

Europe for Citizens | Networks of Towns



International seminar - 25th October 2018
Creative Thinking Workshop - 26th October 2018

SUMMARY REPORT



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Report by Sferalab: Cinzia Zugolaro, Roberto Aloi, Carlo Pandurini and Daniela Sanfratello.

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0. INTRODUCTION

Inclusion, participation and comparison: these are the three common denominators that characterized the first international seminar of the European project Townlab_MEET, **held on October 25th and 26th at the Chiesanuova Meeting Center for Cultures [Centro di Incontro tra le Culture di Chiesanuova] and in which over the two days, participated more than 150 subjects, of which more than 30% were the international guests.**

It was an event **for promotion of democratic engagement and civic participation of European citizens, for fostering inter-cultural dialogue and mutual understanding and struggle against the stigmatization of migrants and minority groups, which are the priority of "Town Networks" [Reti di città] of Europe for Citizens Programme.**

In the first part of the summary report, the thematic contents and results of the international seminar will be given in full details with an in-depth study of the Participatory Project Workshop aimed at sharing proposals and opportunities in the matter of social integration, law and reception.

In the second part, the activities of the Creative thinking educational workshop will be described, featuring **under-18 youngsters from Valle Sacra, Quincinetto and Marnaz.**

1. INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR TOWNLAB_MEET

1.1 PLENARY SESSION

The international seminar *"Dialogue and Laboratory of ideas in the matter of reception, social inclusion and rights of migrants"* provided for the participation of representatives of public bodies, academics and legal experts, experts in European planning, operators in reception and protection of asylum seekers' centres and performing arts researchers.

At the opening of the plenary session, **moderated by Nicoletta Bellin (C.I.S.S. 38), the representatives of the partnership of Townlab_MEET (Giovanni Giachino of the Municipality of Chiesanuova and Angelo Canale Clapetto of the Municipality of Quincinetto | ITALY, Chantal Vannson of the Municipality of Marnaz | FRANCE, Stanka Parac Damjanovic of LDA Subotica | SERBIA and Vanesa Dželadini of the Municipality of Novo Mesto | SLOVENIA),** introduced the seminar, bringing a contribution to the thematic sessions and the Participatory Project Workshop.

Afterwards, **Cinzia Zugolaro (Sferalab)** illustrated the objectives, methodologies, activities and expected results for the Townlab_MEET project. After having contextualized the initiative within the European planning scenario, the itinerant path of the international meetings was deepened with a specific focus given to the civic participation and sensitization tools that will be adopted in the period 2018 - 2020 including the innovative platform of participatory democracy "Livinglab" and the structured statistical survey.

Constanze Janda (University of Speyer) presented a summary of the European legislative scenario on immigration and asylum, highlighting the directives and structural regulations of EU legislative system (e.g. dir. 2011/95/EU and 2013/33/EU, Dublin III, etc.) and addressed specific aspects related to international protection mechanisms and minimum standards for admission.

Retracing the process undertaken in 2001 by the municipality of Chiesanuova in context of System of protection of asylum seekers and refugees, **Annalisa Fontana and Silvia Rovetto (SPRAR Chiesanuova)** described the model of reception used in the mountain context of Valle Sacra area. This action has led to the accommodation of a total of more than 300 people (adults and minors) who have benefited from different types of services (accommodation, social and health support, literacy, language and professional training, job

placement, etc.) while having being supported in the process of integration of families within the local community. Following up the presentation of the good practice experience of the municipality of Chiesanuova, **Virginia Costa (SPRAR Central Service)** illustrated the national scenario of the System of Protection of Asylum Seekers and Refugees, which is characterized by the application of integrated reception projects to which local authorities adhere on voluntary basis. She also set out the structural characteristics of the SPRAR such as the collaboration between different levels of government (from the Ministry of the Interior to local authorities) and the involvement of the third sector (world of associations and non-governmental organizations).

Donatella Bava (ASGI) spoke about the prospects for safeguarding asylum seekers following the regulatory reforms implemented in Italy nowadays. In particular, the possible effects on the rights of migrants resulting from the conversion into law of the decree on immigration, approved by the Italian Council of Ministers in September 2018, were addressed.

In the end, **Rita Maria Fabris and Antonella Enrietto (University of Turin)** illustrated the potential and aims of the performing arts in terms of encouraging processes of social inclusion. During the event, in particular, some audio-video excerpts related to the experimentation of community social theatre were shared.



Image n.1 | The plenary session of the international launch seminar Townlab_MEET

1.1.1 Participants

The event was attended by **61 persons** belonging to different types of categories (public bodies, private sector, non-governmental organizations, etc.) and with the representation of 9 different nationalities.

Representatives of **local authorities** accounted for

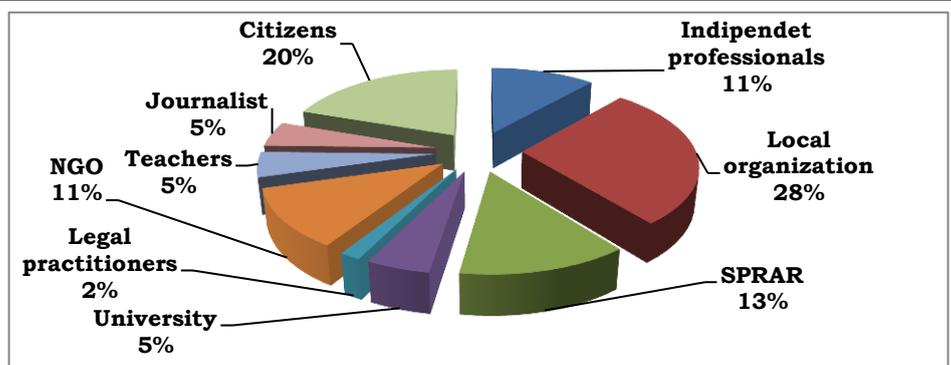


Image n. 2 | Categories present at the international seminar

almost 30%, of which **1/5 of them work in international municipalities**. That element was strategic in context of sharing good practices and consolidation of networks between European cities, in line with the call for proposals Networks of towns.

Civic participation was guaranteed by the presence of a significant number of **citizens, corresponding to 20%** of the entire audience of the international seminar, where some of them originated from countries outside the EU, or with previous work experiences in integration into systems of widespread reception.

With regard to the legal sector, the participation of professionals and researchers in law and legislation field was noted. The educational sector was represented by high school **teachers** and **foreign language teachers** (5%).

From the point of view of the struggle against the non-stigmatization of foreigners, aimed to social inclusion of migrants, the participation of **operators of the Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees** and representatives of the Migrants Observatory [*Osservatorio Migranti*] (which several associations and representatives of the category belong to), was noted.

With regard to the information and communication process, the involvement and presence of **correspondents** of some local and national newspapers allowed the dissemination of proceedings of the international seminar in printed form and through internet portals.

1.2 PARTICIPATORY PROJECT WORKSHOP

Starting from the speeches and issues addressed during the plenary session, during the second part of the international seminar, the activity of participatory planning took place, aimed at initiating a comparison between subjects of different nationalities and backgrounds in the field of:

- **RIGHT AND DUTIES**
- **RECEPTION AND SOLIDARITY**
- **SOCIAL INCLUSION**

The workshop, led by professional facilitators, was attended by 30 participants and was supported for the interpretation by simultaneous translators of English and French language. The participants discussed four aspects based on the following matrix:

- **MAINTAINING** → existing and replicable models and approaches
- **ORGANIZING** → not yet implemented processes, but which have to be adopted
- **ENHANCING** → of positive dynamical processes already in place, but which need to be improved
- **AVOIDING** → negative elements or behaviours, which should not be replicated

	Maintaining	Organizing	Enhancing	Avoiding
Rights and duties				
Reception and solidarity				
Social inclusion				

Image n.3 | Diagram of the matrix in support of the workshop desk

The dialogue and comparison that began during the workshop were preparatory for the comparison of current immigration scenarios in different countries that have been represented (France, Germany, Italy, Serbia and Slovenia), and also for the interaction between operators working in different fields, for the identification of the most virtuous policies to be deepened in the focus groups and to be taken into account for the drafting of the position paper.

The complexity of issues and heterogeneity of participants allowed addressing different types of topics, with particular attention to: models of reception and health care for migrants, education, training and the world of work, organisation of voluntary and

solidarity activities, awareness-raising of the local community, inter-institutional and public/private relations, inter-cultural promotion, etc.



Image n. 4 | Some moments of the Participatory Project Workshop

1.2.1 Right and Duties

HEALTH and HEALTH INSURANCE	
	Maintaining standards that ensure good levels of health for accepted migrants, by comparing governmental regulatory approaches regarding the supplied health services to asylum seekers and refugees ¹ .
EDUCATION and TEACHING	
	Provide for compulsory language courses for refugees and asylum seekers (as required in Italy), in order to facilitate the integration process ² .
	Request for specialisations and specific language teaching requirements from teachers of courses offered to asylum seekers, in order to ensure the quality of teaching and learning.
	With regard to minors, the integration of foreign students into classes of the same age (as in Italy) is considered advantageous, because it provides language courses integrated with the ministerial education programme.
	Implementation of training courses for refugees, with civic education lessons (e.g. content of the Constitution, history and culture of the host country, etc.).
COOPERATION AND NETWORK	
	Encouraging the creation of inter-institutional networks, fostering public-private relations and replication of transnational cooperation activities, with the aim of achieving the adoption of good practices in management and regulation of the immigration phenomenon.

1.2.1 Reception and Solidarity

GOOD PRACTICES	
	Promoting and enhancing of models of widespread reception on national and transnational level, by replicating the collaboration between networks of European cities.
	Improving the organisation and management of the two most critical phases (arrival/first reception) by giving priority not only to assistance and accommodation processes, but also to a support aimed at intercepting needs, expectations and requirements.

1 For example, the Italian regulatory system to persons with international protection and permits for humanitarian reasons, guarantees equal treatment of citizens. In Germany, on the other hand, the procedure for accessing social security services is differentiated according to the pathologies (acute or chronic illnesses, etc.).

2 There are several replicable good practices: in Marnaz (France) language courses are organised for women; in Chiesanuova (Italy) language courses are organised for couples with children, with separate modules for parents and with reconciliation of language learning and family management.

VOLUNTEERING	
	Enhancing the support from non-governmental organisations and civil society (e.g. "pro loco" associations) in solidarity and voluntary actions.
	Educating citizens about the importance of participating in solidarity initiatives in the field of reception of disadvantaged people from other countries.
	Comparison of different approaches applied by European countries, with evaluating the effectiveness of some useful tools for encouraging and facilitating voluntary activities (e.g. reimbursement of expenses).
AWARENESS-RAISING AND INFORMATION	
	Struggling against misinformation and media campaigns that fuel racism and xenophobia, in order to avoid the spread of fears reverted against the presence of asylum seekers and refugees. In fact, there are some propaganda movements praising construction of walls and closing of borders, which must be counterbalanced by cooperation between local authorities and national governments.
SOCIO-ECONOMIC DYNAMICS	
	Reception as an opportunity for avoiding the accentuation of critical dynamics at the demographic level (ageing of population), as well as on socio-economic level (depopulation of small villages, especially those in mountain areas) and for improvement of processes at the employment level (integration of the workforce into the most critical sectors lacking the working force).

1.2.1 Social inclusion

REPLICABLE MODELS	
	Enhancing of virtuous reception systems in small contexts in order to facilitate the management of hosted migrants, promotion of human relations and inclusion into the social tissue of the host community and avoiding the phenomena of marginalization.
INTERCULTURAL PROMOTION	
	Maintaining and replicating initiatives aimed at encouraging of integration and conveying solidarity processes and mechanisms of contamination at various levels (customs and traditions, food and wine, music, etc.), through the organization of public events.
SOCIALLY USEFUL WORK AND EMPLOYMENT	
	Encouraging the socially useful work for asylum seekers and refugees, in order to promote the integration of migrants and to activate useful policies for the local community.
	Promoting professional training and job placement of refugees not only in a form of employees, but also by supporting self-employed business activities with prior preliminary census of their skills and previous experiences.
ASSOCIATIONS AND NGOs	
	Coordinating activity of associations and non-governmental organisations in the field of integration and inclusion, with building articulated networks which act in synergy and agreement with public institutions.

2. TOWNLAB_SCHOOL | CREATIVE THINKING WORKSHOP

In order to raise awareness among young people for respect of cultural diversity and to encourage dialogue between students of different nationalities, on **October 26 2018**, the Townlab_SCHOOL took place, which was a playful and didactic laboratory of creative thinking. The activity was attended by students from the 3rd, 4th and 5th classes from the **Primary school C. Nigra of Colletterto (I.C. "Amedeo Cognengo of Castellamonte)**, the 5th class of the **Primary school Comm. Buat Albiana from Quincinetto (I.C. Settimo Vittone)** and from the **Primary school of Marnaz**. The **Centre Saint Exupery of Marnaz** also took part in the initiative, involving two guests from the **reception centre for unaccompanied minors**. More than 80 young participants divided into class groups **were guided by professional educators and facilitators through a brainstorming process** with the aim of representing the students' perception of multicultural and social contaminations and investigating their vision about the phenomenon of immigration and the processes of reception and integration.

In agreement with the teachers in charge of the classes, prior to the event, the students have created graphic, artistic and musical works and contributed to convey messages and principles about brotherhood, solidarity, cultural and ethnic diversity, identity and integration. Further on, with the support of a matrix - guide, the three groups expressed their thoughts graphically and through written reflections about the following themes:

❖ **Reception | Fraternity | Equality**

At the end of the activity and after appointing the speakers for each group, the young people shared the results of their activity with the support of the educators and the interpreters.

During the brainstorming activity, it emerged that **the young participants do not give a negative connotation to the concept of ethnic and cultural diversity** and do not consider them as relevant aspects to identify and judge persons.

There has been a marked **propensity towards others, comprehension of the importance of solidarity** with people with problems and difficulties.

The children's vision of the world is outlined **as a set of nations and continents with different flags, languages and cultures, but interlinked by a common red thread that rests firmly on values such as unity, peace and brotherhood, which are the founding principles of the European Union.**

The tendency of under-18s of different nationalities, to interact and cooperate, is reflected in the slogans printed on posters, which are consistent with the objectives of the programme Europe for citizens.

The activity carried out, being similar to that of adults in terms of methodology and general macro-environments, **confirms the importance of generational responsibility in under-18s on complex yet topical issues in order to educate and raise awareness among the citizens of tomorrow on important aspects, not only at the national or international level, but also on the level of daily living.**



Image n.5 | Creative Thinking Workshop: Youngsters from Valle Sacra, Quincinetto and Marnaz at work



