ARCO  
**Action Research for CO-development**

ARCO is a University centre founded in 2008 at PIN s.c.r.L, Prato [Italy]. It offers research, qualified consulting, and training services in social economy, local development, inclusive development, M&E and impact evaluation and circular innovation.

ARCO relies on the expertise of a multidisciplinary team and operates both at national and international level.

ARCO supports the Yunus Social Business Centre University of Florence, the first Italian centre accredited by the Yunus Centre in Dhaka [Bangladesh], founded by the Noble Peace Prize Laureate Muhammad Yunus.
ARCO provides scientific and operational support to organizations by designing activities to satisfy their needs in terms of research, qualified consultancy and training.
We handle all phases of the research process.
Since 2009, we have been supporting organizations that want to have a positive impact on society.
• Social Reports and Sustainability accounting
• Social Impact Assessment
• Design of corporate social responsibility strategies (CSR)
• Research, consultancy and training in social economy and social business

• Quantitative and qualitative research on vulnerability, resilience and multidimensional poverty
• Support in the creation of policies concerning groups at risk of marginalization
• Simulation of the impact of policies, programmes and social protection policies
• Elaboration and implementation of Emancipatory Research processes.

• Support in strategic planning and policy design for sustainable human development
• Territorial and sectoral diagnosis and needs assessment
• Measurement of multidimensional wellbeing and sustainable development
• Creation of ethical and environmental labels

• Support for the definition of policies for the circular transition at urban level
• Need analysis and product characterization for the sustainability of supply chains and organizations
• Implementation of innovative procedures and integrated management systems

• Monitoring & Evaluation
• Impact Evaluation
• Design of statistical investigation tools
• Data collection and analysis with qualitative and quantitative methods
• Evaluation of communication and awareness campaign
01
Social Economy

We support companies and organizations that want to have a positive impact on society

- Research, consultancy and training in social economy and social business
- Market analysis and business plan elaboration
- Social Impact Evaluation
- Capacity Building and training for non-profit organizations
- Design of CSR strategies, social accounting and sustainability reporting
01 Social Economy Expertise

Research, Training and technical support to social businesses: Business plan for social business, market analysis, organizational diagnostics, CSR strategies, implementation, planning and evaluation of program for the creation of an enabling ecosystem for social enterprises in Italy, Spain, Taiwan, MENA Region, Mozambique, Senegal, Liberia and Nepal.

Social Impact Evaluation

Social and Sustainability reporting
Elaboration of Social and Sustainability Reports for NPOs, implementation of stakeholder engagement processes, elaboration of social and sustainability communication strategies, training and capacity building for NPOs.
ARCO supports the YSBCUF, the first centre accredited by the Yunus Centre in Dhaka (Bangladesh), a prominent organization founded by the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Muhammad Yunus.

The centre works in order to spread theories of social business and offers strategic support to private individuals and Institutions setting up a Social Business both in Italy and abroad.

The centre also acts as intermediary between the Yunus Centre in Dhaka and Italian organizations and entrepreneurs wishing to be in contact with this organization.
02
Inclusive Development

We envisage an inclusive society as a starting point for a true and shared development

- Quantitative and qualitative research on vulnerability, resilience and inclusive processes
- Support in policy elaboration for groups at risk of marginalization
- Simulation of the impact of policies, programmes and social protection policies
- Implementation of Emancipatory Research processes
Inclusive Development
Expertise

Emancipatory Research.
Fostering the empowerment of men and women with disabilities in Mozambique, Palestine, Tanzania and Italy through processes of emancipatory research.

Gender Budgeting.
Assessing the differentiated impact of local public policies on women and men in the multidimensional space of wellbeing in Italy and Senegal.

Simulation of the impact of fiscal and social protection policies on the well-being of children in low income countries.
Simulation of the impact of public spending by adapting the OECD Tax-Benefit Model to the cases of Bolivia, South Africa, India, Vietnam and China.
We encourage sustainable human development by valuing local resources

- Support for local authorities in strategic planning and policy design for sustainable human development
- Territorial, sectoral and industrial diagnostic and need analysis
- Measurement of multidimensional wellbeing and sustainable development
- Creation of ethical and environmental labels
03

Local Development Expertise

Agenda 2030 and SDGs localization
Comparative analysis of local strategies for sustainable development. Scientific support for the definition of the agenda for sustainable development of the Metropolitan City of Florence.

Fostering ecotourism in Vayots Dzor, Armenia
Diagnostic assessment of the ecotourism sector, with particular attention to the needs of accommodation facilities and development of ecotourist paths with a community-based tourism perspective.

Programme for Participatory Democracy and Local Development in Algeria.
Fostering governance decentralization and participatory democracy; strengthening the dialogue between local authorities, civil society and citizens to improve social cohesion.

Strengthening the economic development in Bolivia
Fostering social economy by strengthening productive and marketing capacities of local associations working in the agricultural, livestock and crafts sectors.
04
Circular Innovation & Sustainable Commodity

Nowadays, there is a compelling need to develop and establish systemic and integrated circular models aimed at fostering sustainability.

We support institutions, municipalities, production districts, organizations and people in accelerating the transition to the circular economy by fostering:

- Circular Transition at the urban level
- Sustainability of the production chains
- Production processes attentive to Innovation, Environment and Quality
Circular Transition at the urban level

At urban level, we support local decision makers for the definition and implementation of innovation, regeneration and cohesion policies:

- **Innovating processes**: rethinking production processes in a circular way focusing on the product’s life cycle.

- **Regenerating the city**: abandoned or underused spaces and buildings designated to new productive, recreational and social functions.

- **Increasing cohesion**: promoting participatory processes and active citizenship within the cities improving the quality of life and collaboration at all levels.
Each step of a product’s life cycle, from the provision of raw materials and commodities to the design, production and distribution, must minimize the amount of resources used and the waste produced.

- Needs analysis
- Analysis of the relationships between local stakeholders and producers
- Analysis of international markets in relation of different commodities
- Product characterization
- Training on issues related to the sustainability of the supply chains and to good manufacturing practices
Nowadays, there is a renewed attention to the quality of the local and national production processes, as well as to the issues of environment protection and fair labour. Increasing the circularity contributes to the active participation of stakeholders and to the valorisation of waste through innovative productions.

- Implementation of integrated management system according to international standards
- Labelling and traceability
- Sustainability Reporting
- Academic lectures, vocational trainings, dissemination events on innovative, sustainable and quality production.
We evaluate results to help organizations enhance their programmes and projects

- Mid-term evaluation, final and ex-post evaluations of projects and programmes
- Impact evaluation
- Design of monitoring systems for project management
- Application of mixed quali-quantitative methodologies and participatory approach to evaluation
- Micro-simulation modeling for social policies, programmes and social protection schemes
- Fostering an approach to evaluation that includes training and capacity building for organizations
M&E and Impact Evaluation Expertise

05

Evaluation of projects tackling children educational poverty
Application of mixed methodologies and participatory approaches to evaluation (EHD-Evaluating Human Development methodology) for the Evaluation and Impact Evaluation of the projects tackling children educational poverty fostered by the Social Enterprise “Con I Bambini”

Evaluation of a project strengthening rural communities’ resilience to climate change in Kenya
Application of RIMA-II approach, developed by FAO, and on-filed data collection through household surveys to assess the degree of resilience of 10 beneficiary communities.

Evaluation of a project supporting communities hit by earthquakes in Central Italy
Application of a mixed approach consisting in online surveys, participatory methods adapted to children and the use of the CAPS scale to evaluate PTSDs; and adoption of emancipatory research processes to carry out in-depth analysis of the growth of gender based violence in areas hit by the earthquake.