



Youth in Action programme "Youth for democracy project"

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3rd Meeting: Palermo/Italy, April 12-15, 2013

*Istituto dei Ciechi
Opere Riunite
« I. Florio - F. ed. A. Salamone »
Palermo*



SOLIDARITY TRACKS



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Magazine



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Introduction

The Youth Entrepreneurs Club is a meeting point for young people who are interested in developing an entrepreneurial project. By means of this club, we want to support the future young entrepreneurs by giving them useful information.

It started in Lefkada (Greece) in November 2012. We made the first step by creating the networking among the four partner countries. During those days the group set up the content of the web site and the forum, which constitute both the virtual meeting point for the young entrepreneurs.

In order to broaden the network already created and to continue learning from new experiences of young entrepreneurs across Europe, we organised a second meeting in Baile Tusnad, Romania in January 2013.

For the third meeting, a group of sixteen young people met from 11th to 15th of April 2013 in Palermo, Sicily.

Here, we tried to focus on the specific group of people with any kind of disability, specially blind and deaf people.

We were hosted by the 'Istituto Dei Ciechi, Florio e Salamone' in Palermo. There, participants shared activities and daily moments with local youngsters with special needs.

During the four days of meeting, the participants visited the facilities of this Institute where blind people live, study and find every kind of support.

Besides, they visited the Professional School for blind people 'Florio e Salamone' where blind persons are taught and trained for some profession in order to go into the labour market.

The participants had enough time to enjoy Palermo city. Two tours were spared to show the participants some of the important parts of this Italian city like 'Politeama theatre', 'the Cathedral', 'Teatro Massimo', 'Chapel of Palatina', 'San Giovanni Degli Eremiti' or 'Mondelo Beach'.

During the different workshops, the participants could discuss about the needs of people with disabilities and how we, as society, can involve them in entrepreneur projects.

Within the group of participants, we had two subgroups with different disabilities. Deaf participants were included in the French group while the Italian group comprised people with visual problems. For this reason, the communication was an important issue in this seminar. The entire group learnt history and basic communication in Braille alphabet and sign language.

Through this experience, we tried to open the mind of those who don't believe that disabled people can be part of the entrepreneurial world.

We hope that this exchange between disabled people and people without disabilities enriched both groups and that it allowed normal people to understand better the life of people with disabilities.



Visit to *Istituto 'Florio e Salamone'*

The two parts of the Institute for blind people, i.e. theoretical and professional schools, were visited by the participants

The organizer of the Italian meeting was 'Istituto dei Ciechi "Florio e Salamone"', one governmental institution that takes care and gives support to visually impaired or blind people. The participants were hosted in the facilities of the institute, sharing daily moments with its habitual residents. For all these reasons, it was necessary to visit this interesting place in order to know better what kind of activities visually impaired or blind people can find there.

The tour around the institute started in the garden, a peaceful space where the residents could rest after the lessons and enjoy the Italian good weather.

From there, the participants went to the rooms where the residents study and learn.

They saw the different manual art materials the residents created, which are developing their mathematical, language, reading, sensitive, creative or social skills. They also met the staff of the center and some local volunteers who are doing a wonderful job, trying to make the life of the residents easier.

After that, the group went to the acts room. This room is used for different kind of events like musical concerts or theater acts, played by the residents in the institute.

Next stop in the tour around the institute was the computer room. This place is equipped with computers and all the software, programs and equipment needed for a successful use by a blind or visually impaired person. In this

room, the students learn basic and advanced knowledge about informatics.

The visit was aimed to allow the participants to know how the daily life of the students looks like by seeing where and how they learn and live.

The second part of our visit to the 'Istituto Florio e Salamone' was on the second day of our seminar when the group went to the professional school for blind people. In this school, visually impaired and blind people learn a profession. They develop their technical and practical skills in order to become professionals in a specific area. Courses to become telephone operator or physiotherapist are just two

examples of the possibilities that people with visual problems are given in this school.

The participants had a tour around the facilities of the school, so they could see the different classrooms for many subjects like anatomy, informatics, Braille printing, library... They also visited the museum 'Aptico' and the exhibition 'toccare l'arte' (touch the art). It is an exposition of sculptures which represent the most important monuments of Palermo.

The objective of this exhibition is to give the possibility to the visually impaired to get an idea about how those monuments look like by touching their miniatures.



Group working reflections

The participants reflected in groups about the needs of the disabled people and how they can be involved in the business world.



Needs of youth with disabilities

Nowadays, reality becomes harder and harder every day mainly because of financial issues. In our daily life, we are often surrounded by problems, which do not let us realise what next door people living next to us may have to confront.

Has anyone ever wondered about the daily routine of someone next door? What if this someone is a person with a disability?

We almost never consider the fact that there are people at our age who, except for the common problems, face an additional one, some kind of a disability. This particular youth has particular needs.

Initially, since a very young age, people with disabilities have the necessity of the continuous presence of someone else. This person is usually from the family environment and is playing multiple roles. For instance, it can be some kind of a leader or guide,

helper for orientation or an assistant for everyday basic needs such as eating, getting dressed, having a bath etc. Every disability begets different needs.

For instance, when trying to communicate with a deaf person, you have to get involved in a face to face talking and a clear expressive speaking. Visual information such as sign language is of grave importance and when this is not possible warning devices may be necessary.

A common necessity for all kinds of disabilities is a special educational system. This means specially adjusted school environment (literally or figuratively speaking) and qualified, specially trained teachers in order to prevent social isolation.

Furthermore, local societies need to get organized to build the proper construction for people with special needs.

To reach to a conclusion, people with disabilities need our respect,

understanding, empathy and trust.

They need to be dealt as ordinary people who just want to be an active part of the society, overcoming their problems.

How youth can help disabled youth

The Organization of YOUTH really helps people with disabilities and presents what is actually their problem, their needs and their requirements from the society and mainly from the government.

All the people who participated in this project realized and learned many things about disabled people's life and how they communicate and achieve their goals. The most important benefit of this project was the change of the participant's way of thinking.

People usually don't have the right education to respect and understand people with disabilities.

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They are afraid of them, and it is common that they don't hire them in their companies because of their disability and they consider them different part of the society.

Inside this program, the biggest success is that more and more young people, volunteers or not, have got in touch with this different way of life and spread the idea of trust and belief in disabled people.

It is also useful to wonder what

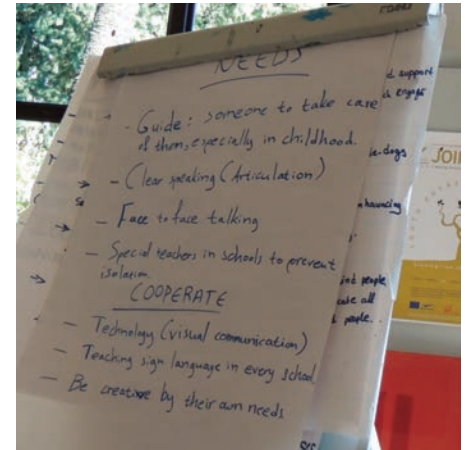
we would do in their stead. We would try to change the world or we would wait for a hero?

Another advantage of this program of YOUTH organization is that young people think and find ideas that would be hopeful for the future of disabled people.

They may give solutions by means of these ideas to problems like unemployment, dependence of others and low incomes.

In conclusion, both the participants and the disabled people be-

nefit from this project in the most adequate way for them.



Experimental workshops: *Game on entrepreneurship*



One of the first workshops of the seminar was a game which allowing the participants to reflect about their entrepreneurial spirit in a specific uncommon situation for them. There was only one rule for the game: everyone had to be silent.

Here we explain this game in detail : we split the room in three different spaces: the card game, where an accomplice is waiting for the players; the creative table where another accomplice is doing some creative stuff with some materials available on the table as paintings, papers, colours... and the circle made by chairs.

The game starts with placing all the participants in a line in the front. They were invited one by

one to play a card game. They were not informed about the rules of this game so they were putting the cards on the table without understanding the logic of the game.

Suddenly, without knowing why, they were sent to the 'creative table' or to the circle. This decision was determinate for their behaviour during the card game.

If they were having a fast reaction and active participation in the game, they went to the creative table.

But if they were slow and thinking too much, they were sent to one of the chairs in the circle.

Once they were at the creative table, they had no instructions but they could see how the accomplice was doing creative

items and they had many materials they could use. If they were active on this table showing an entrepreneurial spirit and a creative personality, they stayed by the table.

If not, they were sent to the circle or to the card game again. The game finished when everyone was in the circle or at the creative table, and nobody was left in the card game area. When the game was over and people understood that there were no rules, they could analyse how their behaviour was during the game and compare it with their reactions in a real situation.

Are they waiting for orders about what to do? Are they active and entrepreneurs in a situation without instructions?

Experimental workshops: *Communication in Braille and sign language*

For this third meeting of the project, the main target group of young entrepreneurs was youth with disabilities or fewer opportunities.

In this sense, some of the participants in Palermo were people with special needs like deafness or visual problems.

This situation made the communication a bit complicated in some moments but, as we could verify, there were always ways to understand each other if we really wanted to. Nevertheless, in order to understand better the way of communication of everyone, the participants had two special lessons about 'Braille' and sign language.

In the 'Braille' presentation, Rita, a total blind participant from Italy, explained interesting information about this way of communication to the rest of members of the club. Braille is an alphabet created by Louis Braille in the middle of the XIX century. It is based on six dot cells that, depending on the combination of dots, have been assigned to each letter of the alphabet.

As well, Rita and Felice showed us the tool utilised to write in Braille in a non mechanical way, by making the dots by hand.



On the other hand, the French participants, Kevin and Youness, both deaf, had time to make a basic lesson in sign language. When sign language first started is unknown because it is a natural way of communication which has arisen because of the need of the deaf people to express themselves. This means that it was not invented by anybody but its origin is due to the communicational human instinct. With this

presentation, the participants could understand how important the visual contact is for deaf people. That situation could represent a problem involving the group of participants with visual problems. For this reason, all the participants played in an activity where the important sense was the touch, because, as it was said during the seminar: "if we want to communicate, we will find the way".

Intercultural Exchange

Meetings like this one represent a big chance to learn about other cultures and countries. Not only about the hosting nationality but also about the cultures of all the partners and participants.

The first night was the moment for each country to show a little of its gastronomy. Romanian palinka, Sicilian arancini or Greek feta were just some of the delicious food the participants ate in

this multicultural evening. But, of course, it was a great opportunity to know deeper Italian culture. Apart from the intercultural dinner, we also had another

Italian dinner with the authorities and members of the blind people's institute. It was a good moment to have the feedback of everyone.



Discovering Palermo

Palermo by night

On the second day of the project we held an activity called “Palermo by night”. In that activity, all the participants of the project made a tour around the streets of Palermo. One of the most interesting things of the activity was that the group comprised also disabled people (blind and deaf) and consisted of different nationalities.

The bus took us from the “Istituto Dei Ciechi” and we soon arrived in front of Teatro Massimo, the famous opera of Palermo and the third biggest opera in Europe. That building influenced by its architecture the whole area around it. Besides, shops and bars have names referring to opera plays. We spent one hour in the area walking together, watching every sight that was close to us. We walked until we found «Politeama» and the square in front of it. On the way, we realized that it was a really crowded place. People were well dressed but in a way that we are not used to. Something else we have to mention is that we got surprised by how dirty the place was. Next stop was the Cathedral, surprising us by its dimensions and different architectural styles. Unfortunately the Cathedral was closed but we took pic-

tures. After that, we went to Mondello beach, a good place for walk, but also very crowded, too. We tasted the most delicious ice cream in a nice place with a lot of special Italian sweets, cakes and a big variety of ice cream flavours.

It was for us a new experience to do things that we also do in our country : going out and spending time in the city, but this time with people of different nationalities and people with disabilities. We also had to help blind people in orientation and describe to them what we saw each time.

It was surprising to us that the blind people knew exactly what was in front of them, and this because they have a special museum with miniatures. So they can understand how they look by touching them.

At the end it was a good opportunity for everyone to come closer and to understand how blind people realize the world and how we can communicate with deaf people not knowing even the sign language.

That night helped us to realize the disabled people's needs further and made us understand that communication with the deaf and the blind is easier than we first imagine.



Palermo by day

We changed the dark night life for the sunny light of Palermo morning.

We started visiting the Palatine Chapel (Cappella Palatina), a sumptuous religious monument of the Norman kings of Sicily.

The Palatine Chapel is located at the centre of the Royal Palace (Palazzo Reale) which we also had the opportunity to visit after the Chapel. We walked along the Royal room and saloon of the Palace. It was a nice walk along the political history of Sicily.

After this interesting visit, we walked to the church “San Giovanni degli Eremiti” (St. John of the Hermits). Originally from the 6th century, this church was converted into a mosque after the Islamic conquest of the Island. It became again Christian in the century thanks to Roger II of Sicily. From San Giovanni degli Eremiti, we continue our visit in Mondello beach. Lying on the sand, swimming or walking next to the beach were some of the options we had to enjoy this wonderful place of the Mediterranean coast.

After spending some time in the beach, we came back to the Istituto Dei Ciechi to return with our work.



Working groups

As it is usual, it is difficult to be productive in a big working group. That's why the participants divided the tasks and split responsibilities in order to be more effective.

As regards the video, a group of participants were working on selecting the best shots among all the numerous pictures.

Based on that selection, a 'making of' video will be edited which it will show the best moments of the Italian meeting.

Besides there, will be a new video with interviews where some of the participants will share their feelings and impressions after the seminar in Palermo.

In addition, part of the video group composed the song that will be used for the 'making of'.

As for the forum, another group of participants planed to add some new topics related to the inclusion of the disabled people in the entrepreneurship world.



On the other hand, in the case of this meeting, everyone was involved in the creation of the magazine.

Divided in pairs, all participants contributed by writing the articles you can read in this publication.

Impact of the project

As is common in our meetings, in the last day of the seminar in Palermo we wanted to meet with local people in order to explain them what Youth Entrepreneurs Club is about.

So we organized a presentation in the 'Istituto Dei Ciechi'.

Many people from the institution and some local media came to join us and to know what Youth Entrepreneurs Club is about.

We showed them our work in Palermo but also all our evaluation since we started the project in November last year.

For sure, it was a good way to make the youngsters of Palermo to know better our club between and to achieve one of our objectives as a club: create a big network of young entrepreneurs and people interested in entrepreneurship.



Future steps of the project

Everything started in November of last year in Lefkas (Greece). In January, we held the second meeting in Baile Tusnad (Romania).

In April 2013 was the turn of Palermo (Italy) with a new meeting focused in the topic entrepreneurship and disabilities. Now it is the moment to prepare the last meeting of this project which will be organized by 'Together' in France.

Next date will be in July 2013 when a new group of 16 young people will meet in order to be part of Youth Entrepreneurs Club.

During the French meeting, the participants will have the opportunity of evaluate everything what has been done until then, but, they will also have the pleasure to present the Club to the European authorities in the European Parliament of Strasburg.

Feedback of the participants

"I work with visually impaired and blind children; that's why this project was very useful for me. I was able to meet visually impaired adults and see how they live. During the project, I got some ideas for future projects involving people with visual problems in our organization in Romania".



Gabriela, Romania

"I'm very happy for my participation in this seminar because I learnt many things. I learnt about the problems of deaf people and a little of sign language. I think it is very important to induce people with and without disabilities to know how the life of handicapped people is".



Dario, Italy

"I realized through this meeting that the communication with blind or deaf people is much easier than I thought before. But, I also saw that they have many abilities to be entrepreneurs".



Panos, Greece

"It is the third time I participate in a seminar like this and I have to say that, at the beginning, the communication was difficult between people from different countries. But, step by step, I could share my ideas and communicate with everybody without problems. I'm very happy for that.

It is very important to open the world of the business to the people with handicap. During the seminar, we found new entrepreneurial ideas involving the needs of disabled people".



Kevin, France

It is possible for us to create an entrepreneur project because exists a big fear to start. But I think that, with the support of organizations and society, it can be possible.



Younès, France

Partners



Municipality of Lefkas - DEPOKAL (Greece)



Fédération Familles De France Moselle (France)



Together (France)



Istituto dei Ciechi "Florio e Salamone" (Italy)



Work in progress (Italy)



Solidarity Tracks (Greece)



Asociația de Tineri din Ardeal (Romania)



PIHE- Association for Youth and Students in Partium (Romania)

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