

“We decided, together with ACRA, that the 2015 Forum will be a landmark event with no space for mere rhetoric.” Gerry speaks with determination about the 2015 event. He is the Chief Executive Officer at CEIS, the largest and most experienced social enterprise support agency in Scotland and founder member of the Social Enterprise World Forum (SEWF). The Milan SEWF is organized by the ACRA-CCS Foundation and will be held during the 2015 International Exposition. The event will be a great opportunity to give voice to many social economy and impact finance experiences at an international level. The Forum will be held in Milan from July 1st to July 3rd, and over 1000 delegates from at least thirty countries, including institutions, policy makers, entrepreneurs, investors and academics will attend.

The SEWF, organized for the first time in Scotland in 2008, is held in a different continent each year and the number of participants has constantly increased; from 400 at the first edition in Scotland, to more than 1100 in Seoul (South Korea) last October. For the 2015 edition the Forum is back in Europe for the first time; it's going to last three days with 10 plenary sessions and 35 workshops, including several meetings with Ministers of Labour, Social Affairs, International Cooperation and Economic Development.

The 2015 edition of SEWF, Growing a New Economy, will have five main themes: the ecosystem, Impact investing, the fight against poverty, social enterprises in agri-

culture and a focus on communication and design.

Moreover, an across-the-board issue of great importance will be the involvement of the younger generation. The goal of the event, according to Higgins, will be to take stock and understand what action can be taken to promote social enterprise at a global level. “We will focus both on success and failure to see what is really working and what our service users think,” says Higgins.

The experiences of entrepreneurs will be the main focus of debate, with particular attention to initiatives taken to ensure solutions to fight poverty and for food security. The Forum will also be an opportunity for exchanging ideas not only between professionals, but also different ecosystems. Indeed, during the three days in Milan, the virtuous solutions adopted by different countries will be shared and the most critical aspects, on which there is still work to be done, will be discussed. One of the main goals of the 2015 SEWF is to help the sector reach a wider audience. For this reason, through case studies and interactive workshops, all the different ways of optimizing the design and communication industry will be considered in Milan. “The most ambitious challenge for SEWF,” says Elena Casolari, Chief Executive Officer of the ACRA-CCS Foundation, “will be impact investing: the growth of the stakeholders involved in recent years in the world and the media coverage of this issue revealed divergences in the system and above all, a misalignment between social entrepreneurs' and impact investors' expectations. Narrowing the actions to mere structural financial transactions is not a sustainable path; the intangible heritage of which social enterprises are entrusted requires a more holistic approach. Financial capital is a social entrepreneurs' service, and can be used to create socially sustainable business models.” The Opening session is scheduled for July 1st at the EXPO auditorium. During the following two days the forum will be hosted at Iulm University, where there will also be exhibition space for social enterprises, a speakers' corner for entrepreneurs and many networking opportunities. The Cariplo Foundation and Iulm University are strategic partners of the initiative.

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## **Social enterprises. Rendez-vous in Milan to achieve radical change.**

**EXPO was chosen as the location of the seventh edition of the Social Enterprise World Forum, organized by ACRA-CCS. The SEWF intends to be a breakthrough event in which rhetoric is not welcome.**