



ISTITUTO COMPRENSIVO STATALE
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Grundtvig Learning partnership

ICAMS

Improving the environmental communication and awareness of migrants and social disadvantaged citizens

1. Description of the complex of problems in the different countries (Italy) in which way the partner institutions (IMA) are involved.

What is the environmental situation in Italy? How does Italy tackle the environmental problem?

With a total area equal to 10% of the country, to which an equivalent extent in the sea should be added, Italy shows a strong sensitivity to the protection of their natural heritage and manifests itself as a territorial entity that holds a substantial portion of significant natural resources, landscape and culture. Since 1966, with the enactment of Law No. 615 "Measures to prevent air pollution," our environmental legislation has had an important improvement that has contributed to fill gaps in the laws still tied to a farming community changing into an industrial one which inevitably would have a greater impact on the environment. Nearly half a century later from what is considered the first "environmental" law, the Italian Parliament has moved its first steps to fill a legal gap to protect the environment and the country. There was also earlier Legislation in this field but it has always been considered as marginal and non-organic.

Despite the several laws, the environmental situation in Italy can not be considered resolved. The debate and action towards a resolution of environmental issues (waste, air pollution, inland waters and seas pollution, soil pollution) is still open and waiting for development. Certainly, much progress has already been made, especially in terms of public awareness (citizens individually contribute to the integrity of the territory), but there is still much work to do. Over the last decade, the school system has recognized a prominent role of these issues by encouraging environmental education activities and putting them into the school curriculum. In Italian schools at all levels there are educational models with the specific task of promoting

and coordinating environmental activities that directly address the specific territorial characteristics. Among these, there are many initiatives, such as sightseeing tours, leisure, recreational and scientific activities, carried out in cooperation with the institutions of Natural Parks and Reserves, that this way constitute extra-curricular educational agencies of particular importance. Even local authorities (provincial and municipal) and organizations for the Protection of Natural Resources work together with schools to raise awareness among pupils and, through their families, promote the acquisition of aware eco sustainable environmental and civic behaviours.

Upon the Situation of Migrants in Italy

Immigration in Italy is a phenomenon that began to reach significant size roughly in the early seventies and later it became a characteristic phenomenon of the Italian population in the twentieth and early twenty-first century. Italy is today the fourth European country for the number of foreign residents. We are talking about 5 million people, about 7% of the Italian population, who contribute to the 11, 1% of GDP. Usually those people live in the province, since there the cost of life is lower, with exceptional peak in some areas. There are 25 000 marriages a year between Italian and foreign; more than 50 000 non-EU people take Italian citizenship every year, while foreign pairs help to increase the Italian population with 100 000 births per year. Analyzing the areas of origin, we note that in recent years there has been a sharp increase in flows from Eastern Europe which have exceeded those from North Africa countries, very strong until the nineties. This is particularly due to the rapid increase of the Romanian community, in particular in 2007, that has approximately doubled from 342,000 to 625,000 people and represents the largest foreign community in Italy. This is easily due to the entry of Romania into the European Union, facilitating the flow, and the linguistic affinity. Besides these the other main foreign communities in Italy are Albanian, Moroccan, Chinese and Ukrainian. To limit the entry of immigrants and stop illegal immigration, Italy passed a law (No. 186/2008) which provides for the rejection of illegal immigrants through agreements with countries of origin.

Experiences of Laura Lanza Comprehensive School with immigrants in environmental education

The Comprehensive School "Laura Lanza" is located in Carini and now assimilated into the west suburbs of Palermo, in an area where population is characterized by a fair amount of immigrants from Eastern Europe, particularly Romania and Africa. Noteworthy too is the proportion of the population in the territory that returns home after several years of stay abroad, especially in the United States. From the educational point of view the phenomenon of 'return migration' creates difficulties in the local community to those children born and raised in different countries and cultural environments, with particular difficulties related to the language. The presence of these students in our classrooms is a resource for the school community as they bear a "other" culture useful to make comparisons also in the field of environmental education. In this perspective, environmental education is an important opportunity for integration and utilization of diversity. Over the years our Institute has also organized specific training for parents and students aimed at encouraging recycling and energy saving. For example, the project "pizzini for legatiltà" involved the creation of slogans to spread awareness in the area for recycling and a visit to the Ecological Platform in Alcamo where it was possible to look directly into the processing of separated waste.

Through the testimony and experience of immigrant children, it was possible to reconstruct the different ways to handle waste in other countries and the different sensibilities of the population, and develop concrete proposals to protect the environment as is the case elsewhere.

Teaching methods related to environmental education involving adult immigrants

School is a privileged place to make available the requirements for a proper environmental education. Working with students provides a positive feedback also on their families. In fact these students take home what they learned in school and often are able to change their parents' bad attitudes for the environment. Our goal is not to disseminate or transmit simple natural-scientific knowledge but to inspire our children and their families with a greater awareness of environmental problems as well as the will to react to degradation. This is to achieve a cultural change which aims at evaluating the environment as a unique and valuable entity, so switching from a consumer culture to a culture of appreciation, care and respect.

We believe that people can change their way of life to improve their quality of life and that there is strength, creativity and skills within communities to intervene in the territory: this is why we try to activate processes departing from below, our students.

As an educational institution, we aim to:

- Stir in the students and their families a sense of interest and love for nature
- Encourage the creation of a link between citizens and their territory
- Take an active and direct form of knowledge of reality
- Encourage citizens to take an attitude of active participation and informed choices

To this end, our school activates a proper environmental education through:

- taking care of the garden surrounding our educational institution
- daily action to keep clean the garden area of the school,
- creation and maintenance of an eco-center
- development of slogans that encourage recycling and production of leaflets to be disseminated in the territory
- collect separately waste produced at school (paper and plastic)
- development of questionnaires to be submitted to parents and relatives to understand what and how to recycle
- organization of short courses in environmental education for adults run by qualified staff of our school,
- production of commercials spot by the students with their parents and broadcast also via local TV.