

## TRUST IN BO. A new idea for Italian theatre management

Theatre's needs and, above all, audience awareness, have showed relevant changes in the last few years. What happen to theatres organizations? How do they face society development? How do they deal with crisis?

Gli Incauti is a theatre company from Bologna, Italy, founded in 2009. We are theatre workers who do not like to complain and are looking for new solutions. We don't want to look back remembering the happy past we hear talking about, we just want to look forward.

When we set up our small organization, economic crisis was already knocking at the door, but even if it was not a good period to start anything, it spurred us on in our growing process, providing us energy and, more important, the strength not to lose heart. We were fully aware that our resources couldn't be ruled by means of public subsidies and that we had to find financial support somewhere else. We began with a pure mind, with the ambition to become a great cultural enterprise.

At first, crowdfunding was the only way to survive and then we started some projects helped by local Foundations. We tried to involve local enterprises in programs to develop theatre culture within our territory, mostly working with schools.

Although coming from an artistic background during these years we have been developing several "non artistic" skills and have become used to think always in terms of cooperation and inclusion. The constant search of new ways to boost private investments and to encourage public and private sector to work together, brought us to conceive Trust in Bo.

Trusts have existed since roman times and have become one of the most important innovations in property law. Nowadays many trusts support cultural organizations. To give two examples among the most significant in the UK, the United Theatre Trust fosters, promotes and increases the interest of the public in the art of drama and in the co-related arts and the Theatres Trust works with public subsidised, voluntary and commercial sectors to secure a sustainable future for theatre buildings.

In Italy this form is seldom applied and we have no official knowledge of Trusts working in this field.

Our first idea was to gather all the people and the enterprises that so far had fund the company: these groups of private individuals and business companies should have been the settlers of our small trust. We started thinking that it could be possible to do something more for Bologna and that the city could be a breeding ground to develop a real cooperation among institutions, entrepreneurs and cultural workers, to create a network based on participation, co-responsibility and plurality, so farsighted to be run by an innovative legal form.

In Bologna youth creativity is lively, there are many chances for all kind of artists to pop up; during the last 30 years a lot of brilliant minds found in Bologna a nice place to live in and good policies of local cultural administration improved the cultural system. Yet there is not a unique strategy in which all the proposals can be included, a strategy that could allow to save money and to reduce costs. We still underline a lack, the lack of network policies resulting in an extremely low level of cooperation among city government, private enterprises and cultural organizations. Nevertheless at the same time, the red tape of big

structures generates no longer affordable costs and a rigidity that has often hindered more effective allocation of the resources.

Gli Incauti wish to through out the old models and leave behind old mind-sets that spoiled the cultural system and they are looking for an innovative action, an action able to affect social and financial productivity and therefore reduce and contain costs. This all will be possible only by developing net policies able to amass local existing experiences in a wide shared pattern built to optimize the available resources.

We are now following two parallel approaches to develop Trust in Bo:

The first one is a net of public institutions, small enterprises and entrepreneurs ready to participate to a roundtable for the creation of a stakeholders network whose only wish is to promote and to improve the territorial development.

The second is a network of small companies, local institutions and theatre organizations: a stem cell designed to assess the proposal efficacy and the actors' readiness and commitments.

Gli Incauti imagine Trust in Bo as a coordinating body, a place open to the citizens, in which artists and young creative talents can develop their work. It should be a place equipped to host artists, giving them facilities to work, to live, to perform, providing them legal and fiscal support, fundraising and distribution methods: a place in which it is possible to "create" culture, improving and optimizing the investments.

Though this system can bring visibility to benefactors, fiscal advantages, optimize existing financial resources, create economies of scale and increase the effectiveness of services, in Italy we do not have official results yet. Public institutions are reluctant to endorse a project that seems to be too big for a small company, while private contributors are sometime disillusioned and alarmed by the period of crisis: they still consider this Cultural Trust a strange form of start up and look at it with a certain suspicion and distance.

Nonetheless we are strongly determined to drive forward and pursue our target in a belief that Trust in Bo will be the first neutral system to let entrepreneurs, public institutions and artists working together for culture. It is meant as a real cooperation in which everyone contributes with his own best possibilities, devolving spaces, competences, resources, money not to earn for themselves but to let community join a better cultural offer.



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