



VISIONS WITH THE SOUTH

The Horizon We Build Together

TRIENNIAL
STRATEGIC
PLAN

— — —
2025 - 2027





TRIENNIAL STRATEGIC PLAN



2025 - 2027



TABLE OF CONTENTS

01. Introduction: Visions WITH the South	4
02. Mission	8
2.1 Core Values and Mission	8
2.2 Governance and Organizational Structure	9
2.3 Operating Model	10
03. The Results of the 2022-2024 Triennium	12
3.1 The Foundation from Its Inception to Today	12
3.2 Results of the 2022-2024 Triennium	17
04. The Evolution of the Context	22
4.1 The South and the Issue of Depopulation	22
4.2 The South and Social Inequalities	24
4.3 The South and the Economic Divide	27
05. Strategic Challenges and Objectives for the Triennium	30
5.1 Paradoxes of the South and Strategic Challenges	30
5.2 Demographic Regeneration to Counter Depopulation	32
5.3 Extending the Reach and Broadening the Beneficiary Base	33
5.4 Two Strategic Approaches to Prioritize	34
5.4.1 The Integrated Approach	35
5.4.2 The Collaborative Approach	36



06. Strategic Framework for the 2025-2027 Triennium	37
6.1 Thematic Areas	38
6.1.1 Historical, Artistic, and Cultural Area	38
6.1.2 Environmental Assets Area	39
6.1.3 Confiscated Assets Area	40
6.1.4 Socio-Healthcare Area	41
6.1.5 Youth Education Area	42
6.1.6 Inclusion Area	42
6.1.7 Support for Volunteer Practices	43
6.1.8 Human Capital Development	43
6.1.9 Local Development	44
6.1.10 Experimental and Innovative Initiatives	45
6.1.11 Third Sector Leadership Training	45
6.1.12 Communication	45
6.1.13 Studies and Research	46
6.2 Operational Instruments	46
6.2.1 The “Exemplary” Project	46
6.2.2 Supporting the Core Activities of Third-Sector Organizations	47
6.2.3 Community Foundations	47
6.3 Disbursement Methods	49
6.3.1 Call for Proposals	50
6.3.2 Request-Based Initiatives (Virtual Desk)	51
6.3.3 Co-Funding Initiatives	52
6.3.4 Invitation-Based Initiatives	53
6.3.5 Institutional Partnerships	53
6.3.6 Co-funding criteria	54
6.4 The Role of Subsidiaries	55
6.4.1 The Social Enterprise “Con i Bambini”	55
6.4.2 Sefea Social Impact SGR	57
6.5 The Role of Communication	58
6.6 Resources for Implementing the Strategic Plan	59
6.6.1 Core Resources	59
6.6.2 Diversification of funding resources	60
6.7 Alignment with International Policies	61
6.8 Evolution of the Organizational Model	63
6.8.1 General Framework	63
6.8.2 Organizational Structure Development	63



01. Introduction: Visions WITH the South

The Strategic Plan of Fondazione Con il Sud (hereafter 'the Foundation'), outlines key objectives and operational areas for the 2025-2027 triennium, fully consistent with its founding mission: to explore models of social cohesion and promote good networking practices, thereby fostering the development of Southern Italy by reinforcing its social infrastructure.

For this new planning phase—driven by a participatory model, in alignment with the Steering Committee—the Foundation has initiated a thoughtfully designed exchange of listening and dialogue with its core stakeholders: Third Sector Forum, foundations with banking origins, CSVs (Volunteer Service Centers), and private partner foundations. In addition, a survey was conducted to gather insights, expectations, and recommendations from the broader ecosystem of third-sector organizations in Southern Italy. Over 1,100 responses were received, a significant indicator, with nearly half originating from organizations that had never previously received funding. This data serves as clear evidence of the established reputation and credibility of the Foundation, further confirmed by a recent survey conducted by a polling institute¹ to measure its recognition among public opinion and, specifically, within the Third Sector.

The Strategic Plan arrives eighteen years after the establishment of the Foundation, during which the social landscape of Southern Italy has undergone profound changes. The population has declined by nearly one million residents, dropping below the threshold of twenty million inhabitants, while the process of depopulation, particularly in its inland areas, remains an ongoing issue. Young people in the South face a more protracted and complex transition to adulthood, marked by extended schooling, difficulties entering the job market, and delayed move out of their family households. Compared to 2006, there are still significant gaps between the South and the

“For this new planning phase the Foundation has initiated a thoughtfully designed exchange of listening and dialogue with its core stakeholders.”

¹ "The Divide Between the Two Italies," findings from the Demopolis Institute survey for la Fondazione Con il Sud, June 2024.

rest of the country in terms of youth unemployment and the female employment rate. This structural vulnerability inevitably reflects in social inequalities, ranging from the scarcity of essential public services—hospitals, schools, and transportation—to the prevalence of poverty, which affects families in the South at twice the national average and three times that of central-northern regions.

In a landscape that offers little cause for optimism, there is one positive factor worth considering. The strengthening of the Third Sector in recent years is not merely a response to filling a void left by a prolonged crisis and the gradual decline of public spending, but also the outcome of its ability to restore meaning to living in the South.

In other words, it is the visible consequence of an encouraging maturation process which has led to an increasingly prominent role in political debate, the reclaiming of spaces taken from communities, support for citizenship rights, commitment alongside marginalized individuals and regions by understanding and addressing their needs, the ability to give new life to forgotten cultural heritage, abandoned lands, and property confiscated from organized crime. Furthermore, it is essential to acknowledge the wealth of resources and expertise rooted in the Southern communities and regions, as well as the potential energy and creative drive of the many young people who wish to stay or return to their hometowns—provided they find conditions and opportunities that align with their personal and professional aspirations.

Over this long period, in a landscape marked by complexity and challenge, the Foundation has made its contribution, not only in financial terms, with approximately €300 million allocated in its first eighteen years but, more importantly, through its ability to truly listen to the South and its demand for a better future; to restore attention on and bring social issues back to the center of a political debate that has too often been overlooked; to pioneer with innovative initiatives by involving, together with associations that are actively engaged daily, other foundations and partners who had never, or only occasionally, engaged with the southern regions.

The Foundation's primary strategic objective for the next three years will be to revitalize the processes of regeneration of the South, seeking to counteract depopulation, in line with its founding mission of exploring innovative models, in collaboration with all stakeholders who share its commitment to the social and economic growth of the region. For these reasons, the commitment to extending the pool of beneficiaries, expanding the reach of initiatives, and broadening and strengthening the network of partners to collaborate with will continue. To achieve these objectives, it is essential to bypass the boundaries of a singular-area approach and, by doing so, pursue different but complementary objectives. This approach should be prioritized because it has the potential to multiply resources and is best suited to fostering the type of partnerships when facing complex challenges. The intention to implement intervention mechanisms spanning across different areas of activity (integrated approach) and encourage collaboration with stakeholders who share the sustainable development goals of the South (collaborative approach) will inspire the methodological choices for the Foundation's actions over the next three years.

The Foundation will continue to build on the wealth of knowledge and experiences gained in the field, with a willingness to experiment with innovative models and mechanisms in its institutional commitments:

- 
- ✓ To preserve historical and artistic assets by launching a new call for proposals for third-sector organizations and forming partnerships with public administrations in line with the updated legal framework of the Third Sector Code.
 - ✓ To protect and enhance environmental assets by promoting participatory ecological transition initiatives and climate change mitigation efforts, focused on urban redevelopment and the reclaiming of uncultivated or abandoned land.
 - ✓ To redevelop confiscated assets through innovative approaches (on-demand funding) and collaboration with public entities while also advancing a new model for their use in partnership with other organizations.
 - ✓ To support social and healthcare services by ensuring integration with public systems while also piloting new project models, such as social housing initiatives and independent living solutions for vulnerable individuals.
 - ✓ To promote social inclusion for individuals in vulnerable situations or facing disadvantage by developing new partnership initiatives that respond to the needs expressed by third-sector organizations.
 - ✓ To strengthen volunteer efforts by supporting organizations and networks that actively serve local communities.
 - ✓ To implement local development projects over the next three years to counter depopulation and revitalize communities, employing demographic regeneration strategies: birth rate support, return migration initiatives, and resident retention.

Continuing its commitment to managing the Fund Against Educational Poverty, the social enterprise Con i Bambini, fully owned and coordinated by the Foundation, will further strengthen its role in building educational communities. It will promote alliances between public agencies and private entities while also serving as a driver of innovation and a testing ground for new initiatives. Additionally, efforts will continue to strengthen the governance of Sefea Social Impact SGR, the first and still the only asset management company run by nonprofit entities and exclusively dedicated to managing social impact funds, in collaboration with the foundations and financial institutions already involved.

For the implementation of the plan, in addition to the regular resources—which include the contributions guaranteed on a five-year basis by the banking foundations adhering to ACRI, as well as the proceeds generated from asset management—additional fundraising sources will be included. These are essential to expand the resource base to be allocated for distribution following a diversification strategy.

To address the evolving needs arising from increased demands, including a growing volume of initiatives, the imperative to maintain high standards of support and technical assistance, the expansion of specialized skills and resources, and growing demand for collaboration and consultation, the Foundation must strengthen its organizational structure by incorporating new professional roles that support its growth and institutional mission.

02. Mission



2.1 Core Values and Mission

Fondazione Con il Sud is a private organization founded in 2016 through an alliance between foundations of banking origin (united under ACRI) and third-sector organizations (represented by the National Third Sector Forum). In line with its statutory provision, the Foundation seeks to strengthen the social infrastructure of Southern Italy, based on «the conviction that social capital is a fundamental pillar of economic and employment growth and that the presence, efforts, and networks of third-sector organizations are a decisive factor in the processes of social capital accumulation across the region. To this end, Fondazione Con il Sud promotes initiatives that are innovative both in substance and execution, aiming to support—rather than replace—the role of public institutions. Its strategy encourages a positive shift toward effective public-private social integration, always guided by the principle of serving the common good.»¹

The Preamble of the Bylaws underscores the Foundation's strong commitment to civil society and, in particular, the role of the Third Sector. This sector is actively engaged in implementing "exemplary" projects aimed at strengthening social cohesion within local communities and promoting local development, including in economic and legal relations.

The Foundation's supported projects are considered 'exemplary' for several key reasons:

- ✓ They foster the development of broad, collaborative networks among regional stakeholders, all working towards shared goals.
- ✓ They are driven by ethical principles aligned with the public interest, particularly social inclusion and non-profit objectives.

¹ For reference, see the 'Preamble' of the Bylaws of Fondazione Con il Sud (updated May 16, 2023): <https://www.fondazioneconilsud.it/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Statuto-2023-modifiche-del-16.05.2023.pdf>

- ✓ They promote strategic and operational partnerships between third-sector organizations and public administrations.

The "exemplary" nature of the projects is also rooted in the significant imbalance between the resources available for their funding and the widespread, ongoing demand for initiatives throughout Southern Italy. In this sense, "exemplarity," in addition to being an ethical and political value, also serves as a guiding principle for charting a viable path toward unlocking the development potential of Southern Italy.

To construct a robust and sustainable social infrastructure, the Foundation advocates for the implementation of employment programs grounded in shared values, including:



- ✓ The active participation and inclusive engagement of all community members in civic and public life.
- ✓ The prioritization of human vulnerability as a foundational metric for the development process.
- ✓ The cultivation of civic responsibility among more privileged community members, while simultaneously fostering autonomy among vulnerable individuals.

Complementing these core values, which are integral to the Foundation's policies and strategies, the principles of subsidiarity are emphasized. This includes both horizontal subsidiarity, defined as a collaborative alliance among community stakeholders to achieve shared public interest goals, and vertical subsidiarity, which empowers local communities to act autonomously. Furthermore, the Foundation promotes a spirit of curiosity towards diverse perspectives and embraces diversity as a source of enrichment while recognizing trust as a cornerstone for building a cohesive and inclusive society.



2.2 Governance and Organizational Structure

The unique origins of the Foundation are inevitably reflected in its organizational structure, methods, and operational choices, all of which are designed to ensure the achievement of a mission that honours the perspectives of its founding bodies.

The Foundation's governing and administrative bodies maintain a balanced composition, with half comprising foundations and the other half third-sector organizations. The Board of Founders appoints the Steering Committee, the Board of Directors, the Board of Auditors, and the Auditor.

The Steering Committee establishes the strategic direction for asset management and defines the criteria and procedures for fund distribution. The Board of Directors oversees the Foundation's operations and appoints the General Director, who is responsible for organizational functions and ensures the execution of decisions made by the governing bodies. The Board of Auditors monitors legal and regulatory

ry compliance and adherence to sound administrative principles, while the Auditor is responsible for financial accounts.

Since 2011, the Foundation has adopted an organizational, management, and control model pursuant to Legislative Decree No. 231/2001. Its ethical code explicitly states (Article 4) that all activities must be guided by principles of honesty, integrity, loyalty, fairness, and respect for individuals. It also emphasizes the commitment to transparency, fairness, and truthfulness in collaboration with all stakeholders (Article 7).

Furthermore, the Foundation has adopted a child protection protocol, committing to increased attention and accountability towards minors who may be involved in the implementation of its activities.

The Foundation's organizational framework, structured across four distinct areas—management, administration, institutional activities, and communication—is detailed in section 6.8.



2.3 Operating Model

Fondazione Con il Sud supports projects promoted by third-sector organizations, in partnership with other non-profit organizations and regional institutional and economic stakeholders, to cultivate active, cohesive, and supportive communities.

The criteria used to evaluate applications and manage access to funding, while varying according to the objectives and characteristics of the specific initiatives, focus on the following areas:

- ✓ Alignment of the proposal with the Foundation's values and objectives;
- ✓ Characteristics of the proposing partnership;
- ✓ The overall quality of the proposed initiatives.

In the evaluation process, significant weight is given to the partnership's experience and composition, the quality of the needs assessment, the potential for generating real and sustainable regional impact, and the capacity to effectively document, monitor, and communicate the resulting changes. With regard to calls for proposals, the project selection process uses the Chàiros digital platform (developed directly by the Foundation) and follows a procedure approved by the Board of Directors on a case-by-case basis, and typically involves the following stakeholders:

- ✓ The Foundation's Institutional Activity Department conducts eligibility re-

views and merit evaluations based on the call's criteria and provides guidance and co-design support to partnerships.

- ✓ Independent experts, appointed by the Board of Directors as needed, with specialized expertise in the call's field, assess submissions according to technical and specialized criteria.
- ✓ A review panel, comprising board members, appointed experts, and Foundation staff, examines the evaluations by the experts and the Institutional Activities Department and formulates a funding recommendation for the Board of Directors.
- ✓ The Board of Directors, upon reviewing the panel's recommendation, provides its evaluation and makes the final funding decisions.

Subsequent to the Board of Directors' decision, the Foundation ensures that the outcomes of the selection process are communicated to all applicants. This practice not only upholds transparency but also provides constructive feedback, empowering applicants to refine their project development capabilities and improve their prospects for future funding.

Throughout the implementation of the projects, the Foundation's staff is engaged in ongoing monitoring and evaluation to support projects in achieving their intended objectives. This support function, essential for the full implementation of the program's objectives, directly reflects the core values of accountability, participation, and solidarity that underpin the Foundation's mission. These support processes extend throughout the entire implementation cycle of the various funding streams and also rely on the use of the Chàiros platform. In addition to the platform's digital tools, the Foundation has created a model for ongoing, direct interaction with project leaders and partners of the funded projects. This includes phone assistance, online information exchange, in-person meetings with coordination teams, site visits to project locations and recipient offices, and direct interactions with the final beneficiaries and project partners.

The evaluation analysis assesses initiatives in terms of their contribution to both initial project objectives and the broader aims of the call for proposals. This analysis operates on multiple levels, concurrently examining the efficacy of implementation mechanisms in meeting targets, the positive impact on beneficiaries, and the alignment with the Foundation's overarching mission.

03. The Results of the 2022-2024 Triennium



3.1 The Foundation from Its Inception to Today

From 2007 to 2023, Fondazione con il Sud has awarded 1,834 grants, totalling over €299.8 million.^{1,2}

The table below provides a comprehensive overview of grant disbursements by the Foundation from 2007 to 2023, categorized by its strategic areas of action and initiative types.

“From 2007 to 2023, Fondazione con il Sud has awarded 1,834 grants, totalling over €299.8 million.”

¹ The allocated funds, including all amounts approved to support projects and initiatives endorsed by the Board of Directors, do not take into account initiatives that were not implemented and whose funding was revoked within the same year of approval.

² The total funds refer to the contributions allocated within the Foundation's institutional activities and do not include the funds disbursed to the Special Volunteer Fund CO.GE in 2014 and 2015, totaling €4 million.

TABLE 1 – AREAS OF ACTION

Core Intervention Area	Percentage %	Initiative Area	Amount Provided (Euro)	Percentage %	n.
Exemplary Projects	73.1	Institutional Initiatives	177,493,287	59.20%	563
		Co-Funded Projects	23,790,182	7.90%	123
		Co-funded Calls and Institutional Partnerships	17,808,630	5.90%	184
Third-Sector Leadership Training	4.1	Third-Sector Leadership Training	12,334,045	4.10%	16
Support for Volunteering	11.5	Volunteer Programs and Networks	27,199,106	9.10%	405
		Institutional Support and Volunteering Agreements	7,328,917	2.50%	293
Community Foundations	8.5	Community Foundations	24,973,121	8.30%	7
		Social Projects	618,000	0.20%	3
Direct Support	2.8	Support for Third-Sector Events and Initiatives	3,861,600	1.30%	141
		Communication Initiatives	946,454	0.30%	21
		Emergency Initiatives	2,405,000	0.80%	25
		Studies and Research	1,055,000	0.40%	53
Total			299,813,342	100.00%	1,834

At the end of 2023, out of the 1,834 initiatives funded, 427 (23%) were still ongoing, while 1,407 (77%) had completed the implementation phase.

Approximately 7,300 different organizations were involved in the implementation of the funded initiatives. Through its monitoring and data collection activities on the funded projects, the Foundation can provide cumulative data on the overall results achieved over the years. The term "beneficiaries reached" refers to individuals who have actively participated and remained engaged in the various activities carried out by the projects.

Overall, it is estimated that the direct beneficiaries of the projects supported by the Foundation since its establishment have been approximately 590,000, primarily minors, but also people from various socially marginalized groups.

TABLE 2 - TYPES AND NUMBER OF PROJECT BENEFICIARIES AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2023

Direct Beneficiaries (Estimate)	n.	%
Minors (Students in Educational Institutions)	248,500	42%
Adults/Citizens/Other Categories	73,500	12%
Volunteers	59,500	10%
Young People	45,000	8%
Parents and Families	35,500	6%
Foreign-Born Citizens	28,000	5%
Elderly	26,000	4%
Other Vulnerable Groups	22,500	4%
Third-Sector Professionals (Tutors, Educators, Executive Managers)	17,500	3%
Public Administration Employees (Teachers, Doctors, Officials)	15,000	3%
Minors at Risk of Exclusion	14,300	2%
People with Disabilities	11,000	2%
Total	596,300	100%

An additional detail relates to employment outcomes, which are monitored both during the project implementation phases and through follow-up surveys conducted up to five years after the completion of the initiatives. This data specifically refers to the number of new hires, as reported by the responsible entities, relating to the 'direct' beneficiaries, including those employed by organizations created specifically through the projects (for example, new cooperatives providing catering services, university startups, etc.). However, individuals temporarily involved in the execution of the projects and paid through the allocated funding are not included in these figures.

TABLE 3 – EMPLOYMENT IMPACT

Type of Employment Placements	n.	%
Self-employed or freelance	693	15%
Temporary or Permanent Employee	1,363	30%
Project Collaborator or Contract Worker	830	18%
Work Integration Contract	1,650	36%
Total	4,536	100%

Overall, it is estimated that around 4,500 job placements have been achieved through the projects supported (even after the end of the Foundation's funding), with 30% of them being through employment.

The creation of new organizations is also one of the most notable outcomes of the initiatives. As of December 31, 2023, 244 new legal entities were active, mostly in the form of associations and cooperatives.

TABLE 4 – NEWLY ESTABLISHED ORGANIZATIONS

Legal Typology of New Entities	n.	%
Association	143	59%
Social Cooperative or Social Enterprise	70	29%
Other	31	13%
Total	244	100%

The Foundation's project funding across sectors and project areas is provided through the following quantitative data:

- ✓ 426 educational institutions and 250,000 minors participated in diverse educational programs.
- ✓ 400 municipal governing bodies, 5 regions with various departments and councils, and 22 provincial governing bodies were involved.
- ✓ 34 university institutions or research centers, with various departments, 21 leading researchers, and approximately 10,000 graduate and postgraduate students were engaged.
- ✓ 40 historical and artistic heritage sites were preserved.
- ✓ 14 properties were repurposed for sporting activities.
- ✓ 57 protected areas were preserved and improved for activities with environmental impact.
- ✓ 24 correctional facilities for minors and adults were involved.
- ✓ 17 centers for waste reduction or reuse were created.
- ✓ 98 confiscated assets were repurposed.
- ✓ 21 day centers and 12 residential facilities for the elderly and people with disabilities were activated.
- ✓ 7 housing units and 32 beds for people in need of housing support were created.
- ✓ 100 hectares of land were reclaimed for cultivation or pasture.
- ✓ 13 residential centers for women survivors of violence were created or developed.
- ✓ 28,000 foreign citizens were involved in social activities.
- ✓ Approximately 4,500 new job placements were created.
- ✓ €24 million was raised from third-party co-financing entities to support initiatives in Southern Italy.
- ✓ 60,000 volunteers were mobilized.
- ✓ 244 new organizations were established.
- ✓ 7 community foundations were founded.
- ✓ 15 editions of the Third Sector leadership training programs were supported.
- ✓ 570 bicycles, 180 electric vehicles, 13 cars, and 11 minibuses were provided for sustainable mobility services.



3.2

Results of the 2022-2024 Triennium

During the 2022-2024 period, the Foundation successfully carried out all planned initiatives, adhering to timelines and allocating available resources primarily to so-called "exemplary projects."

In the historical, artistic, and cultural areas, the Foundation partnered with public entities to improve cultural heritage sites. One such collaboration was with the Municipality of Taranto to restore and promote Palazzo Amati, leading to the funding of the Kétos project, presented by the association Jonian Dolphin Conservation. Building on previous work completed on the ground floor of Palazzo Amati—funded through a 2014 call for proposals—the project aims to develop innovative, high-quality cultural services centred on the blue economy and the local identity of Taranto's historic old town. Based on the framework of the special public-private partnership model defined in the Third Sector Code, two key agreements were established. A collaborative agreement with the Municipality of Catanzaro for the development of the San Giovanni monumental complex, a central heritage site in the Calabrian capital, and an operational agreement with the Ministry of Culture (MiC) to support the preservation and promotion of culturally significant sites across Southern Italy.

Under environmental assets, two calls for proposals have been launched: Terre Colte (Cultivated Lands) and Comunità Energetiche e Sociali al Sud (Energy and Social Communities in the South). The first, now in its second edition, concluded with the selection of five projects and the allocation of a total contribution of €1.9 million to revitalize 93 hectares of uncultivated and abandoned land for developing sustainable agricultural production and creating 32 new jobs, many of which are designated for vulnerable individuals. The second initiative, based on the pilot project that supported the first energy community in San Giovanni a Teduccio, funded nine projects with a total of €1.36 million, including an impact assessment assigned to the Euricse Institute following a public selection process. This initiative aims to establish participatory energy communities in disadvantaged urban areas of Southern Italy, involving over 400 citizens. A third call for proposals focused on promoting circular economy practices is currently in the evaluation application.

In 2024, the funding program dedicated to the repurposing of confiscated assets was completed, selecting eight proposals for the redevelopment of 12 properties. These projects focus on community-driven regeneration and social inclusion of 58 people, many of whom are in vulnerable conditions.

Meanwhile, the socio-healthcare program allocated €4 million to 12 projects aimed at supporting approximately 3,000 caretakers of individuals with high care needs (e.g. cancer patients, people with chronic degenerative diseases, rare diseases,

and congenital or acquired disabilities).

In the area of social inclusion initiatives, the call for proposals focused on the social and professional reintegration of incarcerated individuals (*Evado a lavorare*) is currently underway, with 63 proposals submitted. At the same time, an agreement has been defined with the Municipality of Naples to jointly launch a project that will provide housing for five Roma and Sinti families from the "Cupa Perillo" encampment in Scampia from confiscated properties formerly owned by organized crime. This initiative aims to facilitate their social and labour integration.

Two initiatives were launched to strengthen volunteering. The first initiative provided financial support for the ongoing operations of individual volunteer organizations in the Southern regions that had received comparatively lower Foundation funding between 2007 and 2021, resulting in the allocation of €3 million to 137 organizations. The second initiative aimed to stimulate the emergence of new organizations capable of managing complex projects by mandating that applicant organizations have no prior experience in project management. The evaluation process concluded with the funding of 33 projects and the allocation of €4.9 million (approximately €2 million more than initially planned).

In the experimental phase, a planning process was launched with the entities supported in the first edition of the *Terre colte* (Cultivated Lands) call for proposals to foster the development of a network of agricultural and agri-food producers. Throughout the three years, several collaborations were established with other funding entities, for which the most appropriate funding method was determined on a case-by-case basis (whether call for proposals or co-funding initiative). One notable example is the call launched in partnership with *Fondazione CDP* for the development of cultural ecosystems in Southern Italy, which has received 60 proposals currently under evaluation.

Two editions of the *Realizziamo il cambiamento con il Sud* (Making Change Happen WITH the South) call for proposals were launched in collaboration with *Action Aid Italia* and *Fondazione Realizza il Cambiamento* to provide targeted support for initiatives designed to mitigate poverty and uphold the rights of individuals experiencing vulnerability. Additionally, for the first time, the Foundation and *Fondazione Finanza Etica* jointly launched a call to support the development of 11 social enterprises in the Southern Italian tourism industry. Furthermore, in collaboration with the *Centro per il libro e la lettura* (Center for books and reading), two editions of the *Biblioteche e comunità* (Libraries and Communities) call were conducted. This call, designed to establish public libraries in Southern Italy as hubs for community engagement and social inclusion, resulted in the funding of 24 projects across the 2022 and 2023 editions. A total of €2 million was allocated, with the Foundation contributing €1 million. The third edition of the call is currently in progress.

Three national institutional initiatives developed within ACRI have continued to receive support: *Migranti* (Migrants), *Never alone*, and *Per aspera ad astra* (Through Hardships to the Stars). The first, now in its fifth edition, supports humanitarian corridors, maritime rescue efforts, and healthcare and legal assistance for migrants who find themselves in conditions of moral and material abandonment and who transit in border locations with high migration pressure. The second initiative focuses on the reception and protection of unaccompanied foreign minors, particularly during their transition to adulthood. For the third initiative, the Foundation has continued

its support across all three years for training and social reintegration programs for prisoners through theatre, arts, and crafts, implemented in 15 correctional facilities, including two in the South (the juvenile institution i Fornelli in Bari and the Pagliarelli prison in Palermo).

The Foundation has confirmed its membership in the FilieraFutura association and, in 2022, renewed its collaboration with the Fulbright Commission to promote scholarships for American researchers and professors interested in conducting research and teaching at universities and other research institutions in Southern Italy. Furthermore, the Foundation initiated a collaboration with the Moleskine Foundation to support socio-cultural third-sector organizations (TSOs) in Southern Italy that leverage creativity as a tool for social change. This collaboration is part of the Creativity Pioneers Fund, a philanthropic fund launched in 2021 to provide microgranting support to organizations working in disadvantaged regions worldwide. In the first two editions, 16 cultural TSOs were awarded €5,000 each.

Over the past three years, several regranting initiatives have been developed in collaboration with international partners, entrusting the Foundation with the selection, distribution, and support of organizations and projects in Italy and the South. In particular, the JP Morgan Chase Foundation entrusted the Foundation with a €1.6 million contribution to manage a call for proposals *Crescere è un lavoro* (Growing is a Job), co-funded with the social enterprise *Con i Bambini*. This initiative aimed at improving the school-to-work and/or higher education preparation and transition system. Similarly, in January 2023, the Foundation entered into a regranting agreement with Fondation CHANEL for a total amount of €1 million to support Southern Italian organizations working to combat gender-based violence. Finally, under the European COSME-funded Sofigreen project, the Foundation allocated €194,000 to identify and train 33 Southern social enterprises in environmental transition.

Support for the training project for third-sector leaders had been confirmed for the 2022–24 period, with a total amount of €2,962,400. This is a "systemic" training initiative aimed at strengthening the networking and training process for the leaders of third-sector organizations in the South, as well as the development of their organizational, managerial, and relational skills. During the triennium, the third sector leadership training (FQTS) deepened its community-focused program, prioritizing the development of local communities as vibrant hubs for interpersonal and organizational connection, cultural identity, and shared values.

In 2022, the Foundation contributed €3,625,000 towards the establishment of the Benevento Community Foundation. This foundation was collaboratively formed by key third-sector organizations in the Benevento region, alongside over 30 founding members, including 18 individuals, 9 private companies, 5 trade associations, and 2 third-sector entities. Its core mission is to function as a local hub, identifying and allocating resources to community-driven projects.

Maintaining its commitment to collaborative funding, the Foundation supported 29 co-funded projects, securing over €7 million in funding from various co-financing entities that aligned with the projects' objectives and established strategic partnerships. These initiatives addressed a range of key areas, including social and healthcare services, poverty reduction, social and employment integration of vulnerable individuals, cultural heritage enhancement, and urban and social regeneration.

Throughout the 2022-2024 period, the Foundation finalized several initiatives launched during the preceding triennium (2021-2023). Notably, three calls for proposals launched in 2021 were concluded: the Environment Call, which invested €4,638,000 in 11 projects promoting low-impact mobility, including impact assessment; the second edition of the initiative to combat gender-based violence, which funded 8 projects with a total allocation of €2 million; and the initiative to counter the exploitation of foreign workers, supporting 6 projects with €2 million in funding.

Additionally, two calls for proposals from the previous period were finalized in collaboration with the municipalities of Taranto and Lecce, focusing on heritage restoration. These included the redevelopment of the former Convent of San Gaetano in Taranto (€350,000) and Masseria Tagliatelle in Lecce (€500,000), respectively.

In collaboration with Enel Cuore Onlus, the Nel cuore del Sud (At the Heart of the South) call for proposals was completed. This initiative aimed to promote a social and work integration of vulnerable individuals, while also highlighting the unique strengths and potential of Southern Italy's inland areas. A total of 7 projects received support, with a combined funding of €1,465,000, half of which was provided by the Foundation.

As part of the experimental initiatives outlined in the previous three-year period (2021-2023), the Welfare e tecnologia (Welfare and Technology) call for proposals was also concluded. A total of €1,107,000 was allocated to 2 projects dedicated to testing innovative technologies designed to improve the quality of life for individuals over 65 affected by chronic and degenerative diseases.

Finally, following an extensive planning process initiated in 2020, funding was secured for a local development project led by a broad network in Puglia, coordinated by the association LUA – Laboratorio Urbano Culturale (Urban Cultural Laboratory). This initiative aims to establish new social entrepreneurship initiatives within the Parco Agricolo dei Paduli (Paduli Agricultural Park), promoting sustainable agricultural and tourism activities. Building on years of experience, it seeks to integrate responsible supply chains that link agricultural production, social-educational services, and sustainable tourism.

TABLE 5 – DISBURSEMENT DATA FOR THE 2022-2024 TRIENNIUM

	Allocated Resources	Disbursed Resources	Note
Historical, Artistic, and Cultural	2,9	1,7	
Environment	4,0	4,6	Non-dedicated funds were used.
Confiscated Assets	4,0	3,1	
Innovative Initiatives	7,5	7,3	
Volunteering	6,0	7,0*	Non-dedicated funds were used. Allocation is expected by December 2024.
Social and Healthcare	4,0	4,0*	Allocation is expected by December 2024.
Local Development		2,7	The initiative was funded with resources from the previous three-year period.
Community Foundations	7,3	3,8	
Co-funding	9,7	8,0*	
Communication	0,4		
Institutional Partnership	6,5	4,0*	
Experimental Initiatives		1,1	The initiative was funded with resources allocated from the previous three-year period.
Third Sector Leadership Training (FQTS)	3,0	3,0	
Studies and Research	0,2	0,1	
Initiatives for Sardinia	0,5		
International Partnership (regranting)	2,6	2,6	
Other initiatives		1,1	
Total	58,5	54,2	

* Estimated amounts as of November 12, 2024.

04. The Evolution of the Context



4.1 The South and the Issue of Depopulation

Paradoxically, the South's enduring divisions and developmental stagnation could be resolved by its natural extinction. Evidence now overwhelmingly points to the emergence of 'demographic winter', a phenomenon that began quietly but has since become the most pressing issue for the region. The decline in birth rates continues, with contraction that appears increasingly irreversible. This scenario is further aggravated by the trend of youth migration, a pattern that intensifies each year, undermining potential development driven by the energy of younger generations.

Between 2001 and 2023, the South has already lost 730,000 residents. In 2020, for the first time since the post-war period, the population of the South fell below 20 million. In 1951, it represented 43.4% of Italy's total population; by 2024, it will account for 33.5%. If ISTAT's (Italian National Institute of Statistics) forecasts prove accurate, by 2080, the share will plummet to 25.8%. Depopulation has already significantly affected many small towns in the inland areas and is beginning to extend to urban areas, showing no signs of interruption. The decline affects all southern regions, with more pronounced decreases in Basilicata and Sardinia.

While the natural dynamics, particularly the decline in birth rates, have impacted all of Italy, it is indisputable that the South has borne the brunt of these changes, exacerbated by both internal and international migration. Projections from ISTAT and other research institutions offer little cause for optimism. According to the "average scenario" estimates (not the worst-case scenario), by 2080, the South will have lost 8 million inhabitants, compared to 5.2 million in the Centre-North, with the greatest losses concentrated among younger age groups.

Unlike in the past, emigration today predominantly affects younger generations with higher levels of education. This shift means that, in addition to the aging population, the South is facing an inevitable cultural and social decline. Over the past two decades, the South has seen nearly half a million citizens emigrate. More than

— — —
"By 2080, the South will have lost 8 million inhabitants, with the greatest losses concentrated among younger age groups."
— — —

47% of those who left were between the ages of 15 and 34, with 22% holding a university degree. Two regions, Sicily and Campania, have recorded net migration losses exceeding 105,000 individuals from 2001 to 2022. In Sicily alone, where the net loss surpasses 65,000, this equates to the loss of the population of cities such as Agrigento or Trapani within just one generation.

As the South ages and loses its ability to renew itself, with its vital energy dispersing and moving away, the situation becomes even more critical when attention shifts from urban areas to the inland regions. While urban areas will experience a more moderate population decline, small, peripheral towns along the Apennines will face even greater depopulation¹. According to ISTAT data, between 2014 and 2024, nearly 90% of municipalities in the South saw a population decline, with more than two-thirds of these located in inland areas. Projections for the period up to 2034 show that 90% of municipalities in the inland areas of the South will experience further demographic decline, with some regions seeing decreases of up to 93%. This is 20 percentage points higher than the decline projected for the Centre-North. Nearly half (46.2%) of the national migration flow comes from the inland areas of the South. Over 40% of those emigrating from these inland regions are aged between 25 and 39, and many of them are university graduates.

In certain Southern regions, inland areas are particularly significant. The municipalities within the SNAI² (National Strategy for Inner Areas), based on the new classifications, are 548, representing 21.5% of the total, and are home to over 1.4 million people. Of these municipalities, 68% fall into the "peripheral" and "ultra-peripheral" categories. This proportion rises to 84.6% in Calabria and 78.1% in Basilicata. In Sardinia, all 15 municipalities in the inland areas are classified as either peripheral or ultra-peripheral.

While the demographic decline of rural and mountainous areas is not unique to the South, but also affecting the central-northern regions, it is in the South that the issue reaches its most acute form. It is no coincidence that this phenomenon has led many observers to describe this challenging scenario in recent years and have spoken of fragile, marginal, and dwindling Italy.

Addressing depopulation must, therefore, be considered a top political priority, one that requires an understanding of the complex, interrelated factors at play. The measures undertaken so far have often reflected a local development model that has proven incapable of reversing the ongoing trend. A notable example is the "village" model promoted in certain PNRR calls, which has often prioritized tourism over the strengthening of services for the communities still living in these areas.

There is considerable value in supporting initiatives that have sought to mitigate the effects of depopulation in recent years. These include numerous projects aimed at revitalizing the South and attracting new residents, as well as organizations ded-

¹ Municipalities with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants represent 94% of the total in Molise, 84% in Sardinia, 82% in Basilicata, and 80% in Sicily. In the southern regions, there are 489 municipalities with fewer than 1,000 inhabitants. Sardinia alone is home to 130 such municipalities, more than one in every three, while Calabria has 98, or one in every four. The situation is particularly critical in Molise, where more than half of the municipalities have fewer than 1,000 residents. In the province of Isernia, 63.5% of municipalities fall below this threshold, while in the province of Campobasso, the proportion is nearly 49%. In Sardinia, the percentage reaches over 56% in the province of Oristano and 35% in Sassari, while in Reggio Calabria, it is close to 31%.

² The areas identified within the framework of the National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI) are those regions characterized by significant distance from major service hubs, particularly those related to education, mobility, and social-health services.

icated to reactivating communities in rural areas and rebuilding social cohesion. Furthermore, the community-based enterprises seeking to create both economic and social value from an already rich array of resources, and the individuals who, inspired by the pandemic lockdown, have decided to relocate their professional activities to their hometowns or to places where the lifestyle is more sustainable and the quality of everyday life is perceived as higher than in urban areas should also be supported.



4.2 The South and Social Inequalities

Significant disparities exist between the South and other regions of Italy regarding access to healthcare, both in terms of the quality of regional health systems and the ability to meet the needs and demands of local residents for healthcare services. A comparative analysis conducted by Crea Sanità, based on eight different performance dimensions, reveals that the regions at the bottom of the rankings are all located in the South. These regions include Abruzzo and Molise, which remain in the penultimate tier, with scores ranging from 37% to 43% of the maximum achievable result. In descending order, the other regions ranked are Sicily, Campania, Puglia, Sardinia, Basilicata, and Calabria, which regrettably ranks last with the lowest score of 30%.

Even more concerning are the figures related to interregional healthcare mobility. The National Agency for Regional Health Services (AGENAS) uses an indicator known as the "fleeing index" to measure the propensity of residents in one region to seek medical care in other regions. Between 2017 and 2021, over 74,000 patients from the eight southern regions sought care in hospitals outside their home region for oncological treatments, accounting for more than 54.5% of national healthcare mobility.³

The findings from the monitoring of Essential Levels of Healthcare (LEA), conducted by the Ministry of Health, with the latest data available from 2022, highlight the persistent challenges faced by healthcare services in Italy, with particularly acute issues in the South. Five southern regions—Calabria, Sicily, Sardinia, Abruzzo, and Molise—are below the sufficiency threshold in the area of prevention, with the first three regions exhibiting severe delays. Similarly, four regions—Calabria, Campania, Sicily, and Sardinia—fail to meet the sufficiency threshold in the district area, that is, territorial healthcare services. The situation regarding the opening of "community health centers" is no different. As of June 30, 2024, only 20 such facilities are operational in the South. In contrast, of the 413 community health centres estab-

³ The "fleeing indices" vary from 52.1% in Molise to 13.6% in Sardinia. The figures for other regions fall between these extremes: 50.5% in Calabria, 43.8% in Basilicata, 24.4% in Abruzzo, 20.5% in Campania, 17.9% in Sicily, and 16.2% in Puglia. The social impact, as well as the economic consequences, of patients and their families traveling long distances to access better care is significant, particularly when dealing with serious health conditions.

lished across Italy, over half are located in Lombardy (136) and Emilia-Romagna (85), followed by Veneto (62), Tuscany (35), and Piedmont (26).

One of the main challenges facing the South remains school dropout rates. Paradoxically, the enrollment rate in upper secondary education among the 14-18 age group is highest in the southern regions, with a stable average of approximately 97-98% in recent years, surpassing the national average by 7 percentage points. However, this significant growth is not matched by a similar improvement in the graduation rate, due to a widespread phenomenon of early school leaving. In 2022, 98.7% of the population aged 14-18 in the South was enrolled in secondary education, in contrast to 91.2% in the Centre-North. However, only 81.3% of the population aged 20-24 in the South has obtained at least a secondary school diploma, compared to 87.2% in the Centre-North. Consequently, the gap between participation rates and educational attainment is 4 percentage points in the Centre-North and 17.4 percentage points in the South.

The development of human capital remains a key driver for promoting sustainable growth in the South. It plays a crucial role not only in enhancing individual career prospects—offering more diverse and higher-paying opportunities—but also in strengthening the competitiveness and appeal of local communities. In this way, it can help mitigate the effects of depopulation and abandonment.

According to ISTAT data, more than 75% of university graduates in the South hold a qualified job, compared to only 29% of high school graduates and 7% of those with lower educational qualifications. Moreover, the proportion of temporary or involuntary part-time workers is lower among university graduates. In the South, the employment rate for university graduates is 35 percentage points higher than for individuals with only a middle school diploma and 16 points higher than for high school graduates. These figures, when considering the "premium" in terms of higher income for graduates compared to high school diploma holders or those with only a middle school diploma, clearly highlight the strategic importance of investing in education. However, despite this, educational spending, which was already low in Italy relative to other countries, has significantly decreased in recent years. In the South, expenditure fell by 19% from 2007-2008 (biennium) to 2020.⁴

Social challenges are also exacerbated by the reduction or erosion of citizenship rights, a situation that may worsen with the implementation of regional autonomy. This policy, which advocates for the regionalization of educational systems through distinct recruitment and funding mechanisms, is likely to result in greater investments in wealthier regions that are already equipped with better infrastructure and services. Consequently, this would only serve to further widen the disparity between the South and the rest of the country.⁵


⁴ The South is also significantly disadvantaged when it comes to indicators related to school infrastructure, such as the availability of cafeterias, gymnasiums, and building safety certifications. For instance, only 24.8% of primary school students in the South have access to a cafeteria, compared to 60.2% in the Centre-North. Similarly, only 56% of secondary school students in the South attend schools with access to a gymnasium, while this figure rises to 76.7% in the Centre-North. Moreover, there is a gap of more than 14 percentage points in terms of safety certifications for preschools, with 13.1% in the South compared to 27.7% in the Centre-North.

⁵ According to data from Svimez's analysis of Istat figures, in 2020, the availability of places in nurseries in Campania stood at 6.5 per 100 children aged 0 to 2 years, 8.2 in Sicily, 9.0 in Calabria, and 9.3 in Molise. These are the only regions in Italy with a coverage rate below 10%, compared to the national average of 22.7%. Some regions, such as Tuscany (36.0%), Emilia-Romagna (35.9%), and Lazio (33.9%), consistently exceed 30%. In the South, only Sardinia (26.5%) and Abruzzo (21.4%) surpass 20%, while Puglia has 13.9 places per 100 children.


The South of Italy is becoming increasingly poor. According to the 2023 ISTAT data, the picture of absolute poverty remains alarming, worsened by the asymmetrical effects of inflation despite the positive trends in the labor market. Households in absolute poverty, defined as those with expenditures equal to or below the absolute poverty threshold, stand at 10.2% in the South, compared to the national average of 8.4%. In the South, 859,000 households, nearly 39% of the total, and 2.4 million individuals live in poverty. The intensity of absolute poverty, which measures in percentages how far poor households' monthly expenditures fall below the poverty line ("how poor the poor are"), is 17.8%. Unlike the rest of the country, in the South, poverty is higher in metropolitan areas. The proportion of poverty among households with foreign nationals is significantly higher than among Italian-only households (35.8% vs. 8.8%), and this difference rises to four and a half times when comparing households with minors. Relative poverty has also reached unprecedented levels, affecting 26.8% of households in Calabria, 22.3% in Puglia, and 21.2% in Campania. With the sole exception of Abruzzo (19.5%); no southern region has a relative poverty rate below 20%. In 2023, the proportion of households in the South classified as "certainly" poor—those with monthly expenditures falling more than 20% below the standard poverty threshold—accounted for 9% of the total, twice the national average of 4.6%.

Despite this bleak landscape, which starkly highlights regional disparities, there are, nonetheless, some encouraging signs. In recent years, nonprofit organizations in the South, harnessing the many forms of active citizenship and playing a crucial role in welfare services as well as in the experimentation of social innovation practices, have grown at a faster pace than in the rest of the country. According to the census conducted by ISTAT, the South is home to 27.6% of Italy's 363,500 nonprofit organizations, amounting to nearly 100,000 organizations that employ approximately 185,000 people. These figures also reveal a structural gap, as nonprofits in the South account for only 20% of the sector's total workforce. Among these, 85,000 are associations, a proportion slightly above the national average. Nearly 37% operate in the field of sports, 15.3% in culture and the arts, and 14.1% in recreational and social activities. Moreover, over 30% of the South's nonprofit organizations are relatively young, having been established since 2015. Social cooperatives based in the South total 6,900, representing 46% of the national total. Of these, 52% are engaged in social assistance and civil protection, while 31% focus on promoting economic development and social cohesion.

Synergies and networked collaborations between associations and social cooperatives are pivotal for the socioeconomic development of Southern Italy. While associations serve as key agents of active citizenship, fostering innovation, and identifying emerging social needs, cooperatives are the ones that try to provide a concrete response to unmet needs. The social economy, represented in the entrepreneurial sector by cooperatives, operates on a foundation built by volunteerism and civil society organizations. There are over 38,000 third-sector organizations in the South registered with the National Single Register of the Third Sector (RUNTS), with Campania leading among the southern regions, accounting for nearly 9,000 registered organizations. Three regions—Molise (2.7), Sardinia (2.3), and Calabria (2.1)—have several third-sector organizations per 1,000 inhabitants above the national average of 1.9. The data from the National Single Register of the Third Sector (RUNTS) highlights a notable increase in both volunteer associations and more established third-sector organizations that are capable of generating employment while also revealing regional disparities. In Abruzzo, social promotion associations constitute 42.5% of all registered third-sector organizations, whereas in Sardin-



“Households in absolute poverty, stand at 10.2% in the South, compared to the national average of 8.4%.”



ia, they represent only 20.5%, with volunteer organizations exceeding 37%. The choice to establish a social enterprise is particularly prevalent in Basilicata (46.6%) and Sicily (39.1%) but less common in Abruzzo (23.7%). Overall, the widespread presence of third-sector organizations in Southern regions demonstrates their capacity to identify emerging social needs, build collaborative strategies, and implement solutions that can drive social and economic development within local communities.



4.3

The South and the Economic Divide

According to the latest estimates from Svimez, in 2023, the GDP growth of Southern Italy outpaced both the national average and that of all other macro-regions, recording an increase of +1.3% compared to the national growth of 0.9%. This marks the first such occurrence since 2015. Employment also saw a notable rebound (+2.6% year-on-year compared to +0.6% in the Centre-North). However, a sectoral analysis reveals that much of the GDP growth was driven by the construction industry (4.5%) against a contraction in manufacturing activities (-0.5%) and agriculture (-3.2%), with a slight growth in services (+1.8%).

The positive economic trend, although slowing in recent years, can be attributed to the post-Covid recovery phase that began in 2021. Between 2019 and 2023, cumulative GDP growth reached 3.7%, halting the divergence that had seen the South lagging behind the national average by nearly 7 points from 2008 to 2019. The growth observed in recent years has largely been driven by investments in public works, driven largely by PNRR (the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, NRRP) and the acceleration of spending from European cohesion funds during the final stages of the 2014-2020 programming cycle.

The GDP dynamics have been positive across all regions of the South, albeit with varying growth rates. However, the South's GDP per capita decreased from €20.1 thousand in 2008 to €19.4 thousand in 2022. Despite also experiencing a decline, the per capita GDP in the Centre-North, highlighting the nation's struggles to return to a growth trajectory, amounted to €34.8 thousand in 2022. The southern regions at the bottom of the Italian rankings are Calabria (€16.9 thousand in 2022) and Sicily (€17.8 thousand). When Italy's average per capita GDP is set at 100, the gap between the South and the Centre-North is striking: 65 versus 117, a difference of more than 52 points. When the average national figure is set at 100, productivity in the South drops to 82.1, with a gap of more than 24 points compared to the Centre-North's productivity (106.6).

The gap between the South and the North becomes even more apparent when moving beyond macroeconomic data to examine the per capita disposable income of households. According to data from the Tagliacarne study centre, the South lags behind the national average by €5,000; Calabria's disposable income is over €10,000 lower than that of Trentino-Alto Adige, the region with the highest disposable income. In terms of disposable income, the highest-ranked province in the South is Cagliari, in 38th place (with Pescara following in 60th). From 71st place

— — —
“When Italy's average per capita GDP is set at 100, the gap between the South and the Centre-North is striking: 65 versus 117, a difference of more than 52 points.”
— — —

to the last, 107th, except for Frosinone, all other provinces are located in the South.

After the dramatic decline caused by Covid, the employment rate has risen, yet the gap with the Centre-North has only narrowed slightly. However, it is often the quality of employment that exacerbates the inequalities. Nearly 10 points separate the unemployment rate of the South from that of the Centre-North, but the most alarming figures, with clear implications for social inequalities, concern the youth segment and women: generational gaps and gender disparities in the labor market show the most discouraging data in the South.

According to the ISTAT labor force survey, in 2023, the youth employment rate in Southern Italy stood at 32.4%, compared to 51.6% in the Centre-North and 58.5% for the European average. The gap narrows slightly for those with a university degree (but grows by over 30% for young graduates), with the employment rate rising to 61.6% in the South compared to 80.6% in the Centre-North. While it is clear that having a degree increases the likelihood of finding employment, it is worth noting that the situation of young people in the South has no equivalent in other European countries with regions lagging in development, such as Spain or Greece, where the youth employment rate stands at 83.0% and 70.1%, respectively. The percentage of young people who are neither in education, employment, nor training (NEET) is 31.3% in the South, compared to 14.9% in the Centre-North, resulting in a 2-to-1 ratio, which remains even if we narrow the analysis to NEETs who have a degree: in the South, 20.4% of graduates fall into this category, compared to 9.9% in the Centre-North.

Gender disparities are even more severe, reaching levels far removed from European averages. It's important to note that employed women are more frequently in temporary positions, even when they are available for full-time work. In Southern Italy, the female employment rate is 34.4%, compared to 59.8% in Central and Northern Italy. In regions like Sicily (30.5%), Campania (30.6%), and Calabria (31.8%), roughly seven out of ten women are not employed.

But even for working women, conditions are often discriminatory. In the South, involuntary part-time work affects 70% of female workers, and the precarious nature of female employment is at a much higher level than that of men: in 2022, over 25% of female employees in the South held temporary positions, compared to 16% in the Centre-North and 15% across the European average. Alongside fewer working hours, women also face lower hourly wages. Gender disparities are even more striking when having children: in the South, the employment rate for mothers is 37.9%, compared to 76.9% for fathers and 52.3% for single women.⁶ These figures underscore how regional differences in the availability of daycare services and the lack of extended hours and school cafeterias strongly influence female participation in the labor market. The challenge of balancing work and family care is the primary reason for women voluntarily leaving their jobs. In Southern Italy, working mothers account for 90% of all officially confirmed resignations.

Gender gaps are also evident in higher education, with higher gaps in the South. In a country that already ranks at the bottom of the European rankings for university graduates, the proportion of women with a degree among the 24–35 age group stands at 26% in Sicily, 28% in Puglia and Calabria, and 30% in Campania—well below the European average of 47.6% and the national average of 35.5%. Young women in the South

⁶ Women's employment rate declines even lower if their children are preschool age, dropping to 37.8% compared to 65.1% in the Centre-North. It tends to rise once children start school (41.5%), yet the gap with the Centre-North widens even further, reaching 73.0% and exceeding 30 percentage points.

are also less likely than their European or other Italian counterparts to pursue STEM degrees, with an enrollment rate of 24% in the South, compared to 25% in the North and 28% in the Centre. The only exceptions are Basilicata and Calabria, which report figures above the national average.

To truly understand the socio-economic disparities and the unequal opportunities between Southern Italy and the rest of the country, it is worth noting that although the percentage of young adults with university degrees is similar across regions (25.1% in the South compared to 32.9% in Central and Northern Italy), the significant difference lies in the 'brain drain' effect. One-third of university graduates from Southern Italy move to Central or Northern regions for better prospects. Of those who migrate, one in three holds a degree in STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).

However, in what is certainly not an encouraging picture, it is important to acknowledge a positive development: in recent years, a network of medium-sized enterprises has strengthened. These enterprises have demonstrated a growing capacity to drive international market expansion, achieving export growth rates that significantly outpace the national average.⁷ The agrifood chain has made a significant contribution to the expansive trend, once again reinforcing the critical importance of regional natural resources and established production traditions.

Another encouraging sign comes from data on entrepreneurship, particularly the growth of young, high-tech star-ups. Looking at statistics on innovative startups, three southern regions ranked among the top ten in absolute numbers for 2023: Campania, Sicily, and Puglia. Moreover, when adjusting for population size, smaller regions such as Molise and Basilicata also demonstrate strong performances, with 28 and 25 startups per 100,000 residents, respectively.

Between 2018 and 2023, Campania and Puglia were also among the regions that stood out for their remarkable vitality: Campania more than doubled its number of startups (+105%), while Puglia saw a 69% increase, compared to a national average of 47%. And again, the South shows a stronger inclination toward youth entrepreneurship, with Campania firmly holding the top position among Italian regions in terms of the share of youth-led enterprises—defined as sole proprietorships owned by individuals under 30 registered with the Chamber of Commerce—accounting for 7.0% of the total. Additionally, Calabria and Sicily surpass the national average in this metric, with respective percentages of 5.9% and 5.6%.

⁷ In 2023, while Italian exports remained stagnant, the South recorded a nearly 17% increase, with four southern regions leading in growth rates: Campania (+28.9%), Molise (+21.1%), Calabria (+20.9%), and Abruzzo (+13.6%). In the first half of 2024, the most dynamic regions in a country experiencing an overall decline (-1.1% for Italy) were once again in the South, with Sardinia (+18.8%) and Calabria (+18.0%) ahead of Molise (+14.2%) and Campania (+8.8%).

05. Strategic Challenges and Objectives for the Triennium



5.1 Paradoxes of the South and Strategic Challenges

Amidst such a complex and, at times, troubling landscape—with seemingly unsolvable critical issues—Fondazione Con il Sud remains an important presence in addressing key concerns while staying true to its founding mission. We cannot afford to succumb to despair, discouragement, or resignation.

The participatory planning process that has shaped the development of this Strategic Plan has further reinforced our awareness of the Foundation's pivotal role and the credibility it has built in recent years through its actions. Most importantly, it has reaffirmed the importance of the Foundation's activities and tasks in the eyes of its many stakeholders: the communities of Southern Italy, the third-sector organizations active in the regions of operation, and local public administrators.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon the Foundation to act decisively and promptly, exercising patience when necessary while maintaining rigorous monitoring and evaluation standards. It must cultivate trust among partners who share its mission and align with its objectives, challenge those who propagate pessimism and apocalyptic narratives and stand alongside those who believe in the possibility of change in the South.

In recent years, comforted by the outcomes of the projects in the regions, and by the interactions with hundreds of organizations involved with and around the Foundation, there has been a growing conviction that actions in support of social development must be integrated with commitments to economic growth, with the ability to address priority challenges, and with the efficient use of public resources.

In 2024, the Foundation surveyed a non-representative yet highly significant sample—a group of 1,162 third-sector organizations, over 50% of which had never received funding from the Foundation. Also in 2024, through a technical collaboration with a leading polling institute which had previously conducted a similar survey in 2018, it was possible to carry out a study on a representative sample of the Southern Third Sector. The findings revealed that over 80% of third-sector organizations representatives in the South are well aware of the Foundation, and among them, 96% hold a positive view of its work (though only 70% have had direct interaction

— — —
"Over 80% of third-sector organizations representatives in the South are well aware of the Foundation, and among them, 96% hold a positive view of its work."
— — —

with it). The analyses reaffirm the Foundation's established reputation. This is further reflected in the high expectations stakeholders have, amplifying, even more, the sense of responsibility that the Foundation will have to demonstrate in its future actions.

From the information-gathering and listening process conducted over the past year, it has also been made clear that to widen the range of beneficiaries and enhance the scope of activities, the Foundation must diversify its program's instruments over the next three years. The survey data and the meetings highlight the need to broaden the scope of the Foundation's programs, enlarge the beneficiary pool, and expand the network of collaborative partners.

The Foundation's efforts will be directed toward creating value for the South and its communities in collaboration with organizations committed to the development of the South. This will involve leveraging the South's wealth of resources, often not fully or appropriately utilized. They include its rich biodiversity—both terrestrial and marine—the beauty of its landscapes, the vast and largely unexplored natural heritage, the diversity of its cultural heritage, which is little known and even less visited, the presence of vibrant communities that have preserved their traditions, languages, cultures, and sense of belonging, and have been able to cherish and nurture a longstanding legacy of relational assets. Moreover, many young women and men in the South wish to stay in their native regions or return if adequate conditions and job opportunities aligned with their education were available. They are fully aware of the quality of life their communities can offer in the South.

We must also consider the paradox of having numerous abandoned urban areas in the town's peripheries, unused and forgotten spaces, and neglected and uncultivated land, which stand in contrast with the difficulties many projects face in finding operational space. Furthermore, there is the paradox of employment—the region's employment rates remain below the Italian and European averages, and many young people leave in search of work opportunities. Yet, numerous projects struggle to launch due to the shortage of labour.

Valuable knowledge and expertise have been accumulated through substantial, though often demanding, career trajectories among experienced professionals who seek avenues and opportunities to apply and validate their skills, offering their acquired competencies to emerging projects. This exchange fosters an ideal inter-generational bond.



5.2 Demographic Regeneration to Counter Depopulation

The primary focus for Fondazione Con il Sud over the next three years will be addressing and reversing depopulation in Southern Italy, a horizon toward which the available project resources will converge. It may seem a futile effort or even a utopian task, but we are convinced that the Foundation through collaboration with both public and private stakeholders—who share the responsibility of not accepting the demographic drift of the southern regions as a sealed destiny—can and must implement innovative actions, with pilot projects, and develop the marginalized regions as a testing grounds (“open-air laboratories”) for cross-cutting approaches. These actions and approaches can help slow the process of population decline, chart alternative development pathways, and give meaning to repopulating the South. This is not a case of delusional omnipotence, and the Foundation fully acknowledges the limitations of its actions and the resources at its disposal. Rather, it understands the role it can play in dialogues with public policymakers and local governments, as well as in promoting collaborations with other institutional and economic stakeholders to multiply the impact of its projects and initiatives.

For the Foundation, it is a commitment that takes an integrated perspective on the issues and possible paths to repopulate the South: birth rates, retention, return migration, and the welcoming of newcomers. This perspective will have to be inspired by the desire to give young men and women a central role, through actions aimed at fostering the development of new entrepreneurship and strengthening the service networks, essential to increasing female employment rates. The concept of “reception”, in particular, viewed as the ability of the regions and the communities within them to welcome migrants, will serve as a guiding principle for the Foundation’s choices in the coming years, a prerequisite and a criterion for evaluating the use of resources.

At the same time, the focus on depopulation will not detract from the Foundations’ ongoing support for actions in favour of third-sector organizations operating within metropolitan areas and the urban and peri-urban peripheries of towns in the South. Here, too, the priority remains: to curb depopulation and marginalization, restore a sense of meaning to living in these areas, help create favourable conditions for social entrepreneurship, support the educational training sector, strengthen service infrastructures and local economies, and preserve citizenship rights.



5.3

Extending the Reach and Broadening the Beneficiary Base

“One of the commitments for the forthcoming three-year period is to extend the number of the third-sector organizations supported by the Foundation.”

In its activities, the Foundation has traditionally focused on the "creation" of exemplary projects while being mindful of the constraints posed by limited resources compared to the extensive demand. The projects, recognized for the quality of their partnerships and their impact on local communities, have served as reference models for effective social capital development, initiating a mechanism of "a ripple effect", a "contagion" that inspires public action in contexts and regions different from those in which the projects were initially launched. In the coming years, the goal will be to amplify the effects of this approach to achieve accelerated replicability of the dissemination process. This means, first and foremost, moving beyond the single-area focus that has traditionally characterized the actions of the Foundation, with calls for proposals and measures tailored to specific recipients and project areas, to progressively adopt a cross-cutting approach that addresses multiple areas and different target groups, allowing for the simultaneous pursuit of diverse yet complementary objectives. It is an almost mandatory path not only because it allows generating a potential multiplier effect for the resources committed but also because it is better suited to addressing complex issues and promoting dialogue and collaboration among the entities and organizations operating in the targeted regions.

This will enable us to broaden both the areas of operation and the potential beneficiaries. One of the commitments for the forthcoming three-year period is to extend the number of the third-sector organizations supported by the Foundation, employing more effective measures and tools aimed at engaging development actors in the South that have not yet been reached. It entails working to strengthen support for social entrepreneurship, which, through hybrid models, can accompany local development processes, promote welfare initiatives, reduce inequalities, and combat social injustices, all while ensuring the economic and financial sustainability of these projects.

Growing social capital in the South, increasing employment opportunities for those who choose to remain in the region—particularly women and young people—and promoting the entrepreneurial spirit are some of the Foundation's longstanding missions, and further efforts will be directed toward advancing these objectives. It is an area of intervention that will have to count on the collaboration of "partner" foundations convinced, like the Foundation, that the South's development and demographic regeneration and the fight against depopulation must continue in this direction. It also involves placing greater focus and scrutiny on the world of volunteering, and on organizations dedicated to the environment, culture, and sports, based on the belief that enhancing the quality of life in the South is a fundamental lever for people who choose to remain in the region and for those who wish to return.

For these reasons, in the next three years, the Foundation intends to intensify its efforts aimed at those who remain outside the current scope of beneficiaries—those who, despite being aware of the Foundation and its work, have yet to find opportunities for exchange, engagement, or support. The analysis of the long and in-depth survey conducted in the first months of 2024 identified areas in the South where the Foundation's projects have not yet achieved significant impact and areas where the demand addressed to us has been only partially met. These needs and requirements warrant further exploration.

In the coming years, the increase in variety will have to be matched by a greater differentiation of support tools and mechanisms. These tools and mechanisms will also have to adapt to align with the developmental trajectories and capacity-building needs of the beneficiaries, providing differentiated forms of support for those who have already received contributions from the Foundation in the past. The purpose of the differentiation process is not only attributable to the desire to extend the Foundation's scope of action and to reallocate resources toward areas of the Third Sector or toward regions and organizations that have so far been marginal to its project landscape, but above all, it aims to mitigate the risks of "complacency" among organizations that have already had a longstanding relationship with the Foundation.

On the one hand, the Foundation will continue to support the growth of already funded organizations, using mechanisms beyond traditional tools, which will demand greater contributions and efforts from its partners. On the other hand, it is committed to strengthening the organizational capacities of its beneficiaries in areas such as resources mobilization, project development, stakeholder relations, and collaborator management, thereby facilitating a gradual reduction in reliance on funding provided by the Foundation.



5.4 Two Strategic Approaches to Prioritize

The complexity of the challenges to be addressed, coupled with the constraints of available resources, indicate the necessity of pursuing the strategies previously outlined by prioritizing two methodological approaches that will inspire the renewal of operational tools over the forthcoming three-year period:

- ✓ Developing intervention mechanisms that can traverse multiple sectors and impact areas in a cross-cutting vision that considers the interactions among diverse domains and promotes collaborative partnerships among the different stakeholders active within the regions where the Foundation operates.
- ✓ Promoting collaborative opportunities with stakeholders aligned with the sustainable development goals of Southern Italy—such as public administrations, third-sector organizations, fellow foundations, and private companies—to enhance the impact of the implemented actions and enrich the knowledge base and network of relationships essential for effective action.

5.4.1 The Integrated Approach

The process of preparing the Strategic Plan and listening to the needs expressed by third-sector operators and those who confront the daily challenges of working in the South has further convinced us that addressing social development issues and related demographic regeneration requires a broad outlook. This perspective crosses individual domains and strives to initiate mechanisms of a “contagion” and generate multiplicative effects, as previously mentioned, with an emphasis on the need to broaden the range of beneficiaries in the coming years.


In many cases, the root of the problems and the critical issues cannot be attributed to a single cause or reason. Furthermore, as demonstrated by the nearly two decades of the Foundation’s experience and almost always, intervening on one of the factors that are delaying or slowing down the development processes in the South often requires the removal of obstacles or the loosening of constraints of various natures.

Adopting an integrated approach not only offers advantages in terms of resource consumption, allowing it to operate across multiple areas with the same level of resource commitment, but it can also act as a catalyst to encourage collaborative relationships among stakeholders, undertake ambitious projects that bring together diverse skills, experiences, and personal stories, converging toward a shared and broader objective. Moreover, it helps mitigate the risks of opposition and competition, often inevitable when resources are limited and fragmented across different sectors.


In prioritizing demographic regeneration and countering depopulation as a strategic challenge for the next three years while designating the marginalized regions of the South as a testing ground for innovative intervention methods and tools, it is crucial to adopt a vision that simultaneously considers economic, social, and cultural issues. Promoting projects that seek to reorganize the service network—one of the key priorities for addressing the exodus from the South, from both rural areas and urban peripheries—requires collaboration between local administrations and the social sector. This approach inevitably involves implementing a multidimensional strategy that considers a variety of objectives and tools, integrating the educational system, services for the care and well-being of individuals, mobility, activities for cultural promotion, and sports.

It must also adopt a long-term vision, one that cannot be solely dictated by the present emergencies but should patiently and confidently await the outcomes of actions that, as we have learned over the years, need time to yield results.

Having an integrated vision also means considering, for each measure of action, not only the potential capacity to slow down processes of depopulation and reactivate habitation, but also to generate benefits for environmental sustainability, accelerate pathways of social inclusion, and support the digitalization of the South, while preventing it from becoming an added factor of inequality. Furthermore, it entails calibrating instruments and the intensity of actions according to the specific characteristics of the regions. There is not just one South.



“Having an integrated vision means calibrating instruments and the intensity of actions according to the specific characteristics of the regions. There is not just one South.”



5.4.2 The Collaborative Approach

Since its establishment, Fondazione Con il Sud (“The Foundation With the South”) has prioritized collaboration, as emphasized by the “CON” (“WITH”) in its name. The choice of collaboration—patient yet never subordinate—will remain the guiding principle in the coming years. The objective is to further consolidate this approach as a distinctive hallmark of the strategy, based on the belief that accepting or succumbing to competitive mechanisms, forgoing the pursuit of dialogue and constructive engagement, and positioning oneself antagonistically against those who govern the region are ultimately losing choices that are inconsistent with the social development goals of the South.

In the upcoming three-year period, the Foundation aims not only to promote opportunities for collaboration among third-sector organizations and local administrations, or to encourage and support partnerships between the social and the research sectors, but also to accelerate its path on the road to collaboration with greater intensity and frequency along three integrated directions:

- ✓ To seek, whenever the conditions allow, partners with whom to share a vision for the future and initiatives supporting the South, making a concerted effort to engage foundations and institutions that have never collaborated with the Foundation or that have not invested their resources and energies in the South, despite having objectives aligned with the mission of the Foundation.
- ✓ To explore innovative models of collaborating with local governments, with the belief that it is through joint efforts, working side by side, that ambitious goals can be accomplished and, above all, sustained over time.
- ✓ To develop innovative partnership programs with private companies and business associations, with the goal of both involving key players in the processes of regional development and extending the resource mobilisation perimeter, thereby enhancing the pool of available resources.

The choice of collaboration as a preferred strategy will enable the Foundation to operate more easily and effectively in the areas and regions where it has been less present thus far, leveraging the expertise of partners who have already gained experience there.

Finally, collaborating with others will allow for both a broader impact and a wider range of beneficiaries while also enriching the diversity of skills, promoting a positive process of exchange and sharing projects, knowledge, and relationships.

“Promote opportunities for collaboration among third-sector organizations and local administrations.”

06. Strategic Framework for the 2025-2027 Triennium

This chapter outlines the Foundation’s strategic initiatives for the 2025-2027 triennium.

The first section examines the key areas of initiative (see paragraph 6.1), identifying the general objectives that will subsequently be developed through annual planning and operational activities carried out by the Board of Directors and administrative offices.

Next, the operational instruments (see paragraph 6.2) and funding mechanisms (see paragraph 6.3) are defined and aligned, tracing their evolution in relation to strategic objectives while taking into account the operational framework established in previous years.

The section “The Role of Subsidiaries” analyzes the contribution of the Foundation’s two affiliated entities—the social enterprise Con i Bambini and the asset management company Sefea Impact—which play a central role in complementing the Foundation’s strategic initiatives.

Paragraph 6.5 is dedicated to communication strategies and how they support the development of the Foundation and its mission. Paragraphs 6.6 and 6.7 are dedicated respectively to outlining the financial resources to operationally support the activities and to comparing the Foundation’s strategy with the main international policies.

Finally, the last paragraph (see paragraph 0) addresses organizational developments, which are essential for the effective implementation of the objectives outlined in this chapter.



6.1 Thematic Areas

Below are the thematic areas of the Foundation's funding programs and initiatives for the 2025-2027 triennium. Each identifies a central objective in broad terms within the framework of the theory of change, while the development of specific actions is entrusted to the Board of Directors as part of the annual programming process.

The concrete definition of initiative tools will follow the "integrated approach" outlined in the chapter on general strategy (see paragraph 5.4.1), understood as the need to adopt principles and areas of action that generate multiplicative and diffusive effects.

Furthermore, the structure adopted will also take into account several cross-cutting objectives of significant importance, which may be further defined and appropriately emphasized over time. The following is an initial, non-exhaustive list of key priorities: the development of inland areas; the role of housing in fostering autonomy for vulnerable individuals; women's empowerment; the enhancement of youth engagement; and the upholding of dignified labor practices within organizations involved in project implementation.

6.1.1 Historical, Artistic, and Cultural Area

The promotion of historical, artistic, and cultural heritage (SAC – "Storico-Artistico e Culturale") is an instrument for the Foundation to activate community processes among local stakeholders and strengthen regional identity. Through initiatives focused on sites of historical, artistic, and cultural significance, the Foundation aims to "return" these assets to the community, creating sustainable social, cultural, and economic activities with broad and meaningful participation from residents and families.

The Foundation's approach to managing historical, artistic, and cultural assets—developed through extensive experience and positively assessed over the years—recognizes the central role of the Third Sector in defining strategies for their use. This model emphasizes the connection between these sites and the cultural and socio-economic activities of the area, integrating them into a broader framework of local microeconomic development.

Over time, the Foundation has tested different models, including direct calls for proposals targeting third-sector organizations (with four editions launched in 2008, 2011, 2014, and 2017) and public-private partnerships with public administrations. These partnerships have made it possible to use both restored and yet-to-be-restored properties funded through public resources, as seen in agreements with the municipalities of Taranto and Lecce in 2020 and the framework agreement with MIC (the Italian Ministry of Culture) in 2023.

During the 2025-2027 triennium, the Foundation plans to launch a new call for proposals targeting third-sector organizations for the promotion of historically, artistically, and culturally significant real estate, with a focus on urban and peri-urban areas. These projects, developed in collaboration with the local community, should transform the properties into accessible spaces that foster social cohesion, inclusion, and the creation of new opportunities, including employment.

During this period, the Foundation will also continue to explore partnerships with public administrations interested in assigning restored properties to third-sector organizations or involving them in the promotion of "cultural sites" through the use of new legal instruments introduced by the Third Sector Code, particularly the partnership model outlined in Article 89, Paragraph 17.

6.1.2 Environmental Assets Area

The Foundation's strategy for the protection and sustainable use of environmental assets is centered on participatory grassroots ecological transition processes and initiatives aimed at addressing climate change. Over the years, efforts have focused on reducing environmental risks in protected natural areas, safeguarding and revitalizing landscapes—particularly abandoned lands—and developing new models and approaches to minimize the environmental impact of individual and collective actions, including the adoption of renewable energy sources. In the upcoming three-year period, the Foundation will be able to continue its commitment to improving the relationship between the natural environment and civil society through two key initiatives.

One initiative will focus on the green urban regeneration of public spaces through sustainable and inclusive practices that also strengthen communities' sense of belonging and identity. Beyond improving the aesthetic and functional quality of public spaces, green urban regeneration presents an opportunity to reinforce social cohesion and resilience while addressing the needs of vulnerable groups, including access to housing, culture, and sports. By adopting sustainable and inclusive practices, it is possible to shape an urban environment that supports both social and environmental well-being, contributing to a more sustainable and balanced future for all.

During the triennium, consideration may also be given to launching the third edition of the call for proposals dedicated to repurposing uncultivated, abandoned, or underutilized land for economic and commercial activities with social objectives, creating employment opportunities for disadvantaged individuals, NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), and youth at risk of migration. Agricultural activities, conducted using sustainable practices, combine a social mission with a market-oriented approach, fostering the production of high-quality, competitive food products that are also emblematic of their place of origin. These initiatives emphasize the deep connection between local products and the cultural identity of rural and marginalized areas in Southern Italy.

6.1.3 Confiscated Assets Area

Mafia-confiscated assets play a crucial role, as their redevelopment serves as a means to promote and embed a culture of legality, which is essential for the development of Southern Italy. Efforts aimed at strengthening the social economy, creating employment opportunities, and fostering active civic participation can help communities reclaim areas that have been subjected to the economic and cultural dominance of criminal organizations.

In these contexts, the Foundation, through active engagement with civil society, strives to integrate restoration and revitalization initiatives with social inclusion strategies and the creation of economic and employment prospects. This approach is effective when built on collaboration among individuals and organizations with diverse expertise in social, productive, and commercial sectors. Redevelopment initiatives must be grounded in a strong organizational culture and, when relevant to project goals, an entrepreneurial mindset to ensure that efforts to restore civic life remain sustainable even after the Foundation's funding has ended.

The Foundation's commitment to the redevelopment of confiscated assets will be further strengthened over the next three years through the following:

- ✓ To pilot an open-call funding mechanism, in collaboration with co-funding entities, to further expand the number of organizations involved in this critical area of civic engagement and to increase the number of confiscated assets repurposed through the Foundation's support (currently around one hundred);
- ✓ To establish collaborations with public institutions that, aligning with the Foundation's strategic goals and adhering to its funding framework, are willing to make their confiscated properties—preferably already renovated—available to the nonprofit sector.
- ✓ To attempt to create a national partnership (build on the work carried out in previous years by the specially established task force set ad hoc), a national coalition capable of scaling and amplifying efforts in this field. This would facilitate the launch and development of social projects within confiscated assets across the country. Such a partnership could act more effectively than in the past in dialogue with agencies and public institutions to promote a more efficient management of confiscated assets.

More broadly, at the institutional level, the Foundation will continue—through the ongoing efforts of its President, staff, and key stakeholders—to advocate for a shift in the approach to the use of confiscated assets. The goal is to harness their full potential for social impact in community development processes, overcome the evident current challenges, and propose new solutions emerging from dialogue among the Ministry of the Interior, the National Agency for the Administration and Destination of Assets Seized and Confiscated from Organized Crime (ANBSC), the Ministry of Justice, Local Authorities (EE.LL.), the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI), the National Forum of the Third Sector, and the Parliamentary Anti-Mafia Commission.

6.1.4 Socio-Healthcare Area

The social and health sector has been the subject of constant attention over the years both because of the growing needs expressed by the regions as a result of the decline of the traditional welfare model and because of the desire to promote a community model that emphasizes an active engagement of citizens, third-sector organizations, and public services.

Over the years, a variety of initiatives have been supported, including care and social inclusion for individuals with disabilities and non-self-sufficient elderly people; strengthening the social and professional autonomy of young people with mental disabilities; addressing healthcare disparities; improving access to social and healthcare services; providing support and treatment for new forms of addiction; and promoting the well-being of family caregivers responsible for individuals with high care needs. The projects funded in this sector have contributed to strengthening accredited local services, leading to more extensive and effective personalized support for individuals in vulnerable conditions and those experiencing healthcare disparities.

The next edition of the social and healthcare funding program should continue to integrate effectively with public policies (e.g., the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, or PNRR), available resources, and local needs while also supporting experimental and innovative initiatives. The proposed focus will be on one of the following priority areas, to be determined as part of the annual planning process.

-
- ✓ Addressing healthcare disparities and patient out-migration in inland areas: the movement of individuals seeking medical care outside their regions threatens the fundamental right to health, equality, and equity, further widening regional disparities. To counteract depopulation in Southern Italy and respond to the growing phenomenon of healthcare-related out-migration, this initiative could support experimental measures to strengthen local healthcare facilities and community-based services for prevention and treatment in remote and peripheral areas. These efforts may also involve the adoption of new technologies to improve access and service delivery.
 - ✓ Promoting mental health and well-being: psychological and mental well-being has become a critical issue both in Italy and internationally, with a significant rise in demand for mental health support. This initiative could focus on experimental programs aimed at strengthening mental health promotion and psychological and social well-being, particularly for individuals facing socio-economic hardship. These efforts would be developed in collaboration with and alongside the local community.

In both cases, funded initiatives will be able to test and include, where feasible, strategies to support social housing and independent living for individuals experiencing vulnerability.

6.1.5 Youth Education Area

With the establishment of the Fund Against Educational Poverty in Minors, the Foundation's budget allocated to youth education initiatives has been incorporated into the activities of its subsidiary Con i Bambini, which manages the fund.

Exceptions may be considered for specific initiatives if institutional or international partnerships dedicated to education can be established, (as occurred in the recently concluded triennial agreement with JP Morgan Chase Foundation, which also actively involved the subsidiary Con i Bambini) or if special initiatives are launched, such as local development programs (where the Foundation will mandate both technical and financial support from Con i Bambini).

6.1.6 Inclusion Area

The inclusion area stems from years of experience with innovative initiatives that have explored aspects and issues beyond the Foundation's established operational framework.

Over the years, various initiatives and strategies have been tested and strengthened to ensure that individuals in disadvantaged and vulnerable conditions can access opportunities and fully participate in the social, economic, and cultural life of their communities, contributing to a more cohesive society. These initiatives have addressed several key issues, including combating the exploitation of people with a migration history, supporting the social and professional reintegration of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, tackling gender-based violence, and assisting those experiencing housing insecurity or lacking access to sports.

Based on these themes, the Foundation will be able to launch new initiatives over the triennium, defining their specific content and objectives within the framework of annual planning. The scope and format of these initiatives will be determined not only by available resources and programming constraints but also by opportunities for collaboration with co-funding partners (many of whom place a particular or primary focus on inclusion-related issues) and by the needs expressed by third-sector organizations active in these sectors. The Foundation's Institutional Activities Department will remain engaged in developing innovative proposals on the aforementioned themes, also integrating them as important cross-cutting elements within the planned initiatives.


6.1.7 Support for Volunteer Practices


Supporting volunteer practices is a core component of the Foundation's mission. The objective is to strengthen volunteer organizations and networks actively operating in local communities, including in terms of methodological and organizational innovation, to improve their effectiveness and impact. Rather than funding projects within predefined thematic areas, this approach acknowledges the inherently cross-cutting role of volunteer organizations and the diverse nature of their activities.

Over the years, the Foundation has initially supported the development of local networks established by groups of volunteer organizations, as well as the strengthening of national networks operating across multiple regions. It has later focused on addressing issues such as combating social hardship in the poorest areas of Southern Italy, mobilizing new volunteers by considering emerging forms and models of volunteering, and sustaining the ongoing activities of volunteer organizations across eleven southern provinces.

In the upcoming three-year period, one of the following two initiatives may be selected, with the final decision to be made during the annual planning process:



-  Replicating the pilot initiative that offers direct support to individual volunteer organizations to maintain and strengthen their regular activities, following the previous approach of pre-selecting target areas based on strategic considerations regarding the Foundation's regional reach.

-  Addressing issues related to social hardship and the ongoing depopulation of Southern regions by promoting volunteer initiatives that improve access to essential services and involve local communities in initiatives supporting social inclusion, active citizenship, and collective participation, with particular attention to young people. They could be developed—following the model of the 2024 Volunteer Call for Proposals—through partnerships led by third-sector organizations that have never previously received funding from the Foundation as the primary fund recipient.

6.1.8 Human Capital Development

The human capital development initiative in Southern Italy aims to attract young talent to the regions of the South and encourage their integration into international research networks. This objective has been pursued through two editions of a call for proposals designed to recruit researchers from other regions into universities and research centers in the South. While the initiative has achieved excellent results, it has also exposed several challenges related to universities' management of academic career pathways. Moreover, the structure of these calls now appears outdated, given the emergence of numerous large-scale initiatives of a similar nature funded through European programs and directed toward universities.

In line with the strategic objectives of the 2025–2027 three-year plan, the Foundation aims to develop a model that promotes the admission and long-term retention of international university students in areas with high depopulation rates and universities experiencing a significant decline in enrollment. In the long term, at-

tracting young people from other countries is intended to create new residents, workforce, and families who can contribute to the demographic recovery of these regions, mitigating ongoing depopulation processes, and to lay the foundation for the revitalization of local communities.

The program is designed to support the social integration of international students, enabling them to actively contribute to the development and growth of their host communities. Third-sector organizations are expected to play a key role by assisting with orientation both in students' home countries and in the cities where their destination universities are located. The initiative's success will also depend on universities' capacity to establish dedicated support services, including financial incentives such as tuition waivers and subsidized access to food and housing, as well as administrative assistance to streamline bureaucratic procedures.

6.1.9 Local Development

The local development initiative for the 2025–2027 period aligns directly with the broader strategic objectives of this plan and aims to initiate demographic regeneration processes to counteract depopulation and lay the groundwork for revitalizing local communities. Issues such as population decline, low birth rates, and aging affect Italy as a whole, particularly the South, not just the so-called "inland areas". However, these areas currently provide an optimal context for testing initiatives that help understand what the necessary levers may be to intervene in this problem. This initiative seeks to place local stakeholders, particularly third-sector organizations, at the center of the process, recognizing their critical role in defining effective strategies for community revitalization based on their in-depth understanding of the local context and ability to navigate diverse interests.

The Foundation, together with other partners supporting the initiative, will select proposals through a call for proposals from the regions, prioritizing those that most convincingly meet the identified evaluation criteria. Given that participatory processes without tangible outcomes can lead to distrust and social disillusionment, a key selection criterion will be the ability to implement the proposed measures within a clearly defined timeframe. Additional considerations will include the optimal size of the target region, the location of the municipalities (with preference given to smaller municipalities that experience more severely depopulation and isolation challenges, while adopting a broader geographical scope than that defined by "inland areas"), and the number of pilot projects to be launched (which should not exceed four over the three years).

Convinced that the most effective approach to halting depopulation, revitalize communities, and initiate demographic regeneration requires the coordinated and simultaneous use of multiple strategies—including immigration, birth rate support, return migration, and local retention—the initiative will adopt a strategic requirement that limits participation to entities with an active SAI (Reception and Integration System) or demonstrated concrete experience in immigrant reception.

The technical and operational coordination of the pilot projects will be entrusted to a collaborative framework between local public administrations and well-established actors in the local social sector. Consequently, proposals must be submitted by a strong public-private partnership that actively involves local civil society stakeholders. Additionally, to increase the likelihood of success, it will be essential to leverage public funding that can be allocated to the initiative, adding to and integrating them with resources provided by the Foundation.

6.1.10 Experimental and Innovative Initiatives

In keeping with its longstanding mission, the Foundation will continue to support initiatives with a strong experimental and innovative component, which may arise from ongoing experiences, dialogue with its stakeholders, or the analysis of current trends. On these grounds, it will be the responsibility of the governing body, with the support of the administrative offices, to define a framework aligned with broader innovation objectives while ensuring compliance with the established evaluation processes. Typically, unless specific and justified exceptions arise, once the Foundation has developed an "intervention model," a competitive selection process will be carried out to identify the implementing entities.

During the 2025–2027 period, one potential initiative could involve supporting third-sector organizations (ETS) seeking to acquire property for use as their headquarters. This initiative would primarily target small-scale ETS, deeply rooted in their communities, capable of generating a measurable social impact in their regions, and with the financial capacity to sustain the investment. Preferably designed as a grant-based system upon request, the mechanism should incorporate clear eligibility criteria to prevent opportunistic behavior and be implemented in partnership with co-financing entities that align with its objectives and methodologies.

6.1.11 Third Sector Leadership Training

Over the next three years, the leadership training initiative for third-sector organizations—now well-established and jointly managed by the National Forum and CSVnet (the Italian National Coordination of Volunteer Support Centers)—will continue.

To align more closely with the Foundation's strategic priorities on social desertification and demographic decline, the initiative may incorporate capacity-building programs not only for Third Sector executives and managers but also for other professionals actively engaged in these organizations. Additionally, efforts will be made to strengthen collaboration with local stakeholders. The community-focused dimension of the initiative will actively engage representatives from third-sector organizations and networks, as well as local public administration officials and private-sector entities operating in small, cohesive, and well-defined territorial areas. Furthermore, the training aimed at certifying competencies for specific roles and profiles currently recognized by national regulations will continue (e.g., technicians in skills assessment and validation, training, and community animation).

During the upcoming triennium, an academy will be inaugurated to further enhance the existing resources available on the digital platform underpinning the training program.

6.1.12 Communication

The communication initiatives play a strategic role in the pursuit of the mission of strengthening social infrastructure in Southern Italy. Their primary goal is to promote the dissemination of meaningful stories and experiences to the general public and to encourage active civic engagement.

Throughout the 2025–2027 triennium, partnerships with agencies and institutions specializing in audiovisual production with a focus on creating content that highlights third-sector experiences and carries strong cultural and symbolic value will continue. This emerging approach offers an effective way to share the Foundation's work and cultural vision with a broader audience. In this context, the collaborations already initiated with Apulia Film Commission and Amazon Prime will carry on.

6.1.13 Studies and Research

It is confirmed that, except for initiatives aimed at enhancing human capital, the Foundation does not provide financial support for scientific research or the activities of universities in Southern Italy. This decision is also driven by the significant imbalance, particularly pronounced in this case, between supply and demand. Additionally, it is reaffirmed that the Foundation, except in truly exceptional cases, does not sponsor events or manifestations, especially those of a recurring nature.

However, a limited number of initiatives for studies and in-depth analyses on topics directly related to the Foundation's activities may receive support. In this regard, research initiatives may be undertaken, provided that the necessary conditions are met and that they align closely with the objectives of the Foundation's institutional initiatives, focusing on issues such as regional development disparities, depopulation, and social decline. The ultimate goal is to enhance awareness of the critical role that social capital plays in development processes.



6.2 Operational Instruments

This section outlines the classification of the 'operational instruments' the Foundation uses to achieve its strategic objectives. These instruments refer to the concrete outcomes produced through its disbursement activity. An operational instrument defines what is funded rather than the framework within which the funding is administered, commonly referred to as the 'disbursement instrument.' The Foundation continuously assesses and refines these instruments to ensure they remain aligned with its mission and the applicants' needs.

6.2.1 The "Exemplary" Project




The 'exemplary project' has served as the core model, guiding the disbursement activities of the Fondazione Con il Sud since its inception. In addition to incorporating the main elements that shape its strategic approach—such as partnership and collective governance, social inclusion, community empowerment, and impact evaluation—the model helps address the persistent imbalance between the high demand for support and the limited availability of resources in the regions where the Foundation operates. It provides a framework for initiatives that can be presented to public policymakers and resource holders with the dual objective of ensuring long-term sustainability and assessing scalability.

The 'exemplary project' serves as a pathway for the growth of associations and co-operatives, ensuring their alignment with the broader objective of strengthening social infrastructure. This consistency is largely maintained through standardized evaluation and monitoring protocols.

Ahead of a new three-year programming cycle, the structure of the 'exemplary

project'—validated through nearly two decades of experimentation—remains stable, including the scale of individual initiatives. A fundamental component of this model continues to be partnership-building, designed to cultivate and strengthen a network-based culture. The Foundation will continue to support 'exemplary projects' through its established disbursement mechanisms (cf. para. 6.3 Disbursement Methods): the call for proposals, request-based initiatives, and invitation-only initiatives. While these mechanisms differ primarily in terms of publicity strategies and accessibility, they all serve targeted disbursement objectives. Throughout these processes, two key principles remain central: the active participation of beneficiaries—ensuring that those directly affected by social challenges have a voice in shaping the initiatives, regardless of the funding mechanism—and the ongoing support provided by the Foundation's offices.

The criteria used to determine eligibility for funding under the 'exemplary projects' framework, adapted to varying degrees based on the specific objectives of each initiative, are guided by three main requirements:

-  Ensuring that the objectives of the proposal are consistent with the Foundation's strategy and with the purpose of the disbursement instrument (proposed idea);
-  Establishing a partnership capable of achieving the intended objectives and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the funded activities;
-  Guaranteeing quality and efficiency in the design of the proposed initiative model.

6.2.2 Supporting the Core Activities of Third-Sector Organizations

In addition to the exemplary project, the Foundation has explored providing funding aimed at supporting the ongoing activities of third-sector organizations on multiple occasions in the past. This strategy seeks to enhance the core activities of these entities, particularly those that are smaller in scale, in the early stages of their development (start-ups), or operating in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas where preliminary support is necessary before progressing to more complex initiatives. This instrument has already been used in volunteer development programs through direct funding to volunteer organizations in underfunded regions in Italy and to support third-sector organizations in the start-up phase within the tourism sector.

This operational instrument also provides a range of financial support, including guarantee funds, interest subsidies, and equity contributions, intended to enhance the managerial, financial, and entrepreneurial capacity of third-sector organizations. In the forthcoming triennium, these funding approaches may continue to be deployed selectively, particularly through request-based initiatives, as they are particularly suitable for demand-driven self-selection policies and institutional partnerships (to maximize their capacity for disbursement and dissemination).

6.2.3 Community Foundations

Community foundations warrant distinct consideration as they play an important role in the Foundation's social infrastructure strategy and are institutional anchors

within their respective communities, fostering cohesion among stakeholders engaged in the social and civic development of the region. For this reason, the Foundation continues to interpret community foundations primarily as disbursing and second-tier instruments. This model is specifically designed to provide local third-sector organizations with an institutional mechanism that expands their access to philanthropic resources available from both internal and external donors within the community. In this regard, the concept of a community foundation remains intrinsically tied to the promotion of a culture of giving and an ethic of care within local communities. In promoting this model, the aim is to prevent it from being perceived solely as a mechanism for mobilizing financial resources at the local level or as a means to reinforce and formalize pre-existing initiatives and partnerships.

The operational instrument, refined over more than 15 years of practice, supports both the endowment component of the foundation and its disbursement activities through a matching mechanism designed to enhance independent fundraising and strategic planning capacities. However, experiences supported by the Foundation have highlighted certain limitations in fundraising efforts aimed at building endowments, primarily due to the difficulty of attracting donations based on the recipient's reputation rather than a specific initiative with an immediate social impact.

These constraints often result in the formulation of overly ambitious multi-year fundraising targets in funding applications, forcibly adjusted to align with regulatory requirements. Moreover, the scale of endowment fundraising goals generally does not permit a sustainable and continuous disbursement activity to be financed solely through endowment-generated returns, even in the medium term. Nevertheless, while insufficient to sustain independent disbursement activities, a foundational endowment is of fundamental importance for the financial operations of community foundations. Considering these challenges, over the next three years, the Foundation will pilot an initiative model aimed at facilitating the achievement of endowment fundraising goals and increasing the allocation of contributions to support grantmaking initiatives, always consistent with the matching mechanisms that incentivize the mobilization of locally sourced funds.

Between 2025 and 2027, Fondazione Con il Sud will continue its strategic efforts to promote the establishment of new community foundations, which are currently concentrated in Campania and Sicily, particularly regions where such foundations have not yet been developed (Puglia, Calabria, Basilicata, and Sardinia). Furthermore, should a particularly strong and well-structured proposal emerge, the Foundation may consider supporting the creation of a community foundation in Molise, recognizing the absence of philanthropic grantmaking institutions in the region. It is deemed appropriate to confirm the preliminary selection criteria for proposals, ensuring that applicants receive the standard support from our administrative offices:



- ✔ A predominantly disbursement function (the operational activities serve the second-tier initiatives in favor of members) based on an effective fundraising plan and primarily implemented through public calls for proposals.
- ✔ A broad representation of the local Third Sector and the presence of the main civil institutions within the local community.

- ✓ A clearly defined and consistent geographical limitation within a scope that allows for direct community engagement and efficient service delivery (coverage of an entire province is unlikely to meet these criteria).
- ✓ A governance structure that assigns to the Third Sector, in all its constituent parts, prevalence in primary authority over the direction, administration, and management of the community foundation.

Based on these considerations, the funding regulations for community foundations will undergo a comprehensive revision. Concurrently, a scouting program will be relaunched to facilitate the establishment of new foundations, with a particular focus on regions and localities where this has not yet been possible.



6.3 Disbursement Methods

Regardless of the operational instruments used for a specific grant, the Foundation may employ three possible “grantmaking mechanisms”, referring to the structured process (and the framework referred to as the “grantmaking instrument”) that leads to the allocation of the funds:

- ✓ Calls for proposals: a structured process conducted within a defined time-frame, made public, and typically following a competitive selection process.
- ✓ Request-based initiatives (also called “on-demand”): publicly available for an extended period with a less competitive selection process. This process is commonly used for identifying community foundations and selecting co-funding projects.
- ✓ Invitation-based initiatives: the Foundation, based on specific objectives and in-depth evaluations, directly selects the organizations invited to participate.

“Institutional partnerships” (see section 6.3.4) cut across different grantmaking methods. These initiatives, regardless of the funding mechanism used, are distinguished by the involvement of one or more institutional partners who collaborate in both the development and financing of the initiative. Additionally, all initiatives utilizing well-established and widely tested models incorporate some form of beneficiary participation. One such mechanism includes co-funding arrangements (see Section 6.3.4).

6.3.1 Call for Proposals

The call for proposals serves as a grantmaking mechanism that more effectively facilitates the achievement of the subsequent objectives:

- ✓ selecting the most promising proposals, amidst a multitude of submissions and in conditions of scarcity of resources;
- ✓ ensuring equitable access and a transparent, standardized selection process for all applicants;
- ✓ having a valid and effective instrument for identifying talent within the Third Sector;
- ✓ optimizing efficiency by aligning the financial needs (based on preliminary analyses) with the available financial and technical resources that can address them;
- ✓ supporting long-term strategic objectives by fostering clusters of projects designed around specific developmental goals;
- ✓ leveraging internal expertise and capacity-building methodologies to provide targeted support for thematically aligned projects;
- ✓ consistently pursuing a long-term strategy by establishing project clusters within the region, selected based on specific development objectives. For example, as demonstrated in the recently concluded triennium, nearly twenty projects simultaneously launched community energy initiatives;
- ✓ optimizing internal expertise and support techniques to effectively oversee groups of homogenous projects.

To these objectives, the call for proposals proves to be a highly effective instrument. Furthermore, following an initial successful pilot phase in the 2019-2021 triennium, the 'two-phase' formula was consolidated during the concluding period (2022-2024). The first phase focuses on selecting proposals with the potential to meet the Call's general objectives, while the second phase is dedicated to refining project frameworks, specifying outcomes, and strengthening partnerships.

This approach provides a tool that facilitates the entry of novice organizations (often lacking adequate project planning skills), while simultaneously ensuring project "implementability" and quality; greater alignment between the specific objectives of individual initiatives and the Foundation's general goals; as well as more predictable timelines for project implementation (the latter has historically been one of the main challenges and sources of difficulty). Beyond offering valuable support to partnerships and continuing a tradition of collaboration with applicants, the two-phase model is also essential for enhancing the organization's learning capacity through external interaction.

The call for proposals instrument also presents certain critical elements, such as the need for third-sector organizations (ETS) to adapt their developmental trajectory to that required by the call, the competitive dynamic it creates among different partnerships within the region, and the misalignment between the timing of publication and the project planning process. The Foundation seeks, as far as possible, to address all these elements by continuously refining the procedure (as outlined above) and, when deemed appropriate, adopting alternative funding mechanisms.

Regardless of the often-polarized views between those who support or oppose the call-for-proposals formula, and beyond the choice of disbursement methods, which must be made based on the need to achieve mission objectives, Fondazione Con il Sud deems it essential to:

-
- ✓ Prioritize the substance of project proposals over their form, discouraging an excessive focus on technicalities that could foster a kind of "professionalism" in project proposal drafting. This tendency risks shaping needs and demands based on formal requirements or even the specific terminology used in calls for proposals rather than on the actual priorities of the communities involved.
 - ✓ Avoid excessively prescriptive calls for proposals, instead defining a broad framework for project areas while leaving ample space for ideas and free expression of the applicants' substantive needs, emphasizing in particular the element relating to a strong understanding of local context and the accountability of local community stakeholders.
 - ✓ Continue the concrete experimentation of participatory practices to ensure, to an ever greater extent, the shared ownership of initiatives among third-sector entities, public stakeholders, and private-sector entrepreneurs.

These guidelines will also be duly considered in the case of co-financed calls for proposals carried out in collaboration with private and public organizations (see Sections 5.4.2 and 6.3.2.1) to pursue common objectives. In such cases, the Foundation will generally retain control of the evaluation and monitoring activities.

6.3.2 Request-Based Initiatives (Virtual Desk)

Despite its advantages, the call for proposals does not always meet the necessary criteria for effectiveness and efficiency, and in certain cases, alternative disbursement methods are preferred. Among these, the Foundation has, for several years, experimented with the possibility of awarding funding upon request (subject to the availability of resources) through the submission of funding applications via a virtual desk (the Chàiros platform).

This modality is applied particularly in the case of community foundations (see Section 6.2.3) and co-financed initiatives (see Section 6.3.2.1), where the adoption of clear access criteria helps prevent organizational imbalances, such as an excessive or overly concentrated influx of requests.

Furthermore, it is usually adopted for initiatives—especially common within institutional partnerships—that provide support for the financial, managerial, and entrepreneurial growth of third-sector organizations (ETS), where the traditional call-for-proposals mechanism proves less effective.

6.3.3 Co-Funding Initiatives

Co-funding initiatives offer a dual opportunity: they attract additional investments to Southern Italy and the Third Sector beyond the Foundation's resources, and they engage in valuable exchanges with other funding practices and philanthropic approaches. Over the last triennium alone, more than €8 million in additional funds have been secured beyond those directly disbursed, bringing the total amount of external contributions since the program's inception to €31.3 million. Co-funded initiatives can take the form of a traditional call for proposals or "on-demand". The choice of one of the two options depends primarily on the strategic objectives of the collaboration with the co-funder and the extent of financial resources available.

For proposals submitted for direct funding, an initial assessment is conducted to ensure alignment with the Foundation's objectives and compliance with regulatory provisions. If deemed eligible, proposals proceed to an executive planning phase, which enhances their quality through direct dialogue between applicants and the Foundation staff.

Funded initiatives are not subject to specific area constraints and can therefore cover any area outlined in the Foundation's program. Additionally, this formula allows for initiatives beyond the scope of traditional calls for proposals, supporting initiatives with a high degree of experimentation.

For the 2025–2027 triennium, the co-funding initiative model will be maintained in its current configuration¹, to support highly innovative or experimental initiatives, attracting additional resources to Southern Italy, and continuing collaboration with public and private entities committed to an integrated approach to issues and areas of intervention consistent with the mission of Fondazione Con il Sud. Initiatives operating wholly or partially in the Molise region may also be considered.

To increase the volume of attracted resources and expand access to co-funding opportunities, particularly for third-sector organizations without privileged relationships with co-funding entities, the Foundation is actively pursuing collaboration agreements with private companies through the initiative Imprese con il Sud ("Businesses for the South"). This effort aims to encourage businesses to engage more concretely with the social sector and the South. This organizational commitment will continue in the new triennium to increase the grant-making base of co-funding initiatives and broaden the range of third-sector organizations that can benefit from this funding mechanism.

¹ The main prerequisites for accessing the instrument include the proposal's overall alignment with the Foundation's focus areas and funding methods, a central role assigned to the Third Sector and social issues, and a territorial focus limited to the regions where Fondazione con il Sud operates, assignment of the role of responsible entity to a third-sector organization (ETS) with a legal or operational office in the target regions, and absence of conflicts of interest between co-financing entities and the partnership.

6.3.4 Invitation-Based Initiatives

In exceptional cases, the Foundation may implement an "invitation-based" call for proposals. This involves predefining eligibility criteria, approved by the Foundation's governing and administrative bodies, to compile a list of organizations invited to submit an expression of interest.

In the past, this mechanism has been used for local development initiatives and may be particularly suitable in cases where the target area has only a limited number of qualified operators or when the Foundation seeks to recognize organizations that have successfully carried out previously funded projects.

6.3.5 Institutional Partnerships

Across the different funding modalities, institutional partnerships serve as a well-established relational and technical-operational instrument for achieving both quantitative (attracting additional resources) and qualitative results (experimentation and innovation in social inclusion practices). Given their tangible ability to expand the Foundation's disbursement volume, these initiatives are an integral part of the resource mobilization strategy (see Section 6.6.2).

Based on the nature of the partnership, institutional partnerships can generally be classified as private or public. This distinction is also crucial from a technical-operational perspective, since collaborating with public entities significantly alters the working framework. In recent years, the Foundation has gained both experience and a strong reputation in this area.


Collaborations with private entities continue to prioritize those within the ACRI² network, which have consistently yielded positive results, particularly in terms of both the quality and number of initiatives funded in Southern Italy. Alongside these, partnerships with private foundations not of banking origin are becoming increasingly prevalent. These collaborations stem from relationships the Foundation has carefully nurtured over the years, both with Italian entities—most notably Fondazione Vismara and Enel Cuore Onlus, recognized for the continuity and quality of their engagement—and with international foundations and institutions particularly interested in specific themes or areas of work, such as JP Morgan Foundation, Open Society, and Fondation CHANEL. In most cases, these agreements involve joint initiatives, typically co-funded calls for proposals. However, some partnerships also include regranteeing agreements, positioning them as an integral part of the Foundation's resource mobilization strategy. This approach is especially favored in collaborations with international philanthropic institutions.

The Foundation will continue to forge collaborative agreements with private partners to pursue its mission of social infrastructure development in Southern Italy and increase its funding volume within its designated regions. Special attention will be given to identifying Italian and international partners who ensure adherence to the Foundation's mission objectives and who can contribute additional resources to support these goals. The involvement of external entities with their procedures

² Just to name a few: *Never Alone*, dedicated to unaccompanied foreign minors; *Migrants Initiative*; *Per Aspera ad Astra* initiative, focused on theater in correctional institutions; *FilieraFutura* and *Ager*, supporting research in the agri-food sector; *Funder35*, aimed at fostering the creation and development of social enterprises in the cultural sector; and a research observatory on common goods, in collaboration with ANCI.

and evaluation systems may require partial exemptions from the regulatory criteria outlined in the statute and regulations. Such exemptions must be carefully submitted to the governing body, which will assess their validity to the Foundation's objectives. All supported initiatives must, in any case, focus on the Foundation's target regions and areas of operation.

During the recently concluded triennium, the Foundation continued its collaboration with public administrations, formalizing specific agreements, replicating previously tested initiatives, and initiating dialogues that, it is hoped, will lead to new operational models. A suite of collaborative mechanisms has been established, which will be maintained and developed throughout the upcoming triennium, categorized as follows:

- 
- ✔ Technical assistance to public administrations to support them in defining of policies that support the Third Sector. A notable example is the assistance provided in 2020 to the Agency for Territorial Cohesion during the development of a call for proposals aimed at combating educational poverty in minors.
 - ✔ Establishment of equal partnership collaboration, formalized through cooperation agreements and the publication of co-funded and 'jointly' managed call for proposals (as seen in the agreements signed with the Lazio Region and the municipalities of Taranto and Lecce).
 - ✔ Entrusting the Foundation with the operational management of initiatives supporting the Third Sector, based on criteria and objectives predetermined by the public administration. This model has been successfully tested during the implementation of the Fund Against Educational Poverty in Minors.

The three possible forms of collaboration are largely carried out by the Foundation on a pro bono basis (without financial burden on the public administration). In the context of collaborations, the opportunity to adopt the mechanisms outlined in Articles 55-57 of the Third Sector Code on shared administration will be assessed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with public partners.

6.3.6 Co-funding criteria

Since the inception of its activities, the Foundation, following precise directives from its governing bodies, has adopted the practice of requiring beneficiary partnerships to provide financial coverage for a small portion of the project cost (ranging between 10% and 20%). This rule has had significant exception over the years (most notably, the numerous and substantial initiatives in support of volunteer organizations) and has always been applied with *cum grano salis* (with a grain of salt), carefully weighing its extent and defining its operational models based on the characteristics of the initiatives³.

³ In the calls for proposals under the National Fund Against Educational Poverty in Minors, a co-financing rate of 5% has predominantly been applied.

It responds to several needs: in addition to promoting the empowerment of community members who participate in social and civic change, which is fundamental for the achievement of the Foundation's mission (see Section 2), it also reduces the risk of moral opportunism regarding the appropriation of resources that could be perceived as “free” (even though, in fact, they are scarce within communities). Additionally, co-funding mechanisms play a crucial role in strengthening local actors by enhancing financial literacy, a fundamental component of contemporary citizenship, and by improving their capacity to regulate social governance processes. The management of co-funding flows demands careful oversight and allocation, continuously challenging the governance structures of partnerships. Lastly, the co-funding requirement encourages third-sector organizations to establish sustainable fundraising strategies both within their communities and beyond. This not only supports their ongoing activities but also helps ensure financial stability beyond the temporary assistance provided by Fondazione Con il Sud.

For the reasons outlined above, it is considered appropriate to maintain the general rule of co-funding, especially since no significant issues have emerged in recent years. However, the governing body, based on proposals from the administrative offices, will evaluate initiatives on a case-by-case basis to determine whether exceptions can be made. In such cases, more flexible co-funding mechanisms could be adopted, allowing for the recognition of the value of voluntary work through simplified reporting procedures.



6.4 The Role of Subsidiaries

6.4.1 The Social Enterprise “Con i Bambini”

In May 2016, pursuant to an agreement with the Government and in implementation of Article 1 of Law No. 208 of December 28, 2015, ACRI designated Fondazione Con il Sud as the implementing body for the Fund Against Educational Poverty in Minors, with an initial allocation exceeding €300 million⁴. To manage the Fund, Fondazione Con il Sud established a new entity in the legal form of a social enterprise, wholly owned and directed by the Foundation. Through its administration of the Fund, the social enterprise Con i Bambini seeks to promote the innovation of public policies aimed at addressing educational poverty among minors by testing effective, territorially-based initiative models and developing institutional mechanisms to facilitate their dissemination on a national scale. In the following years, the financial instruments of the Fund were extended until 2024, bringing its total funding to over

⁴ Banking foundations are eligible for a tax credit on contributions made to the Fund. During its initial three-year implementation phase (2016–2018), this fiscal incentive covered 75% of the contributed amounts. Between 2019 and 2023, the incentive was reduced to 65%, before being reinstated at 75% in 2024.

€780 million. Since 2016, the Fund has allocated €497 million, financing more than 800 projects involving the participation of over 9,500 public and private entities.

Con i Bambini upholds the same foundational values as Fondazione Con il Sud, with the operational objective of enabling a local institutional framework that prioritizes participation, dialogue, accountability, and mutual trust. This framework aligns with what is commonly referred to as an "educating community," which, in Con i Bambini's vision, is built upon a partnership between public agencies—responsible for care and education—and private entities that embrace these responsibilities as a priority.

This commitment to proactive and restorative action has facilitated the creation of local and national partnerships dedicated to working closely with individuals facing multifaceted social exclusion in highly vulnerable areas. As a result, a network of collaborations has emerged among third-sector organizations, schools, and local authorities, providing direct support to minors and families. This network is generating a broader civic engagement movement that includes parishes, sports associations, volunteer organizations, universities, and businesses. In many cases, these collaborations contribute to initiating or strengthening integrated local development initiatives while also encouraging public administrations to adopt innovative policies and approaches.

Throughout the recent 2022-2024 triennium, the trajectory of Con i Bambini's role in the implementation of the Fund has undergone a significant evolution. While maintaining a rigorous and efficient approach to fund management, the organization has increasingly positioned itself as a driver of innovation and a promoter of experimental initiatives in addressing educational poverty among minors, placing at the center:

- ✓ alliance between public institutions and private entities specialized in fighting educational poverty among minors as the axis on which to anchor the foundation for a accountable action within the education community;
- ✓ experimentation and dissemination of individualized support models for minors living in conditions of either potential (prevention) or actual (care) vulnerability to facilitate their transition to independent adulthood.
- ✓ validation of the effectiveness of the tested models through impact evaluations conducted by specialized third-party entities;
- ✓ continuous collection of quantitative and qualitative data on the conditions of minors and the impact of innovative educational practices, promoting a growing public dialogue grounded in informed learning.

Following this strategic approach, over the past three years, Con i Bambini has positioned the Fund as a key partner for public and private entities in designing comprehensive strategic plans. The most recent example is the national initiative to address educational poverty among minors in 15 Strategic Socio-Educational Areas (ASES, Aree Socio-Educative Strategiche), developed in collaboration with numerous national public institutions and coordinated with local administrations and agencies.

— — —
"The Fund has allocated €497 million, financing more than 800 projects involving the participation of over 9,500 public and private entities."
— — —

The continuity and in-depth management of the Fund has provided significant added value for the Foundation, both reputationally—enhancing its institutional recognition through agreements with multiple ministries, public administrations, and national and international philanthropic organizations—and operationally, by facilitating the adoption of technological and methodological innovations. Notably, the introduction of the Chàiros project management platform now recognizes as one of the leading tools in the field, as well as methodological advancements such as impact assessment and data analysis have been incorporated into the funding process.

The strategic direction of Con i Bambini's future development remains significantly contingent upon whether the Fund's financing will be further renewed. Such a renewal would ensure greater continuity, reinforcing its impact in the coming years and enabling the necessary investments in human capital and technology. Certain organizational areas and sub-areas require further consolidation of skills and process oversight to ensure the Fund's full effectiveness.

Nevertheless, even if the funding period is not extended, the resources presently available—consistent with the average annual allocation in recent years (approximately €50 million per year)—are sufficient to sustain the Fund's full operational capacity throughout the upcoming triennium.

The initiatives planned for the 2025–2027 period will, in part, be shaped by ongoing initiatives, particularly the call for proposal Organizziamo la Speranza, which targets 15 strategic socio-educational areas and will remain a focal point throughout 2025. Beyond this, the remaining initiatives will be determined through the strategic Steering Committee's planning efforts, which will be informed by recommendations from Con i Bambini's, based on monitoring and evaluation findings.

The management of the Fund, in addition to constituting a significant part of Fondazione Con il Sud's organizational and reputational assets, also de facto absorbs the work that the Foundation has historically carried out in the field of so-called 'youth education.' For the next three years, this work will remain entirely integrated within the Fund, except for specific and exceptional initiatives that may be approved as exceptions by the Foundation's governing bodies (see Section 6.4.1).

6.4.2 Sefea Social Impact SGR

At the beginning of the 2019–2021 planning period, and in accordance with its earlier decision (2016) to allocate a portion of its assets (up to 5%) to mission-related investments managed with autonomy and professional expertise, the Foundation acquired a substantial 25% stake in Sefea Social Impact SGR. This entity remains the first—and currently the only—asset management company controlled by non-profit organizations, which collectively hold 75% of its share capital, and is exclusively dedicated to managing social impact funds. Its mission is to promote a financial model capable of generating positive social change in the community's well-being, integrating into its investment strategy not only equitable financial returns but also the reinforcement of social capital, the enhancement of individual capabilities ("capacity-building" processes), and environmental sustainability.

Between 2022 and 2024, the company continued its consolidation process, both in organizational structure and financial and economic area. While the Foundation

has maintained its existing stake, it has become the largest minority shareholder and remains the principal actor and driver of this initiative, working alongside institutional investors who share governance of the SGR. However, further diversification of the shareholder base and of contributors to the fundraising remain essential to ensuring the initiative's long-term sustainability and independence.

The investment phase of the first fund has now concluded, yielding positive results (with 33 investment transactions finalized, for a total investment of €31 million). Additionally, the initial fundraising phase for the second fund has secured €20 million. The investments made thus far—monitored through built-in assessment mechanisms—have contributed to improving the working and living conditions of 636 vulnerable individuals, expanding access to essential products and services in key social sectors (such as social housing and right to education) for 2,011 people, facilitating educational and training opportunities for 2,771 individuals in vulnerable situations, and reducing CO₂ emissions by 1,912 tons.

Following the completion of the startup phase, the Foundation has achieved its goal of expanding the range of financial instruments available to third-sector organizations, promoting the creation and consolidation of an entity equipped to effectively support their financial and managerial development.

During the 2025–2027 period, the Foundation will continue its efforts to strengthen the governance of the SGR in collaboration with its financial partners (Fondazione Vismara, CFI, Coopfond, Banca Etica, and Fondazione Messina). Furthermore, the diversification and consolidation of investment instruments managed by the SGR will be prioritized.



6.5 The Role of Communication

Social communication functions as a catalyst to promote, support, and provoke positive change within local communities. Acknowledging this, Fondazione Con il Sud views communication not solely as a means for advancing its mission but as an integral and fundamental instrument for its realization. Consistent with its commitment to promoting social cohesion, the Foundation has implemented initiatives that prioritize participatory engagement. Through the interconnection of best practices, it has fostered projects dedicated to storytelling and the sharing of experiences. This participatory approach is also reflected in the communication efforts of the individual initiatives it supports, which the Foundation has systematically strengthened by incorporating specialized professionals, providing access to resources and opportunities, and cultivating a unified vision within a participatory communication framework.

Throughout the 2025–2027 triennium, the Foundation's communication strategy will persist in pursuing two closely connected overarching objectives: the consoli-

— — —
“Social communication functions as a catalyst to promote, support, and provoke positive change within local communities.”
— — —

dition and fortification of trust with stakeholders (institutions, foundations, the third sector, businesses, media, and the general public) and the expansion of its audience through increased awareness of the Foundation's work and the enhanced public recognition regarding its concrete contributions in Southern Italy. Consequently, communication will serve to broaden and solidify the perceived and recognized trust in the Foundation, which serves as the spark to fuel processes of change in local areas. Concurrently with these vertical macro-objectives, two cross-cutting objectives are established: promoting and disseminating institutional initiatives (calls for proposals and other initiatives) and the enhancement of the participatory process, both internal and external, that consistently characterize the Foundation's operational model.

The major themes outlined in the triennial plan and the individual initiatives will be framed by a reciprocal, mutually reinforcing relationship. Specifically, a participatory campaign will be designed and promoted on the subject of demographic regeneration and the mitigation of depopulation in Southern Italy, based on data, scenarios, stories/experiences, and proposals, with the aim of raising awareness among partners (local and national entities, third sector organizations, co-financiers, and media) and strengthening its impact on public opinion. Particular emphasis will be placed on activating citizen participation, with a specific focus on engaging younger generations.



6.6 Resources for Implementing the Strategic Plan

6.6.1 Core Resources

To sustain its operational activities and meet its funding requirements, the Foundation primarily relies on contributions from the banking foundations affiliated with ACRI (typically allocated on a five-year basis). The current agreement, covering the financial competency period of the funding foundations, extends from 2021 to 2025. Consequently, considering the timing shift in the Foundation's budget caused by the actual disbursement of contributions⁵, the funding required for funds in the 2025–2027 period is already secured.

The second funding source, regularly reflected in the Foundation's financial statements, comes from asset management. These revenues are primarily used⁶ to complete the coverage of planned disbursements (the contributions from the banking foundations are expected to cover approximately 85% of the disbursements for the next three-year period). Secondly, to preserve the real value of the assets over

⁵ Taking into account the approval timeline for the relevant budget by the foundations, the transfer of liquidity to the Fondazione, and the allocation of resources within its financial planning, there is a two-year lag in the fiscal cycle.

⁶ After covering operating cost.

time. Finally, they serve to reinforce the disbursement stabilization fund when necessary. The Foundation remains committed to planning its asset management activities to ensure the proper achievement of these objectives.

6.6.2 Diversification of funding resources

Over time, the Foundation has implemented multiple strategies to diversify the disbursement funding sources. While some of these are currently active, others remain in the preparation phase.

✓ National and International Institutional Partnerships

This category refers to agreements with professional philanthropic organizations that share the Foundation's objectives and methodological approach. At the national level, these partnerships typically take the form of co-funded initiatives and call for proposals, effectively doubling the financial resources available for funded projects. The Foundation remains committed to sustaining this collaborative model, which has delivered substantial results in previous triennials (securing an additional €9.2 million in 2019–2021 and €8.1 million in 2022–2024).

Internationally, this approach translates into regranting activities: the Foundation receives a fund from the donor and redistributes it—sometimes deducting a portion for administrative costs—by allocating funds to projects whose objectives are agreed upon with the donor. In the upcoming three-year period, the Foundation aims to continue collaborations with existing international partners (with whom agreements have already been signed), as well as to establish new partnerships.

✓ Resources mobilization from Italian Businesses

Over the next three years, the Foundation will launch an awareness and fundraising campaign, "Businesses with the South," designed to encourage Italian companies to actively engage in corporate social responsibility efforts that support local communities.

✓ Resources mobilization from Private Philanthropists

During the three-year period, the Foundation may explore additional fundraising avenues with strong potential for impact, particularly in the area of philanthropic donations from individuals and families. Efforts to enhance understanding and establish the necessary legal and operational frameworks will build on past successes, including securing equivalency determination to collaborate with U.S. entities and initiating institutional relationships with select organizations in the United States. These efforts will focus on two key areas: engagement with the U.S. philanthropic community and the development of testamentary bequests.



International Calls for Proposals

The Foundation has already begun participating in European Union grant programs specifically aligned with its thematic areas of interest and are designed for philanthropic intermediaries (entities that operate through regranteeing mechanisms). Through its subsidiary, Con i Bambini, the Foundation will continue seeking internationally recognized partners to establish transnational collaborations capable of obtaining accreditation with EU institutions.



6.7 Alignment with International Policies

The development of this triennial document has been guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other key directives from international organizations, both in the definition of strategic objectives and methodological approaches, as well as in the selection of initiative areas and thematic priorities. Given the complexity of global challenges, an integrated approach to economic, environmental, and social development is essential. Each objective must be pursued through a systemic approach that accounts for interdependencies and avoids generating negative impacts in other areas of development. Within this framework, the Foundation's institutional mission is consistent with Goal 10 of the 2030 Agenda—reducing inequalities—and, more specifically, with Goal 10.2, which aims to promote social, economic, and political inclusion in all its forms.

The Foundation's strategic priority of demographic regeneration of communities and sustainable development in Southern Italy pursues Goal 1 of the 2030 Agenda—ending poverty—particularly in relation to ensuring citizens' access to basic services (Goal 1.2). Furthermore, prioritizing vulnerable individuals, youth, and women as key beneficiaries corresponds to the other Agenda goals, such as ensuring health and well-being for all and at all ages (Goal 3), providing quality, equitable, and inclusive education while promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all (Goal 4), and achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls (Goal 5). The mission of Con i Bambini, the Foundation's subsidiary, dedicated to combatting educational poverty in minors, is fully aligned with Goal 4.1, which calls for free, equitable, and high-quality primary and secondary education that leads to effective learning outcomes, and Goal 4.2, which focuses on ensuring quality early childhood development, essential care, and access to preschool education.

In the forthcoming triennium, efforts, already initiated over time, will be intensified to preserve and enhance the environmental and natural resources of Southern Italy, promoting actions capable of contributing to the mitigation of climate change effects (Goal 13); encourage the sustainable use of the terrestrial ecosystem, halting land degradation, and stopping the loss of biodiversity (Goal 15); and increas-

ing the share of renewable energy in the energy mix (Goal 7.2). Other initiatives, consistent with what has been achieved in the past and also recently, such as the recent call for proposals supporting circular economy projects—aim to promote and ensure sustainable production and consumption models (Goal 12).

Measures in favor of social enterprises and new entrepreneurship will have the task of incentivizing lasting, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all (Goal 8); the commitment to making cities, particularly urban and peri-urban peripheries, and human settlements, especially in inland areas, more inclusive and sustainable (Goal 11).

Through the strengthening of the subsidiary Sefea Impact SGR, the Foundation aims to enhance efforts to facilitate small enterprises' access to financial services (Goal 9.3). Strengthening existing institutional partnerships and developing new collaborations through an integrated and cooperative approach aligns with Goal 17 of the UN Agenda, specifically Goal 17.17, which promotes effective partnerships among public, private, and civil society actors.

Initiatives aimed at combating climate change and protecting environmental assets, particularly through participatory, grassroots-led ecological transition processes, are also consistent with the 2015 Paris Agreement, the 2019 resolution of the European Parliament that set climate neutrality by 2050, and the Green Deal approved by the European Commission in 2019.

The main strategic objective of the 2025–2027 plan—the demographic regeneration of Southern Italy's communities—is aligned with European Parliament resolutions addressing this challenge. Demographic trends have been identified as a priority for the EU's cohesion policy, alongside climate issues and digital transition. In its 2017 resolution on the use of cohesion policy instruments by regions to tackle demographic change, the European Parliament emphasized the importance of creating new employment opportunities, particularly in areas at risk of depopulation, while ensuring universal access to high-quality, affordable public services and infrastructure—key priorities in the Foundation's three-year plan. In May 2021, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on reversing demographic trends in EU regions through cohesion policy, highlighting the role of rural tourism in mitigating depopulation.

In the more specific context of reforms and investments impacting social infrastructure, the European Commission published its annual Employment and Social Developments in Europe report in October 2024, the EU's primary analytical assessment of employment and social affairs. Its conclusions have been considered as guidelines for this strategic document, reinforcing the following key principles: social investments and reforms yield higher returns when focused on early stages of life; investing in active labor market policies helps individuals secure and maintain employment; public funding has increased job opportunities by stimulating skills development; expanding housing availability and improving housing assistance enhance affordability, reduce poverty, and can support individuals in accessing better employment opportunities.



“The main strategic objective of the 2025–2027 plan—the demographic regeneration of Southern Italy's communities—is aligned with European Parliament resolutions addressing this challenge.”





6.8 Evolution of the Organizational Model

6.8.1 General Framework

The Foundation's organizational structure is composed of the following areas:

- ✓ General Management
- ✓ Administration and Operations
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Institutional Programs

Each department has a head, and may include coordinating units responsible for specific functions. These departments are integrated with the corresponding operational divisions of the subsidiary Con i Bambini, sharing key leadership roles.

6.8.2 Organizational Structure Development

In the 2022-2024 triennium, the organizational structure remained stable, and organizational support to the subsidiary Con i Bambini continued consistently in terms of secondment of human resources, particularly for leadership and coordination roles.

The Foundation's current staffing level, excluding personnel on temporary assignment, currently amounts to 17.95 full-time equivalent positions, with a total of 24 individuals employed on either a full-time or part-time basis.

The development of the organizational structure, in terms of both size and diversification, will need to take into account the following needs over the next three years:

- ✓ Accommodating the significant growth in both standard and innovative program initiatives.
- ✓ Maintaining high-quality technical assistance and support services throughout the Foundation's extensive operational area.

- ✓ Acquiring specialized skills and advanced tools in key areas such as Resources mobilization, information technology, impact evaluation, and data analytics.
- ✓ Responding to the growing demand for collaborative partnerships, dialogue, and stakeholder engagement.

The listed needs are, as a whole, the consequence of the Foundation's evolution, which is still in progress, from a pure provider to an organization capable of facilitating and supporting micro-processes of social development based on specific skills and collaboration with local public and private agencies. This transformation, driven by the cultivation of specialized competencies and collaborative partnerships with regional public and private stakeholders, has been accelerated by the organizational demands of managing the National Fund Against Educational Poverty in Minors. Completing this strategic evolution is a key priority for the Foundation's near future.

In light of these considerations, it will be essential to further strengthen the organizational structure by incorporating new roles to support the outlined growth processes.

The Chàiros platform, which has been successfully established, will continue to be enhanced and updated, enabling the Foundation to manage its diverse initiatives efficiently and with flexibility. Furthermore, the platform has been provided, at no cost, to public and private entities who, through collaborative experiences with the Foundation, have recognized its inherent advantages.

VISIONS WITH THE SOUTH

The Horizon We Build Together

