

DIVERSITY AS AN ASSET: THE CULTURAL APPROACH TO MIGRATION

Rome, 6th - 10th May 2019

Training course in co-operation with **Università di Roma Tre**, Dipartimento di Filosofia,
Comunicazione e Spettacolo.

FINAL REPORT

0. INTRODUCTION

The training course was part of the Erasmus project “**The whole school approach for integration of migrants**”, implemented by **Plevne Ortaokulu**, a Turkish public school based in Amasya. Six teachers took part to the training course, each of them belonging to a different discipline: from Turkish, to English, to Art, History and Geography, and Physical Education.

Turkey has been facing for the last five years a quite large and increasing number of asylum seekers and refugees. The area of Amasya is affected by the presence of three main communities: Afgani, Iraqi, and Iranian. The lack of experience in dealing with this issue, from a social and educational point of view, was the main reason for the teachers’ participation to the training course provided, in order to get some examples of good practices, to be transferred and tailored to their specific context.

On the other hand, it must be said that the Turkish civil society is not connotated by a high number of associations, no profit organizations, that autonomously co-operate among them and with the public insitutions, such as schools, local public administrations. Everything is based on very detailed and somehow rigid schemes that do not allow the development of those kind of activities.

Italy, on the contrary, has a very long tradition in self-organizing associations and other entities activities (the first workers’ self-help associations were established in the last decades of the XIX century). The support to migrants, asylum seekers and refugees finds in what is called “Third sector” (no-profit entities world) an extremely important network of services, with a spectrum of activities ranging from legal and health aid, to education, social and working inclusion, some of them specifically targeting women, minors, migrants, illiterates and other “weak” subjects.

For this reason the training course has been organized specifically with the aim of presenting to the participants some of the most significant experiences within the civil society in Rome, in terms of promoting and fostering the social, educational, cultural and working inclusion of migrants. The specific goal of these visits was to allow the participants to have a clear picture of the range of activities implemented in Rome, and subsequently to evaluate which ones could be successfully proposed in Amasya.

1. VISITS

We visited two public schools and two informal schools/social centres.

The first visit was to **CPIA1** (Provincial Centre for Adult Education): CPIAs are public schools operating during both morning and evening time. The students are adults, mainly foreigners, drop outs students, persons that never attended school in their youth life. The morning classes are for non-working students, while the evening ones are specifically for workers. Foreign students can get the A2 certification for Italian language and, subsequently and together with Italian students, to get the lower secondary school diploma, i.e. the level needed to participate to official training courses, calls and to be enrolled in high secondary schools. The CPIA1 teachers explained to their Turkish colleagues how they operate in order to provide efficiently to students the needed knowledges to go ahead with their lives in Italy, keeping always in consideration that cultural differences exist, but can be seen as enrichment for all students rather than barreiers.



CPIA1

The second public school we visited is the lower secondary school “**Di Donato**”. It’s a very active school, open to the neighborhood, to associations and students’ parents. The school offers many extra-curricula activities to the students, such as sport, social and cultural activities. “Di Donato” school is located in a very multiethnic neighborhood: a quite high percentage of the students are original from different countries; many activities keep in strong consideration this specific aspect.



The Turkish colleagues found it extremely interesting, and they got a clear picture of what could be proposed in their school, in order to open it more to inputs coming from outside. The teacher that accompanied us, **Tommaso Castellani**, explained very clearly what the deep sense of their way of operating is: a school that remains closed on itself has little chance to promote a sound and lasting inclusion environment.

Di Donato school with prof. Tommaso Castellani

We visited two informal schools and social centers, **Asinitas** and **Laboratorio53**, the latter operating with **La città dell'Utopia**.

Asinitas is one of the most successful informal school in Rome. That's due to the extremely innovative approach, that joins very skilled teachers for Italian language (L2) and a high variety of techniques and practices used to turn the staying of students in its area (all of them are asylum seekers or refugees) a full process of cultural, educational and human inclusion.

They are in touch with different centers where asylum seekers and refugees are hosted, they funded a soccer team that participates to a local amateur league, succeeded to raise funds from different donors, both public and private, to finance their projects. Their classes are actual laboratories where cultures are continuously put one in front the others and identities are discussed, in order to avoid their crystallization and closure. The training course's participants have been involved in some activities (Italian language class, games) and appreciated how youths coming from many countries find the way to communicate, co-operate and organize together the centre's activities.



Asinitas informal school and social centre

Laboratorio53 is an association operating within La città dell'Utopia, a historical antiracist and antifascist entity, whose room is used by SCI (International Civil Service), too. When we arrived there, they showed us a video that witnesses the strong linkages between them and some public schools in the neighborhood, with visits, music and dances that involve the public schools' students and the Laboratorio53's participants. The training course's participants have been informed about everything that takes place on a daily base to foster the self-confidence, self-esteem in all students and participants to the centre's life. The psychological aspects of the migration track, the impact with a new reality are kept in strong consideration in Laboratorio53 and are performed in theatre laboratories.

An operator told us the importance of organizing and cooking together foods for all. It creates a strong sense of respect, awareness of differences to be faced, knowledge of sharable habits.



Laboratorio53, informal school and social centre

2. CLASSES

Three classes have been delivered to participants.

The first was an introduction class by Stefano Rota (Transglobal). It focused on five terms and the intersections among them: Culture, Subjectivity, Identity, Difference, Interculture. The presentation has been done using slides, annexed to this report (diversity as an asset.pdf).

The class started discussing how culture can be defined, the position we have to keep if we want to understand clear what we mean by 'culture'.

The relation between culture and subjectivity followed, analyzing how different subjectivities stem according to the different position kept by individuals and groups in relation to the norms and the exceedances to them. This brings to analyze the role of 'identity', as a representation of the different ways we position ourselves and we are positioned by the narratives of the past. The identities are "positions that the subject is forced to take, even if he always knows that they are representations and that representations are always constructed through a lack, a division, starting from the place of the Other, and therefore they can never be entirely adequate - identical - to the subjective processes that are attributed to them" (S. Hall, 2006).

As far as difference is concerned it is a concept continuously in progress: it depends on how one perceives himself in the relation with the other, and this perception depends on the position that I keep and the one the other keeps. In other words, it depends on the "inbetween", "deviation" that marks the area between two cultures.

Interculture acts on the same level, it identifies those modes of interaction already existing in the facts between cultures, practices of identity representation; it highlights possible contaminations and contacts, with the awareness of the temporary nature of the value they have, within the context in which they are inscribed and which cannot be ignored.



Diversity as an asset. Stefano Rota (Transglobal) and prof. Federica Giardini (University of RomaTre)

The second class focused on the Civil Service International (SCI) activities and practices. The class was delivered by Susanna Monello, head of the service (slides annexed, Presentation_Tutti inclusi_SCI Italia.pdf). The importance of the presentation is to be found in the very important role played by the Service in promoting and fostering a sound idea of active and activist citizenship.

One of the added values is that the migrants are involved in these activities not as beneficiaries but as active persons offering their support to others.

The issues that define the way of working of SCI are the following:

Peace as social justice and equality; Non violent conflict transformation; Antimilitarism; Environmental sustainability; Social Inclusion; Freedom of movement; Nonformal education; “North-South” unbalances.

The activities aim at:

The promotion of autonomy and the protagonism of the subjects involved; The removal of cultural and social causes of social exclusion; The dismantling of the logic of pure assistance (avoiding immobility effect).

The added values, subsequently are:

peer to peer inclusion; opportunity to express his/herself without the barrier created when the “condition” come before the “person”; opportunity to be outside his/her own current context; be active subject of an intervention on something and not passive beneficiary of an intervention on his/herself; be helper and not helped; create relationship without a mediation.



Tuttinclusi SCI programme - Susanna Monello (SCI) and prof. Federica Giardini (University RomaTre)

The third class had as a specific focus the psychological aspects of the migration track; the latter has to be considered as a process that starts well before the actual departure and, very likely, never ends (Slides annexed, presentation a psychological reading migration track.pdf).

One of the main topics was the migration trauma, i.e.:

Transculturation stress

Social solitude

Identity suffering

And the strategies adopted to face these trauma:

Closure ("I will never be like them")

Hyper-adaptation ("To survive I have to become just like them")

Reformulation and multiplication of identity ("What can my new ways of being here be?")

The presentation went on, treating the training needs experienced by migrants, the "inclusion training" and the role played by claiming and enhancing one's history.

The teacher's task can be summarized as follow:

Support students in overcoming barriers that block the expression of their potential in the school context.



A psychological read of the migration track and educational scenarios. Dr. Angela Barlotti, psychologist

3. PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

The participants have been asked to indicate the most important aspects of the week we passed together. Each of them pointed out some topics, herein after listed.

Murat:

The role played by associations in Italy is very important;

The education system is very flexible (compared to Turkey):

The technological assets seem to be not very updated (in Turkey a major attention is given to this aspect of education facilities);

We don't know much about the migrants' background in Turkey, while here the global system (formal and informal school) considers it seriously;

Satilmis:

The co-operation between school and parents' associations is very important and here it seems to be quite strong (in Turkey is practically absent);

The associations give a strong support to the formal educational system;

From a technological point of view, the system seems to be quite weak;

There are few artistic activities shown in schools' common spaces, like corridors, etc.

The social life in Italy is very strong;

Kamil:

There isn't any separation between Italian and foreign students; they do easily everything together;

The environment is much more inclusive than in Turkey;

Rome has an historical and architectonic structure unique in the world;

Vedad:

Immigrants here seem to be less poor compared to Turkey;

The role of associations is very important to organize their own lives; in Turkey we don't have associations working as they do here;

Children here go to school; in Turkey they often go to work with their parents, also because they are much involved in school's activities;

Ahmad:

Quality seems to be considered more important than quantity in Italy; in Turkey it is the other way round;

Technological structures are more updated in Turkey;

Here students don't wear a uniform: everything is more informal;

Generally speaking, people in Italy seems to have a higher self-esteem, they enjoy their freedom;

The architectural and historical structures are valorized; it doesn't happen in Turkey;

Alper:

Simple things at school are important in Italy; it seems that less attention is given to structures, technologies and more to the job done together: school, parents, associations, etc.

The qualifications are not so important and teachers work a lot on informal aspects, rather than accomplishing rigidly a task;

Rome is magic.

We think that the participants' feedback is quite important, because it gives a clear picture of what they have caught during this experience and what they'll probably try to bring back, in terms of proposals, suggestions, ideas.

From our side, we can say that it was a very productive and interactive week: all of us learnt a lot. The area "in-between", the "third space" we have worked in is actually the only room it deserves to be considered whenever we get in touch with persons bringing with them a different set of values, points of view, working schemes. It's the space where diversity is actually an asset.

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