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BRIDGE-IT (Be Relevant to Intercultural Diversity Generation in Europe Integration Team) invites service providers, working within bureaucratic institutions, to “be relevant”, that is, to reflect on their current communicative behaviour within multicultural settings with a view of transforming attitudes and behaviour. Rather than cultural melting pots, BRIDGE-IT advocates for communities where different cultures and languages co-exist in a dynamic and dialectic relationship.

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<http://bridge-it.communicationproject.eu>

Newsletter Two

Some good practices...



...from Malta

AFTER ALL.....

Intercultural dialogue Experiences of Excellence for a better world.

Mario Pace
Cav. Martin Micallef

We have developed the habit to take everything and everyone for granted. Whatever comes our way hardly touches us anymore. It is there any way! On the other hand we belong to a world that needs us, that needs all the attention possible to continue in its journey towards new heights and achievements. For this to happen we need to create bridges where there aren't any, to restore those that have become fragile, to consolidate those that have resisted in time. These bridges can only be sustained if we open ourselves to a process of understanding, on both the personal and societal level.

Goodwill can be created through cultural dialogue and many have done this before and others are joining in, through their personal commitment, because they believe that the world must be given a change.

The Società Dante Alighieri, an independent autonomous non governmental association, has

been involved in this process, with regards to the promotion and teaching of Italian language and culture, since 1889, now having over 500 branches all over the world.

That is why in its international endeavours, the Malta Branch, has come across the prestigious Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Prize Foundation for Poetic Creativity, which has shown over recent years the dedication to the promotion of intercultural dialogue and the diffusion of the Arabic language.

Common goals, between the SDA-Malta and the Albabtain Foundation, have been translated into a unique learning experience in Malta, to which an international group of participants adhered with success. It was an occasion, which has proved that peoples share the most basic needs and thoughts and that we can all live together in the full respect of the specificities of others. After all, it is through interaction that the possibility to know each other, to become curious of the unknown, to want to discover the new, emerges.

Having at the same time, under the same ceiling, in adjacent classes, the teaching of Italian, Latin and Arabic, was practically a non-event, compared to the fact that French, Dutch, Maltese, Italians, British, Danish, Bulgarians, Russians, Filipinos, Abkhazians, Ukrainians, Spaniards, Swiss, Swedes, among others,



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were next to each other participating in this experience. Here, every single individual was the protagonist of his own story. Translating into words the atmosphere is not an easy task...one has to live it in order to fully understand that after all it is so easy to live together and share meanings and values.

The chaotic coming and going, murmurs, whispers, smiles, sounds, pitches, typical exclamations of every language, names, presentations, new acquaintances, reminded me of the caravansera and the travelogues of the Italian author Edmondo De Amicis. Fragrances of culture spread throughout the SDA Centre, penetrating the solid stones of the good old Maltese globigerina...with the Dante, "where they teach Italian", stepping in as a bridge for intercultural dialogue, for peace, where cultures embed each other, in a soft togetherness, characterized by the uniqueness of each.

The course in basic Arabic language and culture, sponsored by the Albabtain Foundation and organised in collaboration with the Societa' Dante Alighieri (Malta) and the Emuni University was structured in a series of lectures and seminars. These sessions were held between 22nd November and 22nd December 2010, Monday to Friday between 18.30 hrs and 21.00 hrs. The course was conducted by foreign mother language professors from the Sousse University in Tunisia, who have already run the same

programme in Cordoba (Spain), Agrigento (Italy), Rennes (France), Nice, Sorbonne and East Anglia in London. The cultural topics included Geopolitics of the Arab World, Arab World and Global Issues, Interference of Languages and Intercultural Dialogue, Arabic Language in the Mediterranean Region, Case Studies Linguistic Borrowing.

The Foundation of Abdul Aziz Saud Al-Babtain's Prize for Poetic Creativity is an Arab cultural Foundation dedicated to promoting Arab poetic creativity and Arab culture, and supports dialogue among civilizations, through a number of activities including the teaching of the Arabic language and literature to non-Arabic speakers.

The Emuni University is an international network of universities and has an important role to play in facilitating intercultural dialogue, as one of the priority areas of the Union for the Mediterranean, the latest tentative to further develop North-South cooperation in the region, based on project-led initiatives that focus on common fields of interest to the populations of the Mediterranean.

A second session will be held in the first quarter of 2011 and it will be introduced by an international roundtable on intercultural dialogue, to be hosted by the Speaker of the Parliament of Malta.



Some good practices... ...from Italy



REGIONE UMBRIA:

Investire in prevenzione, per non spendere poi il doppio in riparazione.

Estratti da una conversazione con il nostro Partner Associato del progetto BRIDGE-IT
Alessandro Maria Vestrelli

“... La trasformazione in senso multi-etnico e multiculturale della nostra società evolve di giorno in giorno di fronte ai nostri occhi. Volenti o nolenti sta andando avanti e non è una realtà nuova perché è in corso da molti anni ormai. **Il nostro ente non si è mai sottratto al compito di governare il cambiamento, ha fatto la scelta di guardarlo in faccia.** ...

“La nostra è stata la prima Regione (febbraio 1987) a disegnare il profilo di un organismo ampiamente rappresentativo come la **Consulta regionale della immigrazione**, dove le associazioni degli immigrati e non solo esse (ad esempio le istituzioni locali, le organizzazioni sindacali, i patronati, le organizzazioni produttive, le università) possono far sentire la loro voce. ...

“Nei primi anni '90 vennero trasmessi al Governo cinque **programmi finalizzati alla creazione di centri di prima accoglienza e/o di servizi per immigrati** in varie parti del territorio regionale e nella fase di loro concreta realizzazione incontrammo molti problemi soprattutto in comuni e frazioni meno abituati alla presenza di culture diverse e quindi meno allenati alla convivenza. Con una decisa azione di convincimento e con una forte protagonismo sul territorio dell'ente Regione, in stretta collaborazione con gli enti locali e l'associazionismo, **abbiamo cercato di contrastare i sentimenti xenofobi e di convincere le popolazioni locali** che la presenza di un centro d'accoglienza non era una cosa negativa. ...

“Abbiamo puntato su di un **modello di governance** dove la regione rimane protagonista e non si defila per paura delle conseguenze in termini di consenso, ma sceglie di coinvolgere nello sforzo di governo del fenomeno gli enti locali e le diverse articolazioni della società civile....

“Quindi il nostro motto è: **Investire in prevenzione, per non spendere poi il doppio in riparazione.** ...

“Una corretta politica di integrazione non deve essere rivolta solo agli immigrati ma anche agli

autoctoni, lavorare sugli autoctoni che si trovano a contatto con gli immigrati e non sempre sono preparati a questo compito è un investimento in termini di prevenzione del disagio futuro, un investimento sulla qualità della società di domani ...

“Noi lavoriamo con gli immigrati non solo per aiutarli a far valere i propri **diritti**, ma anche perché essi assumano consapevolezza e responsabilità dei propri **doveri**, per farli sentire cittadini a pieno



titolo, per **promuovere una cultura condivisa dei valori costituzionali**, incoraggiare un loro attaccamento al paese di approdo ...”

“Il nostro messaggio è che non dobbiamo avere paura del cambiamento, della diversità, che può essere una grande fonte di ricchezza, ma bisogna avere comunque consapevolezza delle difficoltà che si possono incontrare nel rapporto con culture e tradizioni diverse”

“La **pluralità** di lingue, culture, tradizioni e fedi diverse è oggi una preziosa opportunità **per contrastare i pervasivi processi di una globalizzazione omologante e i rischi della affermazione di un “pensiero unico”**.

“Il problema da affrontare è allora quello del passaggio **da una società multiculturale**, caratterizzata dalla presenza di una molteplicità di etnie spesso tra loro incomunicabili perché separate da rigidi confini materiali e simbolici, **ad una società interculturale**, caratterizzata dalla produttività del confronto e dalla reciprocità”.



BRIDGE-IT
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newsletter

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INTER CULTURAL COMMUNICATION TRAINING COURSES

At the Umbrian School of Public Administration - Villa Umbra

Sonia Ercolani

The Umbrian School of Public Administration is one of the Italian associated partners of the BRIDGE-IT project.

It was already cooperating with the University of Perugia in two former Grundtvig projects which were also tackling the Inter Cultural Communication (ICC) within bureaucratic-institutional contexts: in the 'e-

 Scuola Umbra di
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spices partnership' (2008-2010) and the 'SPICES training course project' (2005-2007).

In February 2007 the School also had an active role in the experimental course of the SPICES Project for testing different methodologies in order to reduce the gap between the Communication skills of the Public Administration and foreign citizen requests for services. Moreover, training activities from the "SPICES GUIDELINES" (2007) have been used in 2008 in a training course for the Umbrian Tourist Offices and in several training courses for the front office employees especially from the Perugia and Corciano Municipalities.

The School is a public consortium created by the principle public institutions in the region of Umbria, and the University of Perugia. Currently, it is divided into three sections: Local Authorities, Health and Local Police. It hosts approximately 9,000 students a year with 10.000 hours spent in classroom training and organizational consultancy. The school is experimenting with Blended teaching that provides real-time knowledge on new legislatures as well as for the whole area of behavioural training.

It has organised many training courses for public sector employees who use bureaucratic and institutional vocabulary in their everyday life and workplace. Most of these employees are in contact with "adults-in-mobility" (migrants): i.e. many of its trainees belong to the Local Police, Tourist office, Registrar Office, Housing Office, International Adoption Office and Social Services Office.

In the years 2000-2005, the School organized a Masters course in *Institutional and Public Communication* in collaboration with the faculty of Political Science, University of Perugia. This course was based on the application of the Law 150 of the year 2000 "Legislative framework of the Information and Communication activities of the Public Administration". The article number 6 of this national law distinguishes between Information and Communication Activities of the Public Administration. The same article states that the Information Activities are carried out by 2 specific professionals, the spokesman and the press office, while the Communication Activities are carried out through the Public Relations Office (URP- Ufficio Relazioni con il Pubblico) coordinated by a Head Press Office. In fact, a new professional - "the public Communicator" - is established by law. The following Implementing Regulation of the law 150/00 contains a detailed training program that has been the structure of the Masters course.

The Inter Cultural Communication was not specifically provided for in the law, but Villa Umbra made an innovative choice and decided to dedicate an important section within the overall educational programme to the ICC, in particular for those Municipalities most sensitive to the multicultural change of the Italian society, due to their front line role in the everyday life of citizens, such as housing, child care and social assistance.

10 SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES TO USE IN SERVICE INTERACTIONS WITH AN ADULT-IN-MOBILITY (MIGRANT)

Gabriella B. Klein

The following recommendations are based on needs for communication training which had emerged from a training group (Perugia, 17-22 October 2009) within the former Grundtvig Learning Partnership e-SPICES, **electronic Social Promotion of Intercultural Communication Expertise and Skills**, 2008-1-IT2-GRU06-00547 1 - www.e-spices.net.

1. Use visual materials to integrate with words

If needed, visualise the keywords used in bureaucratic-institutional forms/contexts (family, child, husband, female) through pictures; show an example of identity card, passport...

2. Use concrete examples

Refer to forms already filled in, in different languages and from different ethnic backgrounds.

3. Use the computer / internet

Translations online can help, but be careful: they are not always correct; especially when you deal with complex sentences; better to use this tool only for single words or short expressions.

4. Develop a helpful disposition

Listen carefully. Show through your non verbal behaviour that you are listening and ask questions to clarify.

5. Speak slowly

But without exaggerating: check if the other can follow or not. Adapt your pace accordingly.

6. Do not give too much information

Verify through questions which and how much information is needed, demanded; give only the information really needed.

7. Go point by point in helping to fill in a form

Don't tackle 2-3 points together.

8. Take into account the vulnerability of an adult-in-mobility

Respect differences in cultures; (e.g. the commitment to a signature.)

9. Be aware of the “educational” power of such interactions

Be a model for the adult-in-mobility; each of such interactions is a learning experience for an adult-in-mobility and also for you as service provider, i.e. adult-in-contact-with-mobility! **Emphasise technical key words:** the adult-in-mobility is likely to repeat them while you are talking to him/her.

10. Respect the other: avoid offending the self-esteem of your interlocutor.

Help to rebuild self-esteem, avoid making your interlocutor lose his/her “face”

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THE LET ME LEARN PROCESS AS A PEDAGOGICAL TOOL

Carmel Borg

In its endeavor to reach out educationally to Adults in Mobility (AMs) and to Adults in Contact with Mobility (ACMs,) BRIDGE-IT will be adopting the Let Me Learn Process (LMLP) as one of its pedagogical tools.

The LMLP is based on the idea that every learner is unique. In the context of a learning situation informed by LMLP, an adult educator's task is to understand how the adult participant learns and how to tap his/her will to learn. The LMLP also provides the adult educator with an opportunity to reflect on his/her teaching methods and practices and to adapt accordingly, thereby enhancing the adult participants' understanding of what is being put across.

The LMLP starts with the understanding that all learning is an interactive process of thinking, feeling and doing. This interactive process reveals itself in four learning patterns. The four learning patterns are sequence, precision, technical reasoning and confluence.

The Learning Combination Inventory (LCI) measures the varying degrees to which an adult uses the four different 'learning patterns' and how s/he combines them in her/his own particular way. The LCI asks individuals to respond to 28 statements and three open-ended questions about learning, and identifies the patterns a learner uses 'First', 'As needed' or 'Avoids'. The Learning Patterns identified provide insights into and information regarding the learning process for each adult learner. There is no good or bad, right or wrong combination of learning patterns.

Once the patterns and learning combination are determined, the next step is to help the adult participant understand how s/he can make his/her learning combination work successfully how one can access learning through his/her combination of patterns.

The four interacting patterns are:

1. Sequential Pattern

This pattern seeks **order** and **consistency**.

Clear directions I become frustrated when the directions are not clear or do not make sense.

Planning I need to follow a plan. I need to have a clear explanation of what I am expected to do.

Time I need enough time to complete my work.

Neatness I need to make sure that my work is neat.

2. Precise Pattern

This pattern seeks **information** and **detail**.

Correct information I need to have the correct information. I do not like making mistakes.

Detailed information I give detailed information and I take detailed notes.

Questions I ask a lot of questions in order to obtain more information. I like it when I am given detailed answers.

Writing detailed answers I like to show what I know by researching, writing in length and proving that I am right.

3. Technical Reasoning

This pattern seeks **autonomy** and **relevance**.

Hands-on Let me build things!

Autonomy/Problem Solving Let me figure this out alone.

Real World Experience/Relevance Show me how I can use this in the real world.

4. Confluent Pattern

This pattern relies on **intuition** and **creativity**.

Use my ideas I don't like having to do an assignment in only one way.

Imagination I like exploring new things.

Presentations/Creative Writing I like to write things the same way I would say them.

Risk taking I take risks with new ideas.



QUALITIES THAT BRIDGE-IT EDUCATORS WILL UPHOLD

Carmel Borg

1. Humility

Humility helps the educator avoid remaining entrenched in his/her own subjectivity.

2. Empathy

Empathy helps the educator cross cultural borders. Empathy is blocked when adult participants are perceived as deficient, inferior or as having nothing substantial to contribute.

3. Active Listening

Active listening constitutes the first step towards a genuine dialogue with the adult participants. Unlike hearing, active listening is more than a physical act; it means willingness on the adult educators' part to validate adult participants' stories and knowledge/s.

4. Trust

Dialogue cannot be genuine unless both educators and adult participants are willing to share their histories, narratives and biographies. For this to happen, mutual trust is indispensable.

5. Safety

Opening up one's inner self to others requires a high degree of emotional safety within the learning context. Creating a safe environment, free of prejudices, will help the adults engage their and other participants' biographies.

6. Competence

Adult participants look for reassurance in the competence of the adult educator. In the case of BRIDGE-IT, competence includes digital and intercultural communication as well as pedagogical skills.

7. Consistency

Adult educatees look for consistency and coherence. Credibility will be severely damaged when adult educators engage in contradictory behaviour within the learning context preaching democracy while employing autocratic pedagogies, to give one example.

8. Praxis

Adult education is at its best when it is transformative in nature, that is, when reflection leads to action.