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Report describing the stakeholders, experts
and refugees involvement in a local
workshop - Parma

10 2019





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A. Workshop description

On October 23, 2019 the workshop on how to build an innovative social approach to refugee integration took place in Parma.

The main objective of the facilitation carried out during the workshop was to include some tools and techniques used in the dialogic approach in the format of the European project that included specific objectives, topics and tasks, to ensure the effectiveness of the dialogue and comparison.

In particular, the team of facilitators used, at different stages of the meeting, the following tools and techniques:

- fair distribution of speaking times, to ensure all participants can express their thoughts and contribute to the discussion; this monitoring, which is a fundamental requirement of the dialogic encounter, was essential in group work (Phase 1: co-creation process), to allow everyone to explain and share their idea about the target group, their needs and the creative solutions that could be adopted;
- writing of public notes, clearly visible to all participants, so that everyone can focus on the dialogue and that everything is documented for discussion, in a transparent and clear way and eventually amended;¹
- favor the expression of one's own point of view, rather than telling that of others;² during the reception phase, questions were asked that led the participants to get involved in the first person; everyone was therefore asked to introduce himself, to express his expectations and to outline the contribution he could bring to the day;
- build dialogue and organize discussion for smaller in-depth groups; the entire phase 2 was managed through the constitution of three groups that had the task of deepening the ideas and creative solutions that emerged in phase 1; in particular, each group was asked to discuss the proposed practical activities and to highlight the process necessary for their realization, as well as the guidelines that characterize the process itself. At the end of the groups' work, a spokesperson for the group reported in plenary, before the final discussion.

A.1. Agenda of the workshop

Morning (10.00-12.30)

1. Self-presentation
2. Profiling the target group (individual activity)
3. What are the refugees looking for and what are the main difficulties (individual activity)
4. What can be done to improve the situation? (individual activity)

¹ Jaakko Seikkula - Tom Erik Arnkil, *Dialogical Meetings in Social Networks*, Karnac Books, 2006, p. 77: "Public notes are important not only for having a record of the elements for a collective study at the end of the meeting, but also for transparency and clarity. Everything takes place on view; documents are not worded somewhere behind people's backs" e p. 86: "The public notes serve as material for the discussion".

² Seikkula - Arnkil, *Dialogical Meetings in Social Networks*, p. 127: "Speaking for your own sake and in I-form. Through the questions, the team members can demonstrate a habit that each one is speaking of his/her own views and emotions and not of another's. There is often a need, at least at the beginning of a conversation, to emphasize what is the speaker's own subjective view. Thus, everyone is participating in generating the dialogue in his/her own voice".



Lunch together (12.30-13.30)

Afternoon (13.30-15.00)

5. What this group can do to improve the situation? (group activity)

A.2. Stakeholder list

The participants were local politicians, small and large companies in the area, employment agencies, university professors, reception agencies, associations that use innovative solutions to the issue of refugees.

A start-up initiated by a group of refugees was also involved, but at the last moment they had difficulty in participating.

In particular, we involved:

- **Councilor for Welfare of the Municipality of Parma:** she has delegations for social and labor policies, housing assignment, reception and inclusion policies, economic support and solidarity projects, policies for families. She is currently in her second term, which will end in 2022. The reference party is "Effetto Parma", a civic list established in 2016, following the interruption of relations between the 5-star movement and the Mayor of Parma, Federico Pizzarotti.
- **Delegate for Social Inclusion of the Municipality of Parma:** she is a support for departments in order to make the administrative effects effective. She has the task of collaborating with the Social Sector and with the other Sectors of the Administration involved in reception projects, integration activities, training, relations with resident foreign communities and the social inclusion of asylum seekers of the Municipality of Parma. In particular, she collaborates with the Social Sector in relations with the Prefecture and the management bodies of the reception projects, supports the offices that manage the innovative projects concerning social integration, coordinates and supervises, in agreement with the offices and bodies managers, training projects, language learning, civic engagement, volunteering and socially useful activities. She compares with the associations and communities of foreigners present in the area in order to activate and promote collaborations with innovative projects of participation and involvement of migrants with the dual objective of promoting the exercise of rights and opportunities for the inclusion of the persons accepted and simultaneously to improve the security conditions for the entire city community.
- **Number 1:** leading Italian company in integrated logistics for consumer goods. Specialized in providing integrated logistics services in the Grocery world. It is present in several Italian cities, both in the north and in the south. It is a partner, together with Caritas Fidenza, the Giberti Onlus Foundation, Cariparma Foundation, of N.E.X.T., New Experiment for Training, a project that aims to build training courses which, starting from the learning of the Italian language, can provide migrants with the tools to more easily fit into the world of work and the local social fabric.
- **Ad Store Italia:** Italian advertising agency at the helm of the international network The AD STORE. They are responsible for WELcome, a corporate volunteering project that transforms communication into



integration. Part of a corporate welfare program called WE, the project saw the agency's employees dedicate time, skills and passion meeting with refugee groups, guests of the second reception centers in the Parma area.

- **Openjobmetis:** work agency on the Italian market for over 18 years, active in the administration, research, relocation and staff training. Openjobmetis is the first operator in the sector to be listed on the Italian Electronic Stock Market, representing a connection bridge between companies looking for staff and resources seeking employment, with the aim of optimally matching job supply and demand.
- **Professor Nadia Monacelli - Università degli Studi di Parma:** university researcher at the Department of Economics and Business Sciences, she is a member of the Board of Professors of the research doctorate in Social Psychology of the Department of Psychology. She is the contact person for the international relations of the Department of Psychology and deputy director of the CUCI - University Center for Cooperation.
- **Professor Dimitris Argiropolus - Università degli Studi di Parma:** university researcher at the Department of Humanities, Social Disciplines and Cultural Enterprises. He deals with pedagogy of marginality and emergencies and special pedagogy. He is particularly interested in the contexts of extreme marginality in relation to migration, refugees and ethnic minorities. He conducted research on living conditions and the reduction of Roma participation and activities in residential situations of "nomadic" camps. Activist and member of the Romani Foundation, he coordinates the Scientific Committee and he's involved in international educational cooperation activities. He deals with the enslavement and trafficking of human beings and he's interested in the formation of street educators.
- **Svoltare Social Cooperative:** operates in the Parma area to offer an opportunity for improvement to anyone in conditions of social hardship. They propose to the guests an innovative path which is based on educational, training and social rehabilitation proposals, to allow the achievement of autonomy and inclusion, valuing human capital and identifying an individualized project. In their structures, present both in Parma and in the province, they welcome victims of trafficking and labor exploitation, families and adults in housing and socio-economic difficulties, persons subject to measures restricting individual freedom, asylum seekers (men, women, unaccompanied foreign minors and families). Since 2015 he has held an agreement with the Prefecture of Parma for the reception of asylum seekers. They have obtained various certifications of the quality system ISO EN UNI 9001:2015 in relation to their reception system. They have started a social farming project to support the social and work inclusion of disadvantaged people.
- **CIAC - Center for immigration, asylum and cooperation:** Born during the Balkan conflicts back in the Nineties, it was one of the forerunners in Italy of widespread reception of asylum seekers and refugees in the form of Sprar (Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees). It also promotes the rights of migrant population through around 30 help desks in the Province of Parma (free access with direct services and orientation, inside Municipalities). During the years it has always strived for a responsible role of the third sector in subsidiarity with institution at different levels (local, regional, national), establishing innovative protocols and collaboration (when possible) or pushing for advocacy to win of political resistances. In the recent years it has experimented advanced forms of community involvement



through domestic reception, co-housing among young Italians and refugees, and tutorship programs by individuals or associations.

- **Extrapulita:** is an association of social promotion which has the aim of helping municipal administrations in implementing and making effective social integration policies intended for migrants and Italians in difficulty.
- **Host:** we involved a group of dialogic facilitators to guarantee an effective confrontation among the participants in the workshop. They took care of carrying out the process, using different techniques and tools: fair distribution of speaking times, to allow all participants to contribute to the discussion; writing public notes, in order to offer clarity and transparency to the contents emerged; short interviews to bring out the point of view of everyone, allow mutual knowledge and to outline the contribution that each one could give to the discussion; constitution of working subgroups and collection of inputs resulting from group work.

B. Key results

B.1. Findings of phase 1

Profiling the target group (individually)

The question resulted difficult to be answered by many participants (target of what?). Nevertheless the majority finally focus on a target group of mainly young male refugees (18-35), with low or no education, low level of Italian, willing to learn and ready for (almost) any job.

3. What are the refugees looking for and what are the main difficulties (individually)

	What are they looking for?	Difficulties
Michele (Ciac)	Community, reconstruct their being around affective relations, work, health, documents. If you nurture relations, opportunities flourish.	Ex. In order to access asylum procedure, you need domiciliation. If you don't have and institutions don't provide it, you can get it through black market. But then you are socialized in the wrong community, you experience exploitation from the beginning of your stay



Simone (Svoltare)	At the beginning they look for good food, reception and medical care. Later on many (not all) look for training and work.	Documents: now they know that almost nobody will get refugee status
Monica (extrapulita)	Autonomy, work, mobility, access to opportunities in the territory, social networks, care of the family	To get these things.
Roberto (extrapulita)	Autonomy	Basic skills, capacity to stay in the territory. Documents (no hope...)
Elena (extrapulita)	Depends on the target. Individual problems.	
Katia (Municipality of Parma)	Autonomy, a project for the ones who decide to stay.	Housing, social networks, training, getting a job.
Laura (Municipality of Parma)	Regularization, housing, work. While not everybody wants to integrate.	The same: Regularization, housing, work.
Alessandro (extrapulita)	They want to be acknowledged as "human beings"	Not to be acknowledged/recognition (as human beings)
Stefano (OpenJobMetis)	Work	Italian language, low education. It is us to experience difficulties in finding economic actors who open their doors
Dimitris (Univ of Parma)	Not to feel like "strangers"	
Nadia (Univ of Parma)	Dignity connected to work. "Citizenship"	Being obliged to move from one place to another because nobody



		wants them
Francesca (Number One)	Work – connected to dignity and freedom. To feel they are an active part of society	Settle down in the territory, transportation, language, social networks (generally composed only by people who are in the same conditions)
Giampaolo (Number One)	Work, house	If I don't speak Italian, I don't find a job. If I don't have a stable contract, I don't find a house... Orientation to bureaucracy. Transportation in order not to lose opportunities.
Natalia (Ad Store)	Friendship, social networks, cultural exchange, security, work.	Building trust, creating a friendship.

4. What can be done to improve the situation?

Michele (Ciac)	<p>Changing approach.</p> <p>Somebody said (in the previous activity) that refugees often appears as “not ready matter”: but what if it is us to be considered as “not ready matter”??.</p> <p>There is a subtle discrimination: e.g. in the case of school dropout, we interrogate school institutions, teachers, curricula – we don't say that students who retreat from school are to be considered as a “not ready/inadequate matter”.</p> <p>Change should be mutual (see the experiences of school integration of disabled students, antipsychiatry) in order to have a real path of integration.</p> <p>We need to propose a theoretical and cultural model to overcome the obstacles. See Ager and Strang</p> <p>The real foundation is rights and citizenship, and not viceversa.</p> <p>Model: anticipated citizenship</p>
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	<p>1) Protection; 2) Reception; 3) Integration</p> <p>Ex. Generally when need is at the top level, responses are at the lowest. On the contrary, establishing a prompt reception system gave these results: 157 cases with high vulnerability, 132 with stable autonomy, only 3 drop outs + 2 in charge of services.</p>
Simone (Svoltare)	<p>It is necessary to create the legal conditions for the integration to be evaluated differently by the courts during the appeals or even in this sense to the territorial commissions.</p> <p>Also include an important weight in the assessment of the qualifications acquired</p>
Monica (extrapulita)	<p>a) Facilitating the acquisition of permit to stay connected to work (motivi di lavoro)</p> <p>b) Access to social and health services also without residence</p> <p>c) Facilitating community networks through the experience of families/singles who host (domestic reception) and become landmarks in the territory</p> <p>d) Tables of participatory planning in the communities</p>
Roberto (extrapulita)	<p>Work</p> <p>It is clear what we have to do</p> <p>a) Language</p> <p>b) How to live in a community of colleagues/job environment</p> <p>c) structures/support</p> <p>matching with opportunities</p> <p>network of enterprises</p> <p><u>But</u></p> <p>90% won't get international protection</p> <p>So, what's the meaning of our intervention?? It's not cynical, we just need to understand the possible impact of our actions</p>
Elena (extrapulita)	



<p>Katia (Municipality of Parma)</p>	<p>a) stimulate policy makers to approach the issue of refugees in a non-emergency way, but from a systemic perspective</p> <p>b) provide for systems of legal recognition in the face of successful integration paths</p> <p>c) establish evaluation systems of non-canonical competences that allow the emergence of strengths from which to start</p> <p>d) involve the world of private companies in the establishment of ad hoc training courses that respond to needs in two ways: company + refugees</p> <p>e) provide protection against labor exploitation + "linguistic" protection systems</p>
<p>Laura (Municipality of Parma)</p>	<p>a) Residence permit for job search</p> <p>b) Clear definition from the world of work of profiles, skills, skills required to invest in preparation</p> <p>> ad hoc training</p> <p>> individual work on specific and transversal skills</p> <p>c) Availability of the world of work (big entrepreneurs) to invest in the house: one-roomed apartments for workers or apartments for families at controlled prices</p>
<p>Alessandro (extrapulita)</p>	<p>a) Making a market or fair where every migrant has a banquet in which he presents himself: his story, his problems, his needs. The population meets and a live match is created</p> <p>b) The lack of knowledge of the language is the Problem: strongly pushing schools to create schools run by teachers / students to teach Italian</p> <p>c) "Using" former migrants as trainers for new migrants on the theme: "How to behave in Italy", "What is right and what is wrong"</p>
<p>Stefano (OpenJobMetis)</p>	<p>Structural training courses for insertion into work with the involvement of different entrepreneurial and institutional actors, not easy to bring together in reality, and thus to make known the difficulties faced by all.</p>



<p>Nadia (Univ of Parma)</p>	<p>From the rethoric of compassion to the responsibility of action</p> <p>a) Take political responsibility as citizens demanding laws that facilitate civic integration = permits</p> <p>b) Invest (as it has been done) and provide support and training to overcome certain difficulties</p> <p>> need of community</p> <p>> understanding of the "codes" of life in Italy</p> <p>> language</p> <p>NB. a lot has been done in the last 4 years and we have allowed everything to be lost</p> <p>c) Immigration needs to be considered as a physiological phenomenon of our social life. History says it</p>
<p>Elena (extrapulita)</p>	<p>a) Listening to them</p> <p>b) Organizing co-planning tables with groups of refugees and migrant associations</p> <p>c) Offering meeting spaces - delivery (islands, showers, wardrobes, wifi)</p>
<p>Natalia (Ad Store)</p>	<p>2020 goal of the Welcome project: directly involve a group of refugees in an integration project of creative communication.</p> <p>Possible outputs:</p> <p>A communication campaign that tells Parma 2020 seen from another point of view</p> <p>Create a miscellaneous group that unites young refugees and Ad Store workers to use one of the most important levers to communicate: music. Music that unites. Possible name of the group (proposed by the Ad Store guys): Re-Fugees.</p>



B.2. Findings of phase 2

What this group can do to improve the situation?

Through 3 different steps: Priority – Process - Guidelines

Group 1

Current situation: “there is no refugees” (due to the new Law). We lack a “map” to orient refugees and a good “protocol” between this sector and private companies. We lack policies, not practices.

Priorities. “A laboratory for the future”

With a good mix between social and economic (work) aspects. We need a new wave of consultation among social parties. Innovation does not deny what has been already done but it should systemize best practices.

Social networking is a priority, in the context of subsidiarity between public and private sector.

Group 2

Priority: to create social cohesion and enhance mutual contact/knowledge

Where? At the level of neighborhood

Process: Institution of a neighborhood mediator, with three goals:

- humanistic mediation of conflicts
- peer to peer training
- conciliation of life times

He/she is involved in training, information, creating situations for understanding, orientation (services, opportunities), conflict management.

Group 3

Priority: Training and work placement of migrants

Process

- training of the trainers of the professionals involved in the training process
- definition and formation of coordination roles
- provision of basic courses (Italian, work orientation, soft skills, reception)
- provision of vocational courses + basic school education
- accompaniment to professional integration



Guidelines

- definition of structured / organized paths (with a pivot that acts as "integrator" between the third sector, companies, public administration, employment agencies)
- need to introduce assessment / feedback systems by the people involved in the process
- need to intervene in public administrations in order to have a certain timeframe for activating the process of integrating / obtaining documents
- mechanisms for spreading the model for scalability

C. Résumé

The workshop has generally been a success: all the participants gave a meaningful contribution and appreciated the opportunity to have an exchange with different stakeholders. During the discussion many people underlined the importance of sharing resources, views and solutions with subjects belonging to different contexts and having different perspectives on refugees. Economic stakeholders showed interest in going further in consultation and common planning.

Two issues emerged as particularly relevant and shared by different actors:

- 1) how to relate to the changed scenario (after L. 132/2918), where it is almost impossible to obtain refugee status . Some actors showed a more "depressive" attitude (what's the use of our efforts if at the end nobody gets the status? are we kidding ourselves and the asylum seekers?), while others pushed for a more proactive reaction involving social movements and institutions for a necessary change (policies and laws can change, and we should advocate for that. When we started to work with refugees there were no laws, no reception system... but we didn't give up!)
- 2) Tension between "practices" and "policies". Many participants underlined that there is a risk in the rhetoric and emphasis on "best practices": the perception is that in Parma there has been several good practices in the past and in the present time, but that is not necessarily sufficient to achieve a change in policies. On the contrary, if we continue to stress on practices, someone has the impression that we always start over again, as if it was the day 0. Besides that there is the awareness that "100 best practices don't make a good policy". There is a matter of scalability and of impact, impossible to obtain only through a sum of limited practices.

As regards the co-creation activity, we observed that the opportunity to meet and exchange experiences/expectations among different subjects has been appreciated by all the participants. Above all the presence of stakeholders belonging to the economic arena (local companies, employment agencies) was an added value: while the other participants already knew each other and had already met in different situations (institutional meeting, projects, conferences etc), the economic actors had never been part of a context dedicated to refugee integrations were they were called to express their own point of view. Even if some of them are actively engaged in creating job opportunities for refugees, they appreciated having been invited to discuss on wider political/social issues.

The collaboration among the different actors has been very positive and engaged. The general climate of the workshop was collaborative, friendly and respectful. The role of the dialogic facilitators has been crucial in order to promote the equal participation of all the stakeholders. Particularly important, it was the strict use of time which allowed everyone to give his/her own contribution without anyone to prevail (at the beginning it created some anxiety but then it was something to smile at, but to respect). We observed that during the presentation/discussions, and above all during the group activity, nobody has gone „off topic“ even though we had the impression that for some participants it was hard to keep the direction and overcome the „depressive“ mood connected to the normative context.

For future co-creation activities the main "lessons learned" during the workshop held in Parma are the importance of inviting a mixed range of participants, the key role of facilitators in carrying out the



activities and allow the equal participation of all, the need to develop a process which goes beyond the single workshop/activity (and this can be done not only creating future occasions for stakeholders to participate and give their contribution but also illustrating very well and openly the goals of the project and the following steps, keeping them informed on the developments etc.).