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COVID RESPONSES

CITIZENS AS ACTORS IN A GLOBAL CRISIS



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CONTEXT

The Co-Engage project is facilitating co-creation processes in order to turn citizens to be innovators and advocates of positive change in their community. By supporting people to discover and develop their capacities of critical thinking and constructive participation in any issue related to their personal and professional lives, citizens will gain the tools to be empowered and to be equipped for active participation.

We distinguish three types of co-creation/co-production where citizens might be involved:

1. Citizens as co-implementers;
2. Citizens as co-designers;
3. Citizens as initiators.

In this context the smart practices will explore the following effect of co-creation on society:

- A. The value of co-creation in general, as citizens are involved in helping the community.
- B. Finding measures which groups of citizens' directly benefit, paying particular attention to those who have lower education, wealth and/or come from ethnic minorities.
- C. Exploring the potential of co-creation in community building, where social capital can be a driver for co-creation, but also an effect.

While limited in our work during the Covid pandemic, we noticed a raise in citizens driven responses in all the fields of our interest across Europe. In order to document and reflect on those, we decided to make those responses visible and reflect how it might shift the role of citizens in interacting in society and political frames.



ACTIONBOUND FOR REMOTE PARTICIPATIVE WALKS

MARTIN BARTHEL



Organization and country: CRN, Germany

Target group: All citizens

Age group: 12+

Context / Learning environment:
non-formal education

References, Link: www.kieztraum.de

In 2020 CRN collected in the project Kieztraum perspectives and ideas of the citizens of the Pankstraße area in Berlin–Wedding. The process included the collection of places with positive emotions, but as well a collection of stories and insights of local citizens on what makes them happy and sad in their neighbourhood.

Due to the pandemic lockdowns, those stories however, could not be anymore collected face-to-face and additionally guided walks to the favorite spots in the neighborhood had been impossible.

The urge to move adult civic education digital presented the opportunity to use a free web service called Actionbound. Actionbound is an app for playing digitally interactive scavenger hunts which help to lead learners on a path of discovery. These multimedia based hunts are called 'Bounds'.

The program quite literally augments our reality by enhancing peoples' real-life interaction whilst using their smartphones and tablets, with the use of GPS coordinates. The bound led the participants to the top 5 favorite places in the neighborhood. At each of these stops, the users have to fulfill a task, like commenting, what could be changed on Leopoldplatz, post a video of a thing on the spot they don't like, and tell a story with audio why they moved in the neighborhood. The data is collected and uploaded to a database, which can be used for further input for the project.

The bound can be played anytime by individuals or groups, the data is uploaded in real time. In this way it was possible to keep the dialogue with the citizens alive, even during the lockdown, providing citizens with an interactive, fun walk, while no other activities were allowed and unintentionally helped to increase the sustainability and visibility of the project, as the actionbund is staying online without much maintenance.

Strength

The tool is combining offline and online experiences in a creative, easy accessible way through mobile phones, but still providing real time feedback. The tool itself needs no programming skills and can be easily created, adapted and monitored through the website.

Weakness

There are some limitations on the possibilities, what can be done. As well the service depends in an external provider. The level of digital literacy to use the tools is not high, but still explanations and QR-codes are needed. The bound is requiring as well a permanent internet connection in the public space.

Opportunities

Due to the easy creation and adaptability of the actionbounds, the fields where the tool could be used are wide. During the Co-Engage Lab for example a prototype of a circular economy bound had been created.

Threats

The biggest threats are one the one hand the dependency on external devices which could raise concern on digital skills needed by learners, language used and administrative issues, such as data and intellectual property protection.

Which aspects are transferable?

All the components of this practice are transferable. The walks with the gamification elements can be adapted to any relevant social topic in any public area. Collecting insights and audiovisual, discussing change and creating a debate can be transferred to many areas, countries, target groups or topics.

The Actionbound tool itself is highly adaptable too. Besides walks, it is possible to create quizzes, scavenger hunts in real time, and finally mini lessons with instant feedback from the learners. Still, while the actionbound can be adapted easily free of charge on the website, complete ownership of a bound requires a license.

What kind of change is created?

The people who went on the tour learned about places the neighbors like and think are worth protecting. This increased the identification in a social-economic backward district in the city of Berlin. At the same time the walks helped to start conversations on how life in the neighborhood can be improved. Live footage of places with trash, wild parked cars or places where people would love to put flower beds, made this conversation more concrete and gave the local authority through the Quartiersmanagement Pankstraße a better understanding of what and where things should be changed.

Due to the lockdown the people felt isolated and disconnected from even thinking about any change they could do. The bound helped to be involved and to become part of a wider discussion.



COVID walks and neighborhood engagement

At the beginning it was difficult to motivate people to take the walk. Many citizens felt skeptical regarding another digital tool. So, our team was happy to see the first person talking the tour. We waited for 45 minutes until the tour was completed and for the feedback. The man was really touched, as he was living in the neighborhood for many years but had not even be aware of many of the places. In the discussion and his contribution, it became clear, that the walk stimulated many thoughts and reflections, on gentrification, traffic, integration, urban design and environmental protection. The reflection had been personal by this man, as he did the tour alone, however all of his reflection s had been made visible to the project team through the actionbound. It helped to start many other conversations with the citizens and finally had been included in the action plans, which had been designed in the Kiezraum project at the end.

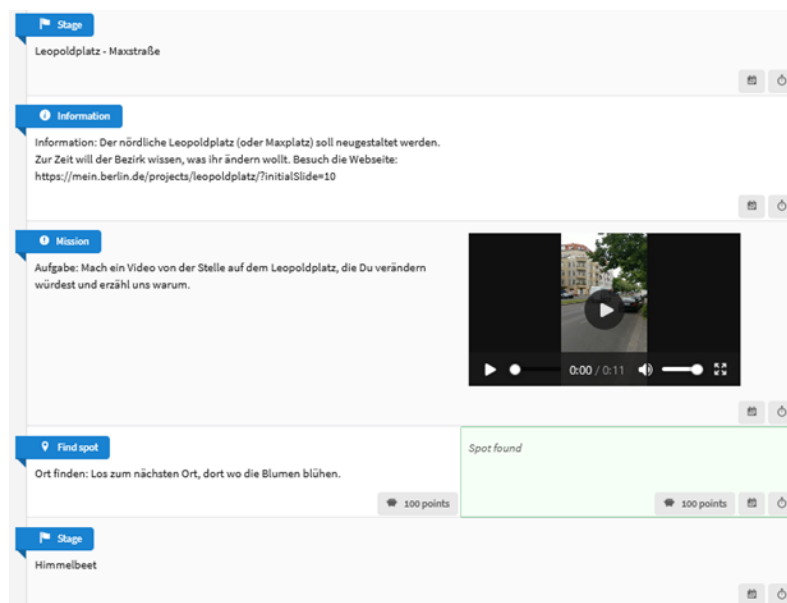
Conclusion

The bound is combining collecting insights with educative moments in a playful way and thus, is innovative – making insights visible both online and offline in a new way. Without the pandemic the tool would not have been used, but already now in 2021 we can say that actionbounds will become a regular option for our work.

The visibility of internal individual reflections of the learner/citizens, help to co-design and co-create public services and space, close to the needs of the concerned.

Having it online makes it flexible to use, either individual on walks or for groups, with a stronger gamification element or even for learning in- and outside the training room.

With proposer planning the actionbound can be adapted to any location or topic, providing a great tool for blended education and in the case of further lockdowns, as well a tool to reach out to the community.



LOCKDOWN DOCUMENTARY

IPSO-FACTO



Organisation and country :

L'Echappée des copropriétés, France

Target group : condominium inhabitants

Age group : all

Context : Documenting citizens story

When the world was shaken by the Covid pandemic in early 2020, many countries decided to impose a home lockdown to their population. France was one of those countries, and suddenly the condominium inhabitants (1/3 of the whole French population) were tight to their buildings. Condominiums became the daily scenery!

Our team, and especially Ludivine Bras and Manon Leroy, was inspired by this out-of-the-ordinary experience. If our job is to document and accompany group dynamics in condominiums, how to waste the opportunity to track the effects of Covid lockdown in condominium inhabitants?

That's how "Un pied dans la porte" (« A foot in the door ») was born. A short documentary that follows the experience and reflections of a young tenant, a volunteer of our association, that tries to implement solidarity and community building initiatives in her building.

The film will be a valuable resource to stimulate exchange and reflection during our workshops, where we open discussions about living conditions, community within condominiums and mutual aid.

The documentary will be available online and in open source, so it will be possible to subtitle it and use it as much as wanted by other organisations around the globe wishing to reflect on those subjects.

For her documentary, Ludivine Bras interviewed more than ten people from different cities and condominiums, collecting their stories and their reflection about community living in these strange times. This practice only, of listening and capturing people's voice, is an engaged practice to us, because it gives value to "ordinary citizens" and portrays their story intact. Furthermore, the result is a film that shows this reflection of the documentarist and the interviewees about community, solidarity, conflict resolution... So it contributes to a new narrative about condominiums and a new vision of society.

Strength

It captures the reality of a contemporary moment, and it puts the focus on a very particular (yet very shared) experience that illustrates community building. It makes some positive experiences of the lockdown visible.

The form of the documentary was adapted to the situation, and the filmmaker was able to seize the opportunities and to take advantage of her difficulties. It considers itself as a starting point for further reflection.

Weakness

It shows a narrow range of experiences, as the means of the documentarist were reduced.

The documentary is not an in-depth testimony, it is focused on a specific moment.

Opportunities

It shows all the initiatives that took place between neighbours during the lockdown.

The people that were interviewed were welcoming and receptive to the project.

Threats

At Ludivine's condominium, the inhabitants were not open to most of her attempts to get in touch. Instead, she reused this reluctance into her thinking.

The pandemic was also a threat, as the lockdown narrowed the possibilities of the film-maker (freedom of movement, etc.).

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The documentary was recorded during the lockdown, which meant that most of the takes were done through online tools or by the interviewees themselves. A work was done then by the documentarist to put together the final piece, the interviews, the takes that follow her experience, her reflections, and the story.

The materials used were:

- A video camera
- A computer
- A microphone
- A "montage" software

The film can be used during workshops. In this case, you will need a computer and a projector. Some questions can be prepared to stimulate discussion about the documentary.

This documentary was made during the lockdown and it was a first experience for Ludivine, its maker. This proves that you can get a good short documentary, using few resources (few places, few materials... but nevertheless many possibilities).

The film will also be available online and in open source, which means that it will be easily reusable, in brainstorming workshops or for other occasions.

Furthermore, the goal of this documentary is precisely to inspire initiatives between neighbours of condominiums, by showing some ideas of practises and sharing some pieces of reflection about this topic. These ideas can be re-appropriated by anyone. Our documentary aims to show that it is possible to set up little things in a shared place of living, in order to get to know their neighbours. Therefore, it highlights the importance of social connections and it promotes local solidarity between inhabitants of a same building or of a same neighbourhood.

Besides, the approach shows that in order to get in touch and to bond with your neighbours, you need to be patient and you might have to test several ideas at several moments. As one of the interviewed person said : you need to "tame" your neighbours.



Making collective dynamics visible

For Ludivine, who made the whole film, this experience mattered a lot: indeed, it was her first documentary, and an opportunity for her to test this practise. It fuelled a lot of questions and analysis that she already had. Moreover, this type of project made sense for our organization, that works on collective dynamics in condominiums. The shape and goals of this lockdown documentary changed throughout time, in order to adapt to the situation. There was also a kind of urgency, linked to the lockdown period, which helped Ludivine to complete this project.

Conclusion

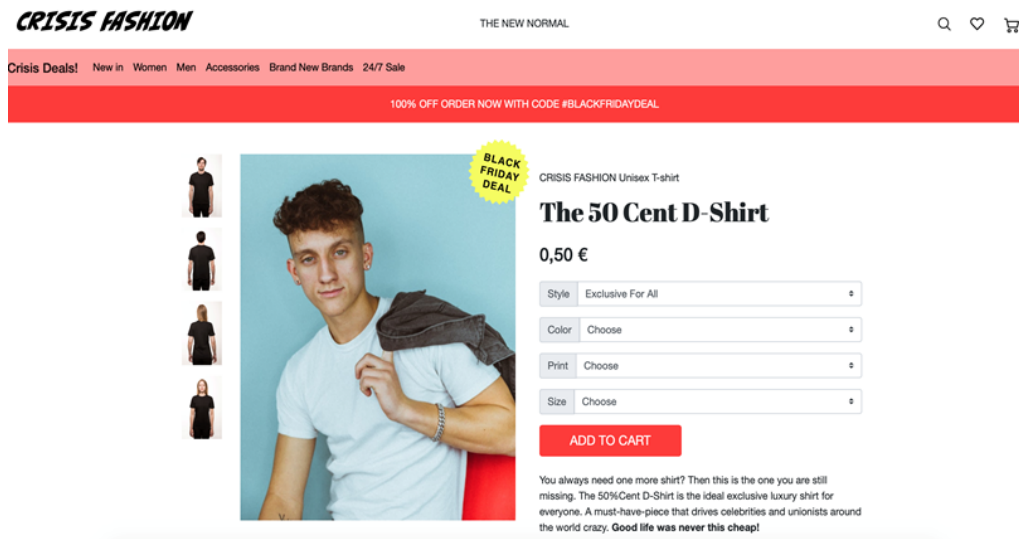
First, we can tell that the documentary-making itself is a good practise. Its form and its content can be adapted even to complicated situations, such as a lockdown time.

At the same time, the film documents smart practices, that aims to make connections between citizens.

“Un pied dans la porte” (“A foot in the door”) is a short and accessible documentary. It is a bundle of initiatives, and intends to be an invitation to discover them but also to carry them out and (why not?) to find some more.

CRISIS FASHION

ARIANNA NICOLETTI



Organization and country:

Fashion Revolution Germany e.V.

Target group: Young consumers

Age group: ages 14 to 35

Context / Learning environment:

Online, non-formal education

References: <https://www.crisis.future.fashion/>

In the wake of the Corona Pandemic in Europe in April 2020, while in Germany there are discussions about relaxing lockdown measures, many fashion brands have shirked any responsibility and cancelled orders worth several billions of dollars. As a direct result, countless factory workers are now confronted with unemployment and loss of livelihoods. And those countries without the security of social welfare or stable health systems remain the weakest links in the value chain and are deprived of their needs and rights. The resulting poverty could be more deadly than Covid-19 disease itself.

No money and no health system mean corona may result in an even greater disaster than Rana Plaza. Fashion Revolution Germany presents CRISIS FASHION: a webshop using the methods of fast fashion brands. Contemporary marketing and satire are used to draw attention to the situation of the seamstresses in the hard hit production countries – including three voices from Bangladesh on the current situation.

The target group is that of young consumers aged between 15 and 35 years, who are attracted by cheap fashion.

As online practice and using English as language, this method has an international focus.

In the fictive webshop crisis.future.fashion one can supposedly buy a white T-shirt for only 50 cents. As soon as you interact with it, however, the shop disintegrates and reveals the actual message of the campaign – information about the current situation of factory workers, for example in Bangladesh, and points out options for sustainable action. Instead of buying a T-shirt, we share the opportunity to support an emergency relief fund and other charitable organizations with a donation, thus contributing to the fight against inhumane conditions.

Strength

The website has an appealing design, is catchy and uses the language of the fast fashion consumers. It is online and in english, so it is accessible to an international audience. Its way of educating works through disruption and a surprise element.

Weakness

It is difficult to follow up on the results of the method, since we don't have a direct feedback by the users and can't track if the consumers are taking action after visiting the website.

Opportunities

CRISIS FASHION offers a unique way to reach young consumers, who usually the hardest target group to reach, when talking about conscious consumerism. It also enables the individual to take direct action. Therefore the opportunity to collaborate and connect with more organisations working in the field of sustainable fashion and give them direct support by the website visitor is great.

Threats

As online project, CRISIS FASHION would need continuous online marketing to be ranked high on research pages.

CRISIS FASHION is a very dynamic website, where the individual consumers decide which ways to follow, which information they want to know deeper, and eventually also if they would like to be co-creators of a better future for the garment industry workers.

The practice works by itself. There is no need of trained stuff or materials. As this method is website, it is essential that the site is online at all times. A web domain, a hosting platform and other technical equipment was needed to set CRISIS FASHION up and the Future Fashion Forward organisation pay for the maintenance costs of the website.

The method is completely transferable to both online and offline projects. It is based on a surprise effect and this is totally replicable in any context.

The practice creates first of all a change of setting, where the participant is brought from the action of buying online to the action of donating.

Everything happens through the same medium and inside the participant/visitor the change is emotional.

CRISIS FASHION empowers the users to reflect about their own consumer behaviours and to understand that there are many possibilities to change the status quo of the fashion industry. The practice aims basically to a behavioural transformation .

LOVED CLOTHES LAST BUT TRASH TOO



CRISIS FASHION DEALS!

Making Impact

During the CRISIS FASHION launch so many people have been attracted to the website through the smart use of social media. We got extremely good feedback not only from the website visitors, but also from the organisations, which actually collected donations. The website has been internally praised by the international Fashion Revolution community and by the German press.

Conclusion

CRISIS FASHION is simply unique in its genre. It is an interactive practice that address people, who would never have visited the website because of its ultimate aim. CRISIS FASHION is one of the smartest examples of how talking the language of the target group can result in reaching and involving the right audience. Just using the usual communication channels, visuals and language of young consumers, CRISIS FASHION is able to bring these to a journey of self-exploring and change towards becoming better consumers and citizens.

#COVID CONVERSATIONS

INSTITUTE OF COMMUNITY REPORTERS



Organization and country: Institute of Community Reporters, UK

Target group: People with disabilities, those experiencing economic hardship, people with mental ill health

Age group: 21–67

Context / Learning environment: Online

Link: <https://communityreporter.net/covid-conversations>

streetreporter

POSTED IN

Tags:

CoProduction

COVID

disability

Category:

Coproduction

Disability

Location:

United Kingdom

North Yorkshire

ICR Network:

During 2020, members of the Community Reporting movement gathered stories from across Europe of people's experiences of the COVID-19 crisis. With a focus on supporting people who are often the least resourced and less likely to be in positions of power, the stories that are a part of the #COVIDConversations project represent everyday experiences of communities across Europe. It is important that these voices – those that are often unheard – are part of this on-going narrative and involved as active actors in rebuilding our future.

To provide an equitable platform in which often unheard voices can be not only part of the conversation around COVID-19, but also key actors in how we rebuild our communities post-pandemic.

How did the conversations engage citizens/learner?

It provides a space for people to share their experiences and set the agenda of the conversation. It provides space for Community Reporters to engage with their peer groups.

Which co-creation moments are included?

Participation in society:

- Encourages participants to share experiences of life during the pandemic
- Asks others to listen and understand these experiences and work with the knowledge

Awareness as a citizen:

- Promotes listening to other people's experiences and cross-community learning

Being involved in creating the method:

- Members of the CR movement are co-creating how the project moves forward and is implemented

Being involved in adapting and improving the method:

- CR members have inputted into creating a guide for remote story gathering and are sharing learning on implementation with each other

Strength

- Involves different people in a collective conversation
- Promotes understanding through empathy
- Provides different perspectives on the same issue

Weakness

- Only reaches people who our network currently is in contact with
- Can only be done as much as people can give
- One of many storytelling initiatives around COVID-19 and it is hard to show why what we do is different – we don't have the presence and the marketing capacity

Opportunities

One of the principal opportunities of the practice.

Threats

- Online safeguarding
- Digital exclusion

The project uses Community Reporting as its underpinning methodology. However, what is unique about this project is that it has moved this practice online due to COVID-19 restrictions. This way of applying Community Reporting however could easily be used in a non-COVID-19 restricted environment as a way of engaging more voices in Community Reporting activities.

The Institute Of Community Reporters used blogs, emails and online meetings to invite Community Reporters to take part. Training workshops were offered in how to gather stories online and then the project followed the usual Community Reporter practice of story gathering and sense-making, followed by public dissemination events – albeit all carried out remotely.

The resulting stories are live on the Community Reporter website and impact is measured through feedback and People's Voice Media's own social impact report.

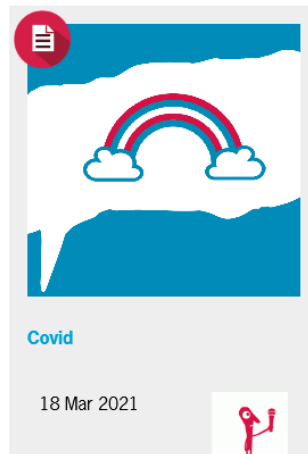
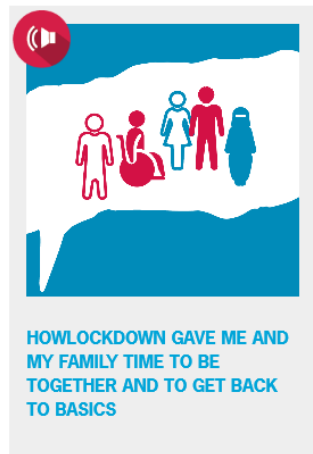
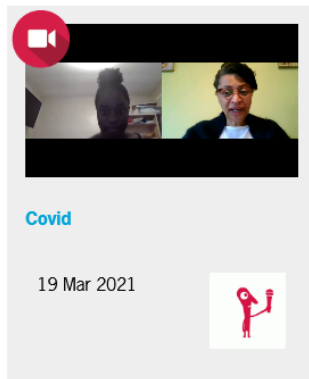
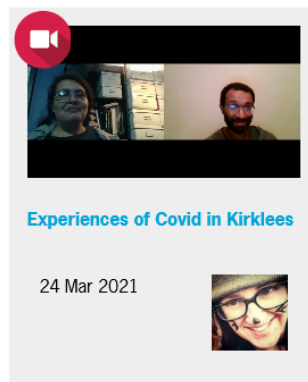
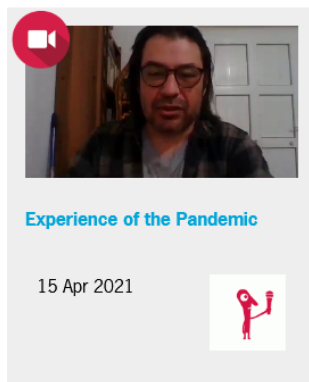
What kind of change is created?

There is no demonstrable change brought about by the practice yet as it's too soon but some impacts that we have seen include:

- People being able to share their experiences and set the agenda
- Public and Third sector workers having the opportunity to hear how COVID is impacting on communities

Which aspects are transferable?

The entire practice can be transferred across any and all sectors.



Stories of lockdowns

So far the Community Reporters have gathered 132 stories and the Institute Of Community Reporters has upskilled 15 members of the Community Reporter network. The Institute Of Community Reporters has also run an event for the public that engaged with 24 individuals who listened to people's stories and discussed their own, while the stories and their insights have been used to inform workshops and knowledge exchanges, online chat shows, insight briefings and much more.

Conclusion

#COVID Conversations is an innovative smart practice because it provided a way to give marginalised people a voice at a time when they couldn't so much as leave their houses and, in doing so, recorded a living history of an unprecedented time.

BRIGATE VOLONTARIE PER L'EMERGENZA

FEDERICO FUMAGALLI



Organization: Brigade Volontarie per l'Emergenza (Volunteer Emergency Brigades) – Italy

<https://www.facebook.com/brigatovolontarie>

Target group: inhabitants

Age group: all ages

Brigate Volontarie per l'Emergenza (Volunteer Emergency Brigades) is a spontaneous mutual aid project born in Milan during the first phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, March 2020, to help the most vulnerable inhabitants to deal with emergencies due to the social, psychophysical and economical consequences of the virus.

In Milano, Italy, during March and April 2020 (and still counting) lockdown policies didn't allow people, especially those who were most affected by indirect consequences of the pandemic, to access basic needs like goods, food and medical items.

Volunteers of any age started to collaborate with activists in many neighborhoods of the city asking people (not only inhabitants) about their difficulties through a proper call center; they gathered and divided them into three main categories: food needs, healthcare needs, mental care needs.

After that, they self-managed whip-round outside of supermarkets to collect foods; bought a phone and opened a call center; created a safe space where they could host people who had psychological burnout due to their conditions facing the pandemy.

It turns out to become one of the most appreciated self-organized practices observed in the last 18 months in one of the most hit areas of Europe.

Thanks to an internal organization we used to give us before the pandemic, a pre-existent communication network and a common space where to stock materials – Macao (a cultural workers and activists collective I'm part of) –, the collaboration with the municipality of Milan and Emergency, a famous NGO active worldwide, Brigade began to help people who found difficulties and no-help by authorities.

Strength

Everyone can do it according to their energies and resources. You see immediately the result of your action: making the World a better place will sound as real as you could imagine.

Weakness

Usually, mutual aids have a hierarchical structure to better optimize all the efforts. Keeping it horizontal could decrease final results but, instead of volunteering, in a long term period it's the best way in my personal opinion.

Opportunities

To enforce the solidarity network; to strengthen human relationships, specially in the same local area (like a neighborhood).

Threats

Don't let volunteers be exploited.

The general condition of that period and a common sense of human solidarity let volunteers activate themselves. They found a great ally in social and cultural centers which already had skills and resources to positively impact on the ongoing situation. The municipality and Emergency added, after two months, new competencies and a more structured way of doing it.

Every service was created following the evolution of the pandemic and new rules the government spread almost weekly.

Step by step you had to face the situation in an artisanal way, listening to people about their problems and acting on them in the best way you can do it.

The three main frames of help Brigade gave to people were designed on people's needs, physical and mental energies of volunteers (who, in contemporary times, were hit by the indirect consequences of COVID-19 too) and material resources available. Foods whip-rounds: self-managed whip-rounds out of supermarkets with volunteers divided on turns on different days of the week. Foods were stocked in the warehouse of Macao; boxes with goods were prepared based on needs people communicated to our call center; other volunteers brought them to people using their vehicles.

Call center :Everyday, from 10 to 16, a phone number answers your needs and problems. It was communicated to volunteers managing the warehouse or to the different help desks depending on what people were asking for.

> Psychological fragilities care desk: for sure one of the most diffused and underestimate consequences of COVID-19 was the mental care. No institutional help was given neither supporting measures were taken to help people who played with mental burnout or psychological fragilities lockdowns restrictions. We opened a care desk, a safe space where to talk and listen to each other trying to give comprehension and human solidarity. A special mention has to be given to women self-managed listening groups because violence against women increased a lot during the pandemic.

Each of them was managed by a horizontal decisional process through an weekly assembly of volunteers who were following that particular frame. This assembly was used also to debug eventual inside problems.



Basically, this practice could be replaced everywhere you need a basic-level self-organized group of people helping other people in need.

The social system is, year by year, more and more flaky. We need as many of these kind practices to find out again our trust in our closer relationships.

Bringing food or helping people with some mental or health vulnerabilities make a positive change by itself: you will immediately see the results of your action and that's something which lets you go on despite your lack of energy and time.

Navigating the challenges

At the beginning we were a bunch of people, less than the number of our fingers, trying to understand how to help people in need, most of whom lacked food and individual protective equipment like masks or disinfectant gel.

Day by day, restriction after restriction, we had to adapt ourselves to the ongoing crisis: a lot of people lost their jobs, and a lot of kids couldn't go to school or to follow lessons via pc for different reasons. We decided to start a help desk, collaboration with job's lawyers or law students, to give unemployed people some tips about which rights they could exercise or how to be refunded, where possible and according to our knowledge.

We also began to help kids in many popular houses with their homeworks and we host the older ones in our space, Macao. We asked our network to bring us old PCs or devices to repair them and give them to kids in need.

Conclusion

I just heard from my grandparents or read history books about popular solidarity during crisis periods. Of course, I already saw it and joined it during some natural disaster, but the huge dimension of this pandemic needs a better organization and what happened in Milan was such a great social experiment, testing our human side by helping each other. That's why it is important to me to remember this experience and to tell it to the next generations.

WE CAN DO THIS! SUPPORTING EDUCATION FOR REFUGEE CHILDREN

EWA KOZDRAJ



Organization and country: Stowarzyszenie Dla Ziemi,
Poland

Target group: refugee children

Age group: 6–14 years of age

Context / Learning environment:
non-formal education

Link www.dlaziemi.org/damy-rade/

While working with the Centre for Foreigners in Łuków, we noticed that the children staying there have significant educational deficiencies. The pandemic notably widened this gap. The educational situation of the Łuków Centre children was dire, as they had no access to computers or proper remote learning. However, the main reason behind their educational deficiencies lay in their insufficient Polish language skills. We established contact with the Pedagogical University of Krakow and started providing one-to-one online Polish lessons (one student per child, like private tuition). This annual educational process attracted 73 female students, who delivered almost 400 teaching hours to 30 refugee children. This good practice can be used in various towns and cities, across different groups of refugee children, especially during the pandemic.

Learners become directly engaged in educational activities of highest quality. University students learn to teach during an exceptionally useful university apprenticeship. The university faculty is pleased, as the pandemic renders contacting schools difficult. Students gain direct access to a different culture, which necessitates more awareness and involvement in their teaching. This inclusive process attracts various groups. In our case, we help children excluded due to their present life situation (refugee children) and place of residence (small locality without an academic centre).

These actions follow from the individual contacts established by student-teachers. Although they use ready materials, a lot depends on their engagement and creativity. In many cases, apprenticeships trigger student-teachers' creativity, as they need to adjust the curriculum and educational tools to learner needs on an ongoing basis.

Education is provided in the form of one-to-one lessons compliant with the standards and methodology promoted by a pedagogical university. Students are equipped with ready materials and elaborations which have been used in academic classes for many years. It makes most sense to provide teaching for at least one academic year. It is necessary to supply children living in excluded groups (refugee children, in our case) with necessary equipment, i.e. computers with webcams and reliable Internet.

Strength

working with a university with necessary resources, including teaching methodology

Weakness

poor Internet coverage (dependence on available infrastructure)

Opportunities

increasing the educational opportunities of refugee children

Threats

absence of an internal teaching process coordinator. Another possible threat would be to launch the project without knowing anything about the children and their parents. In our case, we introduced the project to the Centre for Foreigners in Łuków, where we had been present for years. We couldn't have done without the support of a member of Centre staff who helped the children get online and minded the children who could not use computers in their rooms, as those were occupied by a high number of people. If that was the case, the caretaker showed the children to our classroom.

Education is provided in the form of one-to-one lessons compliant with the standards and methodology promoted by a pedagogical university. Students are equipped with ready materials and elaborations which have been used in academic classes for many years. It makes most sense to provide teaching for at least one academic year. It is necessary to supply children living in excluded groups (refugee children, in our case) with necessary equipment, i.e. computers with webcams and reliable Internet.

In our opinion, all aspects are transferable. This practice can be transferred to different towns and cities across various countries. It can be transferred by universities and non-governmental organisations, as well as schools. The practice can be transferred not only to refugee children, but also to groups suffering from different types of exclusion.

Inclusion of excluded children into social life. Providing opportunities of acquiring high quality education. Improved Polish language skills help children learn all other school subjects. Greater educational opportunities in the future.



Excelling in language

We found the opinions of student-teachers very important. One of the most impressive achievements were the improving Polish language skills of a girl learner who finished the school year with the highest possible grade (six) in Polish, and came top of her class in that subject. Student-teachers shared the following opinions with us, “At introduction class, Khava surprised us with her level of Polish. The exercises we prepared turned out to be too easy for her. She completed them in no time at all. We understood from this situation that the learning materials should be more difficult. At the next lesson, Khava did great with grammar. She didn’t have any problems with passive voice. When we got to numerals, Khava had some difficulty with correct declension, but she understood the principle after we had gone through some examples, and the exercises ceased to be problematic. Khava proved adept in active and passive voice.”

Conclusion:

On the one part, it seems natural to come up with such a practice. On the other part, we haven’t heard of any similar one-to-one lessons or direct NGO–university cooperation in other Polish centres for foreigners. We therefore believe this practice is innovative, though it should be the norm. I selected this very project, because it is “my baby”, my work and my joy fuelled by the effects I can see with my own eyes, now that I can visit the Łuków Centre in person, something that was not possible in the darkest moments of the pandemic.

ASSOCIATIVE QUARENTINE

FAJDP



Organization and country: FAJDP, Portugal

Target group: Youth Organizations, Youth Leaders

Age group: 6–99

Context / Learning environment: Non –Formal Education

During the state of emergency, confinement and isolation, FAJDP, in partnership with the IPDJ, launched the challenge for affiliated associations to create online content (social networks and other platforms) or publicize their initiatives. This idea reached as a way of combating sedentary lifestyle and social isolation, as well as demonstrating that, despite the difficult period we were going through, youth associations continued to be active in fulfilling their mission and maintaining some of their activities, namely in supporting risk groups and the most disadvantaged populations.

Since the beginning of April, more than 50 youth associations spread across the district of Porto are carrying out and publicizing their actions through the #QuarentenaAssociativa campaign, created by the FAJDP. It is estimated that more than 250 young people are involved.

The main goal was to share knowledge, best practices, activities and most of all being aware that no one was left behind or alone – even if it was in front of a laptop.

By involving youth organization, youth associations and youngsters in the organization of the online activities. By promoting their good practices during the covid-29 pandemic

By creating special and unique moment for all

By encouraging everyone involved to assume a compromise between their Youth Association goals and FAJDP.

Also, because it privileges non-formal education methodology with practical exercises, peer-to-peer activities, reflection and evaluation moments and or of the projects and initiatives related to their civic participation.

Since the beginning of the method, FAJDP involves Youth Associations affiliated in the process. Making them feel that the project is for and with them and value their good practices. By promoting their activities, soon Youth Associations were co-creating new activities among them, participating in each other's projects and ideas. A real interchange happens during Associative Quarentine.

Strength

Youth associations mobilization; combating social isolation and sedentary; Youth participation and engagement.

Weakness

Non personal contact; lack of digital tools.

Opportunities

Online activities; bigger achievement of youth associations activities and trainings; bigger promotion of youth associations and their work; more people involved from other cities.

Threats

Lack of digital tools; lack of digital skills; less people with less opportunities involved (with no smartphone, laptop or internet access).

During the pandemic crisis we encourage affiliated Youth Associations to do some activities and to create online content (social networks and other platforms) or publicize their initiatives as a way of combating sedentary lifestyle and social isolation, as well as demonstrating that youth associations continued to be active.

By doing this online content, they could receive more participants from different cities.

To do that, we share with youth associations zoom platform, paid by FAJDP and we use social networks to promote their content and created an image to promote the associative quarantine.

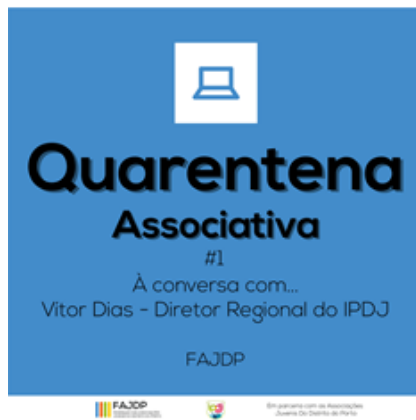
We had more than 50 youth associations and 250 direct participants involved in activities such as dance classes, debates, challenges, quiz, movie nights, sustainable development goals, yoga classes, podcasts, etc

So, it was up to the Youth Associations what to do, when and how to facilitate the process. FAJDP was the main facilitator, disseminating all the activities and put in contact different groups of young people.

FAJDP also was the main debriefing – after the activities, we evaluate what went well and not so well with the Youth Associations involved.

We realized that using online and digital tools we can do a lot of activities involving youth associations and, in the other hand, to stimulate youth participation and decreasing social isolation. So, as long as we have online and digital tools every organization can promote and develop their online activities by their own or in partnership and involve more participants.

Realizing that in crisis moments we can be creative and continue doing things to the wellbeing of our communities, being active and transfer present activities to online activities.



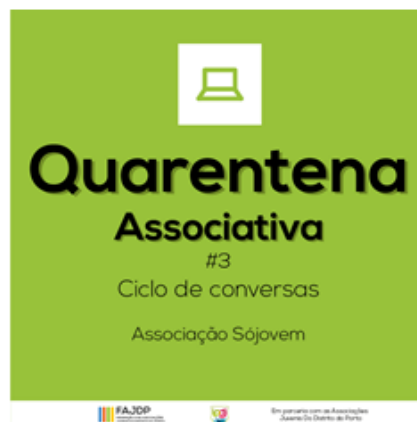
Promote Work Online

During the implementation of this smart practice, we noticed that by doing online activities, youth associations could promote their work and have more participants in their activities. The involvement in this associative quarantine was big, youth associations were engaged and felt valued.

Conclusion

In a crisis moment, we were able to mobilize youth associations which transformed and adapt their present activities to online in a record time to answer to the needs of their community, combating social isolation and basic needs.

Our role was to promote their activities and mobilize participants to them.



„STIPRŪS KARTU“/„STRONG TOGETHER“

VDU AJMD “MODUSAS”



Organization and country: Stiprūs Kartu, VšĮ, Lithuania, Vilnius

Target group: citizens who needs help, organizations, and volunteers.

Age group: 18 – 60 and above

Context / Learning environment: non-formal social phenomenon.

Link: <https://stipruskartu.lt/>

In 2020 the idea of helping each other came, when the whole world stopped, a large part of Lithuanian people found themselves in a stalemate and realized that it was the time to be active and help. The aim of the project is to initiate the population into giving a helping hand to others. This became a social phenomenon – 7760 people from all over Lithuania participated in the campaign.

The initiative grew into the National Volunteer Aid Coordination Center which was focused on providing help and aid to the ones who are effect by Covid-19 situation.

The campaign is dedicated for people of different professions, ages, and social status. The practice started in Lithuania and covered the whole country. It can be transferable to international focus as well.

In 2020 during the beginning of the pandemic the situation in Lithuania was tense. The idea of the practice in such a difficult situation came when some younger and healthier people decided to help those who are having a harder time. A campaign was started, and people were invited to and become STRONG TOGETHER.

Due to the high numbers of coronavirus incidents, the situation was particularly difficult in hospitals and nursing homes. These institutions started facing severe staff shortages, so any help is more than welcome – taking care of the wards, arranging laundry, cleaning the premises or performing other household chores. Participants involved in the practice saved lives when doctors, their assistants, nurses were unable to work because they were ill or in self-isolation.

Creating a networking scheme based almost entirely on empathy and care, people from different sectors and age groups coming together to work for the benefit of others.

"Strong Together" is an initiative of the Owl Squadron of the Riflemen's Union, implemented with the event organization company "Primary Coffee", Lithuanian scouts and other partners (around 80).

Strength

Everyone can do it according to their energies and resources. You see immediately the result of your action: making the World a better place will sound as real as you could imagine.

Weakness

Usually, mutual aids have a hierarchical structure to better optimize all the efforts. Keeping it horizontal could decrease final results but, instead of volunteering, in a long term period it's the best way in my personal opinion.

Opportunities

To enforce the solidarity network; to strengthen human relationships, specially in the same local area (like a neighborhood).

Threats

Don't let volunteers be exploited.

To make this practice work, good networking skills are required. In the current day and age, being fluent in social media will always be beneficial. Having a web page for the initiative will be helpful as well, through it, people can get more information about it, and register should they wish to do so. During the registration people can choose where they want to volunteer – helping people at their home (buying food, doing laundry, cleaning the house) or helping in the hospitals (in this case people would be encouraged to join the organizations who are participating in the hospitals).

After the registration volunteers get all the information by email or by phone and can start working. If people need help from the volunteers, they can also register their problem or call the organizers for the volunteers to come to help.

So, the organizer of this practice needs to prepare platform where all the information about this practice would be. And to coordinate volunteers, that all people who needs help to be visited and solved all the problems.

Ways of networking organization-to-organization, person-to-person. Relying on core human values like empathy and embracing it. Connecting people on the giving and on the receiving end (one can ask for aid, the other can accept to do so and vise versa).

National Volunteer Aid Coordination Center mobilized more than 3.7 thousand volunteers, food rations are distributed to all parties on a daily basis to 200 people every day since mid-March, over 500 assistance requests were received and answered per day during the peak of the quarantine.

"Strong together" project volunteers dealt with more than 2.2 thousand calls and over 6 thousand requests for assistance. One of the initiators of the project, Edmundas Jakilaitis, believes that with the help of contributing partners, helping people has become several times easier.

Our call center received regular, usually weekly, requests for help from the same people at risk. When we notice a tendency for people to ask them to send a former volunteer to help, we try to send someone who has already gained trust to help again. In this way, human relationships based on mutual

Esame stiprūs, kai būnam kartu!



understanding and assistance have naturally formed, which we are very happy about. This means that even after the quarantine and volunteer center is over, most applicants will have something to turn to. And this justifies the emergence of our center's activities and the result," says the project coordinator Inga Naruševičiūtė.

Meeting Neighbors through Volunteering

"Volunteering, I met my neighbor Aldona, who is about 80 years old. She had to buy food by herself because her daughter works as an anesthesiologist and she calls herself a "ticking bomb", and thus was not able to visit her. As soon as I came, the neighbor Aldona started to tear up, she pleaded me to sit down and stay for a while, because she needed someone to talk to. We spoke safely, in compliance with all safety requirements. Today is a special day for me because I have a new friend – Aldona," says volunteer Gerda.

"Some children do not receive regular meals as schools close their doors during the ongoing quarantine, for them, it is especially difficult now. While everyone is talking about seniors and medics who are in a difficult situation, it is also very difficult for children in state care. After the closure of institutions of education and day care centers, instead of the opportunity to eat three times a day, they receive only one meal" L. Kunigėlis said. "When we arrived, the children's mother reacted very sincerely – she even cried."

Once on a Friday night an old woman called and said: there is neither money nor food, I live alone. It's the second day, neither I nor my puppy have anything to eat. The girl who took the call was sitting, listening, and crying. But we quickly managed to resolve the situation. We found a volunteer who bought food from his own money, drove to a remote village and helped the woman and puppy. The sad story has turned into a beautiful one with a happy ending.

This practice helped to build up a social system to fight against covid virus, it is an amazing experience, showing how strong we really are when we work together.

The initiators of "Strong Together" encourage citizens to continue to turn directly to project volunteers who have already provided them with assistance, and whose help to people of respectable age has been inseparable from warm and immediate communication.

OUR PARTNERSHIP

COMPARATIVE RESEARCH NETWORK:



Disclaimer

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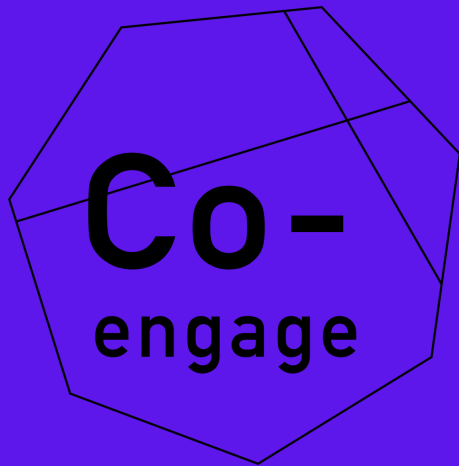
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