



Banca Popolare di Sondrio

The *Banca Popolare di Sondrio* confirms, also for the year 2007, its renewed pledge to support the ten universal principles declared in the "Global Compact" project which relate to human rights, labour rights, environmental protection and the struggle against corruption.

In particular, the Italian credit Institution is constantly engaged in the in-house implementation of the social, ethical and environmental values which are implicit in its very nature as a "people's bank".

Confirming this, and supplementing the initiatives already announced in its past reports, the *Banca Popolare di Sondrio* continues in its support for **actions of solidarity**, making available to its own customers a quick and simple method of access to the section "Sociale&Solidale" ("Social&United"). Using a special link in the website devoted to the Home Banking service, customers of the Bank can make their own donations to:

- **Unicef:** collection of funds for humanitarian emergencies, especially for the purchase of rehydration salt packets, thanks to which UNICEF has managed in the last twenty years to reduce by over half the infant mortality rate due to dehydration.
- **Fondazione Bambino Gesù di Roma** (*Baby Jesus Foundation of Rome*): an initiative aimed at supporting the Vatican-owned Baby Jesus Pediatric Hospital, which gives free care and treatment to children.
- **World Food Programme:** collection of funds to promote activities which, through the grant of food assistance, promote education in areas where there is serious food insecurity due to emergency circumstances.

The *Banca Popolare di Sondrio* has supported in a tangible way the philanthropic initiative in favour of the Pro-Africa Foundation of Cardinal Tonini. On Saturday 24th of March 2007 the ordinary and extraordinary meeting of the *Banca Popolare di Sondrio* took place at Bormio to approve the budget for the financial year 2006 and a procedure to increase the share capital. Among the figures attending the solemn gathering were Cardinal Ersilio Tonini, supporter of the Pro-Africa Foundation sought by him, which proposes to establish a Faculty of Medicine in Burundi near the Hospital of Ngozi with the collaboration of the Milan *Opera Don Gnocchi* and the University of Verona (Faculty of Medicine) and to embark on the construction of a village to be equipped with various services for the **Batwa-Pigmei** people who has always lived in the scrubland. This project will also **allow the Pigmei to attend school, with the enormous advantages which this implies**. The Bank Management in the context of its meetings has decided to donate 25,000 Euro to the Foundation, to which 50,000 Euro was subsequently added, corresponding to the entire increase in remuneration of the Directors which was decided upon by the general meeting for 2007, which the Directors unanimously forfeited for the sake of the fine African initiative.

Among the many activities aimed to promote the "social", the "**Solidarity Current Account**" of the *Banca Popolare di Sondrio* has been implemented for some time now: as well as suitably remunerating the holder, this initiative enables the Bank to transfer a contribution of 0.50% of the average annual equity of such accounts, on the initiative of the account holder, to UNICEF, AIRC (The Italian cancer research association), AVIS (Italian Volunteer Association of Blood Donors), ADMO (Bone Marrow Donor Association).

The *Banca Popolare di Sondrio* will also in 2007 continue its support for the project to gain recognition for the "exceptional and universal value" (UNESCO World Heritage) of the wine country of the Valtellina. On the 21st of January 2005 ProVinea together with the Province of Sondrio applied to the Minister for Cultural Heritage and Activities to have the zone of terraced

vineyards on the alpine Retiche slopes of Valtellina included under the rubric of “**Living, evolving cultural Landscape**” in the Italian list for the next proposed List of **UNESCO World Heritage Sites**. This initiative to include the terraced vineyards of the Valtellina as a candidate for a UNESCO World Heritage Site recognition has been promoted by the Bank, which is concretely supporting the project: the credit Institution rooted deeply in its own native territory, has always focused maximum attention on the primary sector and, in this context, its proximity to the important wine producing sector has always been of particular importance. The ultimate aim of the initiative is to recognize the "exceptional and universal value" of the wine country of the Valtellina on the basis of the selection criteria provided for by the International Convention on the protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage Sites, which is one of the most important international legal instruments for the protection of our cultural and natural heritage. In order for this aim to be realized, the Bank is working **to create a general consensus on UNESCO candidacy, in addition to expanding the associative base of the Foundation**, which is a tangible sign of cohesiveness in the territory regarding the promotion of the province's terraced vineyards.

Banca Popolare di Sondrio reached third place in the award “Bank and Territory. Initiatives in support of the local economy”, announced by AIFIN (Italian association for Financial Innovation), thanks to the various initiatives put in place to support the evolution of the productive and entrepreneurial network in the selected territories. In particular the Institution from Valtellina sees itself as "a People's bank in the etymological sense of the term, namely a bank which has deep roots and which gives special place to families, public and private bodies, small and medium enterprises, without excluding the bigger players."¹ To achieve this, various collaborative agreements have been signed with institutional partners and specialized companies operating in Italy and in many countries abroad, to assist local SMEs in their process of internationalization and to foster the expansion of local enterprises into foreign markets. In this way, the network of relationships created by the Bank over time now covers all continents, linking together a global network with the global dimension of dedicated entities devoted to internationalization, and the local network here refers to the production districts in the area in which the *Banca Popolare di Sondrio* has earned its reputation as “**bank of the territory**”. And all of this in the conviction that the "territory" to be promoted is not simply to be understood in geographical terms, but also in terms of an entrepreneurial and productive territory consisting of enterprises linked in with the same area, ensuring that they do not close in on themselves, and facilitating their outward expansion abroad.

The efforts of the *Banca Popolare di Sondrio* to nurture respect and support for the Global Compact principles have been duly notified to the shareholders in the annual report for 2007 relating to the 137th financial year; the same shareholders, in light also of these initiatives, have renewed their own faith in the Institution, growing in number and to date reaching a total of 157,546.

¹ Quotation from the statement of the 136th year of business.