

---

# Lessons in Leadership from Italian Cooperatives – a Stewardship model of Ownership

---

*Margaret Lund*  
*Co-opera Co.*  
*612-750-1431*

---

# Who am I and why am I talking about this?

- “Co-ops as if they were normal”
- “What are you for?”



---

# Why look at the Italian cooperative system?

## ■ It's Big

- ❑ 40,000 cooperatives
- ❑ Employ 1.2 million people
- ❑ 127 billion euros
- ❑ 8% of GDP

## ■ It's comprehensive

- ❑ Every major sector – ag, wkr, cons, social, CU
  - ❑ Associations by sector and geography
  - ❑ Insurance, financing, education
-

---

# Why look at the Italian cooperative system?

- It works in a fluid, investor-focused marketplace
    - No special trade status
    - Works largely on a local and regional rather than federal basis -- decentralized
    - Works within a market of highly competitive, international investor-owned firms – entrepreneurial
-

---

# Why look at the Italian cooperative system?

- It's influential
    - Key role in setting national environmental practice
    - Leadership in setting national labor standards
  - It get results
    - ER is both one of the wealthiest *and* one of the most equitable regions in the EU
    - Lower unemployment
    - Higher wages
    - Stronger economic performance
-

---

# Stewardship model of ownership – what does it look like in practice?

## ■ Values-based

- Democratic governance – *strategic more than tactical*
- Concern for community
- Stewardship of assets for the next generation

## ■ Indivisible Reserves

## ■ Solidarity Funds

- Other co-op funds

## ■ Systemic financing: supports enterprises at all levels, all industries, all places

---

---

# Examples of Stewardship in US

- What examples of stewardship of assets for the next generation are there in the US?





# Our National Parks





---

# Some (surprising?) findings

- Economic growth and equality are not in conflict
  - Stewardship and Ownership have important things to learn from each other
  - Bigness of their system allows localness flourish in ways that it simply couldn't otherwise
-

---

What else do you want to know?

---