

FONDAZIONE ADRIANO OLIVETTI

Community and Society

Economy and Society

Institutions and Society

Art, Architecture and Planning



## Adriano Olivetti

### Adriano Olivetti

Adriano Olivetti was born in Ivrea on 11 April 1901. In 1938 he became Chairman of the family typewriters factory founded by his father Camillo in 1908. Adriano Olivetti's polyhedric personality led him to broaden his activities from industry and business to a wider sphere including urban planning, architecture, culture, and social and political reform. In 1937 he took part in the preparatory work for a planning scheme for the Aosta Valley. In 1956 Olivetti was made an honorary member of the American Institute of Planners and deputy chairman of the International Federation for Housing and Town Planning while in 1959 he was appointed chairman of Italy's *Istituto UNRRA-Casas* for post-war reconstruction. His publishing house *Edizioni di Comunità* introduced many radical thinkers and distinguished foreign writers to the Italian public. During his exile in Switzerland (1944-1945), Olivetti completed his book *L'ordine politico delle comunità* where he states the fundamental concepts of the *Movimento Comunità*, the political movement he founded in 1947. At 1958 general political election Olivetti had a sit in the Italian parliament with the *Movimento Comunità*. Under his guidance, the Olivetti company achieved

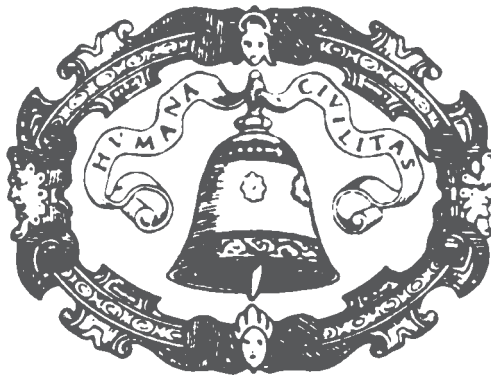
technological excellence, innovation and international leadership, and at the same time strengthened its focus on industrial design and improved living standards for its employees. In 1948, the Ivrea plants formed a Works Council with general consultative powers on funding for social services and welfare. In 1956, ahead of national employment contracts, the Olivetti company reduced the working week from 48 to 45 hours, on an unchanged wage basis. In the industrial design field, too, Adriano Olivetti managed to launch a number of products that would become cult objects in terms of design, technological content and functionality. As early as 1952, the Olivetti opened an electronic computer research laboratory, in New Canaan, USA and in 1959 launched the Elea 9003, Italy's first electronic computer. In 1957 Adriano Olivetti's entrepreneurial achievements won further recognition when the National Management Association of New York awarded him a prize for "ground-breaking activity in the field of international company management". In 1959 Adriano Olivetti signed an agreement for the acquisition of US company Underwood. Adriano Olivetti died suddenly on 27 February 1960.

# The Foundation The Foundation

The Adriano Olivetti Foundation, set up in 1962, has the purpose of *supervising the continuance of the work of study and experiment, theoretical and practical, set in motion by Adriano Olivetti*. From this perspective of social commitment, the Foundation has carried on an intense programme of research and cultural promotion, divided into four fields of activity all informed by an interdisciplinary approach: **Institutions and Society, Economy and Society, Community and Society, Art, Architecture and Planning**. The Foundation promotes in these fields research, studies and projects that through conferences, interventions, workshops, exhibitions and publications characterise the Foundation as a research and operating institution. Its cultural policy favours collaboration with other Institutions of analogous nature and with public and private, national and international bodies. The Foundation engages in publishing, both in collaboration with important publishing houses and on its own behalf with the series *Quaderni della Fondazione*. In Ivrea, at the headquarters of the *Associazione Archivio Storico*

*Olivetti* is housed the paper archive of the Foundation which holds all the company and private correspondence of Camillo, Adriano and other members of the Olivetti family, the archives of the *Movimento Comunità* and of *Edizioni di Comunità*, the archive and the personal library of Ludovico Quaroni and the archive of Georges Friedrich Friedmann which documents his collaboration with Adriano Olivetti in the South of Italy. The Rome headquarters of the Foundation holds the personal libraries of Camillo and Adriano Olivetti, the complete collection of the *Edizioni di Comunità* and of the review *Comunità*, the complete collection of all the Foundation's publications from 1962 to the present. Since 2008, in the event of the centennial of the Olivetti company (1908-2008), the Foundation is also seated in Ivrea.

The Foundation is a member of the European Foundation Centre (EFC). Since 2004 Mrs Laura Olivetti, President of the Adriano Olivetti Foundation, has become member of the International Committee of Council on Foundations of Washington DC.





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