

# Living Memory in Europe

*Narration and writing about oneself  
as a form of Active Citizenship in Europe*

## A map of the workshop ...

### Aspects that connect active citizenship with writing and collection of life stories.

#### **Knowledge, awareness**

Knowing the problems of people and territory, both the one we live in and the ones far away, is the first requirement for an active, informed citizenship, as also communicating our stories and our experiences to the others.

Especially in the globalized world, where local and global levels interact intensely, where the economical, political and productive choices made by a country, territory or groups of people, can be also influenced by decisions taken in places far away ...

*Can stories foster this knowledge? Through stories we are able to know - or to let know - many realities in a direct and effective way...*

#### **From passivity to activity**

Are we active citizens only when we enter the polling station to express our vote? How can we take a more active role in the transformation of society, both locally and globally?

*Working with stories is often a way to become active and there are, for example, groups of people who decide to collect stories to preserve local memories and traditions, others, who decide to testify and support social and political action campaigns (eg for asylum seekers, migrants or ...). Even individual testimonies can perform this function.  
Tools such as "Circle of Stories" also permits the developing of local promotion through stories...*

## **The value of people stories.**

There is a strong link between personal resources and active citizenship. To be an active person in my social environment, in fact, I need some knowledge and skills such as:

- Sufficient awareness of their experience and their values;
- Sufficient capacity to communicate;
- Sufficient interpersonal skills and – as for collective action - working in groups;
- Awareness of oneself as a person who is entitled to participate;
- The possibility to develop their own critical opinions on society.

*The autobiographical methodologies can play a self-education role, relating to all the issues listed before. In fact they are:*

- a) tool and opportunity for awareness and appreciation of one's own experience: means of communication with the others;*
- b) telling and writing about oneself, or listen to the stories of others, are also a training for meeting and relationship;*
- c) when we discover that " we have things to say," we develop - in practice - the right to participate actively in the world;*
- d) writing and telling one's own and others' stories, always includes both the individual dimension and the social and political one; through stories we know and deepen the invisible or little known aspects of reality.*

## **The construction of new relations and identity**

A very important aspect of active citizenship is the ability to create social relations at various levels, both "horizontal" and "vertical":

- Relationships that cross generational and cultural barriers;
- Relations of "nearness", meaning alliance between those who share the same needs or aspirations, in order to carry out joint actions;
- Relations between citizens and policy makers.

*We have seen that many of the projects reported work at all these levels:*

- a) For example, in projects where children, youth, adults and seniors come together to share their stories;*
- b) or in projects in which groups of people write and collect stories, to gather evidence on the history of their place of living;*
- c) in projects in which groups of citizens work together to highlight - through the stories - aspects of society, of social phenomena (eg immigration issues, poverty, the limitation of the rights ...);*
- d) very important, then, the use of narration linked to that of the intercultural dialogue through projects in which people from different cultures may make representations with their own reality through the narration of oneself;*
- e) In general, many education projects and social actions led through individual stories, start from the individual and arrive to group, encouraging informal, trans-generational and intercultural, meetings, and finally to the community, through the creation of products made by the stories (books, website, art products) and activities of publicity.*

## **Toward coexistence**

Nowadays what can favour the coexistence between people of different culture, social class, religious and political beliefs? Surely the chance to "meet each other," and find a common human condition beyond the differences ...

*Oneself narrations can be an helpful means of enhancing this meeting and mutual understanding. Through them we can find that - although we may be very different - there is something common to every human being ....*

## **Instruments**

Workshops in Europe in living memory, we explored some of the tools that allow us to work with stories:

- The creation of contexts in which participants are helped to write about himself;
- The collection of stories;
- The creation and diffusion of stories - as a vehicle of knowledge - through various forms and products (books, videos, audio stories, photo ...) and through various art forms;
- Creation of sites, such as archives, etc. .. which serve as places of preservation and dissemination of records;
- The use of digital storytelling and the web ...
- ...

## **Projects and activities**

During the workshop we have - then - found various projects and activities which, in various ways, represent a concrete expression of the several principles and concepts listed above.

**European Memories:** [www.europeanmemories.eu](http://www.europeanmemories.eu) (see the specific card)

**Stories of a Possible world** – [www.powos.org](http://www.powos.org)

**Stories Going Round** (see the specific card)

Sara Lusini presents her project "La mia inquadratura" - My way of making photos – in which rom children and italian children narrate the way they live using fotography .

<http://www.lamiainquadratura.it/>

Claudio Cassetti, from the sozial.label association and Berlin AWO's group presented their experiences linked to the project Stories of o Possible Europe to narrate the town and the places of life, where several people wrote and made interviews to narrate life stories of turkish migrants in Germany. <http://www.possible-europe.eu/>

Valco Project San Paolo, presented by Diego Di Masi and Fabio Olivieri, gave a contribution of a kind of work in which people's narratives from a specific area of Rome becomes active citizenship

<http://www.progettovalico.org/web/>

Luca Piergiovanni, a teacher from Pieve di Santo Stefano, who won a national prize as “The Best teacher of the year 2010” (“Miglior Docente dell'anno 2010”) made a conference exposing his pedagogical and didactic approach by using the new technologies . He explained how the podcast can be an alternative to the traditional even passive way of teaching.

<http://chocolat3b.podomatic.com/>

Lucia Pannese presented the “Serious Games” project. These are games created from stories using technology to bring ideas to life that make engaging learning experiences. A sort of simulation game who looks like real games that engage, entertain and educate with didactic principles and explicit learning objectives.

<http://www.youtube.com/imaginarysr1#p/a/u/1/au7AqZA4al4>

<http://www.i-maginary.it/>

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