



EUROPEAN NETWORK OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION ENTERPRISES

3rd Annual Convention of the European platform against poverty and social exclusion

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In-Work Poverty – The Contribution of Employment to Poverty Reduction and Inclusion

European Network of Social Integration Enterprises – Davide Ziveri

How to overcome in-work poverty in Work Integration Social Enterprises? Re: Social Club, a best practice from Turin, Italy.

SOCIAL CLUB

In 2009 more than 30 Italian social cooperatives of B-type (work integration social enterprises) join a network of workers of social field starting from a revolutionary idea: if as employers we cannot boost the income of workers, we can decrease the price of the life with a high quality livelihood.

The starting point was a needs analysis.

Thanks to a focus group qualitative research with Turin University of Anthropology we check again the needs among the workers of social field in Turin during the crisis.

We found that:

1. Workers and their families have real needs referring to houses
2. They don't have money for special medical care out of national health system
3. They feel a need of positive identity and membership through internal communication
4. They claim more participation in decision-making processes

Therefore, Social Club network decided to launch the process of mutual aid thanks to two key concepts:

1. **Closeness:** all kind of help has to born from the relationship
2. **Sharing:** we cannot ask more to the social services, but we can share our resources



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The outcomes in a long-term perspective are:

1. **Empowerment**
2. **Resilience**

So, Social Club created these services to the workers:

A) The first step was focused on **sport and leisure events as teambuilding activities** against the gap between normal people and the others (usually working in social field as helped beneficiaries).

A strategic communication can help to see ourselves as part of a group of powered people.

B) As critical mass of more than 3.000 workers we have obtained **a discount pack** with some shops in the city; furthermore all cooperatives of the network offered their services to members of Social Club with a special price.

C) The second step was the need of money thanks to **microcredit**:

Since 2009 we have received more than 100 requests with 50 positive answers for funding with a total amount of 260.000 euros (considering that we have a shared guarantee fund of 80.000 euros).

The denied requests were for: big debt, no guarantee of cooperatives, or give up.

The motivation of requests was to close loans with bigger interest rate, to buy car, or for extra cost for medical reasons.

D) In November 2012 we opened a **co-housing** in the area of building of Winter Olympic of Turin 2006 and dismissed since then creating a black hole in the district.

The aim was to re-use abandoned area of the city in a creative way for social purpose.

Some cooperatives of the network funded by bank foundation of San Paolo for an amount of 200.000 euros have worked for just 4 months in order to **refurbish the building**. The façade was designed by a street artist.

The aim was to break some stereotypes: low income do not mean low quality of life.

Now more than 40 families from at least 6 different cultures, including more than 10 children, now live in the building.

There are 3 shared flats for single, especially fathers after divorce.



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3 more flats for psychiatric patients helped by nurses in order to live in a buffer environment to get back to independent and autonomous life.

2 flats for families followed by social services of the municipality after special community.

And 12 flats for international students of master, with a special flat for the integration of students with handicap.

The aim is to improve the social mix among people of different ages, cultures, classes.

And we have common spaces, as:

Office with help desk, Laundry, Video hall, Roof garden, Booksharing, Bikesharing

The aim is to improve neighborliness!

Positive relations among neighbors are the base of quality of living and for future peer-to-peer help relationships.

As our claim said, Social Club cannot offer help services, but it can create paths to look together for answers to shared needs.

Thank you for your attention!

[More information](#)