

“Interreligious dialogue for a better Europe”

Project of cultural exchange funded by Erasmus+ Programme

Petralia Soprana 7-13 August 2019

Applicant organisation: Centro Studi Tradizioni Popolari Gruppo Folk U
Rafu Terra del sale (Italy)

Partner organisation: Cinar Kultur Sanat ve Genclik Kulubu Dernegi (Turkey)

Objectives of the project

Today's society is characterized by widespread mobility. Millions of people, for various reasons, move from one place to another, bringing with them all the elements of their belonging culture.

In the cultural background that emigrants carry with them, a significant part is constituted by the religious factor, understood as a complex of shared values, beliefs and practices that refer to a specific belonging. For many, in fact, religion is considered a key to understanding many people's behaviors or attitudes. However, not always to an important presence of religious communities, appropriate dialogue and discussion initiatives correspond. As a result, these communities are often isolated because they are perceived as a threat to security or their own value system.

Specifically, the representation of Islam given by newspapers and the media is highly negative and disturbing: the aspects of fundamentalism or deviance are underlined obsessively.

While Islamic opinion accuses the Western Christian states of granting too many freedoms in the social life of individuals where the few remaining moral values are increasingly disintegrating.

Sensitizing people to promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue is a great challenge. On the basis of this premise, we presented this project whose objective was to encourage the integration process through the promotion of interreligious dialogue following a non-formal and informal work methodology. More specifically, to develop, in young people (including young people with fewer opportunities), a positive attitude, openness to dialogue and respect for any religious choice and for any culture. In this way, European active citizenship was also promoted because it was increased in the guys, awareness of the European context in which they live; knowledge of the English language has been improved both spoken and written. Finally, the

creativity of young people has also been stimulated: as a "final product" the participants have in fact created a drawing which for them represents the concept of peace and brotherhood between people.

Summary of activities day by day...

7 August 2019

This day was incentrated on the mutual knowledge and the knowledge of expectations and fears of participants. The first activity was the game "name and gesture" in order to memorize our name. Then, the activity called "The appointment" during which, the guys had some times to exchange informations each other, verbally, about some arguments like sport, hobby, friends...

"The expectations tree" was useful to understand what the expectations of the young people were on the project and if they were afraid about it. This game was taken up by the guys on the last day of the activities during the final evaluation, to understand if they had met their expectations and overcome their fears.

Following, guys, thanks to an adapted interview in couple, had 10 minutes to find out and write about the other person's religious identity. The debriefing was focused on the religious path in one's life.

Finally the daily evaluation to evaluate the evolution of the day.

8 August 2019

After an energiser, we took part to a role game, called "Sailing to a new land - What will you throw overboard?" aimed at knowing the connection between human needs and human rights. We decided to do this activity because it is important that people understand that a human right is considered fundamental because it is based on an important human need for every living being. We started from this activity to then face everyone's right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

"The island of Monomulti" followed, a role-playing game in which guys were divided into 3 groups that represented 3 different tribes with different culture, knowledge, behavior. Together they had to work together to build a shelter to survive on the island of Monomulti. The aim of the game was to become aware of diversity, to start a discussion on how to "interface" with diversity to experience a multi-cultural situation. We thought about this game because it reflects a bit the situation we are experiencing: a Europe made up of peoples, different cultures among us who, if they want to achieve a common goal (a healthy and united Europe) must, despite the cultural, linguistic, learning differences, collaborate with each other.

In the afternoon, a game designed by the italian participants: a crossword puzzle on the main characteristics of the Christian religion that the Turkish guys had to solve, thus being able to improve the knowledge of the Christian religion.

The last activity, before the final daily evaluation, was a game based on the knowledge of Fundamental human rights: in groups, the guys had to identify the article that was pertinent to the design theme and represent it with a sketch or mime. The final debriefing served to make them reflect on freedom of thought, religion and conscience. The purpose of this activity is to develop critical thinking and cultivate acceptance of the diversity of beliefs and religions.

In the evening, after a dinner based to typical italian meals, Italians made a presentation about their Country also on the basis of the main topic of the project.

9 August 2019

After an energiser, divided into groups, a document relating to Erasmus + and its objectives plus the The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights was given to a each group. Reading both documents, the participants had to reflect on the relationship between Erasmus + and European policy in the field of racial discrimination, how Erasmus + meets European policies in this field. Each group made a short presentation on the work done to the others.

If Italians designed a crossword puzzle, the Turkish instead designed the role game "Who wants to be millionaire", as it happens on television, to allow Italians to gain more information on the Muslim religion.

The last activity before the final daily evaluation was "Where is my shoe?" that we took from Salto, thank to we learned that, for example, only a Muslim can describe what it really means to be an authentic member of the Muslim community. At the same time, when the person listening to him tries to describe what he has understood about his partner's description of himself,

putting himself in his shoes, he can develop prejudices and stereotypes. This is a useful activity to increase the awareness of stereotypes and prejudices that we have about different religious practices, to deal with ignorance and incomprehension of religious practices, to understand how in a dialogue only people of certain religious practices can speak for themselves and describe themselves and their religious practices.

10 August 2019

After an energiser, the game "Guess who's coming to dinner": after a brainstorming about the word "stereotype", each guy pretended to invite to dinner only some of the people on a list that was given to them. The list included: footballers, black man, actors ... But it was curious to see their faces and know what they thought when the actor they chose was in prison for a murder or that the black boy is a nobel prize 😊

Game designed to make participants reflect on how stereotypes are transformed into prejudices by conditioning their choices, behaviors, and how often prejudices then become real discrimination.

Then, the participants were asked to come up with an announcement that advertised the importance of respect for the right to freedom of thought, religious belief, expression. We thought about this activity because, in recent years, we often hear talk of Muslim religion, but always in a negative way linked to terrorist acts. We want guys to understand that if television spreads this news and not the good news, it is because this kind of news makes audience. But you don't need to fossilize them too much. Terrorism exists but not all Muslims are terrorists !!!

The day ended with a very entertaining typical Turkish evening based on some typical Turkish dishes and music...

11 August 2019

Today was a day a little "lighter" since the afternoon and evening we were in Palermo. This was not only an occasion to introduce our beautiful capital to Turkish friends but also to ask people we met on the street what they think about the welcome, the integration of a foreigner in their city and in Italy in general.

Instead, in the morning:

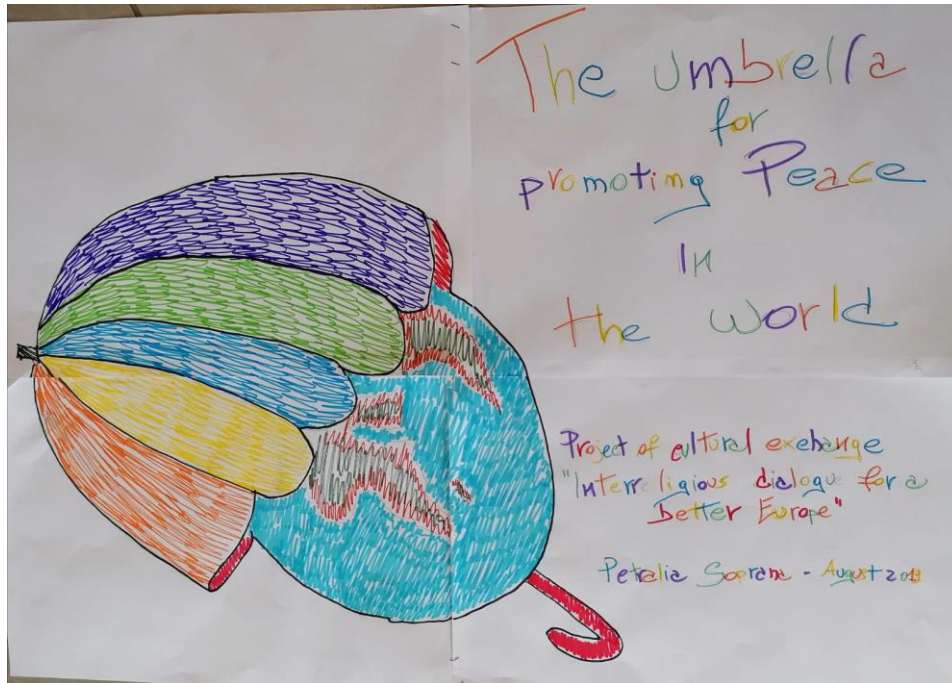
- a test about Christian and Muslim religion, the EU and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, according to the game of the handkerchief;

- a role-playing game during which the guys pretended to be in the town of Sleepville, where some Muslims intend to build a mosque in a territory of Christian religion. Each guy played a specific role. The intent of the game was: to make them experience a real conflict that can arise between the need of two different communities (conflicts that have actually happened in our day); develop debate and analysis skills and knowledge of the right to freedom of religion and religious belief.

12 August 2019

First of all an energiser to awaken physical and psychic energies.

Then a written workshop about similarities and differences between the Muslim and Christian religion. Finally an activity during which the guys were able to give vent to their creativity: on a poster, the boys gave vent to their imagination by representing what they believe to be a message of peace and love between peoples. There was also a discussion on a possible continuation of the project. In fact, divided into groups, each group devised a continuation of the project and each group made a presentation to all the others. In the future we probably will discuss again about it because there is the intention to collaborate again with the partner. In this same day, there was a meeting with the authors to talk about our project and try to understand if our municipalities can do something concrete to encourage the integration of foreigners in our Country.



13 August 2019

Day dedicated to the creation of activities aimed at disseminating the results. Infact the guys had to think about the creation of the press releases, the information flyer of the project that we then spread in our cities and neighboring areas, the final report...

Unmissable the final individual and written evaluation that decree a success this project!