

A young plant seedling with several green leaves and a few emerging brownish-red leaves, growing in a black plastic nursery tray. The background is a blurred field of similar seedlings, suggesting a large-scale agricultural or reforestation project.

2015-2020 COOPI Strategy

**Together we can make the world
a better place**

Table of contents

GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT	3
INTRODUCTION	4
OUR VISION	6
OUR MISSION	6
COOPI'S APPROACH	7
OUR GLOBAL CHALLENGES	9
STRATEGIC GOALS	10
Our priority areas	10
COOPI's sectors	13
1. Food Security	13
2. Nutrition	13
3. Protection	14
4. Water and hygiene	15
5. Environment and disaster risk reduction	15
Improving the quality of humanitarian response	17
Promoting change and innovation	18
COOPI and communication	18
OPERATIONAL GOALS	20
Adapting the peripheral operational structure	20
Consolidating partnerships to improve responsiveness to needs	21
Promoting capitalisation, knowledge sharing and continuous improvement	22
COOPI in Italy: opportunities and necessities	24
Increasing fundraising in Italy	25
ACCOUNTABILITY	26

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Greetings from the President

Is what we do really useful?

Will we be able to create true benefits for the communities with which we operate?

These are the questions we need to ask ourselves every day at COOPI if we really want to help the “least in this world” and effectively respond to the challenges that Father Barbieri posed 50 years ago.

This will to be increasingly efficient and effective in the activities that see us involved daily in the most troubled areas of the planet has led us to develop the strategic guidelines we are presenting in this document.

According to the definition we read in books, a strategy is the set of means, resources, policies and goals with which an organisation pursues its mission and through which it presents itself to donors and beneficiaries with a clearly outlined project to avoid improvisation.

Intuition and experience are no longer enough to make sure that our commitment translates into actual benefits for the communities in which we operate. We have been giving ourselves a mission and guiding principles for years. Now, we have taken another step forward by developing strategic guidelines, which are the result of a broad-based participatory process, as the Director explains in his introduction.

This year marks COOPI's fiftieth anniversary. Looking back over these years, we have often proved how we always look ahead and read the future to deal with the challenges we encounter. These strategic guidelines are our way of thinking about the years ahead in an ever-changing world.



Claudio Ceravolo
President

Introduction

In 2015, COOPI - Cooperazione Internazionale turned fifty. For this important anniversary, all levels of the organisation were involved in an in-depth reflection on the goals of the near future. Back in 2006, we launched the participatory process, which led to organisational changes that made us go from an association to a participatory foundation. A few years later, COOPI's Board of Directors and Management launched a new broad participatory process to verify the progress made after the reorganisation and which challenges needed to be dealt with. This process, launched in 2013, was developed based on a series of discussions with the personnel of the headquarters and international offices followed by three work groups to articulate the most strategic points that had emerged from these discussions. This final summary document is the result of all the indications provided during the various stages of this process.

The 2015-2020 COOPI strategy document sets the guidelines at the core of the organisation's activities for the next five years. These guidelines will allow us to improve our work methods and provide an increasingly qualified humanitarian response, thereby picking up the legacy of fifty years of work and projecting ourselves in an ever-changing international humanitarian scenario.

This document is structured as follows: the introduction to COOPI's general approach and the presentation of the global scenario where we operate are followed by two main sections. The first is dedicated to the strategic goals we will pursue during this five-year period, i.e. the areas we will work in, main sectors, how to improve our crisis response and promote innovation and changes in the way we operate. The second section is dedicated to our operational goals, i.e. adaptation of the peripheral structure and decentralisation of some functions to the various countries, partnership consolidation and promotion of capitalisation and knowledge sharing. Moreover, this section focuses on actions aiming at increasing funds from private sources and the Foundation's possible actions in Italy. The final section is dedicated to accountability, which will be a major theme for COOPI over the next few years. This section focuses on accountability towards populations and both inside and outside the organisation. The aim is to keep improving in a responsible way.

COOPI's 2015-2020 strategy is the result of the contribution of the many people who collaborate at different levels with the organisation. I would like to thank all those who have participated in the various stages of this process and I hope we will continue to take on new challenges together.



Ennio Miccoli

Director



Our vision

“COOPI aims at a world **without poverty**, where the ideals of equality and justice, sustainable development and social cohesion can be achieved thanks to joint work and cooperation among all people.”

Our mission

“COOPI wants to **contribute, through the commitment, motivation, determination and professionalism of its people, to poverty reduction and to the development of the communities it cooperates with around the world**, by intervening in emergency, rehabilitation and development contexts to achieve a better balance between North and South of the world, between developed and developing areas.”



COOPI's approach

In its fifty years of history, COOPI has remained faithful to its mission and has managed to face the increasing number of global challenges and ensure a response to the needs of the populations it cooperates with.

COOPI mainly intervenes where there is poverty and vulnerability and the development processes take too long to consolidate. The organisation promotes a sustainable and planned response to emergencies to mitigate the occurrence of any other vulnerability arising from the humanitarian action. The organisation aims at ensuring respect for human rights by focusing its interventions primarily on the following sectors: food security, nutrition, protection, water and hygiene, environment and disaster risk reduction.

We define our interventions by implementing an **integrated approach**, which includes several sectors, thereby providing a more structured response to needs, not only in the short term, but also in the medium and long-term. Our actions aim at **strengthening resilience**¹, i.e. strengthening a community's ability to face shock and stress and improve its adaptation to future crises.

COOPI's actions are based on the following core elements:

- 1 Placing individuals at the centre of our actions, recognising their identity, social and physical characteristics and ensuring protection of human dignity² for the most vulnerable groups in particular and entire communities in general.
- 2 Defining interventions based on the analysis of the capabilities and vulnerabilities of the communities with which the organisation cooperates.
- 3 Ensuring sustainability of the interventions through the promotion of the development of local capabilities and an improved preservation and management of existing environmental resources.
- 4 Placing people at the centre of every action, launching inclusive intervention definition processes and promoting the active participation of all interest groups in the areas where COOPI operates. The involvement of most vulnerable groups (e.g. children, adolescents, women, senior citizens, indigenous peoples, differently abled persons, people living with HIV/AIDS, refugees and displaced persons) is ensured in every stage of the intervention.
- 5 Launching processes to consolidate capabilities and transfer know-how by involving and mobilising communities, institutions and interest groups (public, private and civil society bodies) in the areas of intervention.
- 6 Ensuring protection against any form of violence (sexual, physical, economic - intended as denied access to resources and material assets -, psychological and emotional abuse) and threat to safety.
- 7 Promoting gender equality, i.e. the possibility for both women and men to exercise and enjoy equal rights and opportunities in accessing and controlling resources, as well as in participating in decision-making processes.
- 8 Considering the environment and disaster risk reduction (DRR) as an essential element of our action, promoting the correct management of environmental resources and the introduction of DRR actions in every country where COOPI intervenes.

1. Resilience is the ability of a system, community, or society potentially exposed to threats to adapt by resisting or changing in order to reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure. For further details, visit: http://www.unisdr.org/files/7817_7819isdrterminology11.pdf

2. The definition of 'Human Dignity' implemented by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) has been borrowed by the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid ratified by EU Member States in 2008. For further information, visit: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/who/humanitarian-aid-and-civil-protection/european-consensus_en



Our global challenges

The global humanitarian scenario is evolving quickly and continuously. In fact, there has been a continuous increase in needs generated by natural disasters and socio-political crises.

Between 2005 and 2015, crises generated by natural disasters and exacerbated by the increasing intensity and frequency of climate change effects have caused the death of over 700 million people and have left 23 million without a home.³ But that's not all. According to UNHCR's report, in 2014 the overall number of refugees, displaced persons and asylum seekers due to the numerous socio-political crises in recent years - among which the Syrian crisis has a huge incidence - has exceeded 50 million people.⁴ These figures had not been seen since World War II. Moreover, the global urban population keeps growing. According to UNDESA's report, in 2014, 54% of global population lived in cities. Urban population is expected to reach 66% in 2050, with an increase by approximately 2.5 billion people, 90% of which will be concentrated in Asia and Africa.⁵

In this scenario, which adds new complex crises to protracted ones, and with serious pockets of poverty within urban areas, the populations' needs keep increasing. A comprehensive reflection on the effectiveness of humanitarian aid is on the agenda and will certainly be a hot topic at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. In addition to these topics, there are other important issues, such as how to respond to the populations' needs during a crisis and how to reduce vulnerability. Finally, there is the emerging topic of how innovation can help the humanitarian world improve

the impact of its interventions, especially in complex scenarios. 2015 has been the year of two important moments for the humanitarian world players. The first one was the transition from Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with all the discussions it raised to achieve the shared sustainable development goals for the 2015-2030 period. The second important global event was the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR), where the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 was implemented.⁶

The challenges for the humanitarian world players, such as COOPI, are many, and the complexity of the countries where we operate, as well as the need for working in a network with an increasing number of players - old and new - in the world of international development cooperation require the ability to listen, innovate and improve the impact of our interventions. Being accountable and taking everything into consideration to better respond to the needs of the populations affected by crises.

Humanitarian actors are required not only to respond to needs, but also to transfer competencies and knowledge, as well as to be part of a network of relations, of a system. Therefore, it is important to differentiate our presence in the various contexts where COOPI operates. In South America and the Caribbean, bringing technical support, implementing capacity building and transferring know-how is our organisation's primary goal. In Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, innovation and being part of the humanitarian system is essential to be able to respond to complex and chronic crises. COOPI's goals described in this document mark the organisation's guidelines to tackle these new challenges leveraging its fifty-year experience.

3. UNISDR, *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, Geneva, 2015, p. 10. For further information, visit: http://www.preventionweb.net/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf

4. UNHCR, *War's Human Cost, Global Trends 2013*, Geneva 2014. For further information, visit: <http://www.unhcr.org/53a155bc6.html>. Viewed on 3/08/2015.

5. UNDESA, *World Urbanization Prospect, New York, 2014*, p. 2. For further information, visit: <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/t-highlights/WUP2014-Highlights.pdf>

6. The WCDRR was held in Sendai, Japan, in March 2015. It replaced the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (HFA) - a ten-year plan that aimed at a substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries - with the aforementioned Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. For further details, refer to the aforementioned: UNISDR, *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, Geneva, 2015.

Strategic goals

OUR PRIORITY AREAS

COOPI operates in areas characterised by extreme poverty and vulnerability. Places where it is essential to ensure an effective response to humanitarian needs and consolidate the development processes.

As of today,⁷ COOPI is present in 24 countries, mainly in Africa, where it has a consolidated presence in terms of number of programmes and time span.



⁷ Reference is made to the situation updated as of 1 September 2015

PRIORITY AREAS

Over the next five years, COOPI will continue mitigating the impact of complex political crises and natural phenomena exacerbated by climate change. It will do so by focusing on its commitment in countries where development processes are taking too long to consolidate and where a more structured response is required. In particular, given the regional nature of humanitarian crisis that has emerged over the past few years, the organisation will tackle this new challenge by defining priority intervention areas that go beyond the local scale. These areas are mainly in the **Sahel region, Central Africa, Horn of Africa, Middle East, South America and the Caribbean**.

In the **Sahel region**, COOPI will focus on strengthening the capability of exposed populations to withstand shock and stress through interventions aiming at combating malnutrition and promoting food security, protection, environment and disaster risk reduction. The organisation will continue ensuring its presence in Mali, Nigeria, Niger and Chad. Particular attention will be given to the refugees who have been fleeing Nigeria since 2009 due to the Boko Haram violence and who are taking refuge in Cameroon, Chad and Niger in search of international protection.

In **Central Africa**, and in particular in the Central African Republic and Democratic Republic of the Congo, COOPI will continue helping to ensure food and nutrition security and to provide child ex-combatants and victims of gender-based violence with protection and psychosocial support.

In **Eastern Africa**, and in particular in Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia and Sudan, COOPI will continue working to consolidate resilience with specific interventions focusing on protection, food security, water and hygiene and drought mitigation.

In the **Middle East**, COOPI will continue operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and responding to the effects of the Syrian crises, mainly from Lebanon, providing humanitarian assistance and protection to vulnerable groups.

In **South America and the Caribbean**, COOPI will continue focusing on Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction by promoting climate change adaptation processes, protection and good governance⁸. COOPI will focus its activities mainly on the following countries: Guatemala, Haiti, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Paraguay.

Moreover, COOPI will continue to operate in the following countries:

- a) **Sierra Leone** to ensure child protection and food security and strengthen the production system affected by the Ebola epidemic;
- b) **Malawi**, where it will continue its activities aimed at strengthening the capacity to reduce disaster risks and promote food security and protection of environmental resources.



8. Reference is made to Good Governance



COOPI'S SECTORS

1 FOOD SECURITY

Goal

Ensure food security and make populations less vulnerable to crises



Food security has been and will continue to be one of the organisation's pillar over the next five years. In the communities where it operates, COOPI will promote food security, i.e. physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

It will do so, first of all, by ensuring a response to food crises in its areas of interventions. To this end, the organisation's participation in the *Global Food Security Cluster*⁹ is particularly relevant. Moreover, where possible, COOPI will work to promote sustainable development processes and increase and stabilise the production and quality of food over time. We will be testing innovative mechanisms to mitigate the effects of food crises by increasing the resilience of the communities with which we cooperate. In agriculture, we will promote water rationalisation and raise awareness against waste. COOPI also actively support the development of strategic production chains both for food security purposes (self-sufficiency) and for promoting livelihood.

For this reason, we will promote the transfer of know-how for the benefit of both the communities and local institutions. With regards to the areas of intervention, our programmes will focus both on rural and urban areas, which are raising in number and will have increasingly larger pockets of poverty. We will also continue paying special attention to the protection of biodiversity and enhancing the value of local production with participatory approaches, keeping the needs of indigenous populations in mind.

2 NUTRITION

Goal

Ensure nutrition security and combat child malnutrition



Proper nutrition is a fundamental right of every human being. This is why ensuring nutrition security will remain one of COOPI's pillars. The organisation will focus on the following four aspects: **integrated approach; response based on the assessment of needs; 1,000-day approach**¹⁰; **promotion of research/action**.

COOPI implements an integrated approach to nutrition, because child malnutrition is the result of a series of economic, social, family and environmental factors and cannot be limited to food distribution alone. In particular, COOPI will focus on hygiene and sanitation practices, availability of adequate healthcare services, and on providing families and communities with the possibility to access food - both physically and economically - in sufficient quantity and of suitable quality.

Our approach is based on the careful analysis of needs and varies depending on whether we are responding to a humanitarian crisis (wars or natural disasters) or a chronic shortage of food. In the former case, COOPI will continue implementing specific nutrition-related interventions to respond to the needs of crisis-affected populations and it will ensure mother and child health, also by distributing food and dietary supplements and promoting targeted prevention. In the latter case, COOPI will focus on the economic, social, and socio-cultural determinants of malnutrition. In particular, interventions will focus on the

9. For further information, visit: <http://foodsecuritycluster.net/>

10. The 1000-day approach is based on the importance of reducing child malnutrition risk by intervening in the key stages of the life cycle between conception and the child's second birthday (a time span of 1000 days). This approach has been studied by The Maternal and Child Nutrition Study Group put together by The Lancet in 2008. For further information, refer to Black, Robert E., et al., *Maternal and child nutrition: building momentum for impact*, *The Lancet*, Volume 382, No. 9890, p. 372–375, 3, August 2013.

COOPI'S SECTORS

relationship between **mothers and malnourished children, food education, and the promotion of breastfeeding**. COOPI will promote special attention to nutrition in the first 1000 days of a child's life, which has been demonstrated to be the crucial period for the development of both the foetus and the infant. As for the need to distribute food, COOPI will evaluate its impact on local economy and support the entire community in achieving food security. This attention to nutritional topics will be crosscutting in all COOPI interventions. Finally, COOPI will promote the cooperation with research institutions and universities specialising in nutrition to improve the quality of its interventions.

3

PROTECTION Goal

Ensure access to and exercise of rights under conditions of equality, security and dignity.



COOPI believes in the importance of enhancing the value of culture and differences as a key to progress. This is why we fight for full respect and equality of rights without any discrimination based on age, gender, sex, ethnicity, social origin, religion and politics. Up to now, the organisation has stood out in its humanitarian and development activities to ensure equal access and exercise of rights for the women, men and children in the areas where it operates.

Over the next five years, COOPI will undertake to ensure the **psychosocial wellbeing** of beneficiaries through programmes suited to the needs **of both individuals and communities**. In particular, the organisation will strengthen its mechanisms to support **children associated with armed groups and forces and victims of gender-based violence**. The promotion of community mobilisation will be one of the organisation's main activities to support the construction of an effective local support network and raise the population's awareness. Moreover, we will launch a series of specific measures to support the **participation and empowerment** of minority and indigenous groups in decision-making processes. This way, we aim to ensure a fair and resilient transformation¹¹ of society. The protection of children's rights will be ensured also thanks to **remote support**, which will continue to focus on the right to proper nutrition, health, education, protection, play and leisure.

11. Refer to the definition of resilience in the section "COOPI's approach" (footnote no. 1).



COOPI'S SECTORS

4 WATER AND HYGIENE

Goal

Promote access, a more conscious and safer use of water and of environmental resources



Attention to access and sustainable use of safe water and suitable hygiene and sanitation practices have always characterised COOPI's activity both with specific projects and integration to activities in other sectors. This is why, for the next five years, COOPI aims at maintaining this attention and improving the effectiveness of its interventions, through both **appropriate technologies and socio-educational approaches** and an increasing attention to innovative solutions and research. As for access to safe drinking water, special attention will be given to **household water treatment and safe storage systems**, applicable to several cases, including refugees and displaced persons. The control, treatment and reuse of wastewater and stormwater will be another interesting topic, especially in contexts characterised by water scarcity. Finally, we will propose new interventions for proper waste management (both MSW and special waste, such as medical waste) in new contexts by leveraging the positive experience of recent years. In general, we will aim for **homogenisation of monitoring and data collection practices** to ensure greater intervention effectiveness and clarify the impact of COOPI's activities. To this end, we will intensify our activities for sharing good practices and experiences among COOPI's countries. This will allow the various coordination bodies to be updated on international developments and benefit from collaborations with research centres and universities.

5 ENVIRONMENT AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Goal

Reduce disaster risks by promoting integrated risk and crisis management



COOPI considers the environment and disaster risk reduction the key to launching sustainable development processes and mitigating climate change effects.¹²

Over the years, the organisation has consolidated its intervention methods by focusing on prevention, preparation and risk mitigation, thereby **strengthening risk and crisis management skills** at all levels, in rural, urban and peri-urban contexts alike. Over the next five years, COOPI will consolidate its programmes to align with the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030**.¹³

In particular, the organisation will continue promoting disaster risk reduction processes that **actively involve the various stakeholders** concerned (civil society, authorities, private bodies, research centres, media and communities). The goal is to promote sustainable risk and crisis management and launch good governance processes. **Disaster risk analysis and the creation of geo-referenced information systems** regarding resources and vulnerabilities will continue to be the core activities in COOPI's environmental and disaster risk reduction processes. To this end, the organisation will consolidate its partnerships with research institutes by promoting increasingly larger spaces where to exchange and transfer know-how on a local, regional and national scale. Moreover, there will be programmatic actions to **improve risk management in urban contexts**¹⁴, where the growing urbanisation, associated and combined with the impact of climate change, is posing new challenges in terms of territorial planning and management. We will also apply an integrated approach on multiple territorial levels.

12. COOPI, *Policy on Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction*, Milano, 2013. For further information, visit www.cooopi.org

13. For further details, refer to the aforementioned: UNISDR, *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, Geneva, 2015.

14. COOPI has started to work on urban risk in 2001, thanks to an alliance with the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD). These partnership with a research institute has allowed for urban risk and crisis management interventions, based on the analysis of the vulnerabilities of the elements that are essential for the functioning and sustainable development of a given territory.



IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

COOPI has been responding to humanitarian crises generated by natural phenomena and socio-political conflicts in Africa, the Middle East, South America, the Caribbean and Asia for over thirty years.

COOPI intervenes in compliance with humanitarian principles, placing people at the centre of its activities and paying special attention to vulnerabilities. For us, responding to a humanitarian crisis means **preserving life**, increasing **protection**, ensuring **safety** and **dignity** of the populations involved, as well as promoting **suitable and sustainable reconstruction and/or rehabilitation processes**.

COOPI intervenes in the following sectors: health, nutrition, food security, water, sanitation and hygiene services, housing and protection. From first-aid activities - aimed at providing the population with basic goods - to more articulated medium-term programmes in response to humanitarian crises, COOPI undertakes to ensure **specific assistance suited to the context**. We will do so by taking the social, economic, environmental and cultural implications of the countries where we operate into consideration, so as to prevent and mitigate any potential negative effect of our aid.

Moreover, COOPI promotes risk and crisis management programmes to reduce the loss of human lives, minimise damage to assets and structures and launch sustainable development processes. COOPI's **environment and disaster risk reduction** policy¹⁵ aims at reducing the vulnerability of the populations exposed to natural risks by implementing specific prevention, preparation and mitigation activities. For COOPI, disaster risk reduction is one of the most effective and sustainable means to promote **resilience**. Therefore, our action aims at increasing the capacity of individuals and social groups to resist shock and adapt or transform their resources and capabilities in virtuous processes.

COOPI wants to become a bearer of an **integrated sectoral approach** for facing humanitarian crises optimising skills and expertise and ensuring an effective, efficient and suitable response to increasingly complex situations. In assisting crisis-affected populations, COOPI promotes the use of innovative systems, such as the *cash based response*¹⁶, the creation of georeferenced information systems and the combination of aid transfer and distribution mechanisms.

This is why COOPI undertakes to enhance the ability to analyse the context and nature of the crisis. This way, we can ensure specific studies that take, for example, the impact of aid on the local market and the availability of goods and services into account. Moreover, continuous monitoring and the ability to adapt to the evolution of the context allow us to mitigate insecurity and corruption-related risks.

COOPI bases its humanitarian response on **needs** and **capacity**, which are clearly identified by involving communities, humanitarian players and the beneficiaries themselves. To this end, COOPI encourages **partnerships** and the creation of **networks** between the humanitarian players involved to ensure a harmonious response that meets the needs of vulnerable populations and context requirements. COOPI is an active part of consortia and sectoral clusters, where it promotes a **coordinated approach** between the various players in the territory to ensure an effective response to the crisis. We promote partnerships with local bodies and institutions to help lay the foundations for a transition to sustainable medium-term development strategies.

15. For further details, refer to footnote no. 13.

16. Responses based on money transfer systems.

PROMOTING CHANGE AND INNOVATION

COOPI believes that **innovation and improvement based on learning from experience are essential** to respond to new global challenges and ensure a high-quality response to the increasing needs. Innovation not only in terms of techniques and products in our sectors of intervention, but also in terms of technology, processes, methods and approach.

The goal is to ensure the highest quality available in the world to respond effectively and efficiently to the huge needs of crisis-affected populations and communities reached by our programmes. Change that learns from experience and ensures the growth of both the programmes and organisation in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and competitiveness.

Therefore, COOPI will continue testing and promoting **new technologies**, such as: a) GIS¹⁷ and web applications to improve contingency planning and monitor programmes and their impact; b) mobile devices (mobile phones, tablets, etc.) and web applications to collect and share data.

COOPI will also launch specific activities to identify and introduce technologies suited to various contexts, promoting and using **energy-efficient solutions and**

renewable energy sources. Therefore, in this context of sustainability, we will continue to analyse the impact of an improved access to energy not only on the environment, but also on other aspects of the community's life, such as economy, education and protection. To this end, we will continue our efforts to improve access to energy in crisis contexts, especially for refugees and displaced persons. This way, we aim not only to improve their life conditions, but also to change the way they are perceived in host countries.

Collaboration with research bodies and universities will play a primary role in promoting programme innovations. Joint research will aim at identifying **technical solutions and product/process innovation** to continuously improve the quality of the approaches used and the interventions in general. For this reason, active involvement of the communities and the implementation of innovation identified through international best practices are certainly two key elements for success.

Innovation must also be considered in a broader sense as the organisation's commitment to improve its action within itself, for the communities and in the contexts where it cooperates.

COOPI AND COMMUNICATION

For COOPI, communication is an essential element for building and maintaining relationships with the various stakeholders.

With respect to the public, our goal is to promote the activities of the Foundation and raise awareness by highlighting the results obtained rather than building a brand. Despite its constraints, this path will allow for a better balance between used resources and obtained visibility.

We have chosen forms of targeted communication for our two primary audiences, i.e. institutional donors and partners on one hand and private donors on the other.

For the former, we have published the first COOPI Annual Report focusing on accountability (2015). A transparent tool that provides information on the Foundation's activities, processes and results. This strategy document is a further clarification that aims at stimulating a discussion about future guidelines.

Similarly, COOPI has launched an international communication strategy to open new information and exchange spaces in the countries where it operates. Our country-specific Annual Reports and newsletters are a first result of this strategy, which will include new tools and functions.

17. Geographic Information System.



Operational goals

ADAPTING

THE PERIPHERAL OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

In 2008, COOPI launched a reorganisation process, which led to a new organisational structure of the headquarters and the decentralisation of responsibilities to the operational offices in the various countries. The organisation will continue to pursue and complete this reorganisation over the next five years. In particular, it will consolidate operations in the countries by creating **decentralised regional coordination bodies**, which will be a reference for several countries and provide support for the following:

- a) programme creation and implementation
- b) administrative management and accounting
- c) institutional relations with donors, partners, local bodies and institutions.

This new configuration will be accompanied by the revision of internal processes and adaptation of internal procedures. The aim is to make our structure more efficient and effective by bringing it closer to the organisation's centre of interest, i.e. to the most vulnerable populations with which COOPI cooperates.

The adaptation of the operational structure will be associated with activities aimed at improving competencies and knowledge of our human resources. Specific training activities have already been launched and will be consolidated over the next few years to ensure clear processes, standardised tools and consistent management methods, even in complex contexts with a high staff turnover.



CONSOLIDATING PARTNERSHIPS TO IMPROVE RESPONSIVENESS TO NEEDS

To COOPI, talking about partnerships and networking in 2015 means consolidating its ability to cooperate and communicate with different players in a structured and strategic manner to pursue its mission. In fact, COOPI promotes partnerships and networking to improve the coverage of needs and seize opportunities for development with an integrated approach.

Over the next five years, COOPI will continue supporting the development and consolidation of networks and partnerships to provide suitable tools for tackling the increasing number of global challenges while enhancing the multi-disciplinary nature of the integrated approach implemented in the various areas of intervention. In particular, the organisation will continue to aim at the structured involvement of NGOs and local associations.

To this end, COOPI will focus on capacity building and technical support for local NGOs to improve know-how transfer processes and increase their networking skills with other NGOs, also at regional level. The organisation will continue to collaborate with institutions and governmental bodies at local, regional and national level to promote sustainable interventions.

Moreover, COOPI will consolidate the synergies established with various **international governmental and non-governmental organisations**, which have allowed us to respond to the communities' needs in an integrated manner through the joint implementation of programmes. The organisation will also consolidate its presence in **local and global clusters** to promote coordination with other players when responding to crises, improve advocacy capacity and assess the needs identified on the field. Moreover, COOPI will consolidate its presence in the various Italian and international networks of which it is part.

The definition of partnerships with research institutes and universities will play a primary role. In particular, COOPI

will continue relying on their specialised support to improve its capabilities on need analyses, innovation, strategic guidelines, know-how transfer and programme monitoring.

Special attention will be given to the identification of partnerships with the **private sector**. This is a relatively new field for our organisation and it will improve investments, innovation and sustainability of the interventions we suggest.

Finally, the organisation confirms its interest in consolidating **partnerships with donors**, with whom it collaborates in an increasingly structured way to ensure efficient and effective interventions and enhance its transparency in reporting the results achieved.



PROMOTING CAPITALISATION, KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The organisation will continue investing in internal capitalisation by enhancing the value of know-how, promoting knowledge sharing within itself and implementing a structured continuous improvement system. All this will help COOPI to grow both in quality improvement processes and organisational learning. This goal will be pursued mainly through three approaches:

CAPITALISATION

The capitalisation of the organisation's experience was launched systematically in 2010 and will be completed by 2015. It has allowed us to systematise and enhance the value of the organisation's practices carried out in its fifty years of history. This approach will be maintained every year by mapping, systematising and enhancing the value of COOPI's new good practices across the globe.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING

We will create an easy-access internal system to share capitalisation documents and technical manuals. The organisation will develop operating manuals for each strategic intervention sector. These will help disseminate the quality standards in all the countries where COOPI operates. We will also implement systematic mechanisms for sharing the organisation's practices within both the organisation itself and international knowledge sharing platforms to facilitate internal growth and share best practices with other organisations.

EXPERTS NETWORK

Over the past few years, COOPI has invested in enhancing internal expertise. During the reference period of this strategy document, we will consolidate this process by:

- a) creating a network of COOPI's technical experts across the globe through coordinated and systematic discussions;
- b) enhancing COOPI's **scientific network**, i.e. COOPI's permanent experts who belong to universities and research bodies with which we collaborate;
- c) positioning **sectoral focal points** to promote the technical quality of our programmes and exchange know-how in the areas that constitute the core of our activities, i.e. food security, nutrition, water and hygiene, protection, environment and disaster risk reduction.



COOPI IN ITALY: OPPORTUNITIES AND NECESSITIES



In 2014, 1 million and 470 thousand families in Italy (5.7% of resident ones) were in conditions of absolute poverty¹⁸, for a total of 4 million and 102 thousand people (6.8% of the resident population).

Relative poverty¹⁹ was also stable and, in 2014, it involved 10.3% of families and 12.9% of the resident population, for a total amount of 2 million and 654 thousand families and 7 million and 815 thousand people²⁰. These figures outline two trends: firstly, that poverty is not a geographic issue and secondly that, although with different intensity and duration - even within the same geographic area - poverty does not affect only marginal individuals and social groups, but also and increasingly other social groups that normally have suitable living conditions.²¹

Well-aware of the fragility of an increasing part of the population, COOPI has reflected on the Foundation's role in helping to provide social protection for the most vulnerable groups and ensure the equal and sustainable development of the local Italian community. In 2014, COOPI appointed an internal work group to delve deeper into this subject. The work group has identified several areas where the intervention of a Foundation with a fifty-year experience in international cooperation as COOPI would certainly give positive and relevant results. In particular, the implementation of social projects across Italy would

meet real and increasingly urgent needs. Simultaneously, it would allow COOPI to enhance its work to inform and raise the awareness of the community, involving younger generations in a positive change with regards to development. All this while increasing its visibility across the country.

The work group has outlined the following three potential areas of intervention for the organisation: **reducing vulnerability** by providing targeted social services; **assisting foreign citizens** in vulnerable conditions; **developing social enterprise activities**.

The analysis carried out by the work group in 2014 was the first step to identify possible directions and opportunities for the future of the Foundation. This analysis will be developed enhancing the value of both the technical and scientific contribution of the players with whom COOPI collaborates (universities, associations, etc.) and internal competencies. Moreover, to ensure constructive, effective and efficient projects, in line with the discussions on key subjects, the Foundation will develop its own approach, specific for the Italian context and will launch partnerships with players already present across the territory to create synergies with COOPI's specific competencies and ensure an integrated and articulated response to the issues identified.

18. Absolute poverty indicates the inability to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for achieving a minimum acceptable standard of living.

19. Relative poverty - referring to people or geographic areas - is a parameter that expresses the difficulty in finding goods and services in relation to the average economic standard of living in a society or country.

20. <http://www.istat.it/it/archivio/164869>.

21. Pete Alcock, Remo Siza, *Povert  diffusa e classi medie*, Franco Angeli Editore, Milano, 2010.

INCREASING FUNDRAISING IN ITALY

To avail of the economic, instrumental and human resources required to implement international programmes, in addition to consolidating relations with institutional donors, COOPI has been developing its own awareness-raising and fundraising programme for the Italian audience.

The aim is to improve its ability to involve people who are attentive to international cooperation and provide the opportunity to actually step in to support it.

Consistent with COOPI's guiding principles, fundraising focuses on the individuals, thereby broadening the concept of donor while trying to understand its specific features. COOPI's relationship with donors is based on the values and principles enshrined in its Pact with Donors.²² COOPI's experience and professionalism have led to the creation of a database that includes approximately 11,900 active individual donors, raising EUR 1,500,000 a year.

²² For further information, refer to www.cooopi.org

To improve these results in terms of both database quality and quantity and fundraising margins, we will implement the following strategies:

Optimising investments by choosing fundraising activities that ensure higher margins in terms of cost/profit ratio and nature of the fundraiser (solidarity SMS campaign, "Paper, Ribbon and Solidarity" - the Christmas gift-wrapping charity project, "5 for 1,000" - Italian taxpayers can choose the recipient of 0.005% of their taxation - to COOPI, etc.) and searching for innovative tools, initiatives and partnerships.

Having a broader and more responsive donor base by intensifying direct communication (by post, email or phone) and promoting appeals for projects and/or long-distance sponsorships.

Increasing fundraising stability by increasing recurring donations (through SEPA bank or postal payments) resulting from face-to-face campaigns, consolidating personal relations with acquired and potential major donors, and promoting bequests.

Improving the ability to attract resources for our projects by developing and implementing a specific action plan targeting private Foundations.



Accountability

COOPI has been promoting the organisation's accountability at different levels and towards different players for several years. The process is rather articulated and the organisation is aware of the multiple actions it requires, but will continue pursuing it even in the next few years to meet international standards.

For COOPI, accountability means responsible and transparent management, listening and keeping different opinions into consideration, reporting its activities to the organisation itself, to populations with which it cooperates, to backers and outside the organisation in general. This commitment will require specific action at various levels:

- 1 ACCOUNTABILITY TOWARDS POPULATIONS**

Consistent with its approach, COOPI will continue ensuring the participation of the populations with which it cooperates in its interventions by establishing systematic communication and information mechanisms. The inclusion of the populations will be promoted during need identification, programme implementation, monitoring and assessment. We will work to improve the mechanisms that ensure transparency in managing and collecting complaints and abuse reports.
- 2 ACCOUNTABILITY OUTSIDE THE ORGANISATION**

COOPI will continue ensuring information on whatever it does. Since 2015, the organisation has decided to publish its Annual Report focused on social accountability, which shows not only administrative and financial data, but also the impact of its programmes in a more articulated manner, thereby providing detailed information on the entire organisation. Moreover, we will consolidate the use of recent tools to improve the communication of the results of our programmes in the countries where we operate. Access to information and direct contact with the organisation will be facilitated by the Foundation's new website.
- 3 ACCOUNTABILITY INSIDE THE ORGANISATION**

COOPI will continue using suitable tools to ensure and facilitate internal communication and information sharing. We will work to consolidate the use of tools developed over the past few years to ensure systematic briefing and debriefing, criticality detection and periodic personnel assessment mechanisms. The aim is to obtain quality certifications for internal management processes in the near future.

Finally, COOPI will promote the use of international sectorial standards in the management of our programmes to better monitor the impact of our actions. The aim is to make clearer and more traceable the relation between the budget spent and the impact in the areas of intervention.

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