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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 Ja- nuary 2013.

For the third meeting, a group of sixteen young pe- ople met from 11th to 15th of April 2013 in Pa- lermo, Sicily.

Here, we tried to focus on the specific group of pe- ople 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 per- sons are taught and trained for some profession in order to go into the labour market.

The participants had enough time to enjoy Pa- lermo city. Two tours were spared to show the par- ticipants some of the important parts of this Italian city like ‘Politeama theatre’, ‘the Cathedral’, ‘Te- atro 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 disa- bilities and how we, as society, can involve them in entrepreneur projects.

Within the group of participants, we had two sub- groups with different disabilities. Deaf participants were included in the French group while the Ita- lian group comprised people with visual problems. For this reason, the communication was an impor- tant issue in this seminar. The entire group learnt history and basic communication in Braille alpha- bet and sign language.

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

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

Visit to Istituto ‘Florio e Salamone’

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

The organizer of the Italian mee- ting was ‘Istituto dei Ciechi “Flo- rio e Salamone”‘, one governmental institution that takes care and gives support to vi- sually impaired or blind people. The participants were hosted in the facilities of the institute, sha- ring daily moments with its habi- tual residents. For all these reasons, it was necessary to visit this interesting place in order to know better what kind of activi- ties visually impaired or blind pe- ople 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 crea- ted, 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 re- sidents easier.

After that, the group went to the acts room. This room is used for different kind of events like mu- sical concerts or theater acts, pla- yed by the residents in the institute.

Next stop in the tour around the institute was the computer room. This place is equipped with com- puters and all the software, pro- grams and equipment needed for a successful use by a blind or vi- sually 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 se- minar 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 be- come 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 visi- ted 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 vi- sually impaired to get an idea about how those monuments look like by touching their minia- tures.

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 har- der and harder every day mainly because of financial issues. In our daily life, we are often surroun- ded by problems, which do not let us realise what next door peo- ple 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 pro- blems, 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 pre- sence of someone else. This per- son is usually from the family environment and is playing mul- tiple roles. For instance, it can be some kind of a leader or guide,

helper for orientation or an assis- tant for everyday basic needs such as eating, getting dressed, having a bath etc. Every disabi- lity begets different needs.

For instance, when trying to com- municate with a deaf person, you have to get involved in a face to face talking and a clear expres- sive 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 educa- tional system. This means spe- cially adjusted school environment (literally or figurati- vely speaking) and qualified, spe- cially trained teachers in or-der to prevent social isolation. Furthermore, local societies need to get organized to build the pro- per 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 ac- tive part of the society, overco- ming their problems.

How youth can help disabled youth

The Organization of YOUTH re- ally helps people with disabilities and presents what is actually their problem, their needs and their requirements from the so- ciety and mainly from the go- vernment.

All the people who participated in this project realized and lear- ned many things about disabled people’s life and how they com- municate 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 un- derstand 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 consi- der them different part of the so- ciety.

Inside this program, the biggest success is that more and more young people, volunteers or not, have got in touch with this diffe- rent way of life and spread the idea of trust and belief in disa- bled 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 pro- gram 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 partici- pants 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 allo- wing 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 de- tail : 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, co- lours... 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 wi- thout understanding the logic of the game.

Suddenly, without knowing why, they were sent to the ‘creative table’ or to the circle. This deci- sion was determinate for their be- haviour 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 thin- king 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 ac- complice was doing creative

items and they had many mate- rials they could use. If they were active on this table showing an entrepreneurial spirit and a crea- tive 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 beha- viour 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 wi- thout instructions?

Experimental workshops: Communication in Braille and sign language



For this third meeting of the pro- ject, the main target group of young entrepreneurs was youth with disabilities or fewer oppor- tunities.

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

This situation made the commu- nication a bit complicated in some moments but, as we could verify, there were always ways to understand each other if we re- ally wanted to. Nevertheless, in order to understand better the way of communication of ever- yone, the participants had two special lessons about ‘Braille’ and sign language.

In the ‘Braille’ presentation, Rita, a total blind participant from Italy, explained interesting infor-

mation about this way of commu- nication 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, depen- ding 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 themsel- ves. This means that it was not invented by anybody but its ori- gin is due to the communicatio- nal human instinct. With this

presentation, the participants

could understand how important the visual contact is for deaf peo- ple. That situation could repre- sent 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 pa- linka, Sicilian arancini or Greek feta were just some of the deli- cious food the participants ate in

this multicultural evening.

But, of course, it was a great opportunity to know deeper Italian culture. Apart from the intercul- tural 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 Palermo by day



On the second day of the project we held an activity called “Pa- lermo by night”. In that activity, all the participants of the project made a tour around the streets of Palermo. One of the most inte- resting things of the activity was that the group comprised also di- sabled people (blind and deaf) and consisted of different natio- nalities.

The bus took us from the “Isti- tuto Dei Ciechi” and we soon arrived in front of Teatro Mas- simo, the famous opera of Pa- lermo and the third biggest opera in Europe. That building in- fluenced by its architecture the whole area around it. Besides, shops and bars have names refe- rring to opera plays. We spent one hour in the area walking to- gether, 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 is was a really crowded place. People was 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 Cathe- dral, surprising us by its dimen- sions and different architectural styles. Unfortunately the Cathe- dral was closed but we took pic-

tures. After that, we went to Mondelo 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 fla- vours.

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 nationa- lities 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 be- cause they have a special mu- seum with miniatures. So they can understand how they look by touching them.

At the end it was a good opportu- nity for everyone to come closer and to understand how blind pe- ople 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 fur- ther and made us understand that communication with the deaf and the blind is easier than we first imagine.

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 sand 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 Gio- vanni degli Eremiti” (St. John of the Hermits). Originally from the

6th century, this church was con- verted into a mosque after the Is- lamic conquest of the Island. It became again Christian in the century thanks to Roger II of Si- cily. From San Giovanni degli Eremiti, we continue our visit in Mondelo 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 Medite- rranean cost.

After spending some time in the beach, we came back to the Isti- tute 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 partici- pants divided the tasks and split responsibilities in order to be more effective.

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

Based on that selection, a ‘ma- king of’ video will be edited which it will show the best mo- ments of the Italian meeting. Besides there, will be a new video with interviews where some of the participants will share their feelings and impres- sions after the seminar in Pa- lermo.

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 in- clusion of the disabled people in the entrepreneurship world.

On the other hand, in the case of this meeting, everyone was invol- ved in the creation of the maga- zine.

Divided in pairs, all participants contributed by writing the arti- cles you can read in this publica- tion.



Future steps of the project

Everything started in Novem-

Impact of the project

ber of last year in Lefkas (Gre- ece). In January, we held the second meeting in Baile Tus-

As is common in our meetings, in

the last day of the seminar in Pa- lermo 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 Pa-

lermo 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 objec- tives as a club: create a big net- work of young entrepreneurs and people interested in entrepre- neurship.

nad (Romania).

In April 2013 was the turn of Palermo (Italy) with a new me- eting focused in the topic en- trepreneurship and disabilities. Now it is the moment to pre- pare 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 every- thing what has been done until then, but, they will also have the pleasure to present the Club to the European authori- ties in the European Parlia- ment of Strasburg.

Feedback of the participants

"I work with visually impaired and blind children; that’s why this pro- ject 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 fu- ture projects involving people with visual problems in our organization in Romania".

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

Gabriela, Romania

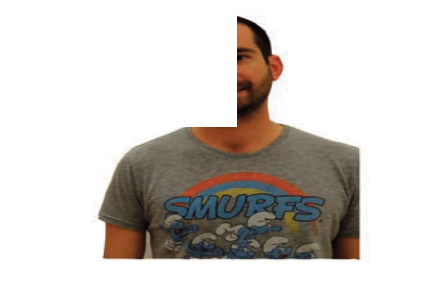
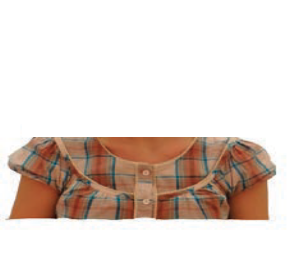
"I realized through this meeting that the communication with blind or deaf people is much ea- sier than I thought before. But, I also saw that they have many abilities to be entrepreneurs".

Panos, Greece

Dario, Italy

"It is the third time I participate in a seminar like this and I have to say that, at the begin- ning, the communication was difficult bet- ween people from different countries. But, step by step, I could share my ideas and com- municate 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 peo- ple".



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 Kevin,France Kevin, France

