

Press release

## **International Award on Territorial Development: the winners**

The winners of the fifth edition of the International Award on Territorial Development, organized by CRIEL - University of Insubria, DiCEM - University of Basilicata and AENL (Association of Latin Languages Economists) have been selected for the three sections of the Award: scholar, territory and business.

### **The Scholar Prize**

The Scholar Prize has been awarded to **André Torre** (Université Paris - Saclay and INRAE) for the quality of his research on territorial development, on the mechanisms of cooperation and conflict between actors that generate innovation, on the governance of development processes in both rural and urban areas. The Commission appreciated the ability to create a bridge between the dynamics of economic development and spatial planning, but also the ability to mobilise international scholars and researchers, especially in the years in which he was President of the European Regional Science Association – ERSA, as well as the attention to bringing the research world and the institutional one into dialogue.

A Special Prize has been awarded to **Arkebe Oqubay** (SOAS - University of London), not only for the quality of his numerous researches (especially The Oxford Handbook of Industrial Hubs and Economic Development, 2020), but above all for his great ability to work in two very different worlds, moving between research and institutional functions, where he held prestigious positions, both at the national government level (as senior Minister) and at the local level, as mayor of Addis Ababa, when he won the Best African Mayor Prize. Arkebe Oqubay has, therefore, directly managed the opportunity to transfer the analytical skills of the scholar in economic and industrial development into concrete strategies and projects on the territories.

### **The Territory Prize**

The Territory Prize was awarded to the "**Milk Mountain**" in the Reggio Emilia Apennines (Italy) for the capability to react to the crisis in a peripheral context. The area, starting from the Parmigiano-Reggiano supply chain, has triggered an integrated territorial project with all the municipalities of the valley and with the active participation of local actors and the community, first on the basis of the National Strategy of Internal Areas (SNAI) and, subsequently, promoting territorial projects thanks to a high negotiation's capability with the Emilia-Romagna Region. This allowed a strong increase in public and private projects' design (it is, among other things, the place where the first community cooperatives were launched) and a strong improvement in services to people, both in the field of care and health and in the field of education and training, which is triggering a path of development in the direction of the "Knowledge Mountain".

A special mention was given to the "**City of Lakes**", in the cross-border area between the Canton of Ticino and the North of Lombardy, which represents a project idea launched by cross-border civic society (especially the Insubria Working Group - GLI) to face the challenges of the future, focusing on a large and participatory project that has already produced concrete results with the organisation of a tram-train system that connects some of the main cities of Insubria cross-border

area. The "City of Lakes" project has led both the main municipalities and the business associations to engage themselves in cross-border cooperation activities.

### **The Enterprise Award**

Finally, with regard to companies rooted in the territory and promoting economic and social development, the Prize was awarded to **LU-VE** (Uboldo, Varese) (a company that produces heat exchangers and which has been transformed in recent years into a "small pocket-sized multinational").

The founder of LU-VE was Iginio Liberali (whom the workers called the "gardener of dreams"), the son of a worker who studied thanks to scholarships (for upper secondary schools and for university students) offered by Necchi, who had followed some corporate welfare methods previously introduced by Olivetti. Liberali was a manager at Necchi and then General Manager at Ariston of the Merloni group, before starting his entrepreneurial activity in 1985, also thanks to the intervention of Investment Funds.

Liberali used to say that companies are first and foremost "women, men and ideas". The company has always shown a strong orientation towards internal training and professional updating: the development of skills and professionalism are, in fact, considered to be the basis of the company's development.

Strong focus on workers not only on workers' health and safety, but also on supplementary health care. Support has been provided also for the training of young people from employees' families with scholarships. In the last year, 77 awards and scholarships have been awarded. In addition, 3 million € have been allocated in the 2022 budget for workers to cope with inflation and the rising cost of living.

Finally, Lu-VE managed and financed interventions in support of the community; among others, the launch and financing of the Alfa cooperative that employs people with disabilities, based on the principle of "work as therapy".

A special mention was given to **Lechler** (Como) (a manufacturer of paints but, also for this reason, very attentive to environmental sustainability), which, in its long history, represents an extraordinary case of a company rooted in society and in the territory (the founder's son sold the company free of charge to his collaborators; the Italian branch became autonomous in 1910 with an anticipation of Management Buy Out, with the acquisition by three executives, accompanied by a local bank). Over time, Lechler has ensured continuity for the company, with balanced governance rules between executives and owner families. Constant and strong orientation of the company has been paid to the enhancement of internal human resources and to Research and Development; moreover a high attention has been paid to social issues and the involvement of employees with the creation of spaces for relationships and the launch of common and participatory initiatives (also with direct interventions on the local community).