

THE CULTURE FACTORY

Olivetti was one of the most important stories of the 20th century, with the Canavese area, the region of Piedmont and Italy playing a worldwide role.

Olivetti's original features made it a unique model of a superlative relationship between capital, labour and the community, which constructively combined business needs with the needs of the individual and the local community. Today, the "Olivetti model" is returning centre-stage as an alternative to the declining relationships between industry players and local authorities.

The core role of people was always the reference for the key decisions in this story of excellence. The recent Olivetti centenary (the first factory was built in Ivrea in 1908) and the 50th anniversary of the death of Adriano Olivetti (1960) provided the opportunity for a careful new reading of the developments and the values embodied by this lengthy exemplary experience.

We felt it was important to build on these considerations and create a place that would be a reference for everyone who believes in the individual, his ability still to be the driver of new forms of excellence.

We have called it **THE CULTURE FACTORY**: FACTORY because it is located in the Olivetti Red Brick Factory built in 1908, CULTURE because it is a container of entrepreneurial culture, industrial and labour culture, the culture of the arts and architecture, the culture of territorial planning and of providing tools to meet the needs of the individual and the community, the culture of knowledge.

The place we have in mind will be an interactive and stimulating re-visitation of the Olivetti experience for those who were not part of it and for young people, encouraging them to take part and to take a fresh look at their own future plans. To understand the fundamental values of the experience and the deep ties between the capacity for invention, for production and for living in the most dynamic century in the history of man.

A story of excellence that puts the question of how, in today's profoundly changed global scenarios, new stimuli can be found and new solutions developed to make man a protagonist again, each individual with his own role, his own abilities, his requirements and a desire to take part in the global plan.

The centre consists of four main sections.

- The **MATERIAL MEMORY** section, a set of projects, products, art objects, technical and political documents, physical items that constitute the reality for people to learn about Olivetti or to re-live the experience. An open, dynamic, interactive approach, which places the visitor centre stage, answering his questions and providing an opportunity for further learning as an expert or as a neophyte of the knowledge

society. There will also be an educational section offering younger visitors an introduction to the languages and methodologies of this new reality, in partnership with schools and training institutes.

- The **CITY LIBRARY**, which will include the municipal library and restore the material and organisation of the Olivetti libraries. It too will use an open layout to permit ample use of the new technologies, as well as of organised, written records. Themed sections will be linked with the individual segments of Material Memory to establish the fundamental connections that enable the visitor to understand the factory as a whole.

Like the other areas, these two sections will lead into the **KNOWLEDGE PLAZA**, a place where visitors go to learn, to understand, to study, or simply because it is an attractive, stimulating, enjoyable place to be.

The Plaza will also include areas illustrating the **CANAVESE CULTURAL ITINERARIES** and a reference and information centre for the **MAAM OPEN-AIR MUSEUM OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE** and other important Canavese locations.

- **THE CORPORATE CULTURE CENTRE**, to investigate the enterprise models that can restore the values underpinning the Knowledge Plaza, to provide a space for companies that already deploy successful models, to offer guidance for organisations that regard these models as benchmarks. We plan to establish an annual national **CORPORATE CULTURE** award to be presented to the company that best meets the requisites for quality in the relationship between capital, labour and the local community. This award will replace the prize currently presented by the Olivetti Historic Archives to the Olivetti entrepreneur of the year. We want to create a scholarship to address the issue of how to give local communities a valuable role in today's global scenarios. We also plan to encourage the involvement of the community in the development of new structures for quality planning.
- **THE CITY OF MAN**, a national and international centre on Olivetti urban planning projects and initiatives involving the enterprise and the local community, in the life of Olivetti and of everyone who worked on the projects over the years. The material in this section may include original drawings and related records, as well as a specialist section of the library. The centre will also play an important role in the project for the local **OLIVETTI ARCHITECTURES** to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Clearly, the four sections overlap and complement one another and the Culture Factory as a whole is a significant opportunity to attempt to project the values of an exemplary experience into today's reality and, even more important, into plans for the future.

Accordingly, we believe young people should take a leading role and the institutions, like all the other industrial and social players in the country, should take responsibility in helping to support these processes.

This is why participation in this project is such an exciting opportunity for local and central government, business organisations and their representatives, universities and research centres active in a variety of specialisations, trade unions, foundations and trade associations. For all of them, the project can provide tools and support to give their activities a fresh new profile.

The entire community of Ivrea is taking part in the initiative: the town council, the Canavese industrialists federation, the trade unions, together with the individuals who represent the Olivetti experience on the Promoter Committee for the Culture Factory, and the bodies who are the depositaries of the specific industry know-how, including the Adriano Olivetti Foundation, the Olivetti Historic Archives Association, the Natale Capellaro Foundation with the [Tecnologic@mente](#) Museum and the Olivetti Spille d'Oro Association.