



Cilap eapn italia

Report of activities – 2015

(Synthesis)

It is hard to divide CILAP's work in 4 straightforward pillars since, as for any organization, working for influencing the national and local policies is at the core of all of our activities: newsletter, press releases, articles, TV and radio interviews, seminars, training, participation to conferences, actions with/for people experiencing poverty are all aimed at influencing governments at any level.

Below a short description, as much as possible divided into the 4 pillars.

Influencing National Governments for Better Policies: Advocacy, Lobbying and Policy-Making linked to European Level developments

2015 marked a new and more advanced step in our relation with the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies. Our network engaged in a useful discussion with the Ministry, namely the Social Inclusion Unit, in charge of the National Operational Plan/Inclusion, the National Plan against Poverty and, the FEAD programme.

The network is member of the monitoring committees for the three Plans/programmes and, as such, was able to give suggestions, some of which were taken into account.

The same kind of lobbying we carry on at national level is done, by our member organizations regionally and locally. This work is particularly valuable since social and health policies depend to a large extent on the local or regional governments although this subsidiarity may, in good part, be cancelled soon thanks to a Constitutional Reform.

On March 12th and 18th the Labor Commission of the Senate auditioned our network in relation with Minimum Income.

Seminars and research work are also very important for influencing the government for better policies. The most important actions taken in this field were:

- Research and seminar on the poverty of women, in partnership with EAPN Spain (EAPN Pilot Action). The research had a broad press coverage, gave rise to a number of radio interviews; the seminar was well attended.

- Seminar on the links between poverty and early school leaving. This seminar, organized the day before the EAPN EUIS group met in Rome, was extremely well attended, had a good press coverage. It marked the arrival point of our network engagement with this issue. We also presented the Italian version of the EAPN booklet on children's poverty, with the addition of a chapter on Italy, which we did in partnership with the association "Albero della Vita" (Italian NGO associated to Eurochild).
- Seminar on fuel (energy) poverty, as partners of the Italian partner (AISFOR) of the European project "Smart-UP". Fuel poverty is a completely new issue in our country, Smart-UP being the first project addressing it. We are now working on questionnaires about the correct use of home energy.

Communication, although it may fit in any of the four pillars, was an important tool for lobbying. 2015 marked a step forward in our ability to communicate with the outside. We were on the radio and on TV – both in private and public channels – more than once and, we were very active on the social media. We were mentioned more than once by the specialized media and the research on poverty and women was picked up by many magazines, internet sites, etc.

Our newsletter was widely spread proving to be a useful means for connecting the our members and for opening debates with the outside.

The activity of our press office continued with many (approx. 25) press releases, some of which were picked up by the media.

Participation of People Experiencing Poverty and Social Exclusion in Internal and External Workings of the National Network

In 2015, the working group on "poverty and participation" went through some important organizational changes which somewhat hindered its working ability. Sabrina Emilio, the "historical" coordinator was on maternity leave for a long period while Letizia Cesarini Sforza, who over the years supported the group, retired. Other factors that influenced our work were, undoubtedly, the short time we had for preparing our delegation for the event in Brussels, the drastic fall in the number of delegates to the European meeting and its short time-span since, as we all know, it is hard for many people in poverty to take a plane or live for a number of hours/days outside the normal environment, let alone for such a short time.

Nevertheless, we managed to have one meeting of the group prior to the European one.

Members of the group also participated in a Seminar on Minimum Income (Lucca, in occasion of the Festival of Volunteers, April 18th), where people in poverty were able to interact with local/regional politicians, listen and question our Ministry for Labor and Social Affairs.

Some members of the working group participated actively in the conference titled "Poveri di Dignità", held in Caposele, Avellino, on the month of August.

Members of the group actively participated in all our seminars although money restrains did not allow travels.

Development and Growth of the Network (including growth and training and capacity building actions)

Again, it is difficult to divide squarely our work, so we may repeat ourselves here.

We worked on building and reinforcing our partnerships and networks, a very difficult task nowadays when most big/medium size networks are undergoing a very serious crisis due partly to severe lack of funds and the lack of a “volunteer” way of working. At the end of 2015, the situation was such:

- The partnership with the main national organizations that are engaged against poverty has not been a simple one, historically. This is due to a very strong and by now historical political and operational difference between these organizations and CILAP. Over the years, CILAP always remained independent and has always refused to become one of the many civil society organizations functioning as liaison between organized civil society and the Trade Unions, the political parties and the Catholic Church.
- Partnership with the CNCA (Collegamento Nazionale Comunità di Accoglienza) and CIPSI (National Network for Cooperation). After the first meeting we insisted on continuing the work that was just started but CNCA is now going through a very deep crisis at the national level and it is very hard to establish any relation with them.
- We were able to establish a very good partnership with CIPSI and, today, we regularly write on their magazine, *Solidarietà Intenazionale* and work together in many issues of a political nature.
- Our engagement with Libera (national association against the mafia) and BIN (Basic Income Network) continued by defining together a common Platform for a dignified minimum income
- Our engagement with the campaign “Banning Poverty” continued

All of our seminars and conferences are part of our training, capacity building and growth of our network. Over the once already mentioned we would like to add:

- Festival del Volontariato (Lucca) : seminar on Minimum Income and seminar on the participation of People experiencing poverty.
- Giornate sulla coesione sociale (Social cohesion Days, Reggio Emilia), organized by the University of Milan
- Training on “The social side of the EU” addressed to young university graduates (Avellino)

Governance and Internal Democracy (including internal governance, respect of statutory requirements, management in the network and funding).

The governance and internal democracy was respected at all moments. We had the number of meetings our Statutes and Standing Orders call for.

The 2015 general assembly elected the new executive committee and the two persons representing CILAP within EAPN. Of the persons elected in the executive committee (5), 1 represents the working group “participation and people in poverty” while the others represent our member organizations.

We are now in a new office which, with the support of our volunteers, stays open regular working hours.

The funding is more and more our biggest problem.