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

10 2019





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A. Workshop description

The two main keywords guiding this first workshop of the project SiforREF *Integrating Refugees in Society and Labour Market through Social Innovation* were “labour market” and “society”.

The challenge that this workshop and the whole project intend to take is discovering and sharing practices, methodologies, networks, cross-sectoral and transdisciplinary approaches that can help European societies as a whole and every single European citizen to be more welcoming, more dialoguing, more open to work and live with people with a refugee background.

After this, a second challenge will take place: advocacy with policy makers, to have an impact on their decisional agenda and make innovative measures become part of an integration system at transnational level. To go beyond the “emergency” approach that is currently running main actions and legislations, towards a different mindset and a real social and cultural long-term inclusion.

Guided by these keywords and objectives, the workshop engaged participants with different background and coming from different sectors: refugees, representative of NGOs working with refugees, local government, small companies working with refugees and experts in the field of migrant integration.

The workshop was led by two hosts of Teatro dell’Argine association, two facilitators coming from theatre, taking advantage from this eccentric point of view, and experienced in focus group conduction, and projects involving migrants. (i.e the project *Acting Together #WithRefugees* with UNHCR)

The workshop included plenary sessions as well as working groups, continuously alternated to be able to listen to everybody and exchange findings and reflections.

It all started with a welcome and icebreaking moment in order to let all participants know each other, be open, at ease and ready to collaborate, and to know specific knowledge or skills able to come to light on specific parts of the main question. During the speed dating stakeholders had to introduce themselves, their name, job, favourite food and the reason why they were there.

It was an opportunity to understand their reasons and motivations:

- curiosity;
- a chance to understand how to improve in the job, to learn something and do something different;
- interest in relationships and opportunity to create a network;
- a place where is important to be if we want to talk about and work on migrant integration.

Francesca Campomori from Ca’ Foscari University of Venice presented the project, its content and challenges as a frame for the workshop, and explained its meaning, underlining the role of engaged participants as active protagonists in co-creation of an innovative approach in refugee policies, as well as stakeholders involved in workshops held in Berlin, Ljubljana and Parma.

After the description of the working groups’ agenda and the explanation of the aims of Phase 1 and Phase 2 by Teatro dell’Argine, participants were divided into two groups work.

Phase 1 “Co-creation process” included a brainstorming session in two groups, equally balanced background of participants, so that every group had all useful skills and knowledge at the table. The main focus here was to identify a specific integration problem (target group and needs) and share practices and new ideas, possible solutions to face it.

Table 1 focused more on integration in society and relationship with the hosting communities; Table 2 focused on integration in the labour market.

About method and materials, we decided to use flipchart and marker post-it (different colors for problems and possible solutions). In order to support participants in expressing their ideas, they could cut some picture from available magazines (image is better than words)

At the end, the results were shared in a plenary session by a spokesman from each group.



In phase 2 “Reflection on co-creation”, the two working groups (same tables as before) focused on the methodology used in the activity, giving and evaluation of the workshop itself, and shared tips and proposals of other methodologies for the future. Emoji stickers were used to let them show feelings about the morning spent together .

At the end, the results were shared in a plenary session, and also a Q&A moment and an open discussion were included as final part of the workshop.

A.1. Agenda of the workshop

9:30 Welcome and ice-breaking activity (speed dating to introduce yourself and share favourite food)

9:50 Opening. Information about the content of SiforREF project and goals of the workshop by Francesca Campomori - Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Presentation of the workshop agenda by Teatro dell'Argine

9:55 Introduction phase 1 (Co-creation-process). Explain the aim of the task and make clear that the important outcome of the innovative co-creation is not a concrete idea/solution, but the reflection on the process. Divide the participants into two groups with one host per group.

10:00 The group work. Brainstorming to identify target group and needs. Flipchart and marker post-it of different colors for problems and possible solutions.

11:00 Coffee break

11:15 Plenary session: Results of group work showed by a spokesman from each group.

11:30 Introduction phase 2 (Reflection on co-creation). Explain the aim of the task. Which methodologies and practices for stimulating co-creative processes? We want to learn, gain insight on this co-creation-process.

11:45 Group work. Reflecting individually and together as a group, bring insights on a more abstract level. Which methods, approaches are best suited? What are the top 10 guidelines, tips, recommendations for innovative co-creation? Emoj stickers to share feeling about the workshop and give a feedback.

12:15 Coffee break

12:25 Plenary session: groups present their ideas, final discussion, Q&A session

13:10 Photos and wrap up. Final greetings by Francesca Campomori - Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Carla De Lorenzo – ASP City of Bologna. Group picture and certificate of attendance



A.2. Stakeholder list

Refugees

1. **Abdoulie Jagne** (Table 1)
Student – worker in the frame of the project SPRAR/SIPROIMI (20 years old)
2. **Bilal Bah** (Table 2)
Worker Confraternita dell’UVA (27 years old)

Representatives from an NGO working with refugees

1. **Alice Genco** (Table 1)
Representative of the Association “Terraverde”, association created by a group of artisans who carry out projects of social and work integration aimed at young people in difficulty, through the development of manual skills, creativity.
2. **Daria Achilli** (Table 2)
Representative of the Association “Universo”, association founded as an initiative of foreign and Italian students and workers with the aim of promoting activities that spread, motivate and facilitate mutual understanding between people of different culture and origin.

Representatives of local government

1. **Paride Lorenzini** (Table 1)
Services to the Person and the Community (social services) - Municipality San Lazzaro di Savena,
2. **Gianni Caselli** (Table 2)
Working inclusion - Municipality of Bologna,

Representatives of innovative civil society initiative's working with refugees or representatives of companies

1. **Antonio Ciavarella** (Table 2)
Representative of the firm “La Confraternita dell’Uva” (Cafè - Wine Bar - bookshop)

Other categories

1. **Sara Bruni** (Table 1)
Representative for working inclusion SPRAR/SIPROIMI (Protection system for asylum seekers and refugees project)
2. **Andrea Durante** (Table 2)
Representative for working inclusion SPRAR/SIPROIMI project
3. **Angelo Pittaluga** (Table 2)
Integration expert UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)



B. Key results

B.1. Findings of phase 1

Table 1: Social inclusion

Target group

First premise: the participants wanted to add a first note, saying that in Bologna Metropolitan Area and in general in Italy, it would be useful and fair to include not only refugees but even asylum seekers and people with humanitarian protection status, in order to take in consideration experiences of all participants. The reason for this request is that, according to the Decree Law n. 113 of October 4th 2018, commonly known as “Security Decree” (Salvini-Di Maio government) they have less possibilities than refugees.

Second premise: the high level of social, political, bureaucratic, financial, legislative difficulties of all those working in this sector in Italy, made it very difficult not to be negative and reach out for possible positive and efficient solutions. Most of the discussion was about what you should and would do, but you cannot or may not do in Italy.

Needs perceived, difficulties experienced, critical issues and challenges (yellow post-it)

What does it mean for you integration? Starting from the real situation and difficulties experienced to highlight most important problems to face.

- Labeling (fake news and negative narration concerning refugees)
- Few relationships in the local community
- Housing
- Work

Focus question: How can they have better interactions with the other residents in local communities?

Ideas and possible solutions, (blue and pink post-it with explanations in green)

Analysis of methods and practices that worked to identify objectives and possible solutions, keep in mind that people, individually, make the difference

- Give correct and useful information, info bombing to fight fake news and negative narration concerning refugees;
- Train the labour consultants about refugees’ condition and legislation;
- Italian language courses;
- Sport, theatre, dance, music and all other cultural and social activities as moments to know each other and build positive interactions;
- Have a cultural mediator in condominiums where refugees live along with natives to facilitate mutual understanding;
- Projects not only for/with refugees, but also for/with the residents, all involved since the very beginning in co-creation processes;
- Agreements with real estate agencies to face housing problems, urban regeneration as a solution to the housing problem and an opportunity to find a job;
- Projects for working inclusion;
 - Metro PON (Multi-fund National Operational Programme Metropolitan Cities dedicated to sustainable urban development) to recover agricultural heritage, train refugees and encourage start-ups;
 - Project “Scuola-Cantiere” of Ass. Terraverde to train young refugees from 18 to 25, innovative training course, in the fields of construction and gardening, structured as a real construction site and in direct contact with expert craftsmen and companies in the green and construction sectors.
- Networking between public and private sectors, involving civil society, people and organizations of different sectors and disciplines, cooperation with associations working with refugees.



Table 2: Labour market integration

Target group

Male refugees aged 20-30, coming from West Africa, illiterate, not in employment and with poor skills to find a job in the new Country (the picture of the man represents the chosen target)

Needs perceived, difficulties experienced, critical issues and challenges (blue post-it)

- Overcome language barriers
- Lack of skills: many people arriving in our country lose their skills, and are obliged to learn a new job (picture of two people sitting in front of a wall means this vision of the future with few opportunities)
- Not only find a place in the labour market but even support positive interaction between people from different background and cultures in the work environment
- No possibility of mobility in the Country, that could be for them a good way to find a job more easily (the picture of the man in prison)

Focus question: How can they build an economic (access to employment) and social identity?

Ideas and possible solutions (green post-it)

(Picture of Italian champion road cyclist Gino Bartali, recognised as a "Righteous Among the Nations" for his efforts to aid Jews during World War II as example of strength and justice)

- Italian language courses;
- Professional training with focus on hard skills as well as soft skills;
- Promote migrants' professional and entrepreneurial skills;
- Specific education to connect the skills of job seekers with the needs of employers;
- "Welcome" Project promoted by UNHCR. Recognition to companies that most distinguish themselves in promoting the labour placement of refugees and in supporting their integration process in Italy. The "Welcome. Working for Refugee Integration" Logo can be used by companies for communication purposes;
- Tax cut for the companies;
- Capitalizing the diversity in the companies, social mix as an added value;
- Corporate social responsibility and attention for migrant integration;
- Training courses and internships for migrants. Regional Law n.14/2014 Promotion of Investments in Emilia-Romagna supports work integration and social inclusion of people in fragile and vulnerable conditions, through the integration of public employment services, social and health services, and foster migrants integration in the labour market
- Close cooperation between public and private sectors



B.2. Findings of phase 2

Key recommendations

Table 1

Reflections about the activity and the methodology, guidelines for future co-creation processes

1. Engagement of all the actors involved in migrant integration from the beginning of the process, from refugees to policy makers, from academicians to practitioners, from educational to social workers to the police;
2. No linguistic barriers. Be sure that refugees engaged have a good levels of language proficiency in order to give a real contribution;
3. Importance of involvement of public bodies to guide and guarantee the participatory process;
4. Role games would be suitable as a methodology, so that a politician can think from the perspective of a social worker or a refugee and vice versa; insert yoga, or theatre, in other words use our body to facilitate the process as well as discussions;
5. Sessions should be longer, allow more time to know each other, develop trust and to talk about such challenging topics;
6. Learning by doing and be ready to try and fail;
7. Transparency. Having clear and declare from the beginning what is the context, the boundaries and the possibilities; avoid to work in abstract, be dependent and contextual;
8. Sharing decisions, collaboration and mutual respect, collaborative working and networking
9. Sharing good practices. Make all the results of the project actions available for all the other partners around Europe, so that we can learn from the others;
10. Ensure that participatory process is not an isolated event but will be part of a long term changing process;

Table 2

Reflections about the activity and the methodology, guidelines for future co-creation processes

1. Multidisciplinary approach: listen to different point of views and learn from different backgrounds;
2. Round tables with different levels of interactions, first bilateral and then wider (process by step)
3. Importance of involvement of beneficiaries in creating innovative solutions. Bottom-up approach and focus group with refugees. Involve all relevant stakeholders, especially migrants themselves, in the design measures responding their real needs;
4. Speed dating and brainstorming as good methods during co-creation sessions;
5. More time to express ourselves in focus group sessions;
6. Insert theatre, theatre forum, role games to understand different point of views;
7. Importance of communication of experiences, good practice and results, data exchange
8. Advocacy at a political level. Documents with results of co-creation process proposal of innovative measures shared with public institutions.
9. Sharing good practices Make all the results of the project actions available for all the other partners around Europe, so that we can learn from the others;
10. Networking and common strategy, local and then transnational



C. Résumé

Although every local context is very different and requires specific solutions to address specific challenges, some of the more general findings in the workshop can be precious to share in a common path:

- the idea of having a bottom-up or peer-to-peer or participatory process, especially involving refugees in co-creation and designing integration measures and laws. Successful policies cannot developed without asking to the directly interested people what are their real needs, pains, difficulties that they are experiencing, and what are the skills, knowledge, contributions they can bring;
- engagement of all the actors involved in migrant integration from the very beginning in order to have more dependent, contextual and efficient solutions and to capitalize the diversity;
- foster positive interactions in the local community and promote recognition of migrants' positive contribution to the society
- go beyond the "emergency" perspective and aim at creating a long-term, sustainable, approach

Workshop is perceived as an opportunity to know each other and create a network at a local level, be part of something important. Participants were very interested in knowing more about future development of the project. They would like it is a beginning of something different.