



## **We teach our students to be entrepreneurs. That's how the lessons are paid for.**

Martin Burt, founder, Self-Sufficient Schools

Young people will be the driving force behind the Social Enterprise World Forum (SEWF), the event that will bring key international players from the social economy and social-impact finance together in Milan from 1 to 3 July, with over 1000 delegates from at least 30 countries. As event organiser Elena Casolari, CEO of the ACRA-C-  
CS Foundation, explains, "If young people are not involved, it will be impossible to grow the social economy."

One of the most eagerly anticipated guests is Paraguayan social entrepreneur Martin Burt, who has dedicated his life to fighting youth poverty. The founder of Fundaciòn Paraguaya, an organisation that promotes microcredit in his country and has helped 16,000 families to start a business in the last 3 years alone, Burt has also been mayor of the capital, Asunciòn. But his most important contribution is the multi-award-winning model of the Financially Self-Sufficient Schools, the sustainably financed professional schools that teach youngsters how to do business.

"In many developing countries, the real problem is not access to education but its quality," explains Burt. "Young people are not given the tools to join the working world." Hence the idea of sustainable schools, real professional institutes that operate as enterprises by selling the products that the students cultivate and manufacture. This model provides them with a practical economic foundation at low fees with teaching quality that many private European schools would envy, by insisting on highly qualified teachers paid through an incentive and bonus scheme. Burt opened his first school in Cerrito, in southern Paraguay, over ten years ago and has now exported the model to over 20 countries. Here, besides studying the traditional subjects, the youngsters also learn to run a business: "Three months after graduating, everyone is in work."

At SEWF 2015, the former mayor will speak about the importance of engaging more and more young people in enterprise creation, because it is a fundamental educational experience, as he explains: "It is not just a question of economics. Teaching young people to be entrepreneurs means teaching them to find new opportunities."