



## ENTREPRENEURS FOR HUMAN PROGRESS

Progressio Foundation was founded in Rotterdam at the Erasmus University in 1989 by **Marcello Palazzi**, MSc MBA, Dr. **Paul Kloppenborg** and Prof. **Pjotr Hesselings**, with the writing and publication of their books: "Towards a civic economy" and "The Quest for Utilization Value: economy as the good ordering of interests". Fueled by their intellectual and entrepreneurial acumen, Progressio has for 35 years been at the centre of over 35 ventures, strategic initiatives, projects, networks & events, writings, programs & courses contributing to 350 other initiatives involving over 35,000 decision-makers around the world. Progressio operates as *Convenors* ('Architects & Organisers'), *Connectors*, *Catalysts* and *Co-Creators* ('Engineers') - see Activities & Roles on our website. **Tom Cummings** joined as Principal in 2010, adding his remarkable leadership acumen and experience.

Driven by Palazzi's and Kloppenborg's zest as young start-uppers just turned 30, their existential belief that '*entrepreneurship for good*' is humanity's ultimate superpower has only strengthened over the decades. Today, in 2025, finding, mobilizing, organizing and supporting the world's progressive entrepreneurs, to imagine, invent and innovate solutions for human progress, is the single most powerful lever for change, whether in Europe, China or anywhere. It remains our core mission and we look forward to the next 15 years.

The combination of a holistic vision anchored in the *eternal truth that human ingenuity, inventiveness, imagination, initiative are at the heart of any good society*, the founders' intellectual depth, their selection of key themes, their choice of leaders from around the world, agile operations and pursuit of excellence have been Progressio's hallmarks. For 35 years, we have helped define both entrepreneurship and human progress, from *Small & Start-Up Enterprises* to *CSR*, *Public-Private Partnerships*, *Active Citizenship*, *Corporate Sustainability*, *Impact Investing*, *Authentic Leadership*, *Mindfulness in Business*, *Microfinance*, *Systemic Leadership*, *Regenerative Economy*, *Europe's Future*, *China's green progress* and other building blocks of a progressive world.

Below are the highlights of Progressio's 35 years. Most notable are the writings of "**Towards a Civic Economy**" in 1991, "**The Quest for Utilization Value**" in 1992, "**Enterprising Europe**" in 2001, founding, co-founding or substantial involvement of: **Social Venture Network Europe** in 1993, **PYMWYMIC** in 1994, the **New Academy of Business** in 1995, the **UN Social Summit Business Forum** in 1995, the **Copenhagen Centre** in 1996, the **UN Habitat World Business Forum** in 1996, the **UNESCO World Business Forum** in 1998, the **Spirit in Business Foundation** in 2001, the **Andromeda Fund** and support of **ResponsAbility AG** in 2001-2, the **Foundation for Natural**

**Leadership** in 2003, the **Tällberg Forum** in 2005, the **Tällberg Global Leadership Prize** in 2007, the **Tällberg Emerging Leaders' Program** in 2007, **Bioneers Europe** in 2009, **Springtij Forum** in 2010, the **REWORK the WORLD Summit** in 2020, the **Authentic Leadership Institute Europe** in 2011, **B Lab Europe** in 2013, the **CAUX Leaders' Program** in 2015, **Regenerative Society Foundation**, Italy, in 2019, **Laudato Sí CEOs' Dialogues** in 2021, **NOW Partners** in 2021, **For Good Leaders** in 2022, **For Good Leaders' Cooperative** in 2024, **United Leaders Europe** in 2025, **Regenerative Amsterdam Challenge** in 2025.

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Starting off in 1990, Kloppenborg led some of the first Public-Private Partnerships in the Netherlands and Africa (Botswana) through **Progressio Civic Enterprise Consultancy** and **Progressio Botswana**. During 1991-1992, when the two books were published, workshops and events were organized around Europe to launch their main ideas of 'civic enterprise' and economy not as profit maximization or self-interest pursuit, but the 'good ordering of interests', the Aristotelian / Christian interpretation of economy.

Since 1993, Palazzi has led the foundation's activities achieving the following milestones:

#### **The First Impact Entrepreneurs in Europe - 1989 to 1995**

- 1993-onwards: **Social Venture Network Europe**, sister of SVN in the USA, the first movement of socially responsible business leaders. Leaders such as **Ben Cohen**, **Anita Roddick**, **Yvon Chouinard**, **Ray Anderson**, **Eckart Wintzen**, **Peter Blom**, **Wayne Silby**, **Josh Mailman** and others pioneered a new paradigm of business, inspired MVO Nederland, CSR Europe and several national level initiatives on CSR and business ethics.
- 1994-onwards: **PYMWYMIC**, Put Your Money Where Your Mouth is Company, founded by SVN Europe members **Frank van Beuningen**, **Jan Willem Nieuwenhuys**, **Jan Oosterwijk** and later **Eckart Wintzen**. PYMWYMIC was the first 'impact' investment vehicle in Europe, followed by Stichting DOEN / Triodos Bank and continuing successfully to this day.
- 1995-2010: **New Academy of Business**, UK: conceived by **Anita Roddick**, founder of The Body Shop, Palazzi and others, it has been the first business school with an alternative, planetary- and society- focused curriculum. The New Academy morphed into the Bath MSc Program in Responsible and Sustainable Business and was later integrated with the Hult Business School. Over 600 alumni have taken part in the Academy's programs and many have distinguished themselves since, such as **Lise Kingo** at the UN Global Compact.
- 1999-2001: **Leading the Future** Programs, together with Leading Ventures, Tom Cummings' own company, to imbue their ongoing leadership development efforts for large businesses such as Unilever, ABN AMRO Bank, BUPA, Fortis Bank and others with exceptional entrepreneurs and thought-leaders such as **Lars Kolind**, **John O'Neal**, **Charles Handy**, **Anita Roddick**, **Peter Blom**, **Eckart Wintzen**, **Otto Scharmer** and others.

**Building Global Partnerships - 1995 to 2006**

- 1995: **UN Social Summit**, Copenhagen, World Business Forum: Progressio invited, curated and organized the forum attended by 180 business leaders on the world's social agenda, in partnership with Mandag Morgen, led by **Erik Rasmussen**, the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs, **Karen Jespersen**, at the invitation of **Juan Somavia**, the then SG of the Summit and Chilean Ambassador to the UN, at the introduction of **Peter Pruzan**, the first professor of Business Ethics and the Copenhagen Business School.
- 1996: **UN Habitat Summit**, Istanbul, World Business Forum: Progressio gathered 320 business leaders, entirely funding a successful gathering on what business could do for sustainable cities, at the invitation of Dr **Wally N'Dow**, the Summit Chair, alongside **Nicholas You**.
- 1996: **UN Habitat AWARDS**, UN HQ New York, where 10 business large and small were selected and honored for their outstanding work in implementing the goals of UN Habitat, through entrepreneurship.
- 1996-2002: **The Copenhagen Centre**, founded by **Karen Jespersen**, then Minister of Social Affairs, led by **Mads Øvlisen** of Novo Nordisk, Palazzi were the first non-Dane to serve on the board and introduce other international leaders: **Jane Nelson**, **Simon Zadek**, **Brian Bacon**, **Will Hutton**, **Geoff Mulgan** and others. In 1996, following the UN Social Summit in Copenhagen, the board was instrumental in seeding the European Business Network for Social Cohesion, later to be renamed **CSR Europe**, which remains the leading European platform for corporate responsibility,
- 1996-7: first talks with **Gus Speth** at UNDP, **Kofi Annan** at the UN and **Georg Kell** at UNCTAD about the engagement of business with the UN, which later became the **UN Global Compact**.
- 1997-2002: **The Bremen Initiative for City-Business Partnership**: working with the Mayor of Bremen, **Henning Scherf** and team, **Rita Kellner-Stoll** and **Andreas Lieberum**. Progressio was the main partner and concept developer throughout with Palazzi serving as board member. Over 1000 city-business partnerships from around the world were presented, selected and 100 honored.
- 1997-8: **Sustainable Business Strategies**, MBA Modules, RSM Erasmus University, which Progressio conceived and designed and Palazzi taught, the first such modules of progressive business at a Dutch university, that spurred others to start similar programs.
- 1998: **UNESCO World Business Forum**, Stockholm: 220 business leaders focusing on UNESCO's agenda of education, science and culture at the invitation of **Federico Mayor**, the SG. Never before has there been a gathering of entrepreneurs and investors working on UNESCO's goals.
- 1998: **Global Dialogue on Micro-Finance**, Stockholm, with **Muhammad Yunus** and 80 bankers, organized together with EBBF, the Ethical Business Building the Future Network.
- 1999: **State of the World Forum**, New York City: Progressio organized the European participation bringing distinguished leaders such as **Anthony Giddens**, **Geoff Mulgan**, **Will Hutton** and others to this mammoth event of over 2000 leaders, with **Mikhail Gorbachev** as chair, at the invitation of **Jim Garrison**, the Forum's president.

### From Leaders to Systems - 2001 to 2013

- 1999: **Compassion or Competition Dialogue**, Amsterdam, De Nieuwe Kerk, with **HH The Dalai Lama, Ruud Lubbers, Jermyn Brooks, Geoff Mulgan, Hazel Henderson, HH Prince Willem-Alexander, Eckart Wintzen, Sander Tideman**. 400 leaders gathered in this iconic church on the Dam to discuss the ethical dimensions underpinning economic activities and leadership, as the world moved towards the 3rd Millennium. A book was subsequently published: "Compassion or Competition: A Discussion on Human Values in Business and Economics".
- 1999: Dublin & Belfast, 1st Enterprise Summit at The State of the World Forum, with **Geoff Mulgan, Anita Roddick, Bianca Jagger, Lech Walensa, Jane Nelson, Tony Blair** (by video) and many others to work on the role of entrepreneurs in securing, and maintaining, a peace agreement in Northern Ireland.
- 2001-2004: **Spirit in Business Foundation**, Amsterdam & New York City. Following the Amsterdam dialogue, we co-founded a non-profit (Sander Tideman, Andrew Ferguson and Marcello Palazzi) which for 4 years organized leading conferences in New York City, San Francisco, Zürich, Bangkok, Rotterdam and helped to launch the 'Mindfulness' evolution in business, led by **Daniel Goleman, Jon Kabat-Zinn, Sharon Salzberg, Ram Dass, Jack Kornfield** and others.
- 2001: **Enterprising Europe**, London, The Work Foundation: in partnership with Will Hutton, we organized a 6-month dialogue and event, published a book focusing on the 'Lisbon Agenda', which both Romano Prodi and José Manuel Barroso at the EU had championed.
- 2001-2003: **Humanica PLC**, a €1M small impact investment fund launched with the Partner Bank of Austria to support the E.Parliament, [via3.net](http://via3.net) and E. Procurement in Europe. Funds were provided by the Italian Foundation Rispetto e Parità.
- 2002-2003: **Andromeda Fund**, where Progressio worked with **Stephen Brenninkmeijer** to launch an impact investment fund, convene 80 other investors in Amsterdam and lead to two highly successful investments: ResponsAbility AG in Zürich and CelTel in Africa.
- 2003-onwards: **ResponsAbility AG**, where Palazzi was a member of the original ResponsAbility Verein, provided advise and introduced the launch investor. ResponsAbility has disbursed over \$15 B in micro-credit and loans to small businesses in the developing world.
- 2003-onwards: **Foundation for Natural Leadership**, Amsterdam and Durban. Together with **Jan-Willem Kirpestein, Robert-Jan van Ogtrop, Mark Tigchelaar, Syb Roëll** and later **Antony Burgmans**. Over 3000 executives have since attended the Wilderness Trails spearheaded by the foundation, leaving meaningful and powerful marks of personal and planetary consciousness on many.
- 2004-2013: **Tällberg Forum**, co-founded by **Bo Ekman**, who previously launched Tällberg Foundation, and Palazzi, the annual forum for 500 leaders from all walks of life answering the question "**How on Earth can we live together ?**". The Forum has spawned the works of **Johan Rockström** on Planetary Boundaries, **Hans Rolsing** on 'Factfulness', boosted the activities of the Stockholm Resilience Centre and influenced hundreds of leaders from South America to China, the USA and the rest of the world. Many initiatives were conceived or inspired in Tällberg, such as

**Springtij**, the **REWORK the World Conference** and the **Global Alliance for Banking on Values**. We nicknamed the Forum the conscious Davos.

- 2006: **'An Inconvenient Truth'** Launch in Brussels, with **Al Gore**, EU Commissioners **Neelie Kroes** and **Stavros Dimas**, attended by over 400 decision-makers, in partnership with the Lisbon Council, founded by **Paul Hofheinz** and **Ann Mettler**.
- 2006-2008: **Tällberg New Leaders Program**, run by **Tom Cummings** with Prof. **Charles Handy** and wife **Elizabeth Handy**, which brought 120 emerging leaders to Tällberg, including now well-known figures such as **Sandrine Dixon-Declève**, former co-President of the Club of Rome, **Oliver Karius** of LGT Venture Philanthropy, **William Frater** of Kutumikia, **Aart van Veller** of vandebron and many others.
- 2007-onwards: **Tällberg Leadership Prize**, first imagined by Palazzi and then launched with funding from the Swedish Postcode Lottery and presented to **Kofi Annan**, **Lord Brown**, **Melinda Gates**, **Achim Steiner**, it later became the flagship project of Tällberg Foundation as the **Tällberg-SNF-Eliasson Global Leadership Prize**, which continues year after year to attract hundreds of the world's most progressive leaders.
- 2009: **Bioneers Europe**, Zeist, the Netherlands, sister of Bioneers in the USA, convened leading biomimicry leaders such as **Janine Benyus**, **Paul Stamets**, **Kenny Ausubel**, **Nina Simons**, **John Warner**, **John Lieu**, **Christine Loh**, **William Ferwerda** and others.
- 2010: **REWORK the WORLD Summit**, for next-generation leaders, over 2000 from around the world, the largest gathering of global young decision-makers in Sweden ever, organized by Tällberg Foundation. Palazzi introduced **Poonam Aluhuwalia**, CEO of YES Global, the ILO and the Swedish Postcode Lottery that made the summit possible, alongside the Swedish government.
- 2010-onwards: **Springtij Forum**, Terschelling, the Netherlands: inspired in Tällberg in 2008 when **Wouter van Dieren** and Palazzi sat on the terrace of the Green Hotel thinking if a similar gathering in nature could be organized in the Netherlands. Springtij has become the Netherlands' leading bolthole for a regenerative economy.
- 2011: **Authentic Leadership Europe**, Zeist, the Netherlands, in partnership with the Canadian ALIA, brought together luminaries in 'authentic leadership' such as **Otto Scharmer**, **Brian Bacon**, **Adam Kahane**, **Arawani Hayashi**, **Marianne Knuth**, **André van Heemstra**, **Jane Corbett**, **Erica Ariel Fox**.

#### **Regenerative Business and Leadership - 2013 to 2025**

- 2013-onwards: **B Lab Europe**, founded at the invitation of **Andrew Kassoy**, B Lab's co-founder in the USA, following the introduction by **Pedro Tarak**, co-founder of Sistema B. Starting in the autumn with 1 B Corp in Europe, Palazzi served as CEO until 2017 (and then as B Lab Global Ambassador), the community grew to 60, 120, 180, etc through a network of partners all around Europe. Today, B Lab Europe employs 60 people and is a thriving, multi million Euro operation. B Corps have become the most cherished accreditation for businesses aiming at the highest standards of governance, environmental and social impact.
- 2014: **CAUX Next Leaders' Program**, organized by Progressio in the historic CAUX Palace Hotel, venue of the Moral Rearmament Movement after WWII, led by **Tom**

**Cummings, Cornelius Pietzner** and with the participation of **Charly Kleissner, Lisa Kleissner, Randall Zindler**, among others.

- 2018: **SIX Istanbul Summit**, over 400 leaders from around the world, was conceived by Palazzi and team at SIX, the Social Innovation Exchange, London-based, where Palazzi is a board member. The gathering gave our Turkish hosts, Zorlu Holding, and their invitees a look at some of the most progressive business and social enterprise solutions for human progress from around the world.
- 2019-onwards: **Regenerative Society Foundation**, Parma, Italy. At the request of **Davide Bollati**, chairman of Davines, Palazzi co-led the process of conceiving and incorporating the foundation in Parma, Italy, and co-organised a global summit in early 2020 that led to the foundation's formal launch and expansion. Co-founders are Illycaffé, Chiesi, Irinox, Lombard Odier, Nativa, Sammontana Italia, AWorld, 3Bee, Aboca and others.
- 2020-onwards: **NOW Partners**. **Walter Link** and Palazzi, who worked together in the 90s at Social Venture Network Europe, the first community of responsible business leaders, re-met in São Paulo in 2019 and decided to create a new venture: NOW Partners, currently a network of advisors, investors and consultants supporting businesses towards 'regenerative value creation'.
- 2021: **Regenerative Alliance Summit**, Belgium. Progressio has been a founding member of the Regenerative Alliance, a Swiss-registered non-profit launched by **Benoît Greindl, Randall Zindler** and Palazzi and subsequently by **Christophe Fauconnier**, to connect leaders with their own deeper selves and nature. Following several retreats in Switzerland, a summit was organized in nature at the La Falize Estate for 250 invited leaders.
- 2021: **Laudato Si' CEOs' Dialogues**: as member of Pope Francis' Laudato Si' Action Network, Palazzi organized 3 dialogues with 200 CEOs on the significance of the Papal Encyclical on business leadership and conduct. **Walter Link** organized a parallel dialogue with Brazilian business leaders and a physical meeting with **Cardinal Turkson** in Rome.
- 2021-onwards: **Future Economy Forum**. Palazzi has been a founding member. In 2022, 2023, 2024 it organised some of the most dynamic and engaging conversations and action workshops at COP27, COP28 and COP29 respectively, involving dozens of leaders and hundreds of participants.
- 2022-onwards: **For Good Leaders**. Launched in Rome at their 1st Summit attended by 700 invited guests, the organisation has since organized seven events in Amsterdam (2x), Nyenrode Business University, Paris at ChangeNOW, Rome and Castel Gandolfo (2x), Jean Monnet House outside Paris, altogether attended by 3,000 entrepreneurs, investors, executives and other 'for good' leaders.
- 2024-onwards: **For Good Leaders' Cooperative**. Launched to 45,000 'friends', of whom 10,000 are actively involved and designed to become a global community of entrepreneurs and innovators for a regenerative economy and society.
- 2025-onwards: **United Leaders Europe (ULE)**. Launched by **Otti Vogt** of the Global Society for Good Leadership and Palazzi at Jean Monnet House in July 2025, ULE is a platform for European and other leaders working from the 'middle out' for a thriving Europe. It aims to rally entrepreneurs, investors and executives to contribute to Europe's future, supporting European institutions and at times nudging these to be more dynamic and effective at a time when Europe's future is at stake. Progressio initiated the event on July 25-27 at Jean Monnet House with

**Jean Marc Lieberherr-Monnet, Sandrine Dixon Declève and Otti Vogt**, attended by 35 European leaders.

- 2025-onwards: **Regenerative Amsterdam Challenge**, a brand new project together with the Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Metropolitan Solutions and the Impact Economy Foundation, to unleash entrepreneurs in discovering solutions for a regenerative city.
- 2025-onwards: **'Toward an Ecological Civilization' Movement**, Sweden-China, with the Aurora Borealis Foundation and the Chinese Academy of Environmental Sciences.

### **Looking Ahead — The Next 15 Years**

As Progressio marks its 35th anniversary, it reaffirms its mission: to nurture entrepreneurs for good, regenerate planet and people through enterprise, and keep alive the civic spirit that gave Progressio its name. The journey continues — guided by conscience, collaboration and care.