Fostering Social Justice

CAPITALISATION SEMINAR REPORT 2021

Prepared By:
Sophie Michelena

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme

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Rome 2021 30 Nov. – 2 Dec.

Participants

We welcomed 10 participants out of 12 to the headquarters of ARCI in Rome (Covid prevented 2 from attending, and remote links did not work well enough at the venue).

They had all been on a study visit this year, so they represent a quarter of all participants.

It was a greatly motivated group!

From the programme team, we had:

- 2 co facilitators – Sophie Michelena and Adriana Persia worked well together for the first time!
- 2 political group / Policy group representatives of the IFS: Claudie Miller and Franco Uda, who also were working together for the first time.

Objectives:

We totally achieved the following objectives:

- Getting to know the capitalisation part of the programme, and each other better
- Capitalization of methods and tools & Identification of lessons learnt to foster transmission, harmonization of tools and update of IFS training reference systems
- Appropriation and cross-examination of feedback and contributions from study visits
- To help participants see the link from their educational work to the political dimension

We partially achieved these:

- Comparison and distinction of the experiential learning of different groups of participants in the study visits to identify what is common and different, what converges and what diverges.

- Maybe we didn't get focused enough material from the policy recommendations group?
- Some tension between political engagement, and methods. Is it political to speak about our engagement?

2021 TOOLS TO CAPITALISE

Out of the 6 study visits that took place this year, our group capitalized 7 tools / methods:

Austria 1 Language Cafe and conversation groups

The language cafe and conversation are an easy to access activity for meeting people from different backgrounds. The aim is to learn the local language and meet local inhabitants. By talking about different backgrounds and cultures, habits and values are shared. It is about learning to know each other better and learning to have small conversations in the local language by the help of translators. So, the tool has many side effects besides learning the language alone. It helps people to be understood and get a feeling of belonging in a new country they do not know. It helps newcomers to build a network and to participate in other activities. It helps volunteers to contribute and participate in building a nice society that gives access to minorities and new citizens as well.

Austria 2 Volunteer Guidance

Volunteers wanting to join the Neighborhood center, they find, in each of the centers, a delegated member of staff that will guide them in one to one sessions on:

- What neighborhood centers do so far
- How volunteers can contribute
- Figure out the motivation and strengths of the individual volunteer

They then structure an official volunteer process to get to know each other, to know where the volunteer would actually be and feel useful.

The main focus of the process is highlighting the personal strengths and the meaning to the community.

Germany: Music as a universal language to connect people

“Spirale” offers an easily accessible space for learning about, making and creating music and dance. Everybody can join. A team of staff and volunteers administer the connection that is happening through the common base line: music and participation. Since it is located within ufafabrik there is a wide range of other (peer)support options.

Italy: Mutualism is a way to organise the individuals to act as political beings for the civic society by enforcing the sense of making one’s own decision and the right to access and choice while advocating for oneself end communal equity.

Mutualism is based on the core belief that fighting for equality is a right that is co-configured and not an action based on assistance, creating a link between the condition of a person or part of society and human rights.

Netherlands: Peer support group working

People take part in the community center; every participation is voluntary. Everybody is involved, and participate, no hierarchy, with the help of facilitators. To make easy, make ease the process. Creating free space. Collectively they build a solidarity net and form meaningful connections.

Share and reflect stories, feelings, and human insight. Participant shall solve their own problems. Support by the local municipality (real connections with).

Spain: Reverse “parenting” The method is to map a social and financial structure to connect and benefit a diverse range of groups that usually does not work together. By putting them in a new context, we can prevent social exclusion. By changing conventional roles, we can see society and ourselves in a new perspective.

France: DPA (developing the power to act)

Listen, understand, and act. Everybody can go to the social center well spread out in the country. Values are: solidarity, human dignity and democracy. Share the skills, don’t forget that changing things takes time. Encourage active citizenship. Traditionally citizen go into the center to meet the social worker and get services or activities. But in the new desired situation citizen are asked to start their own activities and define social issues and work on solutions.

Our preliminary conclusions:

- All these tools can be applied to other beneficiaries than first observed, they are transversal.
- All these tools will go with pictures and full descriptions on our e-platform.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE NETWORK

QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS

Meaningful adult education, as a weapon against oppression.

We can make a symphony together, and make a big difference

From the micro to macro, local to global

Poverty is not only economical, but also educational too.

Society is not just about consuming but contributing.

Need for systemic change bottom up and top down

Societal needs observed

SCORES of importance for SOCIETAL NEEDS we need to tackle

- Money 3
- Cooperation 9
- Access space 8
- Volunteering skills 5
- Time
- Citizenship17
- Education 17
- + others: lack of trust, bureaucracy

Debate about whether we should cooperate with political institutions or not?

It is important to recognize us as actors. We represent the needs of the communities, so we are actors. This activity can contribute to better understand our role in the society.

IFS is a representative institution. We can speak together to different part of our organizations without fighting. Different point of view exists but we can still be together.

Learning from our network

Differences

- Context
- Size
- Geography
- Difference in power
- Beneficiaries

Similarities

- Social inclusion
- Field/groundwork
- Values
- Volunteering
- Exchanges
- Change
- Education
- loneliness

Conclusion: Similarities are focused more on opportunities and differences more on political context. Opportunity we can use only when we have the privilege to use it.

Not to forget our context but find the way to work together through our context.

We are too ambitious when it comes with resources. Interesting to keep going further even though we don't have all the resources.

What your organizations can get from IFS network and what can give to IFS network?

A / What do we get from the IFS?

Denmark: From the micro to macro, local to global. Don't fuss over the small things. Why it's so important to be reminded of how important our work is internationally

Sweden: How we can work globally, and locally. We can make a symphony together, and make a big difference

Spain: New knowledge and information, updates on news: local/national/international; good things come in small packages

Netherlands Lister: Stay connected in the network

Greece: Ambition to dream more to create more neighbourhood centre work

Hungary: New solutions, peer work, evaluating our own work

Austria: Dreaming big, beyond the struggles for our organization. Analysing feedback from visits and thinking of implementing music in neighbourhood centre.

France: Information through IFS, 17 SDG goals

Netherlands LSA: IFS wouldn't be anything without its members

Strong impact of togetherness!

B / What do we give to the IFS?

Denmark: Show courses in assertive thinking

Sweden: Are we for everyone? Are we truly accessible in different languages and for LGBTQ+ people for example?

Spain: Long history of digital inclusion

Netherlands Lister: Knowledge about peer support, that you can use at every level in society

Greece: Ideas, advocacy, free tools,

Hungary: Finding solutions that are not recognized in my country, dancing in the dark

Austria: Experience in working with volunteers

France: We can give ideas of what we do, to help everyone go in the same direction. Walking ahead.

Things we didn't explore

Remarks from Netherlands

- Ask people how they can support themselves
- Remind people they have skills, get them involved
- Use social impact to demonstrate our work as a network

Our partnerships and relationships

- With the public sector
- With each other in the civil sector

Policy vs political

Do we all understand the difference? What we mean by these words in our programme?

COORDINATOR's OBSERVATIONS after capitalisation seminar 2021

	What we can be proud of / makes us unique	What we want more recognition for
PARTICIPATION	Involving people in participation in democratic life and active citizenship in meaningful, deep, and people-led solutions. Our **people-led solutions** are appropriate to the local area and grounded in population needs and experiences.	Volunteers are active citizens who participate along with others in social activities that connect people together and learn non formal skills through volunteering. Everyone needs to be made aware of their own skills, we are great at providing a **participation ladder**. https://www.iacdglobal.org/2019/01/02/arnsteins-ladder-of-citizen-participation/
OUR SOCIAL CAPITAL	We have many community resources already (skills, people, energy, solutions, buildings, spaces, inclusive places, networks, and connections). https://www.nurturedevelopment.org/asset-based-community-development/	We have capital, we don't want to depend on external resources, we want to be recognized as **important community actors in our society** and local environment. We represent the needs of the community.
VALUES DRIVEN WORK	We can learn much from each other, because we have the same values despite our different political contexts and adapt our work to **best practice in Europe** through our network.	Some of our work is **replicable**, we have tools and methodologies that can be more.