

Ladies and gentlemen:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman/Mrs. Chairwoman and Members of the 24th EWMD International Conference Board for the invitation to be amongst you. It's really a pleasure and an honour for me. I appreciate a lot your spirit and the example your organization is setting for woman, not only in Europe but over the world as well.

On top of everything else, the topic proposed for me to discuss is one I personally do care deeply about: "the role of innovation for improving *social entrepreneurship*". Let me share some of my views on it, build up through a number of years of experience working with the so-called "*Third Sector*" and against one of the cruellest faces of poverty: the starvation.

Institutionally as well it is a privilege for the *Banco Alimentar Contra a Fome (Food Bank against the Hunger)* to address this international gathering. I understand the ultimate purpose of this meeting is to think how and whether we can further contribute to build a better world and to herald the outstanding work already being done around the globe to help people being hurt by any kind of needs. These are values that guide our day-to-day action.

In these grey times it should be high lightened the fact that the women in this conference represent efforts, organizations and networks that are replacing conformism with improvement, dependency with self-reliance and, allow me, despair with hope. In spite of our diversity, given the fact that we come from different countries and represent different professions and different life styles, we are all united by our commitment to charting new ways in **development and sustainability**.

This is a valuable perspective that I would like to emphasise. What we have in common is far more important than what divides us. So, to the fundamental question: “*Is a better world waiting for us?*”, my unequivocal answer is “*YES.*”

Our world gone now global in new ways and many challenges are appearing, but never, as in our times, we have had so great opportunities and tools to face them properly. Clearly, there are many factors that lead to pessimism: the unemployment, the financial crisis, the wars, the climate changes, and... the starvation. Yet there is also an infinite resource and sometimes virtually unnoticed factor that could change people’s lives wherever they live: **Human creativity!**

We live in *creative times* as science and technology developments evidences. Innovation is a fascinating topic to think about and try to put at work, technology helping. Creative persons often lead interest lives, create fruitful organizations and stimulate talent around them. And here comes the first idea that I would like to share with you all:

When **talent** is associated with **good will** and **warm heart**, their work produces **value** and contribute for a better world.





We can change, and build a friendlier world. But, “*What exactly do we mean by innovation?*” The concept is linked with wonderful and positive notions as achievement, learning, self-expression, evolution...Call it *human genius*.

If creativity is a hallmark of humanity that separates human beings from other animals, creative process is what we need to transform our aspirations into reality. Talent is one of our major assets. But intelligence without anything else is a short thing: as any other, brainpower requires a purpose.

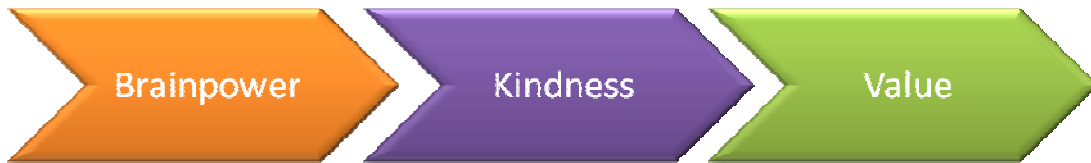
Only when our **mind** contemplates the others human beings with a touch of **kindness**, we could be sure that we are contributing to build a **better world**.

When someone discovers insights or produces new ideas or things and they are accepted by others, they become a part of our world— perhaps becoming part of our cultural tradition, recorded, and transmitted to subsequent generations. This is the exact surplus that, at the end of the day, helps to generate the common good.

Creativity is an individual and cultural phenomenon that allows us to **transform possibilities into reality**.

Studies about creativity offer us one lesson: It is good to be different— at least sometimes. It moves the needle. Let me then put it somewhat differently within the framework we are discussing:

It is good to **be different** only and if the difference results in a **better effect** for us and for our communities. Other else it is a waste of talent.



The *Food Bank against the Hunger* pursues its mission and acts on a daily basis obeying to a simple trinity of principles: “*Small things make a great difference!*”; “*Do more with less*”; “*Lead by example*“. Surprisingly as it may sound, in our Institution, innovation is basically the reinventing of a old value so much forgotten in these days of abundance for some and waste for all. Let me put it in a simple way: a pencil is a pencil and, if I have one, I do not need to have two or three; so, if I have two or three, I will give the second and the third to those who do not have any.



In face of so many challenges, I deeply believe that only an **innovative kindness** will create possibilities to change our daily scenery and will help us to build a better world— for all and, not only for the usual few. As far as we, at the Food Bank, could see, , this requires what scholars and analytical perspectives call “**living sustainably**”:

A life style where global institutions, national states, organizations, families and citizens display living standards without causing excessive damage to their environments, avoiding excesses and exploring the **virtues** both of **globalisation and sustainable consumption**.



These also require concrete actions of another old and always new philosophy: **philanthropy.**

Kind talent is **one way open to everybody** and capable to transform the social landscape and save human lives.

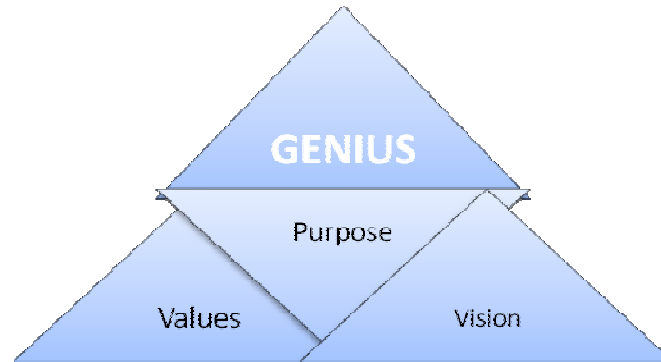
One big reason why it is essential to continue, in the big and small things, in the years ahead, making intelligent efforts to build conditions in the private and public spheres for human dignity. We live in a world of complex challenges and great opportunities. Well, I believe that:

The main problem we face is a **deficit of humanitarian mindset.** Yet, we can change and create and, re-create, **common values** for guidance to a better world.

The growing competition for resources is a major challenge that requires international and national proper actions, but also a more conscious individual behaviour. I believe in an approach founded on two simple pillars to rule social entrepreneurship:

Promoting human dignity and extend responsibility. Ours and, of the all others.

The **inspiration/energy** of human *genius* is a sense of a **common purpose.**



My innovative team and I have been successfully managing the *Banco Alimentar Contra a Fome – Food Bank against Hunger* for over than a decade in a very innovative manner. It is important to emphasize that our Institution is independent from the State and does not profess any confession: it works with a small number of dedicated professionals and thousands of volunteers— that offer their time and their talent to the common good, working day-by-day in a good will’s circle that provide the indispensable material resources for our job.

We do not represent any political or corporate, financial, or lobby organizations. The Food Banks and several other twin organizations, like ENTRAJUDA or Banco de Bens Doados in Portugal, are a clear signal of an increasing sensitivity to the common causes of the philanthropy.

They are the proof that there is an increasing citizens’ adhesion to a “Third Sector”, which notwithstanding is still suffering from a bigger freedom to express its full energy in order to be able to mirror the dynamics of what one female volunteers of ours call the «Society-Providence». We act not in state/public circle and neither in the market/private sphere. But, we act inside situations where a small gesture can and make a great difference.



The Food Banks Against Hunger are what in-doors we classify as “*a necessary, but provisory reply, because*”— as is written in the Universal Declaration of the Man’s Rights—, “*all the person has right to a level of enough that assures itself and to its family, health and well-being, feeding, clothes and, the lodging, the medical assistance and the necessary social services*”.

Our organization mirrors a vocation. The *Food Bank* fights against starvation and through that against all sort of wastefulness, directing food and goods from those who have in excess to those who do not have them at all.

Above all, our type of philanthropic organization establishes a social commitment. The 14 portugueses *Food Banks* collect and distribute twenty thousand of tons of products and support in a daily basis more than 1,600 institutions in Portugal, which, in turn, provide meals and essential products with fixed prices to people surely needed, enclosing already food distribution to nearly a quarter of a million of persons (243,186 people) in all country.

As you can imagine, this involves a large operation, only possible thanks to the generous effort of something like 20.000 volunteers of all ages, gender, academic ranks, races, creeds and professions. This is our value: union and diversity put together to help others *when* and *where* WE CAN. And WE HAVE TO.

Thank you very much for your attention.