

# We grow by experimenting

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## Parents keep collaborating to offer multidisciplinary informal education opportunities at the Foundation

The week preceding the start of the new school year marks the transition from the summer season to the new educational paths. Also this year, September 6-8, the activities of the summer camp “IL GARDEN DELLE MARAVIGLIE”, co-designed with [Progetto92](#), was hosted by the [Tuttoverde](#) nursery, just outside Trento.

This corporate welfare activity, promoted by FBK, saw parents and professional educators collaborate in the creation of a series of informal relationship and learning experiences that involved a group of 7 children aged 6 to 10, children of employees of the Foundation's.

The proposed program saw two types of activities every day: taking care of plants and flowers in the nursery, playing and socializing, in the company of the educators; and science workshops, designed to intrigue children about robotics, computer science and artificial intelligence, approached with narratives, experiments and teamwork, offered by FBK employees.

**The initiative is part of a ten-year attention to the need of working parents to balance life and work schedules during the summer break.** In response to this need, the “Summer Kids” format was developed that provides for the organization of workshops for the children of the Foundation's employees attending elementary and middle schools where researchers present science in an interactive manner and bring new generations closer to world of research.

The Foundation, “[Family Audit](#)” quality standard certified, has experimented with numerous corporate welfare initiatives in response to employees' real situations of need. The value of what has been achieved in recent years is the result of a virtuous internal collaboration between the Human Resources Service, researchers and other support services. This collaboration has made it possible to create working groups with a wide range of skills, scientific and other.

## The Family Audit District of Trento and the Families Share project

Thanks to the experience and expansion of the Trentino area network, the initiatives have turned into reachout actions, leading FBK to become an actor in the Family Audit District of Trento. The District, created with the aim of promoting sharing on family and services for employees, is characterized by the public-private partnership and the innovative co-planning between different types of organizations and skills, resulting in significant added value to the overall experience.

The European [Families Share Project](#) was integrated into this local context, where the Family Audit District of Trento has become an active part of a wider research living lab on co-production of services for family-work balance.

Launched in 2018, Families Share has explored – in different contexts – the opportunities and challenges of a bottom-up and participatory welfare system, which goes alongside traditional forms of welfare. The project, implemented in six European cities, promoted mutual support between parents in neighborhood or professional communities to trigger virtuous processes of co-production of services for children, especially in summer.

The experimentation in FBK – which involved over 50 employees and 80 children – was part of broader considerations by the FBK governance, on the possible scenarios of participatory welfare and reachout in corporate contexts, activating employee networks and strengthening the processes of co-planning with the company, with a view to organizational well-being and sharing of responsibilities and resources.

In addition to social and organizational innovation, the Families Share project also explored the opportunities offered by digital media, creating a web platform (co-designed with over 500 people in the different communities involved) to facilitate collaboration and coordination between parents, paying attention not to replace online interaction with face-to-face interaction, given the importance of trust in the construction and development of reciprocity networks.

### **Towards a reachout participatory welfare model**

Organizations dedicated to research, such as FBK, can act as innovative experimentation laboratories in the field of welfare, giving rise to formats that are sustainable and replicable in other organizational contexts, with a view to opening up and exchanging good practices. These collaborative solutions stimulate participation in defining and implementing services, not only by employees but also by other organizations in the area. This provides added value in terms of impact and organizational well-being and above all provides real answers to the employees' need for work-life balance.

The activation of collaborative networks, both within organizations and between them, represents a resource that is worth exploring in many areas, to address new vulnerabilities in which traditional welfare appears to show gaps. There is a strong need for new participatory welfare models that can increasingly look at the specific context of the organization and the people who make it up.

**“This experience shows us how welfare initiatives can be enriched bottom up, thanks to the involvement of employees in the co-planning of the initiatives, contributing with ideas, skills and resources. This increasingly reinforces the idea that the new welfare game is played as a team. We are glad that, although the European project formally ended in October of last year, many participatory Families Share initiatives were carried out this summer in various cities. As in Trento, also in Venice and Bologna groups of parents have self-organized to suggest work-life balance solutions following the Families Share approach, leveraging neighborhood networks and local support. This demonstrates the positive impact brought by Families Share even after the end of the project.” (**

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- FBK - welfare: <http://welfarefbk.info/work-life-balance>
- Family Audit District (Trento): <http://distrettofamilytrento.it/>
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