Field Visit</i> hosted	3	5	2
	No. of programmes hosted for university and post-university students	4	16	19
	No. of participants aged <20 in programs	146	416	223
	No. of located organizations	51	51	42
	No. of located free organizations	6	9	7
	No. of meetings hosted at Isola	187	74	90
	No. of corporate retreats	9	12	10
	No. of retreats by organizations specifically visiting Sicily to hold a retreat at Isola	5	12	2
	No. of events hosted at Isola (organized or hosted, excluding meetings)	283	101	22
	No. of exhibitions	7	3	4
	No. of performances	6	1	0
	No. of concerts	2	3	4

3.2

Coalitions

Coalitions

The lack of opportunities for young people in Sicily represents a complex and multifactorial challenge that requires the active contribution of a diverse range of actors including start-ups, SMEs, and national and international corporations. This understanding led to the creation of the *Coalitions* programme: a formalised network of private companies that contribute to the governance and activities of Isola and enable the implementation of social innovation projects that transform heterogeneous relationships into collective action and tangible territorial impact. The programme began at the end of 2023 as a pilot initiative and developed progressively, supported by the growing commitment of its members.

Membership takes place through the payment of a base fee, with the option to provide additional support to one of the flagship projects. This support extends beyond financial contributions and includes the involvement of company professionals and founders as mentors or role models within the relevant initiatives. The relationship therefore operates in both directions. Professionals from participating companies contribute to orientation and entrepreneurial training programmes through mentorship activities or by sharing their professional experience. At the same time, selected beneficiaries of the projects present their stories during *Coalitions* meetings, so that change can be understood through the direct testimony of those who have experienced it.

Members of the *Coalitions* programme also participate in the governance of Isola through the election of a representative of key external stakeholders, who sits on the Board of Directors on matters of shared interest.

In 2025, membership increased from 16 to 20. In line with the strategic focus of the second three-year period, the four original thematic working groups (School, Skills and Employment, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Culture, Creativity and Art) were consolidated into a single, comprehensive *Coalition*. This configuration reflects a more cohesive business community with the capacity to generate cross-sector exchange and integrate diverse perspectives. The decision also reflects the direct contribution of members, who took part in the co-design workshops for the new strategy described below in Section 3.6.



In 2025, this business community came together in two annual events: one reserved exclusively for members and one open to the entire Isola Archipelago. The support of the members enabled the implementation of flagship projects such as *Hack the Gap* and the *Water Food Nexus Accelerator Demo Day*, as well as the orientation programme *Futuro Direzione Sud* and the vocational education initiatives *Green Skills Academy* and *Energie con il Sud*.

COMPANIES PARTICIPATING IN THE COALITIONS



COALITIONS

Funding, Data and Narratives

MARCH 2025

The spring session followed a deliberately heterogeneous structure, organised into three distinct segments defined by theme and register: an operational focus on funding instruments, the launch of a territorial analysis project, and a high-level institutional panel on the narrative of Sicily. These three distinct approaches converged around a shared underlying question: how to create better conditions for those who choose to remain and build enterprises within the territory. Sergio Amato, CEO of Finance Consulting, opened the session with an intervention on funding calls for start-ups and businesses in Sicily and across Europe. This is a field that few command with real confidence, and one that companies struggle to explore independently due to its procedural complexity. Addressing it within a shared setting made it more accessible and actionable.



Salvatore Torrisi, Vice-Rector for Research Valorisation at the University of Milano-Bicocca, then presented the *MUSA* project, while Silvia Amato, Director of Opinno Italia, introduced *InSiDE – Innovation and Sicily Data Engine*: a phygital platform that aggregates data on the key sectors of Coalitions and translates them into strategic insights for the territory. The project is presented in a dedicated section below.

The event concluded with the panel *A New Narrative of Sicily*, featuring Enrico Trantino, Mayor of Catania, Francesco Priolo, Rector of the University of Catania, and Antonio Belcuore, Special Commissioner of the Chamber of Commerce of South-East Sicily. This was not a sequence of formal statements, but an open and genuine discussion, which also involved the audience, on what it means today to describe and shape the future of Sicily.



COALITIONS

Co-design of the Three-Year Strategy

OCTOBER 2025

On 27 October 2025, during the autumn meeting, Isola hosted a workshop open to the entire Archipelago. This term is used by Isola to refer to the group of stakeholders most closely connected to the organisation. This includes shareholders, grantmakers, Coalitions partners, entities involved in project partnerships, institutions, networks and alliances focused on innovation and impact, media partners, and third sector organisations closely linked to its activities.

The day unfolded through a morning plenary session dedicated to sharing progress on the strategic review, followed by afternoon co-design sessions structured around nine key questions organised into four thematic clusters. Professional facilitators designed and led the methodology, which combined anonymous surveys with structured discussion and collected more than 450 contributions.



The diversity of voices involved proved to be one of the defining strengths of the day. Local SMEs and national corporations brought complementary perspectives which, through dialogue, led to meaningful convergence and strong alignment with Isola's mission. SMEs emphasised their conscious investment in the territory and their belief that the narrative surrounding the future of young people in Sicily requires fundamental change.

Corporations contributed a more systemic perspective, highlighting the need for structural investment in skills as a necessary enabling condition. Contributions from the wider Archipelago, which include institutional, academic and civic actors, further enriched the discussion. *Coalitions* confirms its role as a space in which actors who would not ordinarily sit at the same table find, through Isola's coordination, a shared method for dialogue and collaboration.



COALITIONS

InSiDE Project

One of the most significant outputs of the work carried out within Coalitions in 2025 is the development of *InSiDE: Innovation and Sicily Data Engine*. The project transforms the analytical vocation of the programme, which has always focused on the collection and sharing of territorial data and research, into a concrete operational tool. *InSiDE* was developed within the framework of *MUSA - Multilayered Urban Sustainability Action*, an innovation ecosystem funded by the Italian Ministry of University and Research under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan. The initiative includes among its promoters the University of Milano-Bicocca, the Polytechnic University of Milan, Bocconi University, and the University of Milan.



The project is implemented in partnership with Tree srl, Opinio Italy as lead partner, the University of Catania, EHT, and with the support of *MIT Technology Review Italia*. Isola leads the Catania-based physical hub and the local community, where members of Coalitions have taken part in thematic working groups and contributed to directing the analysis towards the priorities of the territory. *InSiDE* has led to the creation of a phygital platform. The physical dimension is represented by the *Coalitions* hub and its thematic working groups, while the digital component consists of an online open-source platform. The platform aggregates and analyses territorial data on education, employment, innovation and culture, and includes *LIFT - Life Fullness Territorial Index*, a composite index that measures three variables and the overall value generated by their interaction. These include personal capital, understood as the quality of everyday life; social capital, which encompasses security, equity and accessibility; and professional capital, defined by opportunities and the capacity for fulfilment. *InSiDE* has translated into a tangible and accessible output a body of information that has long been evident but never sufficiently systematised.



"InSiDE is a tool to interpret reality through data and to act in a more informed and strategic way. Sicily has extraordinary potential but also faces complex challenges. InSiDE supports the transformation of information into concrete opportunities for growth and cohesion." Silvia Amato, General Manager of Opinio Italy – Tree

Platform InSiDE
QR Code



[HTTPS://WWW.INSIDE-MUSA.IT/LIFT](https://www.inside-musa.it/lift)

3.3

Projects

Projects

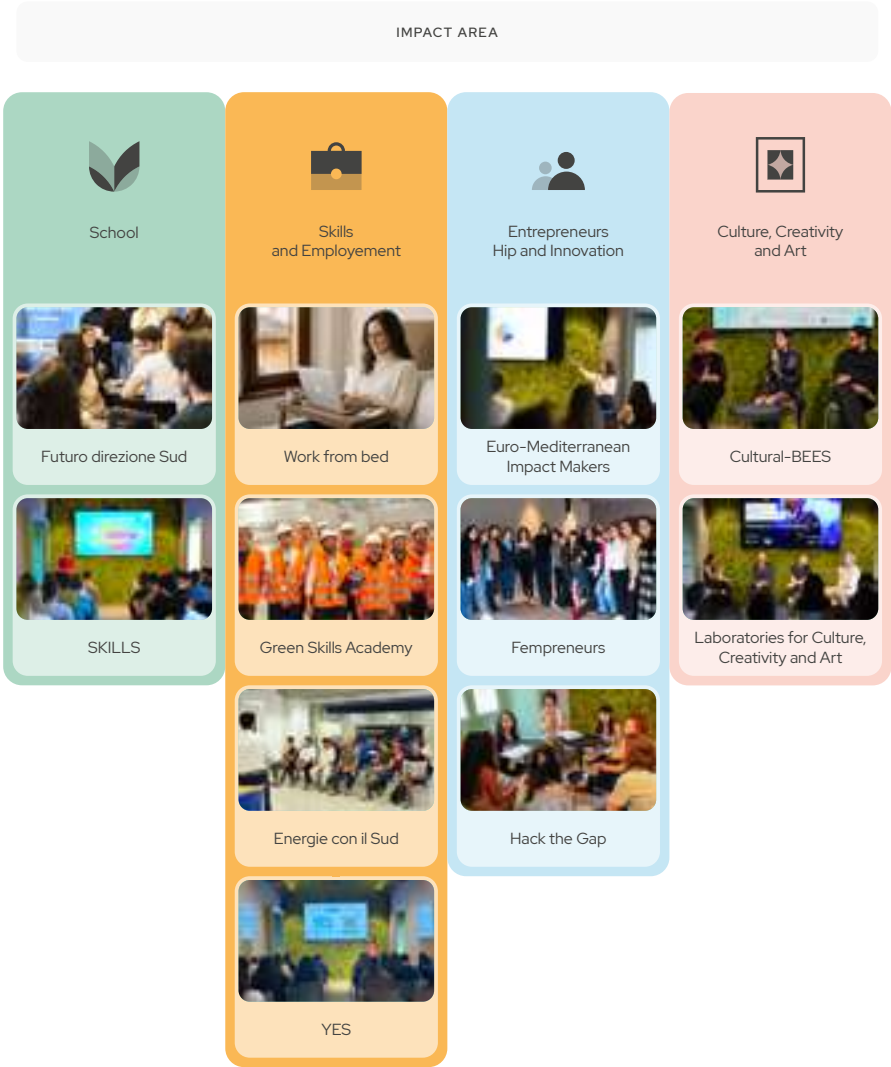


Projects constitute the main vehicle through which Isola’s commitment takes concrete form. They originate from the physical infrastructure of its *Spaces*, draw on the relationships developed through *Coalitions*, and take shape as programmes capable of generating real change in people’s lives. As outlined in Section 2.3, each project results from careful observation of the territory and from a considered alignment between the needs emerging from the local context and the opportunities for transformation that can be activated.

Through its Projects, Isola addresses some of the most deeply rooted structural challenges within the territory. These include educational poverty and school dropout, youth unemployment, the gap between available skills and labour market opportunities, and the enhancement of creative and cultural value chains. The objective is not to respond to emergencies, but to develop models of intervention that are replicable and scalable, and capable of producing lasting impact. Since its establishment, Isola has chosen to dedicate a significant share of its activities to younger generations, based on the conviction that young people equipped with stronger tools and broader opportunities represent the starting point for a more equitable and future-oriented community. In line with this vision, all the programmes described are offered free of charge to beneficiaries, as open access to education, training and empowerment pathways constitutes, for Isola, a value-driven choice as much as an operational one.

This section presents Projects according to the four impact areas that structure Isola’s intervention: *School*, *Skills and Employment*, *Entrepreneurship and Innovation*, and *Culture, Creativity and Art*. This framework provides a clear understanding of how each initiative contributes to the overall system of impact and of the specific role it plays. For each project, a summary sheet is available to facilitate immediate and accessible reading, presenting key information on objectives, activities carried out, target groups, and results achieved.

Overview of projects in 2025



3.3.1

School

The data on educational poverty presented in Section 2.1 indicate a situation that Isola cannot overlook. Sicily remains among the regions facing the greatest challenges in terms of school competences, with the highest rates of early school leaving in Italy and a widespread lack of confidence among young people in the opportunities offered by the territory. A significant share of students approaching upper secondary graduation does not consider Sicily a favourable context in which to pursue further education or professional pathways. This is not a secondary element. It reflects the structural difficulty of the territory in retaining the potential of younger generations.

In this context, Isola has chosen not to duplicate existing educational provision, but to operate in a complementary capacity by expanding opportunities beyond both the domestic environment and the formal school setting. Guidance constitutes the core of this approach. It remains insufficiently integrated within mainstream education systems, yet it can be delivered alongside formal teaching and has the capacity to broaden perspectives, support more informed decision-making, and equip students with practical tools to approach future transitions with greater confidence. Isola's approach is based on the assumption that informed choices in relation to education and career pathways represent an effective lever to address educational poverty and to reduce the structural lack of confidence that leads many young people to seek opportunities elsewhere.

For these reasons, in 2025 Isola maintained a focus on upper secondary school students. This stage is characterised by imminent post-diploma choices and offers a window in which guidance interventions can have a direct impact. Compared to 2024, the scope of intervention has expanded. Alongside *Futuro Direzione Sud*, the post-diploma guidance pathway launched in the previous year, 2025 saw the introduction of *SKILLS: Science, Know-how and Innovation for STEM Education and Guidance*, a programme aimed at promoting awareness and orientation in STEM³⁹ disciplines. These fields are introduced within the school curriculum but are not yet sufficiently valued in proportion to the career opportunities offered by STEM-related sectors.

39. STEM refers to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

Futuro direzione Sud

TITLE



GRANTMAKER

University of Catania

DURATION

November 2024 – May 2025



Futuro Direzione Sud is Isola's main programme for guidance on future educational and professional pathways. Developed within the framework of the "OUI - Ovunque da qui" project of the University of Catania, the title reflects a clear value-based choice: to explore and promote Southern Italy as a context capable of retaining and attracting talent, generating opportunities, and building future prospects.

The programme engaged final-year high school students in a pathway structured in three phases: exploration of personal aptitudes, identification of growing sectors within the territory, and orientation towards self-employment. Isola delivered guidance masterclasses in which, through facilitated activities, practical exercises and inspirational testimonies from Sicilian role models active in key growth sectors in Southern Italy, including energy, digital, agritech, tourism and culture, participants explored the potential of a territory capable of offering concrete pathways for personal and professional development.



In 2025, the programme reached over 1,000 students from 10 upper secondary schools across the territory. Sessions took place at Isola's Hub, which hosted visiting classes. In April, Isola also participated in the University of Catania Orientation Fair, a three-day event held at CUS Catania that attracted nearly 20,000 young people from across Sicily within the framework of the OUI project. This enabled outreach to larger groups that would otherwise have had limited access to the Hub. On that occasion, Isola also delivered a session for teachers on entrepreneurship education for students and on lessons learned from direct engagement with schools. Over the



two-year period 2024 to 2025, the programme's impact was monitored through two questionnaires administered before and after the intervention. These aimed to measure changes in participants' sense of orientation, their perception of opportunities offered by the territory, and their level of confidence in it. The results, developed in collaboration with the University of Catania, were presented at the conference of the Italian Society for Career Guidance, held in Parma in September 2025.





Project KPI's

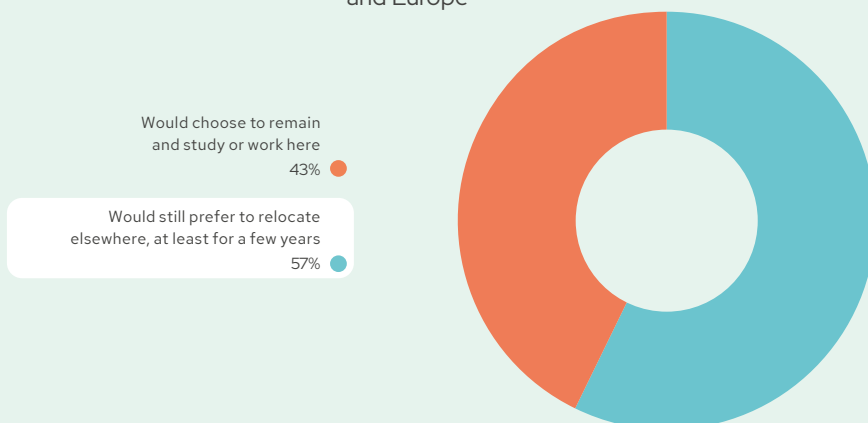
KPI

Number of beneficiaries	1578
Average age	17.9
Gender Balance	52.57% F - 45.93% M / 0.55% non-binary 0.95% not specified
Gender balance (tutors and trainers)	60% F - 40% M
Number of sessions	63
Duration of sessions (hours)	5
Total training hours delivered by Isola	315
Satisfaction rate	79%
Effectiveness rate	70%

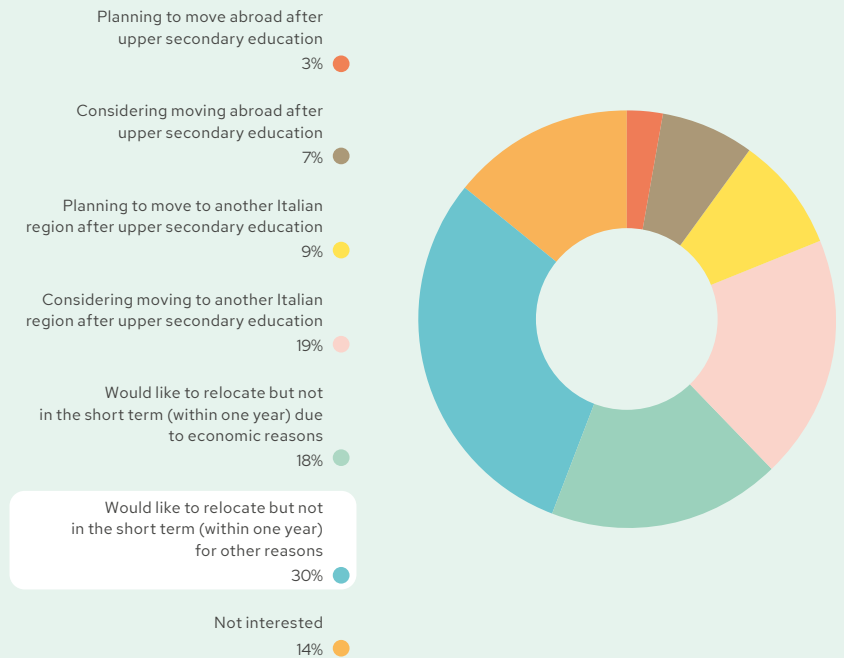
40. Internal analysis of questionnaires administered during the initial months of the project (November 2024 to January 2025), prepared for the XXIV National Conference of the Italian Society for Career Guidance in Parma. The sample consists of approximately 900 students, with an average age of 17.8 years and a female share of 53%.

Selected responses from the pre-activity questionnaire completed by participating students⁴⁰

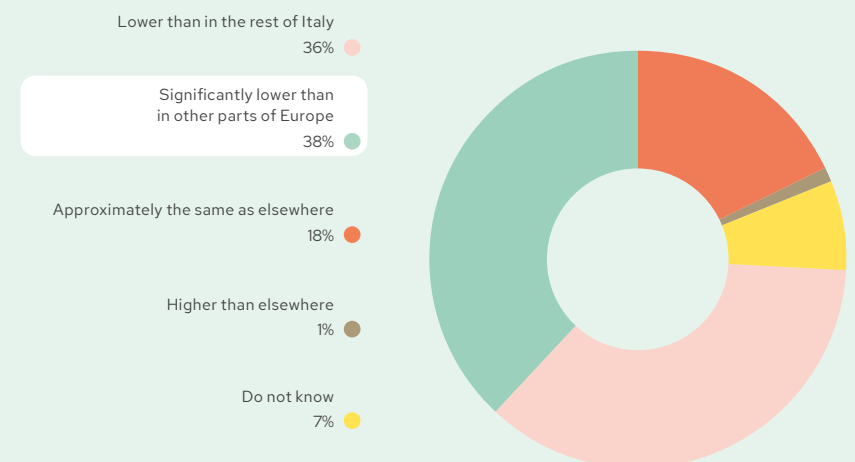
Future plans after secondary school if Sicily offered the same educational and employment opportunities as the rest of Italy and Europe



Relocation plans outside Sicily



Perceived QUALITY of educational opportunities in Sicily

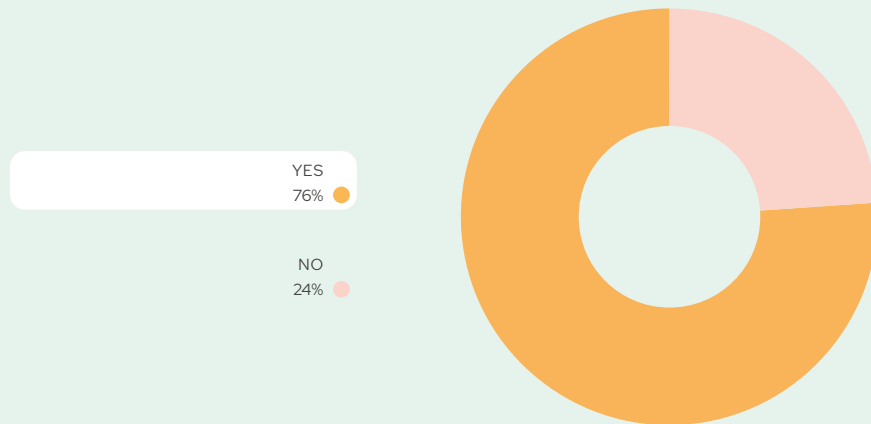




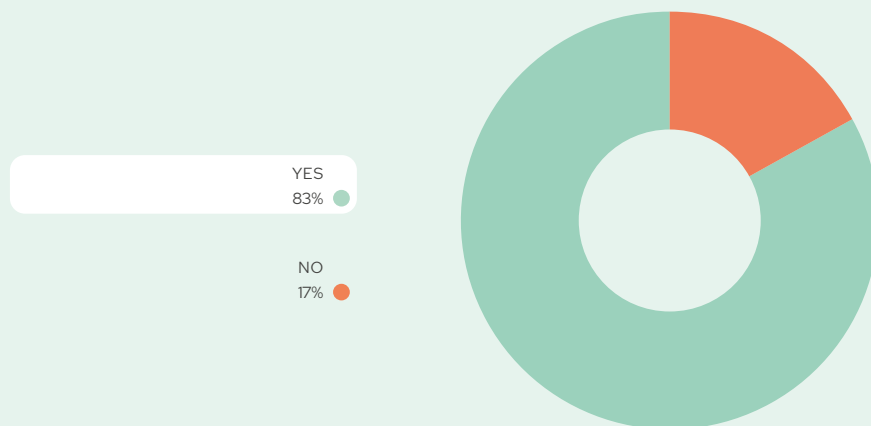
Selected responses from the post-activity questionnaire completed by participating students⁴¹

41. ibidem

Do you feel better prepared to make an informed post-diploma choice after this guidance programme?



Would you recommend this programme to a friend?



Feedback on Futuro Direzione Sud

"I found it very interesting, especially the final part of the project, where we actively worked as a team to achieve a common objective. I believe the whole project should build on this approach in order to engage everyone's interest."

— Carlotta

"The workshop was very useful and clear in addressing topics related to entrepreneurship and to life after upper secondary education."

— Simone

"I particularly appreciated the interactive nature of the presentations, as well as the topics covered and the way they were approached, which was innovative and far from conventional."

— Pietro

"The project was highly engaging, much more so than any other guidance activity I have experienced so far."

— Bruna

TITLE

SKILLS

Science, Know-how and Innovation for STEM Education and Guidance



LEAD PARTNER: Junior Achievement Italia

PARTNERS Isola Catania e Università degli Studi di Catania

SCHOOL PARTNERS: ITI Archimede, IIST De Felice Giuffrida Olivetti, IIS F. Redi, ITI G. Ferraris, IIS Marconi Mangano, IIS Gulli e Pennisi, IISS B. Radice, IIS M. Amari

GRANTMAKER Fondo per la Repubblica Digitale Impresa sociale

CALL Bando Polaris

PROJECT CODE 2024-POL-00310

DURATION January 2025 – ongoing

Science, Know-how and Innovation for STEM Education and Guidance (SKILLS) is a project funded under the Polaris Call of *Fondo per la Repubblica Digitale Impresa Sociale*. It is implemented through a partnership led by Junior Achievement Italia and comprising Isola, the University of Catania, specifically the Departments of Physics and Astronomy Ettore Majorana and of Electrical, Electronic and Computer Engineering, and ten high schools in Catania. The project is based on a clear premise: STEM disciplines are strategic for the local labour market, yet the formal school pathway often struggles to make them attractive and accessible. *SKILLS* addresses this gap by combining technical and transversal competences within a modular and adaptable pathway, co-designed with partner schools to respond to the actual needs of students.

Laboratory activities within university departments provide direct exposure to research and scientific practice. Activities delivered by Junior Achievement Italia focus on transversal competences, some of which are eligible for recognition within PCTO pathways, while those delivered by Isola support guidance, awareness and the development of an entrepreneurial mindset through a simulated enterprise format.



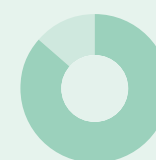
The programme runs over 18 months, covering two academic years (2024 to 2025 and 2025 to 2026), and involves 1,854 students from Years 11, 12 and 13 of partner institutions. Isola has been primarily responsible for the Guidance Masterclasses, which include orientation and awareness sessions as well as meetings with local enterprises. These activities aim to make visible the concrete professional pathways that STEM disciplines can offer within the local context of Catania. These were complemented by a dissemination event open to students and families, held at Palazzo Biscari, which brought together the local education community.



Project's KPI

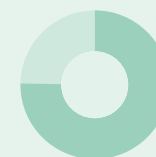
KPI	
Number of beneficiaries	934
Average age	16.8
Gender Balance	57% F - 40% M 3% non-binary
Gender balance (tutors and trainers)	63% M (12) 37% F (7)
Number of sessions	27
Duration of sessions (hours)	2
Total training hours delivered by Isola	54
Satisfaction rate	71.40%
Effectiveness rate ⁴²	71%

Percentage of respondents agreeing on the effectiveness of "SKILLS"



86.5%

Increased awareness of future career choices



75.5%

Increased propensity to acquire STEM competences with a view to integrating them into future professional pathways:

42. Indicator calculated by aggregating responses relating to learning and guidance collected through end-of-programme questionnaires. The figure is derived by comparing positive responses, namely those scoring between 4 and 5 out of 5 and indicating a perceived improvement in skills and guidance, with the total number of responses collected. Number of responses collected: 1,277.



Feedback on Isola's Masterclass for "SKILLS"

"One of the aspects I appreciated most in this experience was gaining a clearer view of the world of work, developing more defined ideas, and improving my soft skills."

— Gabriel

"I found the session very interesting and it showed me how Southern Italy also plays a role, much greater than I had expected, in the European STEM landscape."

— Paola

"These were very constructive hours and I believe this experience will be useful for me in the future. Thank you."

— Michela

"Nothing to add. The explanations were very clear and direct. I understood everything and it sparked a great deal of curiosity in the topic, which I may wish to explore further in the future."

— Dario



3.3.2

Skills and Employment

The labour market in Catania continues to present structural challenges that the economic recovery of recent years has not yet addressed. Unemployment and inactivity disproportionately affect young people and more vulnerable groups, contributing to a condition of social vulnerability that extends well beyond the absence of employment. Individuals who remain excluded from the labour market progressively lose access to training, upskilling and reskilling opportunities that could open new pathways. This creates a self-reinforcing cycle that limits the economic and social development prospects of the wider community.

In this context, the mismatch between available competences and the profiles sought by employers remains one of the most persistent challenges. Demand for technical and specialised roles continues to grow, particularly in sectors linked to the digital and energy transitions, while the education and training offer struggles to keep pace.

On the basis of this analysis, Isola has defined its objective in the area of *Skills and Employment* as supporting underserved groups in acquiring competences in high-demand professional fields, thereby facilitating access to employment within the territory. The main challenge has been to design an offer that is genuinely additional and does not duplicate the many existing free initiatives. Each pathway has therefore been differentiated both in thematic focus, with highly specialised content, and in its intensive format, characterised by concentration and depth. In 2025, programmes launched in the previous year continued, including *Work from Bed*. In addition, in partnership with Fondazione Snam and Fondazione con il Sud, *Energie con il Sud*, a three-year project running until 2028, was launched in October.



TITLE

Work from Bed

Overcoming Life Barriers through a Digital Career



LEAD PARTNER: Università Telematica degli Studi IUL

PARTNERS Intellegere Società cooperativa impresa sociale
Isola Catania Impresa sociale

SUPPORTIVE PARTNER Confederazione AEPI

GRANTMAKER Fondo per la Repubblica Digitale - Impresa sociale

CALL Bando Prospettive

PROJECT CODE 2023-PRO-00046

DURATION April 2024 - December 2025

Work from Bed is a digital vocational training programme targeting individuals aged 34 to 50 who are unemployed or inactive, resident in Southern Italy, and living with motor, sensory or invisible disabilities. The latter category includes conditions such as diagnosed chronic disabling pain and chronic illnesses, including diabetes, renal failure, neuropathies, endometriosis, vulvodynia, migraines and phobias, which limit the ability to carry out everyday activities.

The project is based on a clear reading of the context. In Southern Italy and the Islands, the inactivity rate among individuals aged 35 to 49 reaches 18.5%, while only 35.8% of people with disabilities are in employment, compared to a European average exceeding 50%. In Sicily, out of more than 280,000 persons with disabilities, only 19% are employed. Cultural barriers and gaps in training, combined with mobility constraints, contribute to a form of marginalisation that the traditional labour market struggles to address.



Work from Bed addresses this gap by providing a free, fully online pathway designed to meet the specific needs of its target group. The programme trains specialists in Marketing, E-commerce and CRM, combining theoretical knowledge, technical competences and soft skills within a learning model tailored to the individual. The online format ensures accessibility for those living in remote areas or unable to participate in in-person training. The programme concludes with a placement component aimed at facilitating access to employment, including fully remote positions, and supporting the economic autonomy of beneficiaries.



Project's KPI

KPI	
Number of beneficiaries	36
Average age	42
Gender Balance	84% F - 16% M 3% non-binary
Number of sessions	310
Number of sessions	6
Total training hours delivered ⁴³	1856

43. Indicator based on aggregated responses on learning and guidance from end-of-programme questionnaires. Calculated as the share of positive responses (4 out of 5 and 5 out of 5) over total responses. N = 1,277.



TITLE

Green Skills Academy



LEAD PARTNER:	Isola Catania
FINANCIAL PARTNER:	Intesa Sanpaolo
TRAINING PARTNER:	Fondazione Generation Italy ETS
PARTNERS	Isola Catania, Brindisi & C. ETS
GRANTMAKER	Fondazione Snam
DURATION	November 2024- October 2025

Green Skills Academy is a pilot vocational training project developed from an initiative by Fondazione Snam and implemented in collaboration with Intesa Sanpaolo, Fondazione Generation Italy ETS and Brindisi & C. ETS. It targets young NEETs aged 18 to 29 in Catania and Brindisi. The objective is twofold: to strengthen competences in sectors related to the ecological transition and to facilitate access to the labour market for a population group



structurally distant from both. The core of the programme consists of an intensive training pathway for photovoltaic system installers, provided free of charge to participants and structured over eight weeks in a hybrid format. Five weeks are delivered online and cover theoretical modules on electricity, electrical engineering, electro-mechanics, design, IT, photovoltaic systems, soft skills and safety certification.



Three weeks are delivered in person and focus on practical exercises on real installations. Sessions are held from Monday to Friday during working hours, for a total of 320 hours of training and 160 hours of individual tutoring.

Support is provided throughout the entire pathway. This includes soft skills sessions tailored to the target professional profile, interview simulations with trainers and corporate volunteers, visits to local enterprises, and continuous mentorship from the first week through to the signing of an employment contract. This level of support has proven decisive. The programme achieved significant rates of labour market insertion and reactivation, confirming the effectiveness of the model. The success of the pilot has led to concrete discussions on the development of a permanent programme capable of consolidating and scaling the results achieved.



Project's KPI

KPI	
Number of beneficiaries	27
Average age	29.8
Gender Balance	100% M
Training hours per session	8
Percentage of beneficiaries who completed the programme	100%
Number of sessions	60
Duration of sessions (hours)	320
Total training hours	160
Satisfaction rate	78%
Effectiveness	93%
Job offers upon completion	12



TITLE

Energie con il Sud



LEAD ORGANISATION Isola Catania

PARTNERS Brindisi & C. ETS (Puglia),
Cooperativa Sociale "Seme di Pace" (Campania),
Fondazione Antonio Emanuele Augurusa (Calabria)

EMPLOYMENT PARTNERS Consorzio Mestieri Puglia S.C.S.,
Fondazione Human Age Institute ETS ManpowerGroup,
Mestieri Campania Società Cooperativa Sociale

CORPORATE PARTNERS Gruppo Altea (Sicilia)
Senec Italia (Puglia)

GRANTMAKER Fondazione Snam ETS and Fondazione con il Sud

PROJECT CODE 2025-COF-00167

DURATION October 2025 - ongoing

Energie con il Sud is a programme co-funded by Fondazione Snam and Fondazione con il Sud, coordinated by Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l. as Lead Partner. Launched in 2025 and running until 2028, the programme aims to address depopulation and youth unemployment in Southern Italy through training, career guidance, and employment integration pathways in sectors linked to the ecological transition.

The project builds on the experience of *Green Skills Academy*, a pilot initiative implemented in Sicily and Puglia in 2025, and expands its reach in this three-year edition to Calabria and Campania. These regions were selected due to their particularly high rates of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET), among the highest in Europe. The programme will operate in Catania, Portici, Vibo Valentia and Brindisi, engaging 300 NEETs aged 18–29 over three years, with particular attention to those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

The intervention model is structured around four integrated actions: comprehensive beneficiary support, including outreach, engagement, empowerment and ongoing accompaniment; territorial network development and employment integration activities, supported by labour market analysis and matching between young people and employers; technical and vocational training in green economy sectors – including renewable energy, energy efficiency and sustainability – complemented by practical workshops and pathways designed to encourage mi-



cro-entrepreneurship; and project coordination, monitoring and impact evaluation.

The partnership has been designed to cover the entire value chain and brings together local delivery partners, specialised employment integration organisations, and companies operating in the energy sector, which contribute through training, mentoring and direct employment opportunities. The programme’s long-term ambition is to establish itself as a leading platform for the large-scale activation of youth self-determination pathways, generating lasting and systemic change across the social and economic fabric of Southern Italy.

TITLE

YES

Youth Engagement and Employability for Success through Social Entrepreneurship



LEAD PARTNER

Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l.

PARTNERS

Asociación Cultural Transeúnte (Spagna), Associazione Culturale Giovani Iddocca (Italia), ASOCIATIA GEYC (Romania), Institut za poticanje mladih (Croazia), Junior Achievement Young Enterprise Malta Foundation (Malta)

GRANTMAKER

Commissione Europea

CALL

2025 Round 1 KA2

PROJECT CODE

2025-1-IT03-KA220-YOU-000363238

DURATION

September 2025 - August 2027



Youth Engagement and Employability for Success through Social Entrepreneurship (YES) is a project designed to address the challenges of youth unemployment, the climate crisis, and the mismatch between available competences and labour market demands, using social entrepreneurship as a tool for personal and professional development. The initiative targets young NEETs aged 18 to 30, qualified young people and youth workers, equipping them with transversal, digital and entrepreneurial competences based on the *European EntreComp, DigComp, LifeComp, GreenComp frameworks*. The project promotes civic engagement, encourages the development of entrepreneurial ideas focused on environmental sustainability and urban regeneration, and aligns with the EU Youth Goals to strengthen the contribution of young people to the economic resilience of their territories. Within this framework, Isola leads the consortium as lead partner, overseeing strategic direction and quality monitoring, and hosts in its *Spaces* the in-person bootcamps, which function as active laboratories for testing innovative training methodologies and fostering direct connections among participants.

In 2025, the project entered its research and analysis phase. Two separate surveys were conducted: one targeting young NEETs, aimed at analysing barriers to labour market access, assessing levels of soft skills through a self-assessment tool, and constructing a vulnerability index measuring the interaction between individual challenges and structural constraints; the other targeting youth workers, aimed at identifying



needs and limitations of current training approaches in daily work with NEETs and at exploring more effective and updated reskilling strategies. The results of approximately 300 responses were aggregated into a report that will serve as the basis for the development of a training programme grounded in a robust and evidence-based bottom-up analysis.

The first activity in 2026 will be a partner meeting in Bucharest, hosted by the partner GEYC, which will mark the start of the operational phase of the initiative.



3.3.3

Entrepreneurship and Innovation

The entrepreneurial ecosystem in Catania shows signs of dynamism but continues to face structural constraints that limit its full competitiveness. Youth-led enterprises are numerous, yet they struggle to reach the critical mass required to generate stable employment and sustained economic value. When growth occurs, it tends to be concentrated. A limited number of strong actors drive GDP, while the broader network of SMEs struggles to consolidate.

Within this already complex context, gender disparities persist across both the labour market and entrepreneurship. Women are disproportionately affected by inactivity and unemployment and remain underrepresented among those who choose to start a business. This is not a question of capacity or ambition. It is a question of access to networks, capital, role models and training pathways that are inclusive and responsive to their needs.

On the basis of this analysis, Isola has developed its approach to entrepreneurship not as an end in itself, but as a tool for empowerment and as a response to systemic challenges. Each programme explicitly encourages participants to consider enterprise as an agent of change, capable of generating both economic and social value. In 2025, this approach was implemented through three programmes. *EMIMSEB* continued its trajectory of promoting social entrepreneurship in the Euro-Mediterranean area, fostering dialogue among entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds. Fempreneurs reached its second edition, confirming its role as a space for training and entrepreneurial activation dedicated to women in Sicily. Alongside these, *Hack the Gap*, a new programme, was introduced. It shares with *"Fempreneurs"* a focus on women's empowerment, which it advances through entrepreneurial education and a structured incubation pathway. All three programmes are offered free of charge to participants. For Isola, reducing barriers to access is not a concession but a deliberate methodological choice.

EMIMSEB

Euro-Mediterranean Impact Makers:
Social Enterprise Bootcamp



LEAD PARTNER:	Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l.
PARTNERS	Asociación Arrabal Aid (Spagna) , Esquare (Francia), Junior Achievement Young Enterprise Malta Foundation (Malta), Mataroa (Grecia)
GRANTMAKER	Commissione Europea
CALL	Erasmus+ KA210-ADU: Small-Scale Partnerships in Adult Education
PROJECT CODE	2024-1-IT02-KA210-ADU-000252278
DURATION	September 2024 - June 2025



Euro-Mediterranean Impact Makers: Social Enterprise Bootcamp (EMIMSEB) was the first project implemented by Isola dedicated to the dissemination of know-how on social entrepreneurship. It was developed in a context in which the sector remains fragmented and underdeveloped. The initiative aimed to establish a Euro-Mediterranean network to promote continuous learning and support the growth of social entrepreneurs capable of generating impact. Within this framework, social entrepreneurship was positioned not only as a driver of economic development, but also as a tool for civic participation and territorial cohesion across the Euro-Mediterranean area.



Activities began in 2024 with the participation of project partners in the Social Enterprise Open Camp (SEOC), whose 2024 edition was co-organised by Isola in Catania. In parallel, the partnership conducted research on social entrepreneurship in the partner countries. The findings were consolidated into a report published in English and translated into Italian, French, Spanish and Greek. In 2025, the project reached



its central phase with the Social Enterprise Bootcamp, a four-day immersive programme held in Catania in February 2025 under the theme Social Enterprise as a Tool for Active Citizenship. The programme targeted traditional and social entrepreneurs, third sector practitioners and citizens interested in

social innovation. A total of 35 participants from partner countries took part, with seven participants representing each country. The consortium subsequently reconvened in Catania for the final conference. Project results, together with a video documentary on the bootcamp, were presented at Isola, with the active involvement of the Destinazione Sicilia community





Project's KPI

KPI	
Number of beneficiaries	35
Average age	34
Gender balance	70% F - 30% M
Gender balance (tutors and trainers)	100% F
Training hours per session	7
Percentage of beneficiaries who completed the programme	100%
Number of sessions	4
Duration of sessions (hours)	7
Total training hours	28
Satisfaction rate	97.8%



Feedback on EMIMSEB

“ The diversity of testimonies was very valuable. Hearing from different people showed us that there are multiple options and paths to pursue.”

— Angeliki (Greece)

“ The overall organisation was excellent, congratulations. The location is also simply beautiful. The interactive moments during the sessions were both enjoyable and instructive, and gave me new ideas.”

— Ryan (Malta)

“ The opportunity to engage with people from very diverse backgrounds provided a wide range of perspectives.”

— Tiago (Spain)



TITLE

Femprepreneurs

Female Empowerment Through Entrepreneurial Education



GRANTMAKER

U.S. Mission to Italy

CALL

Annual Program Statement 2024

PROJECT CODE

S-IT700-24-CA-0087

DURATION

November 2024 - September 2025

The project *Femprepreneurs* was developed through the collaboration and ongoing support of the United States Mission to Italy, which has accompanied Isola since its foundation. Co-financed by Isola, the initiative combines the objective of promoting entrepreneurship and social impact innovation with an American mindset that positions the United States as a global reference point in the development of new enterprises. In this context, the initiative also aims to strengthen bilateral cooperation between Italy and the United States by creating a direct link between mentors and future entrepreneurs, while promoting values, competences and the ideal of empowerment associated with the American Dream.





The programme was launched in December 2024 and concluded in September 2025. Its overarching objective is to promote gender equality and support the development of women-led enterprises in Sicily through a bilingual empowerment pathway in Italian and English. The programme combines inspirational content focused on self-awareness and motivation with practical sessions on business planning and market analysis, as well as modules on leadership, communication, public funding strategies and brand positioning.

Participants were supported by eight mentors, including Italian professionals based in the United States, American and Italian-American experts, and American professionals based in Italy, all with experience in women's empowerment, Entrepreneurship and Innovation. In December 2024, the programme opened with a four-day kick-off event hosted at Isola. The pathway was then structured into phases of empowerment, a bootcamp focused on female founders and social enterprise, and a pre-acceleration phase covering financial planning, legal aspects of business formation and pitching techniques.



Travel reimbursements, accommodation and childcare services ensured full accessibility to in-person activities. The programme concluded with a Demo Day, during which participants presented their business ideas to an audience composed of institutional representatives, potential investors, established entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs. The event was attended, in an official capacity, by Rachel L. Cooke, Minister Counselor for Public Diplomacy at the United States Embassy in Rome, underscoring the strategic value attributed by the United States Mission to this initiative and to its collaboration with Isola.



Emerging enterprises from Fempreneurs

Sicilitude

Founded in 2025 by three Sicilian professionals, *Sicilitude* provides a structured and integrated service offering in the field of roots tourism. By combining archival research with tailor-made tours, it reconnects individuals of Italian descent with their origins. The objective is to enhance the island through a sustainable approach, generating tangible value for local communities and Sicilian identity.

FEEDBACK ON FEMPRENEURS

"The Fempreneurs pathway was decisive for *Sicilitude*. It enabled us to consolidate our business model thanks to international mentors and to become part of a valuable network of local entrepreneurs".



Amorello

Amorello is a Made in Sicily kit for preparing limoncello, including fresh PGI lemons and all the necessary components to produce it at home. It offers a genuine and engaging experience to be shared, based on preparation, waiting and tasting. More than a liqueur, it represents a small Mediterranean ritual centred on flavour, slowness and togetherness.

FEEDBACK ON FEMPRENEURS

"Fempreneurs created an immediate connection between us and provided the tools and vision to structure *Amorello*, transforming an intuition into a concrete entrepreneurial project. All in the spirit of 'Amore', which is also our surname."



Effetto Etno

Effetto Etno is an ecosystem of experiences originating in Catania and expanding across Sicily, designed to create authentic connections between people, territory and culture. Through events, workshops and shared moments, it transforms places and relationships into living spaces, where creativity, community and identity meet and generate value.

FEEDBACK ON FEMPRENEURS

"During the initial phase of Fempreneurs, two of us met. Shortly afterwards, the official group was formed and the association was established. An encounter that gave rise to an authentic and continuously growing network".

effettoetneo





Project's KPI

KPI

Number of beneficiaries	32
Average age	40
Gender balance	100% F
Gender balance (tutors and trainers)	86% F
Percentage of beneficiaries who completed the programme	97%
Number of sessions	16
Duration of sessions (hours)	5.4
Total training hours	84
Satisfaction rate	71
Effectiveness ⁴⁴	77%

⁴⁴ Internal analysis based on questionnaires administered at three stages of the programme (Empowerment, Bootcamp and end of programme). For each phase, questions relating to competences acquired, entrepreneurial motivation and self-efficacy were selected. Effectiveness is calculated as the average percentage of positive responses ("Very/Fairly" or "Yes/Mostly yes") per question, averaged across the three phases. N = 59.





Feedback on *Femprepreneurs*

“ The extended duration of the programme allowed time to reflect, revisit and further develop the concepts acquired.”

— Annarita

“ I appreciated the quality of the participants and their ability to cooperate and support one another.”

— Oriana

“ You created a network and a spirit that grew stronger day by day. People are, and remain, the true added value.”

— Gemma

“ I appreciated all aspects of the programme, especially the willingness to respond to the needs of so many women.”

— Agata



Mentors of *Femprepreneurs*

ROLE	MENTORING AREA
Chiara Crisci, HR & Operations Manager at Isola Catania	Personal Development
Claudia Barone, Lawyer at LCA Studio Legale	Legal and compliance
Elena Militello, President at South Working	Stress management
Elissa Bloom, Executive Director at Philadelphia Fashion Incubator	Women's entrepreneurship
Francesca De Marco, Philanthropy Director at Fondazione Marea	Personal development
Julia Thrush, Founder of The Melting Pot	Business development
Leilani Carver-Madalon, PhD, Professor of Strategic Communication and Leadership at Maryville University	Leadership development
Martina Magnano, ESG Manager at Isola Catania	Personal development
Michelle Titus, Entrepreneur and Founder at Cummari	Business development
Morena Brulicchio, Project Manager for subsidised finance at Finance Consulting Srl	Funding and grants strategy
Stephanie E. Raible, Business Professor at University of Delaware	Social enterprise



TITLE

Hack the Gap

Women's entrepreneurship programme



GRANTMAKER

Invitalia

PROJECT CODE

2022E074INV, ODA 4500025343

DURATION

February 2025 – November 2025

Hack the Gap is a programme for women's empowerment and entrepreneurial incubation implemented by Isola on behalf of Invitalia, funded under the National Recovery and Resilience Plan within Mission 5 *Inclusion and Cohesion*, Component 1 *Employment Policies*, Investment Line 1.2 *Creation of Women-Led Enterprises*.

The name *Hack the Gap* reflects the essence and ambition of the programme to use innovation and entrepreneurship as concrete tools to address and overcome the gender gap.





The programme is structured in three progressive and integrated phases. The first phase, focused on women's empowerment and the development of soft skills, addressed self-confidence, awareness of the gender gap and transversal competences, covering topics such as financial empowerment, transformational leadership, design thinking and entrepreneurial orientation. Out of 123 applications received, 48 participants were selected, representing universities and territories across Southern Italy. The second phase, the *intensive Bootcamp*, marked the transition towards entrepreneurial ideation. Over three residential days at Vecchia Dogana Hub, 74 participants, including 42 from the previous phase and 32 selected externally, worked in teams to transform ideas into business prototypes. This was achieved through lean methodologies emphasising creativity and market validation, culminating in a final pitch competition. The third phase, Incubation, selected 10 projects from 60 applications, 70% of which were submitted by women-led teams. Over a three-month period, teams had access to 80 hours of specialised training covering business modelling, customer discovery, digital marketing, venture capital, financial planning, communication, team management and public speaking. Training was delivered by a pool of 26 trainers and complemented by 50 hours of one-to-one mentorship.



The programme concluded with the *Demo Day* on 26 November 2025, during which teams presented their projects to a jury composed of representatives from Isola, Invitalia and the Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy. The three best projects were awarded a grant of €10,000 each to support business creation.

Hack the Gap directly addresses the strategic priorities for women's economic and financial empowerment identified by UN Women Italy, with a focus on access to the labour market, entrepreneurial representation and digital inclusion. In a context where women-led enterprises represent 22.2% of the total in Italy, decreasing to 13.8% among innovative start-ups, the programme constitutes a targeted intervention aimed at removing barriers that limit access to entrepreneurship for young women in Southern Italy.



Startup Weekend Women Catania

TITLE

Central milestone of the *Hack the Gap* entrepreneurship programme



Startup Weekend is a global format developed by Techstars. It consists of three intensive days during which participants, including those without prior experience, transform an idea into a viable business prototype. The process begins on Friday afternoon with idea pitches, followed by team formation based on interests and competences. Participants then work throughout the weekend on market research, business modelling and strategy, culminating in final presentations on Sunday before a jury.





From 11 to 13 July, Isola organised *Startup Weekend Women Catania*, a central milestone of Hack the Gap and, for many participants, the moment in which an initial idea took shape as a concrete project. This edition featured two distinctive elements: it was entirely dedicated to women and marked the return of the format to Catania after a ten-year absence. A total of 74 participants, organised into 12 teams, took part in three days of intensive work. Many participants came from the empowerment phase of the programme and brought with them a

level of awareness that translated into more focused ideas and stronger engagement. Mentors and jury members were all women, entrepreneurs and managers from Isola's network. This was not a symbolic choice but a deliberate alignment with the programme's vision. Three projects were selected by the final jury.



The impact of the weekend extended beyond the three-day event. Several participants brought forward both their ideas and teams into the incubation phase, confirming the role of *Startup Weekend* as a catalyst for entrepreneurial development.



Key figures from Startup Weekend

74

PARTICIPANTS

14

TEAMS

54

HOURS OF WORK,

39

IDEAS

5

JURY MEMBERS,

3

WINNING PROJECTS.

19

MENTORS SUPPORTING
PARTICIPANTS

Adriana Santanocito

Co-Founder and CEO of **Ohoskin**

Elita Schillaci

Full Professor of Management
at the **Università di Catania**

Giovanna Di Bella

Co-Founder and Product Manager
at **Bcame**

Monica Luca

President of **Confindustria Imprenditori
Femminile Catania**

Silvia Celani

Head of Innovation at **Open Fiber**

VociUrbane

From a Startup Weekend to a social initiative

Among the projects developed during *Startup Weekend Women Catania*, one in particular illustrates what can happen when such an opportunity meets individuals with a strong connection to their local context.

VociUrbane emerged from the collaboration between Simona, a community manager in the third sector, and Eva, a school and home-based educator. Their complementary backgrounds share a common focus on the Librino neighbourhood and a strong commitment to education and urban contexts. During the *Startup Weekend*, their team, composed of four women, transformed their initial idea into a structured project, which was awarded third place in the final pitch competition.

The concept is simple in formulation but ambitious in scope. It seeks to present peripheral urban areas in an authentic way by giving voice to those who live there on a daily basis and by challenging stereotypes that limit the prospects of young people growing up in these contexts. *VociUrbane* acts as a bridge between schools and the local territory, connecting students, residents and associations, and activating bottom-up participatory processes in which young people become active agents of change within their communities.

At the end of the Startup Weekend, Simona and Eva chose not to leave the idea as a competition prototype. They applied to the incubation pathway of Hack the Gap and, once selected, entered a phase in which an initial concept is developed into a structured business model. The project was refined and translated into an operational model supported by a defined development plan.

Today, *VociUrbane* continues to grow through collaborations with local organisations such as Catania Book Festival, Katania MP and Fermento Urbano, and promotes co-design assemblies with the local education community. In April 2026, a distributed event in Librino will involve schools, associations, students and families in showcasing a dynamic and evolving urban context.





Winning teams of the Hack the Gap incubation programme

GEEN

Geen is a women-led start-up that develops AI-based infrastructure to make corporate welfare genuinely accessible. Through an artificial intelligence copilot, it supports employees in accessing health and wellbeing services, with the objective of reducing inequalities in access to care.

FEEDBACK ON HACK THE GAP

"Hack the Gap provided Geen with a concrete space for connection with other entrepreneurs and key innovation stakeholders in Sicily, a strategic market and priority area for social impact."



Hematica

Hematica is an innovative start-up originating from the Polytechnic University of Turin that develops technologies for real-time monitoring of haemodialysis treatment. Its device, SuXmonitor, aims to personalise care for patients with kidney disease, improving survival outcomes and reducing the workload of healthcare professionals.

FEEDBACK ON HACK THE GAP

"Hack the Gap acted as an accelerator of growth and awareness. The programme strengthened our business model, expanded our network and improved our ability to communicate our entrepreneurial vision with confidence and strategic clarity".



CTM

Cielo Terra Mare is a Sicilian agritech start-up that combines precision drones and certified natural biostimulants to address soil degradation, land abandonment and the economic marginalisation of local agricultural enterprises. Rooted in Catania and active in collaboration with public bodies and Sicilian universities, its model integrates technology and sustainability to restore value to rural communities in Southern Italy.

FEEDBACK ON HACK THE GAP

Hack the Gap was a turning point for Cielo Terra Mare. It transformed an idea rooted in our territory into a concrete enterprise, providing vision, confidence and direction, and turning an initial intuition into a tangible project with strong foundations and a forward-looking perspective."





Feedback on Hack the Gap⁴⁵

“It was an opportunity to deepen my understanding of entrepreneurship and to build networks. I found it highly engaging and learned a great deal.”

— Alessia

I learned that the process begins with an idea and evolves over time, but that the journey itself is the most important part.”

— Simona

“The programme helped reduce my insecurities, strengthened my knowledge, and introduced me to perspectives and ideas that are more innovative and effective than those I had previously encountered.”

— Luisa



Project's KPI

KPI	
Number of beneficiaries	210
Average age	32
Gender balance	100% F
Gender balance (tutors and trainers)	55% M - 45 % F
Percentage of beneficiaries who completed the programme	23
Number of sessions	4.6 h
Duration of sessions (hours)	180
Satisfaction rate ⁴⁵	92.5%

Key figures of Hack the Gap

INDICATOR	VALUE
Teams	10
Enterprises awarded	3
Grants awarded	€30,000
Expense reimbursements provided (for in-person sessions)	€2,000
Mentors and trainers involved	44
Mentorship hours per team	5

45. Based solely on responses from participants in the incubation pathway.



Perceived improvement in competences among participants in the incubation programme⁴⁶

COMPETENCE	CHANGE
Ability to present a project to investors	+28.5%
Ability to clearly define the problem	+25.8%
Team awareness and management	+26.1%
Business model competences	+21.7%
Overall average of measured competences	+18.9%

46. Internal analysis based on a comparative assessment of questionnaires administered before and after the acceleration programme. The observed change is expressed as a percentage of responses that varied qualitatively over time. Number of participants surveyed: No = 14.



Hack the Gap Mentors

MENTOR	MENTORING AREA
Anita Torino, Digital Marketing Specialist	Marketing strategy; targeting; advertising
Donatella Ruggeri, UX Researcher and Designer at IDIB	User experience; branding; copywriting
Elena Zingale, Project Manager at Paradigma	Community; design thinking; prototyping
Emanuela Figliuolo, Front End Developer at The Wave	Web development; online retail; digital development
Erica Cutuli, Data Engineer at Neodata	Artificial intelligence; sustainability; digital humanities
Erica Todaro, Event and Community Manager at Isola Catania	Community building; public speaking; event management
Federica Di Bella, Lawyer	Legal support; commercial and corporate law; corporate governance
Giovanna Sambataro, Chartered Accountant and member of Confindustria Catania	Business modelling and validation
Gisella Spampinato, Marketing Manager at Bcame	Strategic marketing; brand positioning; business model; customer acquisition
Giusi Buono, Lecturer at Abadir	Strategic design; creative direction; cultural strategies; design thinking
Mia Rupcic, ESG Advisor and member of Confindustria Catania	Sustainability; gender equality; ESG compliance
Maria Calcara, Founder and CEO of Nexus Lab	Quality and business development
Mariangela Camarda, Electronic Engineer, Lecturer and member of Confindustria	Automation; industrial process programming; leadership
Maria Rosa Gatti, Business Development Specialist at Open Fiber	Open innovation
Martina Magnano, ESG Manager at Isola Catania	Impact-driven mindset
Nora Arnone, Product Designer (UX/UI) at Paradigma	Agile methodologies; business modelling; product validation
Sandra Mascali, Event Manager and member of Confindustria Catania	Marketing; communication; event management
Sonia Castelli, Fashion Designer and Project Manager	Public speaking
Vincenza Sciacca, UI/UX Designer at The Wave	Product usability; visual design; product architecture



3.3.4

Culture, Creativity and Art

Isola's focus on Culture, Creativity and Art is rooted in the unique context of Palazzo Biscari. From this concrete setting stems the conviction that culture is not only a matter of identity, but also of cohesion, sense of belonging, opportunity and economic value. The context in which Isola operates confirms that investing in cultural entrepreneurship is a viable and promising approach. Sicily presents a growing ecosystem of cultural and creative enterprises, alongside one of the highest levels of employment in the heritage sector in Italy. In Catania, the province counts approximately 780 cultural enterprises employing around 5,100 people, ranks ninth in Italy for tourism with a predominantly cultural focus, and benefits from a broad pool of future professionals trained by the University of Catania, the Academy of Fine Arts and other private institutions.

Despite these strengths, cultural participation remains limited, relational infrastructures are fragile, and young creatives consistently report a lack of spaces for production, exchange and aggregation. This gap is not only logistical, but systemic. Cultural and creative enterprises, particularly those operating in the non-profit sector, have a distinctive feature: they generate not only economic value, but also a transformative impact on quality of life and community cohesion. Strengthening these actors, supporting their emergence, and creating the conditions for their sustainable growth represent a key objective of Isola's work in this area of impact.

This approach also includes a commitment to preparing and guiding young people towards professional and entrepreneurial pathways in culture and creativity, spanning both the non-profit sector and the different value chains of the cultural core sector. The projects presented in this section contribute to this objective. Cultural BEES focuses on entrepreneurial training in the cultural and creative industries at European level, developing tools and competences for the next generation of practitioners. Laboratories of Culture, Creativity and Art - Isola's Coalitions instead works on ecosystem-building and territorial research through a series of training and dissemination activities. These serve a dual purpose: providing content and opportunities for exchange for professionals in the sector, while also collecting feedback, insights and data.



This listening process feeds into the development of a report that forms the basis for designing entrepreneurship programmes aligned with the needs identified. Two complementary approaches and one shared objective to strengthen the conditions for developing sustainable careers in the cultural sector in Catania.





TITLE

Cultural BEES

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



GRANTMAKER Commissione Europea

CALL CREA-CULT-2023-COOP

PROJECT CODE 101129697

DURATION 2023 - 2026

LEAD PARTNER: Junior Achievement Europe

PARTNER: ANCI Lombardia (Italia), C.A. Innoeusphere Limited (Cipro), Consorzio Materahub Industrie Culturali e Creative (Italia), Cyprus, National Commission for UNESCO (Cipro), Danmar Computers Sp Zoo (Polonia), Junior Achievement - Young Enterprise (Bulgaria), Università di Economia - Varna (Bulgaria), Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l. (Italia), Junior Achievement - Young Enterprise Cyprus Limited (Cipro), Junior Achievement-Young Enterprise Italy (Italia) Università di Nuova Gorizia (Slovenia)

Cultural BEES is a project funded by the European Union's Creative Europe programme, in which Isola participates as part of a European consortium composed of eleven organisations, including universities, business networks and cultural operators from Italy, Cyprus, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Poland. The objective is to develop entrepreneurial competences in the cultural and creative industries among young people in partner countries, through hybrid training pathways and digital tools designed for secondary schools and young professionals.

In 2024, the project entered its initial phase of launch and research. Isola contributed to the development of the State of the Art Report and organised the first local Ecosystem Forum, engaging cultural enterprises, schools and local stakeholders. In 2025, the project moved into the implementation phase. In February, JA Europe hosted the Pan-European Ecosystem Forum in Brussels, bringing together professionals, entrepreneurs, policymakers and educators from across the cultural and creative sector to exchange on trends, challenges and opportunities, with a particular focus on empowering the next ge-



neration of creatives. In the following months, partners worked on the development of the content forming the Cultural BEES Digital Toolkit, a platform now available in four languages and structured around two distinct pathways. The first is designed for high school students aged 15 to 18 and guides them from an introduction to the cultural and creative industries to the development of a business model. The second targets young professionals and focuses on building the competences required to launch and manage cultural projects. The toolkit represents the main delivery mechanism through which the programme will be introduced into classrooms in the pilot countries in 2026, namely Italy, Cyprus and Bulgaria, with the objective of reaching 1,000 beneficiaries.





TITLE

Laboratories of Culture, Creativity and Art

Isola Coalitions

GRANTMAKER

Direzione Generale Creatività Contemporanea
del Ministero della Cultura

CALL

“Laboratorio di Creatività
contemporanea (già Creative Living Lab)”
6a edizione 2024-2026.

PROJECT CODE

7355-P

DURATION

November 2024-2026

LEAD PARTNER:

Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l.

PARTNER:

Abadir - Accademia di Design e Comunicazione Visiva Associazione
Musicale Etna Officine Culturali University of Catania, via raffineria

SUPPORTING
PARTNER

Department for the Historic Centre of the
Municipality of Ragusa

Laboratories of Culture, Creativity and Art – Isola Coalitions is a two-year project, launched in 2025 and concluding in 2026, designed to analyse and strengthen the ecosystem of cultural and creative industries in the territory by creating a space for exchange among artists, practitioners, institutions and experts. The core of the initiative consists of eight working days and five exhibitions, structured around three interconnected components: a workshop for young people studying or approaching the cultural and creative sector, a public talk open to the wider community featuring national and international guests, and an exhibition of emerging visual artists.





The project is developed in collaboration with Abadir, Associazione Musicale Etnea, Officine Culturali, viaraffineria and the University of Catania, with the support of the Municipality of Ragusa.

Research represents the backbone of the project. Activities are co-curated with Professor Anna Mignosa of the University of Catania, who, together with researcher Roberta Costanzo Chiattilla, coordinates a parallel study on mapping cultural organisations in Sicily. Each workshop and talk therefore functions both as a learning opportunity and as a field of observation.



The project operates as a pilot initiative in which participants contribute data, experiences and real needs that feed into the research process. During the first year, four areas of the cultural and creative system were explored, each led by a partner. These included the conditions of independent cultural work, such as precarity, protection and professional recognition; musical identity and the relationship between sound heritage and contemporary practice; design as a tool for interpreting and shaping the identity of places; and cultural accessibility, understood not only as the removal of physical barriers but as a deeper reconsideration of languages and organisational models. Each session was accompanied by a solo exhibition by an emerging Sicilian visual artist: Alessandro Costanzo, Margherita Pedrotta, Roberto Orlando and Silvia Muscolino. These exhibitions are not a decorative addition but a concrete form of support for one of the most exposed and least protected professions within the cultural sector. Selected by curators Barbara Cammarata and Mario Bronzino on the basis of gender balance and geographical diversity, the four artists were supported throughout the first year, from the selection of works to spatial design, from the development of the exhibition concept to engagement with the public.

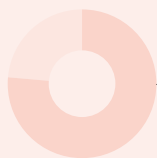


Project's KPI

KPI

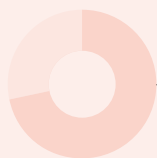
Number of beneficiaries	66
Average age	30
Gender balance	60.6% F - 39.4%M
Gender balance (tutors and trainers)	57.6% F - 42.4% M
Percentage of beneficiaries who completed the programme	100%
Number of sessions	4
Duration of sessions (hours)	8
Total training hours	32

Perceived training impact among participants⁴⁷



76.5%

Perceived usefulness of insights and ideas for improving cultural participation in the territory



71.8%

Identification of methods and tools to innovate and stimulate creative production



68.4%

Emergence of new ideas on promoting social inclusion and territorial regeneration through art and creativity

Feedback on "LCC"

" This workshop was fundamental for me in realising that it is possible to work in the cultural sector even in Sicily. For young people, it is sometimes difficult to have this awareness, as we are often told that there are no jobs, but no one tells us that we can create them ourselves. Meeting people with a strong drive and hearing their experiences was highly motivating, and it made me realise that what seemed like a difficult path can in fact be more achievable than one might think."

— Carlotta

" The session was very useful, and I hope there will be more opportunities like this."

— Simone

" Very useful overall, even for those who were already familiar with some of the topics. It was valuable to engage with people who have a clear understanding of the current context. Worth repeating and exploring further."

— Pietro

47. Based on responses from questionnaires administered during the four 2025 LCC sessions. Number of respondents: No= 37

Project’s KPI

BUSINESS AREA	IMPACT AREA KPI	KPI	2023	2024	2025
		No. of programs designed for youth <20	5	2	2
		No. of participants aged <20 in programs hosted by Isola	178	283	2512
		Gender balance of beneficiaries	-	females 54.06% males 45.58% non-binary 0.35%	females 47.9% males 50.0% Non-binary: 1.5% Not specified: 0.6%
		No. of programs designed for youth <20	0	2	4
		No. of participants in programs designed for youth <20	0	72	105
		Gender balance of beneficiaries	-	females 69.44% males 30.56% non-binary 0%	F: 62.9% M: 37.1%
		No. of programs delivered	2	2	3
		No. of participants in entrepreneurship training programmes	-	32	277
		Gender balance of beneficiaries	-	females 75% males 25%	F 54.9% M 45.5%
		No. of programs delivered	1	4	1
		No. of artists involved	3	11	4
		No. cultural and creative enterprises involved	10	14	NA

PROJECTS* SCHOOL SKILLS AND EMPLOY ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION ART, CULTURE, CREATIVITY

3.4

Isola beyond Isola

In 2025, Isola strengthened its presence across key national and international platforms in social innovation, culture and entrepreneurship, as well as in the field of impact measurement. Being invited to contribute as speakers, jurors, partners or case studies reflects not only recognition of the work carried out, but also an opportunity to learn, position the organisation and build the relationships that sustain its ecosystem. Each engagement beyond the Hub brings new perspectives, expands networks and reinforces the idea that Isola’s model resonates well beyond the island itself.

JANUARY

Working groups *Catania Capital of Science, Technology and Innovation*

At the beginning of the year, Isola joined the thematic working groups promoted by the Municipality of Catania within the framework of the *Catania Capital of Science, Technology and Innovation* initiative. It contributed in particular to discussions on the creation of new physical and digital spaces to foster Entrepreneurship and innovation in schools and neighbourhoods, as well as to the planning of events with national and international reach. This involvement reflects Isola’s role within the local ecosystem and its ability to connect institutions, businesses and communities around shared goals.

MAY:

ArtLab, Bari

Isola took part in the Bari edition of *ArtLab*, a travelling platform dedicated to innovation in cultural policies and practices, promoted by Fondazione Fitzcarraldo and supported by a network of over 40 national and international partners. This participation builds on relationships established in 2024 and has since led to Isola being recognised as an official partner within the network.

GreenMindAI Catania Hackathon

Isola partnered with the Municipality of Catania for the *GreenMindAI Catania Hackathon*, an initiative aimed at students, graduates and PhD candidates to develop projects supporting the transition to a circular economy in the city. Isola contributed through mentorship, focusing on pitching, business modelling and project strategy, and supported the promotion of the initiative.

JULY

Fondazione CDP Convention with Southern partners

President Antonio Perdichizzi was invited to speak at the first *Fondazione CDP* convention bringing together partners and stakeholders from Southern Italy, held in Naples. The event focused on sharing experiences, best practices and results achieved across territories. On this occasion, Isola presented the Water-Food Nexus Accelerator, contributing its perspective on innovation in sustainable water management in the Mediterranean context.

SEPTEMBER

Social Innovation Award, Rome

President Antonio Perdichizzi was invited to join the jury of the Social Innovation Award promoted by Fondazione CDP, in collaboration with Intesa Sanpaolo. The award recognises third sector organisations and social enterprises generating positive impact through innovation. His participation reflects Isola’s growing expertise in impact evaluation.

ArtLab, Novara

Isola also took part in the Novara edition of ArtLab, where it announced plans to host a satellite edition in Sicily in November 2026. This represents a concrete opportunity to contribute to national debate while strengthening relationships that support local development.

OCTOBER

Social Value Italia 10th anniversary, Naples

Isola contributed as a speaker to the tenth anniversary event of *Social Value Italia*, held in Naples. The initiative brought together national and international experts to discuss key issues such as technological innovation, educational poverty and urban regeneration, reinforcing the relevance of impact measurement within these fields.

Changemaker Days, Ashoka Italia, Milan

Isola participated in the *Changemaker Days* organised by Ashoka Italia, marking ten years of activity. The event provided an opportunity to engage with some of the most relevant experiences in social innovation at both Italian and European level.

NOVEMBER

BEYOND, Manchester (UK)

At the invitation of the British Council, Isola attended *BEYOND*, an annual conference exploring the intersection between creative research and business innovation. The event brought together leaders, creatives, researchers and policymakers, offering a platform to exchange ideas and connect with potential collaborators.

DECEMBER

Social Enterprise Open Camp 2025, Torino e Langhe

Isola took part in the Social Enterprise *Open Camp*, one of the main European gatherings on social entrepreneurship. Selected as a case study, it presented its social *enterprise platform* model and its ongoing strategic repositioning.

Isola’s participation in these national and international contexts is closely linked to one of the most significant developments of the year: the launch of Onda, the first incubation programme of Fondazione Marea. This initiative extends Isola’s vision beyond Sicily by mobilising resources, talent and relationships to support the growth of new social enterprises rooted in the territory. The following section is dedicated to this programme.



3.5

The Onda Programme

Onda is the first incubation programme of Fondazione Marea, the philanthropic foundation established in December 2024 with the clear mission of transforming the Sicilian diaspora from a phenomenon of territorial loss into a strategic resource for the island's development. Fondazione Marea represents a natural evolution of Isola's work. Conceived and promoted by Isola, it reflects the belief that building an ecosystem capable of retaining and attracting talent requires a dedicated, independent philanthropic instrument rooted in a community that maintains a strong connection with Sicily. Isola's involvement in *Onda* operates on two levels: a founding role, as the organisation that initiated Fondazione Marea, and an operational one, as a partner supporting the implementation of the programme.

In 2025, the Foundation's community of supporters grew to 515 Pioneers, who represent its driving force through both financial contributions and skills-based volunteering. It is precisely this community, together with the Foundation's vision, that led to the creation of *Onda*, a programme designed to support the development of new social enterprises in Sicily. With Isola Catania and ACube as operational partners, bringing local and national expertise, and with Fondazione Peppino Vismara, Fondazione EOS Edison Orizzonte Sociale and Fondazione Snam as supporting partners, *Onda* has taken shape as a concrete tool to translate this vision into high-impact enterprises rooted in the Sicilian territory. The programme's open call, launched between 15 May and 15 September 2025, attracted 170 groups interested in starting a social enterprise with a positive territorial impact, supported by an extensive scouting effort. Following 151 interviews, the final selection process was carried out through a participatory approach involving the *Onda* team, 75



Pioneers and the technical committee, leading to the selection of 12 teams from across all Sicilian provinces. A thirteenth team, Fuori Centro from Palermo, was also included through the support of Fondazione EOS, which fully covered its participation costs with a contribution of €25,000.



Onda is not only a training programme but a shared vision that brings together local and international talent, communities and Pioneers around social entrepreneurship as a driver of economic, cultural and social regeneration. The ambition is to contribute to a Sicily where it is worth staying, returning or arriving. The call sought business ideas capable of addressing concrete and relevant needs, with particular attention to the most vulnerable segments of the population, across seven areas: care and wellbeing, social cohesion, cultural promotion, environment and circular economy, sustainable agriculture, education, and tourism and heritage enhancement. Additional priority was given to projects addressing key structural challenges in Sicily, including depopulation of inland areas, water scarcity, clean energy, community welfare and urban regeneration.



UN ANNO DI MAREA

19 Dicembre Palermo

Eco Museo Mare Memoria Viva



The 13 selected teams

PROVINCE	MUNICIPALITY	PROJECT NAME	SECTOR
PA	Palermo	Agorà	Participatory democracy
PA	Palermo	O.P.E.N. (later In+)	Social cohesion
AG	Agrigento	Nexo Sicilia	Education
TP	Valderice	Scuola Dinamica	School
CT	Catania	Zagara	Social empowerment
SR	Buscemi	Buscemi Rural Hub (later Abixama)	Tourism
RG	Vittoria/Comiso	L'orto di Pino	Health and wellbeing
ME	Santa Teresa di Riva	Progetto Spora	Agriculture
CL	Montedoro	La casa delle lavoratrici	Social cohesion
CL	Delia	MAQALUBA	Health and wellbeing
EN	Enna	UNNA	Tourism
EN	Regalbuto	Polaris (later Inclusiva)	Inclusion
PA	Palermo	Fuori Centro	Social cohesion



The pre-incubation phase, held between October and December 2025, supported each team through three progressive stages: Exploration, Validation and Activation. The programme combined in-person bootcamps across Sicily, online masterclasses and tailored mentoring. Participants were guided from identifying real needs to developing a sustainable business model, culminating in a public presentation at the Demo Day in Palermo. At the end of the programme, each team produced a pitch deck, a one-pager and an initial financial projection model. These outputs provided concrete tools to support the launch of their ventures. Participants also received a contribution to cover participation costs.

The three winning teams were awarded a non-repayable grant of €10,000, conditional on their formal establishment as social enterprises by June 2026. They also received tailored support in selecting the most appropriate legal structure among those compatible with social enterprise status.



3.6

Towards the second three-year cycle: the strategic repositioning process

In 2025, Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l. completes its first three-year cycle of operations, covering the period 2023 to 2025, and enters a new phase shaped by three years of direct experience on the ground. Closing a cycle is not simply about reflecting on what has been achieved. It is an opportunity to assess what has worked, what has not, and where the organisational model has proven effective or revealed its limitations.

With this awareness, throughout 2025 Isola undertook an in-depth and collective strategic repositioning process, internally referred to as the strategic workshop. This process resulted in the 2026 to 2028 Strategic Plan, the organisation's first formal three-year planning document, supported by a renewed *Theory of Change*, an integrated framework of around one hundred indicators, and a three-year budget aligned with its objectives.

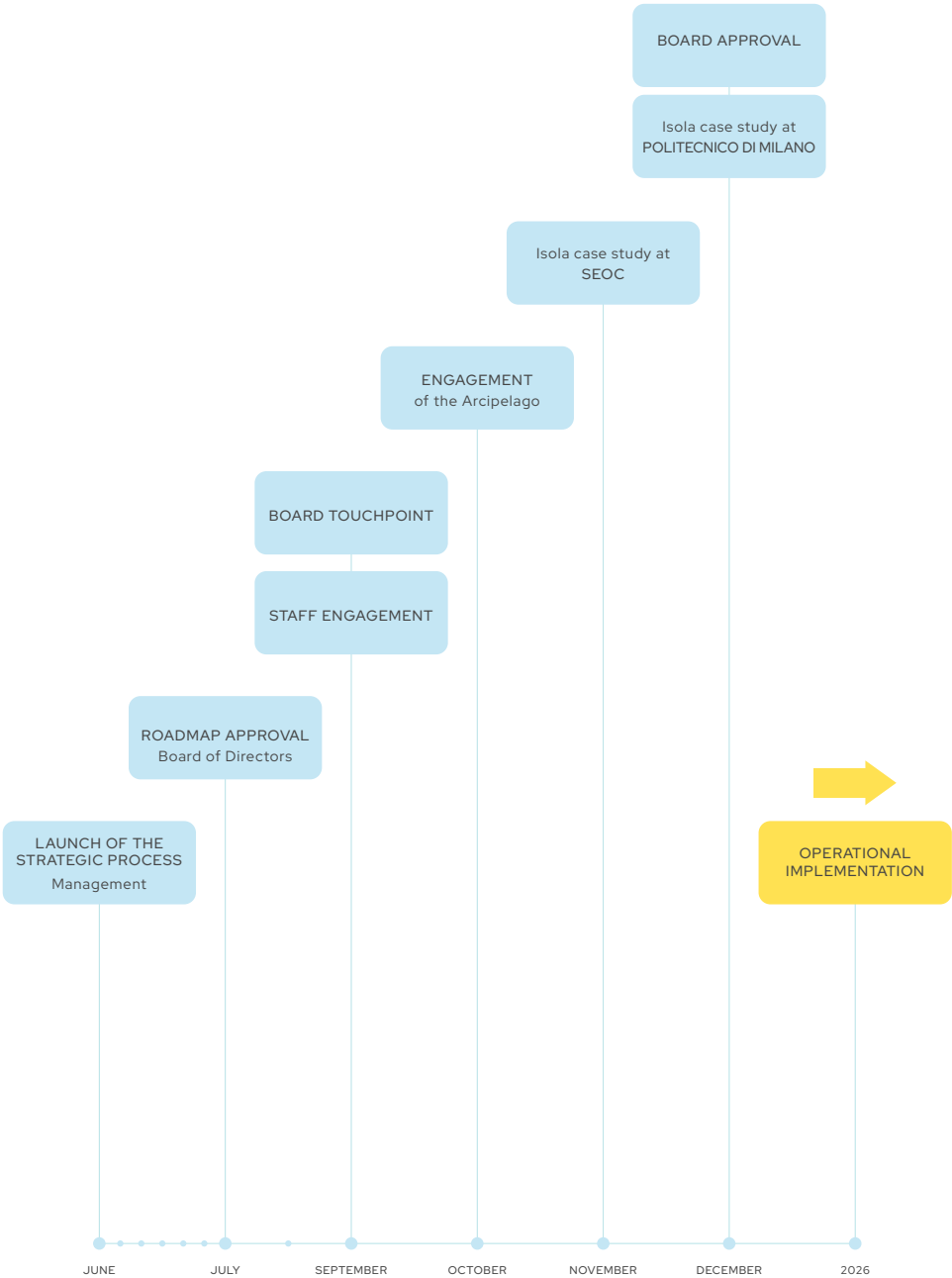
This is not a document developed in isolation or as a purely formal exercise. It is the outcome of a participatory governance process that engages, at different stages and in different roles, the team, the Board of Directors, members of the Coalitions, project partners, public institutions and the broader network of stakeholders closely connected to the organisation. This approach reflects the same principles on which Isola was founded in 2023, when its areas of impact, values and organisational structure were defined collectively with those who contributed to its creation. This time, the process has been even more structured and comprehensive, supported by three years of direct experience, concrete data, established partnerships and a clearer understanding of both the needs of the territory and Isola's capacity to respond to them.

Choosing a participatory approach to strategy is not a matter of form but of substance. A social enterprise pursuing objectives of collective interest cannot define its direction in isolation. It requires the perspectives of those who live in and actively shape the community it serves. For Isola, this process represents a concrete expression of accountability towards the territory.

The strategic revision was driven by three core priorities that emerged from the analysis of the first three-year cycle and the intention to build a stronger second phase. The first is to increase efficiency, by improving organisational performance through a clearer focus on core competences and stable objectives, and by supporting the progressive specialisation of human resources. The second is to enhance scalability, by strengthening the organisation's ability to expand programmes and interventions through process integration and automation, reducing operational friction and increasing the value delivered to beneficiaries, partners and stakeholders. The third is to reinforce effectiveness, by improving the organisation's capacity to design and implement programmes capable of generating transformative social impact that is observable, measurable and consistent with the *Theory of Change* over time.



Strategic plan development process updated
roadmap 2026 - 2028



The process unfolded throughout 2025 across seven structured stages. In June, the management team took the lead, defining objectives and scope. In July, the Board of Directors validated the overall framework and formally mandated the drafting of the 2026–2028 Strategic Plan. In September, the process was opened to the team through a structured workshop, followed by an intermediate exchange with the Board to strengthen alignment between strategic vision and operational choices.

In October, a co-design workshop was held with Isola’s wider network, including members, Coalitions partners, institutions, third sector organisations, grantmakers and invited stakeholders. The session combined a plenary in the morning with thematic working groups in the afternoon, structured around nine key questions. The methodology, designed and facilitated by professional facilitators, combined anonymous polling with guided discussion and generated over 450 contributions. Participants included local SMEs, national corporates, institutional partners, academics and representatives of the third sector. Despite their diversity, the dialogue led to significant convergence and confirmed strong alignment with Isola’s mission.

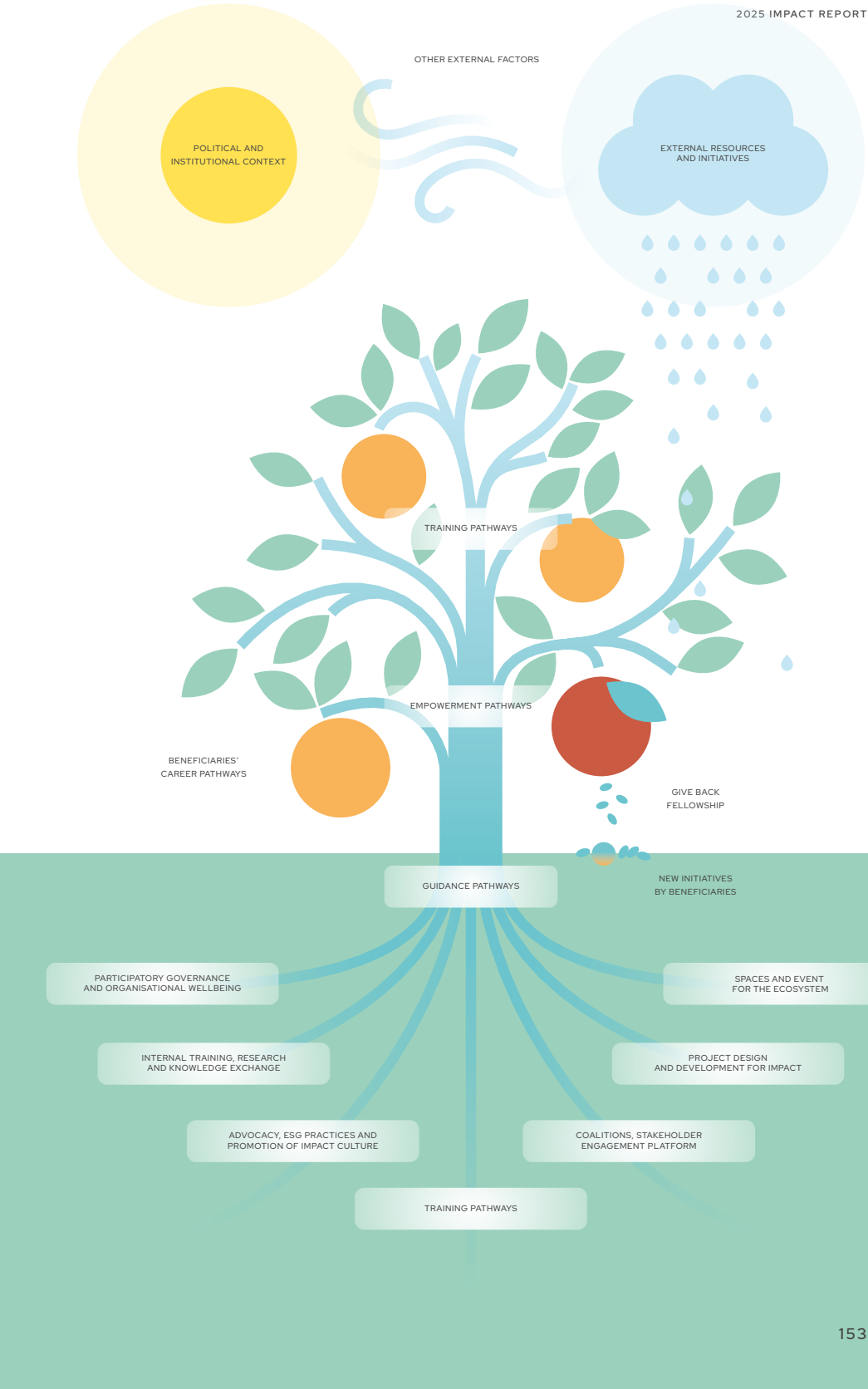
Between October and December, Isola was selected as a case study within the Innovation Management course at Politecnico di Milano. This provided an opportunity to test its model and strategic revision process against academic and student perspectives, using the feedback received to strengthen both the structure and sustainability of the plan. In November, a similar function was fulfilled in an international context. At the Social Enterprise Open Camp 2025, co-organised by Isola together with Fondazione Opes and Consorzio CGM, Isola presented its social enterprise platform model and its ongoing strategic work. This engagement allowed the organisation to gather feedback from sector experts and identify good practices to reinforce its approach, partnerships and positioning. In December, the Board of Directors approved the final version of the Plan, formally concluding the process.

Isola as a driver of systemic change

To fully understand the depth of the new strategy, it is useful to consider how Isola positions itself within the territory. The image of the tree accompanying this section immediately conveys this vision. The roots represent the invisible yet essential infrastructure that sustains the organisation. Participatory governance and organisational wellbeing, internal training and research, advocacy and ESG practices, *Coalitions* as a platform for stakeholder engagement, project design and impact development, as well as spaces and events for the ecosystem all form the foundation that enables everything else to grow. From the trunk branch out the pathways offered by Isola, including orientation, training and empowerment. The outcomes can be seen in the career paths developed by participants, in the new initiatives that emerge, and in the ways participants give back as they, in turn, become a resource for others.

Surrounding the tree are factors that Isola cannot directly control but with which it must continuously engage: the political and institutional climate, external resources and initiatives, and the broader dynamics of the surrounding context.

This image defines the role Isola has chosen to play. It does not position itself as a service provider, but as an enabling ecosystem platform for social innovation. Its function is to create the structural conditions that allow change to occur, connecting resources and actors that would otherwise remain disconnected. This approach is grounded in four principles that define the quality of social innovation: intentionality, additionality, replicability and measurability. Intentionality refers to a clear definition of the change the organisation seeks to achieve. Additionality reflects the capacity to generate value that would not otherwise be produced. Replicability emphasises the development of transferable models rather than isolated interventions. Measurability ensures that impact remains observable, verifiable and comparable over time.



A renewed Theory of Change

The Theory of Change (commonly abbreviated as ToC) is the tool through which an organisation articulates its logic of intervention: how the activities it carries out generate, through a chain of effects, the changes it seeks to create in reality. It is not a static document, but a testable hypothesis built on evidence, refined through results, and used to guide operational decision-making over time.

During its first three-year cycle, Isola structured its *Theory of Change* around four areas of impact: School, Skills and Employment, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, and Culture, Creativity and Art. This framework shaped both Isola's interpretation of the context and the design of its programmes. The model had its own coherence and effectively guided an initial phase of exploration and experimentation. At the same time, the first three-year cycle also revealed that this segmentation, while useful in the start-up phase, risked fragmenting rather than connecting. The relationships between the different areas proved to be real and productive, yet the division into four separate domains made these connections less visible and more difficult to manage.

The revised *Theory of Change* moves beyond this structure and is built around a single logic of intervention that is simpler, stronger and more closely aligned with what Isola actually does. *School and Culture, Creativity and Art* do not disappear. They remain the underlying foundation of the organisation's work. Education, understood in its broadest sense and not limited to formal schooling, is the enabling condition behind every training pathway developed by Isola. Culture and creativity function both as a contextual framework and as an outcome of the organisation's programmes, and will continue to represent a transversal output, particularly within initiatives dedicated to cultural and creative entrepreneurship.

The strategic focus, however, becomes clearer. The core of the second three-year cycle centres on skills, employment and entrepreneurial education, interpreted through the lens of young people's agency.



The new Impact Statement

At the core of the new strategy is the following Impact Statement:

“Isola Catania is a social enterprise that operates as an enabling ecosystem platform for social innovation. Its objective is to address the structural and cultural barriers that limit young people’s access to employment opportunities in Sicily. Through spaces, programmes, training and connections, Isola reduces informational, relational and skills-related barriers, strengthens agency and expands access to employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, addressing disorientation, limited social mobility and territorial outmigration.”

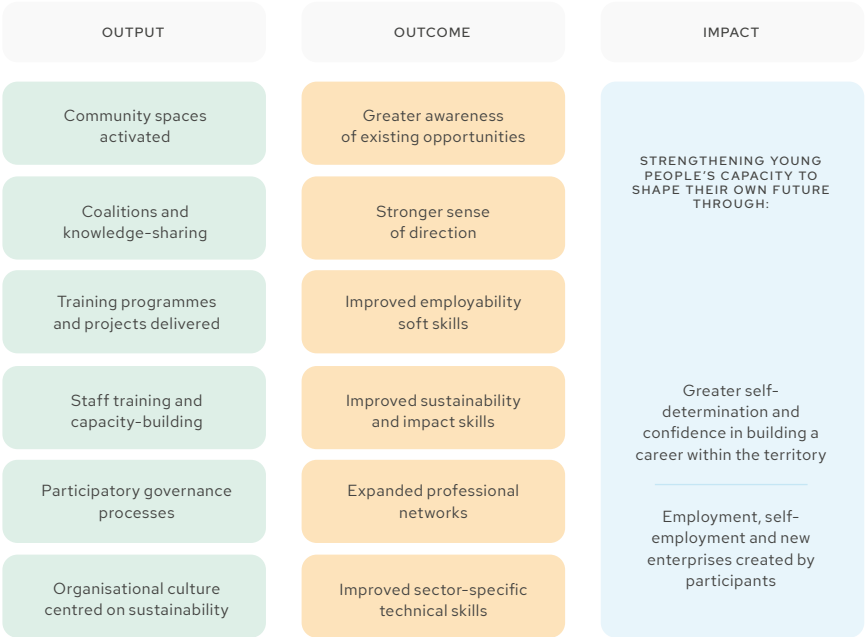
Agency is central to this approach. It refers to the ability of young people to navigate, make informed decisions and activate sustainable professional pathways. This capacity depends on the integration of knowledge, skills, confidence and networks. It enables individuals to move from intention to action and to convert potential opportunities into concrete outcomes. Reducing barriers is therefore critical. Opportunities must not only exist, they must be visible, accessible and navigable for those who would otherwise remain excluded.

The impact objective for the second three-year cycle is to strengthen young people’s agency in overcoming the barriers that hinder access to employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship pathways. Progress is measured through two indicators: increased levels of self-determination and confidence in relation to both the territory and professional prospects, and the number of job placements, self-em-

ployment cases and new enterprises generated through the programmes.

This objective is pursued through six intermediate outcomes structured across three dimensions. The first concerns orientation, increasing awareness of available opportunities and strengthening individuals’ ability to define their professional direction. The second focuses on skills, improving core competences for employability, including leadership, teamwork, communication and critical thinking, alongside capabilities related to sustainable development. The third addresses access, expanding professional networks and strengthening technical competences in specific sectors through targeted and certifiable pathways.

These outcomes are interdependent. Clear direction increases motivation to acquire skills. Stronger skills enhance the capacity to build networks. Broader networks, in turn, unlock access to opportunities that would otherwise remain inaccessible.



Tools of the new strategy

The strategic process delivered three integrated and interdependent tools. The 2026–2028 Strategic Plan, a document of approximately fifty pages, defines the organisation's positioning, objectives and strategic priorities for the next three-year cycle. It sets out what the organisation will do, why it will do it, who it will work with and how resources will be deployed.

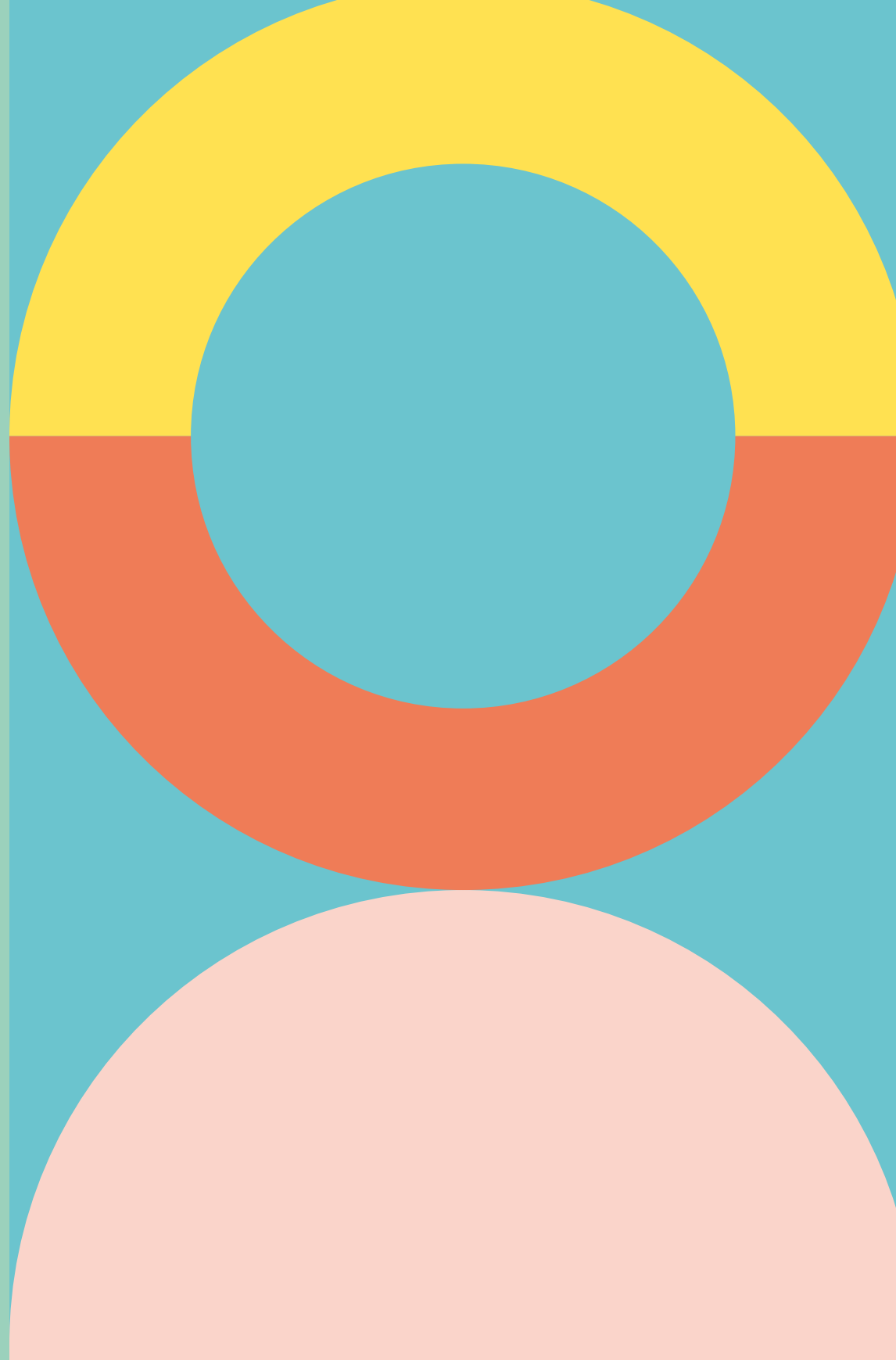
An integrated dashboard complements the Plan, bringing together around one hundred indicators, including business, financial and impact KPIs, within a single framework. These tools are designed to function as a unified system, supporting both strategic direction and day-to-day decision-making. From January 2026, the organisation moves into implementation, translating the Strategic Plan into operational plans.

The new *Theory of Change* enables financial sustainability and social impact to be measured within the same framework, ensuring consistency between strategic intent and performance tracking. A three-year budget forms the third component, aligned with strategic priorities and designed to translate the Plan into concrete and measurable resource allocations over time.



04

Structure, Administration
and Responsible
Governance



4.1

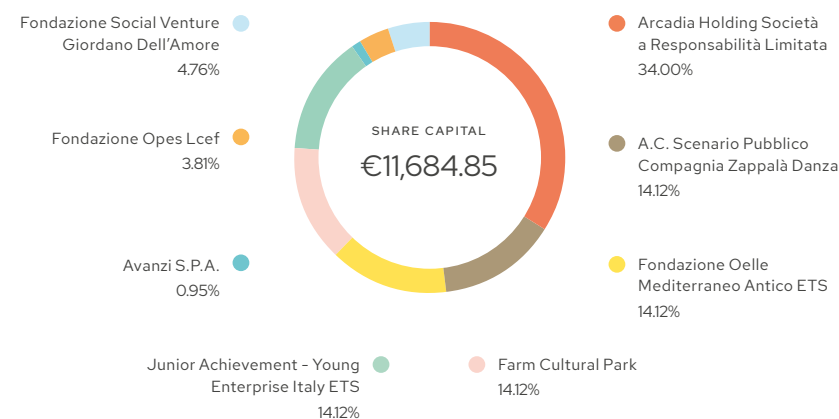
Members, Board of Directors and Statutory Auditor

Isola's shareholder structure consists of eight members, all legal entities, including six non-profit organisations and two for-profit entities. The composition of the membership has been intentionally designed to ensure diversity. Four members are based in Sicily, while the remaining four are located in other parts of Italy, reflecting a project that has attracted national interest and trust while maintaining strong local roots. The expertise and focus areas of the member organisations range from culture to impact finance, from social entrepreneurship to strategic consulting, and from education to innovation. These diverse yet complementary domains are fully aligned with Isola's mission and make the shareholder structure not only a governance framework but also a strategic asset. In 2025 the composition of the membership and the corresponding shareholdings remained unchanged. The company's share capital stands at €11,684.85.

Isola is led by a Board of Directors, which is responsible for the company's management, in accordance with the powers reserved to the General Meeting under the Articles of Association. The Board may consist of between three and nine members. In 2025, its composition was expanded. Following a resolution of the General Meeting held on 30 April 2025, and in line with the provisions of the Articles of Association, Fondazione Social Venture Giordano Dell'Amore, Fondazione Opes Lcef Onlus and Avanzi S.p.A. exercised their right to jointly appoint an additional Board member and an Observer. As a result, Dr Ilaria Pais was appointed as a new Director, while Dr Thomas Finazzi and Dr Roberto Iannaccone were designated as Observers, with the right to attend Board meetings and to receive materials in advance.

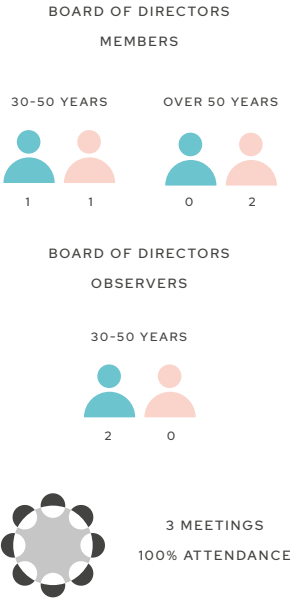
Isola's governance model reflects the principles of participation and social responsibility that underpin its activities. In line with the Articles of Association, in 2025 the Board continued to invite employee representatives and key stakeholders to attend meetings in an advisory capacity, without voting rights, when matters of direct relevance were discussed, particularly those relating to working conditions and the quality of services provided.

Isola's shareholder structure



The financial statements and Impact Report for the 2024 financial year were approved at the Board meeting held on 28 March 2025, within the timeframes established by the Articles of Association. The main topics addressed during Board meetings in 2025 included operational performance, project progress, the strategic repositioning process and the subsequent approval of the 2026–2028 Strategic Plan, the expansion of the Board's composition, and organisational decisions related to the growth of the organisation.

Isola’s 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 removal

BOARD MEMBERS

Miriam Cresta

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

Ilaria Potito

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

Ilaria Pais

Date of appointment: 30/04/2025
Term of office: until removal

OBSERVERS

Thomas Finazzi

Date of appointment: 30/04/2025
Term of office: until removal

Roberto Iannaccone

Date of appointment: 30/04/2025
Term of office: until removal

Isola’s Statutory Auditor

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 Statutory Auditor consists of a Sole Auditor, a single-member body responsible for overseeing compliance with the law and the Articles of Association, adherence to the principles of sound management, and the adequacy of the organisational, administrative and accounting systems. The Statutory Auditor also carries out the functions of monitoring social purpose as required by Legislative Decree 112/2017, ensuring that the organisation’s activities are consistent with its public interest objectives, and certifies that the Impact Report has been prepared in accordance with the relevant ministerial guidelines. The composition of the Statutory Auditor remained unchanged compared to the previous year. The outcomes of the monitoring activities related to this Impact Report are presented in Section 6.

4.2

Organisational Structure, Staff Composition and Development

Over time, Isola has established itself as a place where people can test ideas, build experience and invest their skills locally. Work is not treated as a given, but as something shaped through context. This means creating fair conditions, offering meaningful learning opportunities and recognising individual potential as an ongoing organisational responsibility.

In 2025, the organisation entered a further phase of growth and consolidation. Six new team members joined during the year, including two men and four women. These included three extracurricular internships, two permanent roles and one freelance collaboration. Two additional curricular internships, linked to postgraduate programmes, were also activated. This reflects a consistent commitment to engaging and developing younger talent. Recruitment followed clearly identified priorities. The Communication and Marketing unit was strengthened with the addition of a graphic designer and a content strategist. In the entrepreneurship area, an Innovation Project Manager joined on a freelance basis, supported by an external collaborator working across specific programmes. These additions reflect a deliberate focus on consolidating expertise in areas central to the organisation's development. At the same time, a group of facilitators was formed to support orientation activities. This included three individuals engaged through fixed-term or coordinated contracts, alongside an intern who moved into a professional collaboration by the end of the year.

From an organisational perspective, 2025 marked the completion of a process initiated in previous years. Isola adopted a structured organisational model built around five operational units: *Spaces*, *Coalitions*, *Projects*, *Communication* and *Marketing*, and *Corporate*, which brings together administration, ESG and human resources. Each unit is led by a manager. Together, they form the management team. The management team consists of six members, evenly balanced between men and women, with an average age of 35.3. Each is responsible for a core function and leads the relevant operational area, ensuring coordination across activities. The General Meeting, the Board of Directors and the Chief Executive Officer remain at the top of the organisational structure. This structure reflects a growing level of organisational complexity. Within three years, Isola has moved from a small team to a more articulated organisation, where roles and competences are interdependent. Managing this tran-



sition has required adjustments in how the team works. Monthly meetings were introduced and later moved to a quarterly rhythm to maintain a more sustainable pace. These changes reflect a process of testing, listening and adaptation. A particularly significant moment in the year was the workshop dedicated to the co-design of the new three-year strategy. Following initial work by the management team, the entire organisation, including employees, collaborators and interns, was involved in reviewing and strengthening the proposed direction. This was not simply a methodological step, but a clear expression of an organisational culture based on participation and shared responsibility. As in previous years, the elected staff representative attended Board meetings in an advisory capacity when matters directly affecting staff were discussed, and reported outcomes back to colleagues. This role, regulated by the organisation's stakeholder engagement policy and subject to a three-year mandate, ensures a direct link between governance and the wider team. The next election is scheduled for 2026.

During 2025, further measures were introduced to support staff wellbeing. Employees enrolled in university programmes were granted paid study leave. A structured approach to maternity was also introduced, with the aim of ensuring continuity and appropriate support. These measures contribute to a working environment that is both fair and inclusive, and support the organisation's long-term sustainability. Professional development remains a priority. The industrial PhD programme titled *Isola: the multiplier effect of a social enterprise* continued, led by the ESG Manager and supported by the organisation. The Event Manager



undertook a specialised master's programme in event, hospitality and tourism management. Four members of the Projects and ESG teams completed training on impact measurement through the *CapacitaSud* programme promoted by Intesa Sanpaolo and Human Foundation. As part of the UNI/PdR 125 certification process, a training programme was delivered across the organisation, including employees, collaborators, interns and Board members, focusing on inclusive language, communication and the recognition of gender bias. This created a shared space for reflection and awareness.

2025 concluded with a day dedicated to togetherness, reflection and connection, structured around two moments: a shared lunch and a writing



workshop. The lunch, curated by Martina Fiorito, a young food designer, was conceived as an exercise in collaboration, with each participant symbolically linked to another by a red thread. A simple gesture that made visible how deeply work is shaped by interconnection, and how every individual contribution is necessary to achieve a shared outcome, also through attention to ingredients and detail. The writing workshop focused on recognition as a meaningful form of connection and led participants to exchange personal messages. Together, these activities highlighted the importance of relationships, care and mutual recognition in everyday work.

The workshop, led by Giovanni Gibiino, focused on both personal reflection and human connection through an exploration of recognition as a form of authentic connection. The experience took shape through



gh a practical exercise: the writing of personal letters capable of expressing what often remains unspoken and of strengthening interpersonal bonds. Through these activities, we sought to convey, in an essential way, the meaning of shared work, grounded in relationships, attention and mutual recognition, while reaffirming how fundamental care is to everyday work.

The organisation continues to apply the FederCulture collective agreement. The workforce remains predominantly female, accounting for around two thirds of staff, and includes a significant proportion of individuals under 30, in line with the organisation's focus on younger generations.

Salary structure:

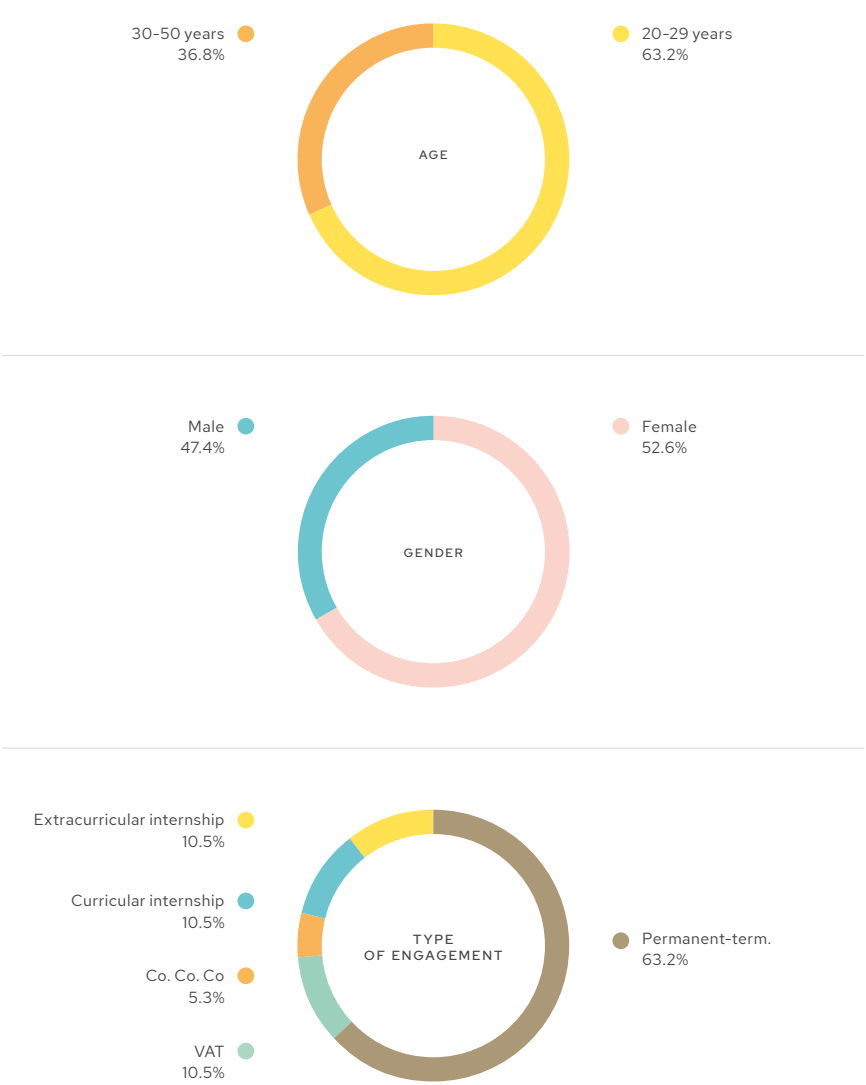
- Maximum annual gross salary: €32,105.36
- Minimum annual gross salary: €21,882.14
- Ratio between maximum and minimum salary: 1.47

This structure reflects a commitment to fair distribution of resources, maintaining a balanced relationship between different levels of responsibility and experience.

Personnel KPIs

KPI		AS OF 31/12/2023	AS OF 31/12/2024	AS OF 31/12/2025	% (AS OF 31/12/2025)
Personnel included in the organisational chart (employees, collaborators and interns) ⁴⁸		12	19	19	//
AGE	No. of employees aged <30	9	13	12	63.2%
	No. of employees aged 30-50	3	6	7	36.8%
	No. of employees aged >50	0	0	0	0%
GENDER	Female	8	12	10	52.6%
	Male	4	7	9	47.4%
	Non-binary	0	0	0	0%
TYPE OF ENGAGEMENT	No. of fixed-term contracts	0	1	0	0%
	No. of permanent contracts	6	9	12	63.2%
	No. of freelance contracts (with VAT)	2	3	2	10.5%
	No. of Co.co.co collaborations	0	1	1	5.3%
	Internships (extracurricular)	2	2	2	10.5%
	Type of contract (applicable only to employees on permanent contracts)	3	3	2	10.5%
TYPE OF CONTRACT (applicable only to employees on permanent contracts)	Employees on permanent contracts	6	10	12	//
	full time	5	9	12	100%
	part time	1	1	0	0%

Personnel KPIs



4.3

Our Archipelago

For Isola, stakeholder mapping has never been a purely formal exercise. From its first year of activity, the organisation has worked to build an increasingly precise and structured representation of the ecosystem of relationships in which it operates. This approach reflects the understanding that participatory governance, grounded in dialogue among actors that differ in nature and scale yet share a common commitment to the socio-economic development of Sicily, requires clear, consistent and well-founded engagement criteria.

Over time, this mapping has been progressively refined and disaggregated, reaching a level of detail that more accurately reflects the complexity of the relationships linking Isola to its territory.

The strategic redefinition process outlined in Section 3.4, and in particular the decision to develop the 2026–2028 Strategic Plan through a co-design process involving the stakeholder archipelago, made this work essential. Structuring the involvement of such a diverse range of stakeholders required a solid framework: identifying who to engage, to what extent, at which stage, and according to which rationale.

In response to this need, in 2025 Isola carried out a systematic update of its proximity map, refining its stakeholder analysis through more rigorous criteria and introducing, for the first time, an explicit assessment of power and interest variables.

The review began with the identification of the main stakeholder categories (Shareholders, Board Members, Management, Employees, Collaborators, *Coalition* Partners, Grantmakers, Project Partners, Institutions, Networks and Alliances, Media Partners, Clients, Suppliers, Consultants, Local Community, Beneficiaries, and Fellows and Alumni).

Each category was assigned two scores, on a scale from 0 to 10, relating respectively to the level of power and the degree of interest in the organisation’s activities and strategic choices. The variables were defined as follows:

- Power: the capacity to influence strategic decisions, resource allocation, and Isola’s reputation.
- Interest: the level of engagement, alignment of objectives, and the extent to which Isola’s activities directly affect the stakeholder

For both variables, a zero value and descriptive intervals (1–2; 3–4; 5–6; 7–8; 9–10) were defined. These guided the allocation of scores and ensured comparability across the analysis, ranging from “no power or interest” to “maximum power or interest”, with low levels (0 to 4), medium (5), and high (6 to 10).

	POWER VARIABLE	INTEREST VARIABLE
VALUE	DESCRIPTION	
0	No power, no influence.	No interest: not involved and not directly affected by the organisation's activities.
1–2	Very low power: limited influence, but perceptible through social, cultural or reputational channels (e.g. public opinion, shared norms, social climate).	Very low interest: aware of the organisation but does not follow its development and does not perceive a relevant impact on their own context.
3–4	Low power: may provide spontaneous feedback in informal contexts, with limited and unstructured influence on decisions.	Low interest: aware of the organisation and may have occasional attention or interaction, particularly when specific issues arise.
5–6	Medium power: has direct access to key individuals and may be formally consulted by the organisation, influencing certain decisions.	Medium interest: the organisation's activities are partially aligned with the stakeholder's priorities or areas of interest; they follow some aspects but not consistently.
7–8	High power: regularly consulted in strategic decision-making processes and holds a significant position.	High interest: the organisation's activities are strongly aligned with the stakeholder's objectives, values or needs; they seek regular updates on progress and results.
9–10	Maximum power: key stakeholder with direct control over strategic decisions and main resources.	Maximum interest: key stakeholder directly affected by the organisation's activities (strategic, operational or reputational), with a vested interest in its success or failure.

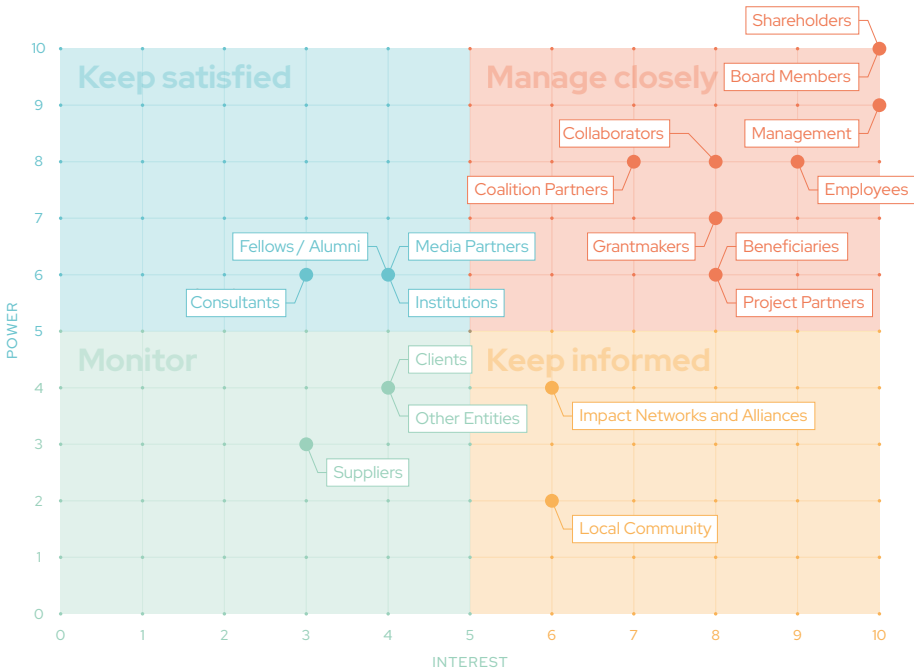
Stakeholder classification based on the power-interest matrix

STAKEHOLDER	POWER	INTEREST	OUTCOME	INVOLVEMENT IN GOVERNANCE
Shareholders	10	10	Manage closely	YES
Board Members	10	10	Manage closely	YES
Management	9	10	Manage closely	YES
Employees	8	9	Manage closely	YES
Collaborators	8	8	Manage closely	YES
Grantmakers	7	8	Manage closely	YES
Coalition Partners	8	7	Manage closely	YES
Beneficiaries	6	8	Manage closely	YES
Project Partners	6	8	Manage closely	YES
Institutions	6	4	Keep satisfied	YES
Impact Networks and Alliances	4	6	Keep informed	YES
Media Partners	6	4	Keep satisfied	YES
Fellows and Alumni	6	4	Keep satisfied	YES
Consultants	6	3	Keep satisfied	YES
Clients	4	4	Monitor	YES
Local Community	2	6	Keep informed	YES
Other Entities	4	4	Monitor	No
Suppliers	3	3	Monitor	No

The combination of power and interest scores generated a relevance index for each category and allowed each stakeholder to be positioned within one of the four quadrants of the matrix:

- Manage closely (high power and high interest)
- Keep satisfied (high power, medium or low interest)
- Keep informed (high interest, medium or low power)
- Monitor (medium or low power and interest)

Matrix outcomes



Based on this mapping, specific strategies for interaction and engagement in governance were defined for each of the four quadrants, with the aim of determining the frequency and depth of dialogue to be maintained with each stakeholder category.

Stakeholders with the highest levels of power and interest, namely Shareholders, Board Members, Management, Employees, Collaborators, Grantmakers, Coalition Partners, Beneficiaries and Project Partners, were placed in the “manage closely” quadrant and identified as actors to be consistently involved in decision-making processes or in structured consultation. Other stakeholders, including Institutions, Impact Networks and Alliances, Media Partners and Fellows and Alumni, were classified as either to be “kept satisfied” or “kept informed”. Clients, Suppliers, Consultants, the Local Community and other entities were instead partly designated for “monitoring” and partly for targeted information sharing.

The analysis was then consolidated into Isola’s Proximity Map, which distinguishes four governance levels:

- Level I includes Shareholders, Board Members, Management, Employees and Collaborators;
- Level II includes Grantmakers and Partners of Coalitions;
- Level III includes Project Partners, Institutions, Impact Networks and Alliances, Media Partners and Fellows and Alumni (the latter category has not yet been formally established, but its formalisation is planned in the short term);
- Level IV brings together Consultants, Clients, the Local Community, Other Entities and Suppliers.

Within this framework, the Isola Archipelago is defined as the set of organisations, rather than individuals, positioned between Level I and Level III. The Isola Archipelago therefore includes:

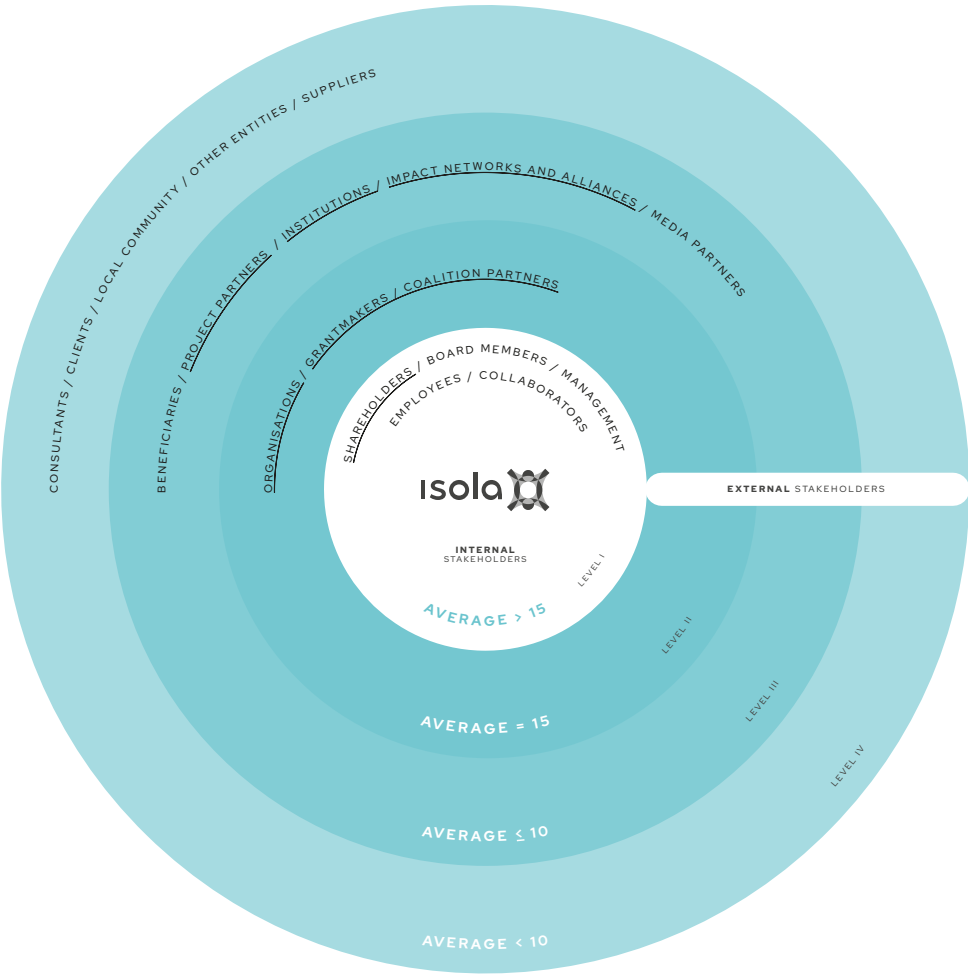
- Shareholder;
- Grantmaker,
- Coalition Partners;
- Project Partners;
- Institutions;
- Networks and alliances focused on innovation and impact;
- Media Partners;
- Third Sector organisations most closely connected to the organisation’s activities.

This Archipelago represents the reference community that Isola engages on a structural basis within its extended governance and forms the core group invited to the stakeholder meeting held in October, as described in the following sections.

Stakeholder classification based on the power-interest matrix

STAKEHOLDER	INDIVIDUAL/ ORGANISATION	POWER	INTEREST	AVERAGE RELEVANCE	GOVERNANCE LEVEL
Shareholders	Organisation	10	10	20	Level I
Board Members	Individual	10	10	20	Level I
Management	Individual	9	10	19	Level I
Employees	Individual	8	9	17	Level II
Collaborators	Individual	8	8	16	Level II
Grantmakers	Organisation	7	8	15	Level II
Partners of Coalitions	Organisation	8	7	15	Level II
Beneficiaries	Individual	6	8	14	Level III
Project Partners	Organisation	6	8	14	Level III
Institutions	Organisation	6	4	10	Level III
Impact Networks and Alliances	Organisation	4	6	10	Level III
Media Partners	Organisation	6	4	10	Level III
Fellows and Alumni	Individual	6	4	10	Level III
Consultants	Individual	6	3	9	Level IV
Clients	Organisation	4	4	8	Level IV
Local Community	Individual	2	6	8	Level IV
Other Entities	Organisation	4	4	8	Level IV
Suppliers	Organisation	3	3	6	Level IV

Isola’s Proximity Map



The underlined categories constitute the *Isola Archipelago*, comprising the organisations, rather than just individuals, that maintain a structured relationship with Isola as part of its extended governance system. These organisations are situated between the first and third levels of this proximity map.

4.4

ESG Commitment

Isola's commitment to ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) does not end with the activities carried out in the local area, already described in the previous sections of this Report. It also concerns, in a substantial way, how the organisation manages itself: its internal practices, the management systems it adopts, the certifications it obtains and the networks it chooses to join.

This coherence is considered essential. It is not possible to work towards more equitable and sustainable local development without embodying those same principles in everyday organisational practices.

4.4.1

Environment

The direct environmental impact of Isola's activities is limited by nature. The management of physical spaces within a historic building mainly involves electricity and water consumption, as well as the production of municipal waste, which is sorted in accordance with local regulations. The only waste classified as hazardous consists of used toner cartridges and waste electrical and electronic equipment, both disposed of through dedicated collection systems.

In 2025, Isola adopted its Environmental Protection Policy, which is now publicly available in the "Transparency" section of its institutional website. The document formalises the organisation's approach to managing environmental impacts, defining principles, responsibilities and objectives for continuous improvement. It is not a formal requirement, but a concrete commitment to monitor what can be measured and to improve what can be improved.

4.4.2

Gender Equality

Following the certification obtained in 2024, in 2025 Isola underwent the first annual monitoring process of its gender equality management system, aimed at confirming compliance with the UNI/PdR 125:2022 standard. This was not treated as a routine check, but as an opportunity to

strengthen the system internally. The process led to the introduction of new tools, including a plan for managing the different phases of maternity and a structured procedure for managing documentation related to the gender equality management system. The certification was confirmed, demonstrating the

continuity and ongoing development of a process that Isola considers an integral part of its organisational culture.

The commitment to gender equality also extends to the public sphere. As set out in the Code of Ethics and Conduct, Isola adheres to the **No Women No Panel** principle promoted by the European Commission in 2018, ensuring adequate female representation in panels and events, with particular attention to *Coalition*-related initiatives.

4.4.3

Certifications

In April 2025, Isola obtained B Corp certification, with a score of 107.2. The minimum threshold for certification is 80 points. The result places Isola in a range that reflects a solid and verified performance across all assessment areas: governance, workers, community, environment and customers.

Becoming a B Corp means joining a global movement of over ten thousand certified companies worldwide, which share the vision of an economy in which business acts as a positive force for change. This implies a shift from a shareholder-focused model based solely on profit to a stakeholder-oriented model in which decisions take into account people, communities and the environment.

This is a vision that Isola did not need to adopt for certification, as it was already embedded in its practices. Placing stakeholders at the centre is the foundation of the participatory governance model that has characterised the organisation since its establishment. In Italy, fewer than three hundred companies are B Corp certified, and fewer than ten are based in Sicily. For Isola, being part of this network has both pioneering value and concrete potential in terms of learning, exchange of expertise and international visibility.



B Corp Impact Score



Median Score for Ordinary Businesses	50.9
Minimum Score Required for Certification	80
Isola Catania's Score	107.2

In 2025, Isola also obtained EcoVadis certification, one of the most widely used global platforms for assessing corporate sustainability, used by more than one hundred thousand organisations worldwide. EcoVadis evaluates company performance across four areas, environment, labour and human rights, ethics and sustainable procurement, and provides a rating that enables organisations to report on sustainability across their supply chains.

Isola was awarded a Bronze rating. Within the EcoVadis system, this recognition is granted to organisations that demonstrate a structured and documented approach to sustainability. The certification is particularly relevant in the context of responsible procurement, opening up opportunities for collaboration with large companies and institutions that require verified sustainability standards from their suppliers and partners.

4.4.4

Networks and Partnerships

In 2025, Isola strengthened its positioning within national and international networks that share its vision of sustainable development and social innovation.

Isola became a partner of ASviS (Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development), the largest Italian network dedicated to promoting the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda. This membership formalises an alignment that was already evident in practice. As outlined in Section 1.3 of this Report, the United Nations SDGs have provided the international framework through which Isola has interpreted and communicated its impact since its first year of activity. Being part of ASviS means contributing actively to this process of cultural and institutional dissemination at local level, through events and initiatives that bring the 2030 Agenda into the community of Catania and across Sicily.

Isola also became a member of the New European Bauhaus, an initiative promoted by the European Commission that connects sustainability, inclusion and the quality of spaces and communities. The network brings together organisations, designers, architects, institutions and entrepreneurs working to create more beautiful, sustainable and accessible places and ways of living. For Isola, which operates within one of the most remarkable Baroque buildings in Catania and works daily to transform a historic space into a hub for social innovation, this membership is deeply consistent with its identity. It reflects an approach to enterprise that does not separate the care of spaces from the care of people.

Isola joined the *AI Hub* for Sustainable Development as a supporter, an initiative co-designed by the Italian Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy and the United Nations Development Programme, launched under the Italian G7 Presidency. The initiative promotes innovation based on responsible artificial intelligence, with the aim of strengthening local innovation ecosystems and developing talent pipelines in high-growth contexts. Isola's participation reflects its commitment to supporting young people in the Mediterranean and to promoting digital innovation as a tool for local development. It contributes to the network through its experience in entrepreneurial education and social impact.

Isola became a partner of Invitalia's *Startup System*, a programme run by Italy's national agency for enterprise development, which supports the creation and growth of innovative start-ups. This partnership strengthens Isola's position as a reference point within the Sicilian entrepreneurial ecosystem and expands access to tools, resources and networks for the entrepreneurs and start-ups involved in its programmes.

Isola is also a partner of EIT Food, the largest European consortium for innovation in the food sector, which connects universities, research centres and businesses to accelerate the transition towards sustainable food systems. This partnership aligns naturally with the ecosystem of projects and collaborations that Isola has developed in the fields of innovation and entrepreneurship, and opens up new opportunities for collaboration with European actors in the agri-food sector.

In 2025, Isola confirmed its adherence to the *Manifesto for Gender Equality* within the Italian supply chain, promoted by the Winning Women Institute, and to the European Commission's *Pact for Skills*, renewing its commitment to the development of staff skills and to fostering an inclusive organisational culture.

In November 2025, Isola joined the UN Global Compact Network Italy, the national network of the United Nations Global Compact, the world's largest and longest-running voluntary corporate responsibility initiative. Since 2000, it has brought together tens of thousands of organisations across more than 160 countries around universal principles relating to human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption. Joining the Global Compact is not merely a statement of intent, but a public and verifiable commitment to integrating these principles into strategy, organisational culture and day-to-day operations. For Isola, this step represents the natural continuation of an already established path and confirms an international outlook that is reflected daily in its work at local level.

Alongside certifications and alliances, 2025 saw Isola take part as a beneficiary organisation in several projects that provided concrete opportunities for internal training. These initiatives contributed to strengthening the team's expertise in sustainability and impact, while also expanding national and international collaboration networks.

4.4.5

ESG Projects
Benefiting Isola

E-Lab by Fondazione Snam ETS

E-Lab, a tutoring programme promoted by Fondazione Snam ETS and aimed at Third Sector organisations working to address energy, educational and food poverty, concluded in January 2025. The programme supported Isola through a working group of Snam volunteers over 10 hours of online meetings, focusing on two priority areas: administrative and financial management, with the aim of optimising internal processes during a phase of organisational growth, and the structuring of governance and human resources, an area in which Isola was developing its first internal policies in line with a democratic and participatory culture.

Sofigreen by Fondazione di Comunità di Messina

Sofigreen, a two-year project co-funded by the European Commission and promoted by a partnership including the Fondazione di Comunità di Messina, concluded in 2025. The programme provided the team with capacity building training on environmental sustainability, complemented by two study visits, and ended with the allocation of funding for specialised consultancy. Isola used this opportunity to commission Boniviri Società Benefit to carry out an assessment of the sustainability of its catering procurement services, based on Food Made Good standards. This work provides the foundation for a future certification in this area.

Welfare che Impresa! by Fondazione Italiana Accenture ETS, Intesa Sanpaolo, Fondazione Snam ETS and Fondazione Conad ETS

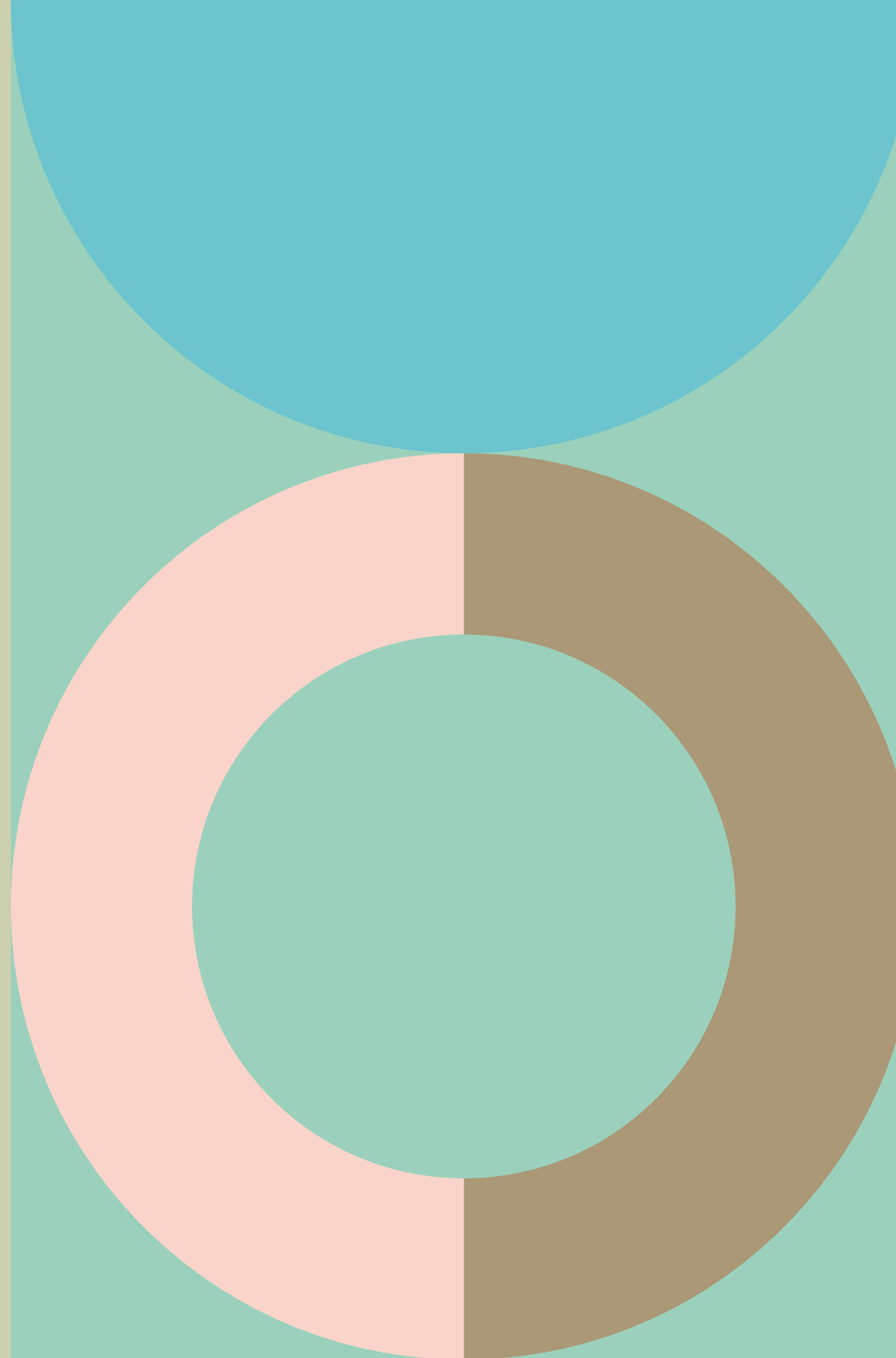
Welfare che Impresa!, a capacity building programme now in its ninth edition, promoted by Fondazione Italiana Accenture ETS together with Intesa Sanpaolo, Fondazione Snam ETS and Fondazione Conad ETS, selected Isola among the twelve national finalists. Participation included two in-person workshop days and mentorship sessions focused on impact. Isola received the Special Prize awarded by Fondazione Snam ETS, consisting of an annual membership to the SheTech community.

CapacitaSud by Intesa Sanpaolo and Human Foundation

Finally, *CapacitaSud*, promoted by Intesa Sanpaolo and Human Foundation, provided the team with 16 hours of training on strategic planning, social business models, impact measurement and fundraising, along with an individual support pathway scheduled for 2026.

05

Financial
Position



5.1

Management Report

Isola Catania closed its third financial year with a profit of €4,387, within a context of significant operational and project expansion that required substantial investment in human resources, professional expertise and infrastructure.

During 2025, the value of production increased from €1,090,271 in 2024 to €1,285,427, marking a growth of 17.9%. This increase was primarily driven by:

- growth in revenue from service provision, which rose from €553,765 in 2024 to €694,955 in 2025 (+25.5%), confirming the progressive strengthening of Isola Catania’s capacity to generate value through market activities and social impact services;
- a solid project pipeline supported by public bodies and private foundations, which contributed to the increase in other revenues and income, including funding for projects such as *MUSA* – Multilayered Urban Sustainability Action, *Skills*, *Coalizioni Isola*: Laboratories for Culture, Creativity and Art, *Energie con il Sud* and *Cultural Bees*.

To support the expansion of operational activities, total costs amounted to €1,282,441. The main cost items include:

- staff costs, including salaries, social security contributions and severance provisions, amounting to €415,342, reflecting the structural growth and consolidation of the organisation’s workforce;
- professional and consultancy fees, amounting to €230,253, related to the engagement of specialised professionals and technical consultants supporting project implementation;
- tangible and intangible asset depreciation, amounting to €120,054, consistent with the infrastructure and capital investments made in previous years.

Income statement

YEAR	2024	2025	Δ%
Value of production	1,090.00	1,285.00	+17.9%
Staff costs	(232.00)	(415.00)	+78.9%
Service costs and third party asset usage	(709.00)	(681.00)	-3.9%
Raw materials, consumables and goods	(9.00)	(7.00)	-22.2%
EBITDA	140.00	161.00	15.0%

Sources of Funding

During 2025, Isola Catania relied on a solid and diversified funding structure, which supported the consolidation of ongoing activities and the continuation of strategic investments. Economic resources derived from a balanced combination of market based activities, public funding schemes and support provided by private foundations and institutional partners.

State Aid

- Contribution relief for employment in disadvantaged areas under the *Decontribuzione Sud* scheme (1 July to 31 December 2022), pursuant to Article 1, paragraphs 161 to 168 of the Italian Law No.178/2020;
- Public call for proposals for the creation and strengthening of “innovation ecosystems” and the development of “territorial R&D leaders” under PNRR M4C2, Investment 1.5, funded through the *NextGenerationEU* programme;
- Exemption from the payment of social security contributions for new permanent hires and employment conversions during the 2021 to 2022 period, pursuant to Article 1, paragraphs 10 to 15 of the Italian Law No. 178/2020;
- Tax credit compensation through the F24 system relating to capital assets under the Italian Law No. 178/2020, amounting to €56;
- Tax credit compensation through the F24 system under the *Special Economic Zone* (ZES) scheme, amounting to €122,511.

Public Funding for Project Implementation

- Coalizioni Isola: *Laboratories for Culture, Creativity and Art*, supported through the *Laboratorio di Creatività Contemporanea* programme promoted by the Directorate General for Contemporary Creativity;
- *Creating Cultural Heritage Businesses through Hybrid Learning Models and Hands-on Curricula Across Borders*, funded under the European Union CRE-A-CULT-2023 call;
- *EMIMSEB: Euro-Mediterranean Impact Makers - Social Enterprise Bootcamp*, funded through the European Union Erasmus+ KA210 ADU - Small Scale programme;
- *YES: Youth Engagement and Employability for Success through Social Entrepreneurship*, funded through the Erasmus+ KA220-YOU 2025 Round 1 programme.

Private Funding for Project Implementation

- Funding provided by Fondazione Snam for the project *Green Skills Academy*
- Funding provided by Fondazione Snam for the project *Energie con il Sud*
- Funding provided by Fondazione con il Sud for the project *Energie con il Sud*
- Funding provided by Fondazione Cassa Depositi e Prestiti for the project *Water-Smart Agrifood Systems Accelerator*
- Funding provided by Fondazione Sicilia for the project *Water-Smart Agrifood Systems Accelerator*
- Funding provided by Fondazione con il Sud for the project *Sofigreen*
- Funding awarded through the Annual Program Statement of the U.S. Mission to Italy for the project *Femprepreneurs*
- Funding awarded through the *Prospettive* call promoted by Fondo per la Repubblica Digitale Impresa Sociale for the project *Work From Bed*.
- Funding awarded through the *Polaris* call promoted by Fondo per la Repubblica Digitale Impresa Sociale for the project *SKILLS: Science, Know-how and Innovation for STEM Education and Guidance*.

Directors' Remarks

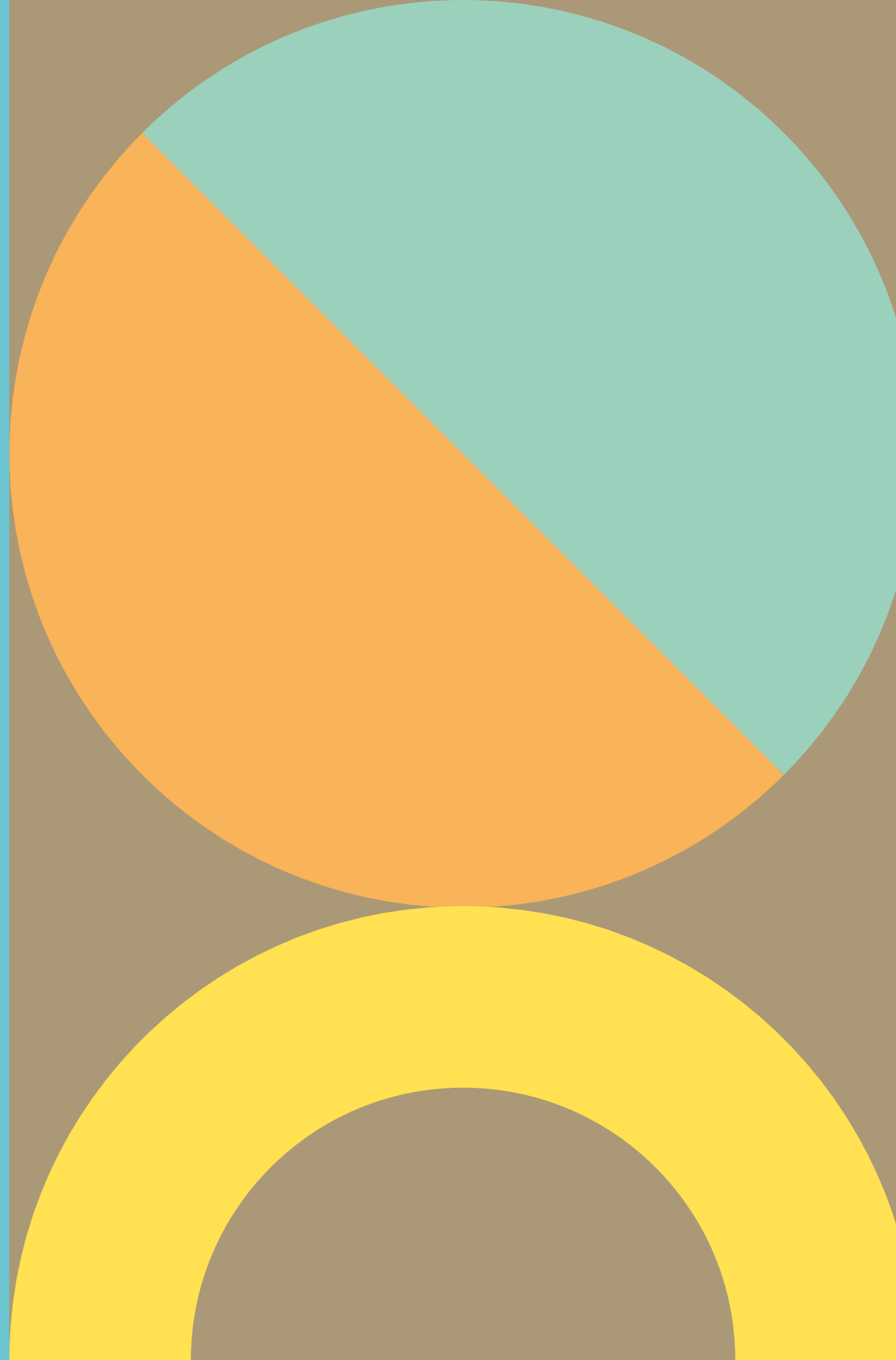
The Board of Directors notes that, although the 2025 financial year recorded a reduction in net profit, the overall result represents a significant improvement compared to the previous year, while also highlighting a number of areas requiring careful monitoring. In particular:

- a significant share of the value of production continues to depend on time limited public and private project funding, making the continuous development and monitoring of the project pipeline essential;
- the increase in staff costs, linked to the expansion of the workforce required to manage the growing complexity of the project portfolio, requires ongoing attention to medium term organisational sustainability.

To address these considerations, the Board of Directors has initiated measures aimed at further diversifying revenue streams, increasing income generated through market activities, as reflected in the 16.4% growth in revenue from service provision, and strengthening the organisation's financial structure through the active management of investments and subsidised financing schemes currently in place.

06

Monitoring by the
Statutory Auditor



6.1

Methods, Implementation and Outcomes

Dear Shareholders of Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l.,

The Board of Directors has prepared Isola's Impact Report in accordance with the standard principles of reporting and in compliance with the provisions set out in the Decree of 4 July 2019 issued by the Ita-

lian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies.

This report presents the outcomes of the monitoring activity carried out regarding compliance with the social purposes pursued by Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l., with particular reference to the exclusive or prevailing exercise of activities of general interest, the absence of profit-making purposes, the ownership structure, the involvement of workers, users and other stakeholders in the organisation's activities, as well as working conditions within the social enterprise.

It should be noted that the outcomes of the supervisory activity concerning compliance with the law and the Articles of Association, together with adherence to the principles of sound administration referred to in Article 10, paragraph 2 of Legislative Decree no. 112 of 3 July 2017 and Article 2429, paragraph 2 of the Italian Civil Code, were addressed in a separate report dated 10 April 2026, attached to the statutory financial statements. Together with this document, that report represents the outcome of the supervisory activity carried out during the financial year under review.

In accordance with the guidelines for the preparation of Impact Reports adopted through the 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 References and Objectives of the Document
- 1.3 Methodological Note

Section 2: Isola

- 2.1 Key Challenges in the Local Context
 - 2.1.1 Educational Poverty
 - 2.1.2 Labour Market
 - 2.1.3 New Enterprises
 - 2.1.4 Cultural and Creative Industries Sector
- 2.2 General Information, Statutory Purpose and Values
- 2.3 Mission, Social Business Model and Impact Objectives

Section 3: Activities

- 3.1 Spaces
- 3.2 Coalitions
- 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 Isola beyond Isola
- 3.5 The Onda Programme
- 3.6 Towards the second three-year cycle: the strategic repositioning process

Section 4: Structure, Administration and Responsible Governance

- 4.1 Members, Board of Directors and Statutory Auditor
- 4.2 Organisational Structure, Staff Composition and Development
- 4.3 Our Archipelago
- 4.4 ESG Commitment
 - 4.4.1 Environment
 - 4.4.2 Gender Equality
 - 4.4.3 Certifications
 - 4.4.4 Networks and Partnerships
 - 4.4.5 ESG Projects Benefiting Isola

Section 5: Financial Position

- 5.1 Management Report

Section 6: Monitoring by the Statutory Auditor

- 6.1 Methods, Implementation and Outcomes

Bibliography and Sitography

Regulatory References

Credits

The structure of this report is based on applicable legislation, the *Rules of Con-*

duct for Boards of Statutory Auditors - Principles of Conduct for Boards of Statutory Auditors of Unlisted Companies issued by the National Council of Chartered Accountants and Accounting Experts, as well as the *Rules of Conduct for Supervisory Bodies of Third Sector Entities* issued by the same National Council.

The undersigned Sole Auditor declares to possess adequate knowledge of the organisation, particularly with regard to:

- a) the nature of the activities carried out;
 - b) the organisational and accounting structure;
- and, also taking into account the size and operational complexities of the organisation, confirms that supervisory activities were conducted with satisfactory findings in relation to the information already acquired.

It may therefore be stated that:

the core activities carried out by Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l. are consistent with its statutory purpose and with Article 2 of the Italian Legislative Decree no. 112 of 3 July 2017;

Isola, which operates on a non-profit basis, carried out its activities in 2025 for civic, solidarity and social benefit purposes,

adopting responsible and transparent management practices and promoting the broadest possible involvement of stakeholders;

the Impact Report clearly identifies the members of the Board of Directors;

the shareholder structure of Isola Catania Impresa Sociale S.r.l. is not composed of a single individual and the organisation does not belong to a group of undertakings;

during the financial year under review, the provisions of Article 13 of the Italian Legislative Decree no. 112 of 3 July 2017 were complied with.

In light of the above, the undersigned Sole Auditor certifies that the Impact Report has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines established by the Decree of the Italian Minister of Labour and Social Policies of 4 July 2019.

Catania, 11 April 2026

The Sole Auditor
Dott. Danilo di Giacomo



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Italian Law no. 106 of 6 June 2016, Article 7, paragraph 3.

Credits

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Visualizer

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Isola Catania

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