



Good practices for the OPEN project (target audience adolescents between 13 and 18 years old)

Good practice n. 1

Title: Italian language lab

Implementing organization : Gualandi Foundation for deaf people, Bologna, Italy;
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Target group: Deaf adolescents between 12 and 16 years old

Short description, including reliable theoretical background (objectives, target groups, context, undertaken activities, results, impact) :

To master a language that for deaf children often requires a hard learning process, both in school and in the rehabilitation process. This is the reason that brought the Fondazione Gualandi to propose Italian language labs where they could try with a small group of children innovative, non-didactic teaching methods. These would be occasions to learn the language, discovering both the oral and written language in everyday activities, in known and frequently visited places, and in the observed, heard and lived actions and stories. The labs are first and foremost a space, a workstyle, a way to get in touch with the language through practical activities; in this way they can strengthen the knowledge they already have or they are trying to obtain, each in their own time and way. There is also the important aspect of socialization: getting together with other deaf children will give them the opportunity to get to know each other and strengthen communication, without giving up the fun.

The objectives are:

promoting communication in every form and language; one of the main dangers of deafness is shutting up the voice that pushes deaf people to want and wish to communicate;

strengthening the cognitive development of the children to create a conceptual knowledge; to understand and master all that happens around us;

training the children to use, master and be competent in the use of a verbal language system, regardless of the knowledge of a sign system; we believe that it is fundamental to provide the children with the tools to orient themselves and be autonomous in a written text, a universal code of the hearing world with which every deaf person will have to deal.

Context:

the city of Bologna. It is a medium to large city, with 380,000 inhabitants, where there are many migrants. In the last few years, the number of foreign deaf children and adolescents who come from countries inside and outside Europe has increased. Even though they go to Italian schools, they still



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have great communicative and linguistic difficulties. The funding for activities aimed at them is supported by the Gualandi Foundation for deaf people.

Sustainability: the labs were first started in 2003 as an experiment and they continue as such to try and offer to deaf adolescents the tools to become independent. This can be possible by knowing things, how to manipulate them and how to use them in other contexts con modalità personali, utilizzando le proprie risorse. Two youth workers, one of which specialized in sign language, lead this activity.

Methodology:

Time has shown and proved that knowing other deaf people improves the way they feel and perceive themselves, as persons and not as someone different or problematic, also for the children of deaf parents. Sharing their difficulties and the processes impacts on the way personal identity is created and self-confidence is built, and it allows them to be free to be themselves.

Why playing? The infinite implications of games in the cognitive and affective development are well known. Free, creative games as well as games with rules and set objectives are the privilege learning context where every child loves focussing and working towards the achievement of the objective, or also just enjoying the process.

Why the written language? Because besides the presence of an efficient auditive channel, the oral language can be acquired perfectly well by every deaf person, with the learning conditions are ideal.

What kind of independency? The communicative and linguistic independency, the independency that allows them to communicate their needs and thoughts in every situation, to decode written messages, to learn practical competences, to be able to make choices.

What kind of inclusion? Accessing to the productive world with their own means, in their own time and ability; accessing culture and managing their own free time.

What modalities?

Sessions with a small group, practical activities with deaf people of all ages, while always giving lots of attention to communication and to the written and oral Italian language.

In-depth sessions thanks to the collaboration of speech therapists and logogenia specialists.

Exchange of experiences with families and teachers, sessions to know and share experiences on the workplace of their children, and time to compare common experiences and difficulties.

Innovative aspects:

The labs aimed at school-aged children and adolescents have evolved over the years and they target more and more precisely and early linguistic stimulation. This is inserted, as naturally as possible, in everyday activities, in games more or less structured, in the use of storytelling in all its forms as a privileged instrument to organise space-time dimensions, to create relationships between the people involved and to boost critical thinking on events.

Evaluation (what are the final, measurable results and how are they evaluated?):

The ability to understand a text and to read independently the books employed during the labs increased participation and engagement in the activity

These aspects are validated thanks to the comparison with the school the children go to.



Impact (what is the impact, how do we know it? Satisfaction of the end users):

Feedback from schools and increased requests of the school to take action.

Potential for replication:

The practice can be replicated through labs that are organised depending on the requests and needs of the local schools.

Ethics :

We can list the five fundamental principles that guide the work of the Foundation.

- 1) Value the difference: be able to accept each person as they are and create the best conditions to help each individual be successful in his/her life, as well as an effective and satisfying growth of the whole group, by creating a learning environment that accepts everyone for their own characteristics.
- 2) Teaching people to be independent and free in everyone's social life. It is important to give deaf people or people with other impairments the growth possibility where they can meet many different people. Creating contexts that are not specific for and dedicated only to people with difficulties; creating situations where also people with difficulties can grow together with people without their difficulties.
- 3) Believing in research, study and exchange. Experimenting learning situations and methodologies that are different and not related to well-known habits nor one single pedagogic theory. Believing in change, an important word that goes hand in hand with studying and researching, since we can never stop researching the best methodologies for the children.
- 4) Stimulating change. Proposing ideas and thoughts on inclusion coming from good practices and actual facts. Having a practical and willing attitude that can understand real needs and work on them in a serious, accurate and professional way; documenting and verifying experiences and communicating effectively the results.
- 5) Being in the network and creating a network with the schools, health and diagnostic and rehabilitative facilities, in order to implement effective, continuous and accurate action for the integration of people with hearing and linguistic impairments. Create a network with people coming from different professional backgrounds to offer ever increasing information to create and educating community, because we cannot do anything alone. Because real thoughts can question and accept more than just one point of view.



Good practice n. 2

Title: Bread and tomatoes

Implementing organization : Gualandi Foundation for deaf people; Bologna, Italy;
www.fondazionequalandi.it; Beatrice Vitali – beatricevitali@fondazionequalandi.it

Target group: deaf youths and young adults (10 young adults, of which 6 in the age group between 16 and 20 years old)

Short description, including reliable theoretical background (objectives, target groups, context, undertaken activities, results, impact):

The project Bread and Tomatoes was created alongside the other lab activities organised over the years by the Gualandi Foundation.

There is an increasing number of deaf youths and adults that come to the Gualandi Foundation because they live in a poor social and communicative situation. We have thus decided to put into practice a viable, complex solution that can integrate the different competencies that each of them has: a double horticultural and cooking lab.

This seemed a great possibility to address to different needs:

- to bring out the actual competences of deaf young and adults that can be put into practice in possible career guidance events;
- to contextualize literacy projects for the Italian language in real situations;
- to dedicate themselves to a vast, complex and organic project outside the classrooms of the Foundation, in order to avoid any artificiality;
- to integrate everybody, moving beyond the focus on limits, in a project whose complexity allows to find tasks and roles adequate to the abilities and potential of everyone;
- to give visibility to "invisible" users that are not addressed by the local bodies and to whom the Foundation has been trying for years to create a network of social partnerships.

Context:

the city of Bologna. It is a medium to large city, with 380,000 inhabitants, where there are many migrants.. In the last few years, the number of foreign deaf children and adolescents who come from countries inside and outside Europe has increased.. Coming into a new city when they are adolescents or adults, their communicative and linguistic difficulties are severe. These youths often have not a linguistic competence in their mother tongue, nor in the sign language or in Italian. The funding for the activities aimed at them is supported by the Gualandi Foundation for deaf people, the Fondazione del Monte di Bologna e Ravenna (banking foundation) and by the Institute for poor deaf-mute women of Bologna (welfare body).

Sustainability: This project was established in 2016. We employ about €10,000 each year for: youth workers who give support for the horticultural and cooking activities, an expert on horticulture, two cooks, materials and working tools.

Methodology:

The project consists of:



- a part dedicated to horticulture, during which we expand the students' knowledge on cultivation and composting techniques. This activity is carried out mainly through practical work in the vegetable garden, but it is supported also by linguistic and communicative facilitators to help understand the complexity of the job. These facilitators are for example panels with explanations of cultivation techniques with photos and symbols; visual calendars of cultivation timetables; working plan for each individual, etc.
 - a part dedicated to cooking, during which the students learn particular techniques, such as making bread and fresh pasta, so that the participants can be more and more independent, even during the organisation of catering services outside the Foundation. This activity is carried out mostly through practical work in the kitchen using linguistic and communicative techniques that support and help the students understand and learn cooking time and instruments.
 - a training module on the health and security on the work place for all participants
- Innovative aspects: the intense and long term involvement of the participants through practical work makes them love the project and it produces real, important results. This involvement produces processes of high participation and loyalty, as well as great satisfaction from the achievement of important results that are admired also from outside the Foundation, such as catering or visits to the vegetable garden for non-members of the Foundation).

Evaluation (what are the final, measurable results and how are they evaluated?):

- building a friendly group of people;
 - obtaining high competencies for qualifications and work
 - creation of a chat vegetable garden/kitchen for the students, so they can communicate for more than just meetings;
 - work guidance at Agriverde for a deaf youth;
 - possible training internships;
 - integration of the activity with other activities of the Foundation: snacks with the youngest children and distribution of the products;
 - organisation of a carpentry workshop to improve the vegetable garden's logistics.
- Impact (what is the impact, how do we know it? Satisfaction of the end users)
- the involvement of young adults between 16 and 20 years old and doubling the number of the participants;
 - satisfaction of the participants (measured through final interviews)

Potential for replication:

This practice can be replicated also if the two modules of horticulture and cooking are set as two different modules.

Ethics :

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- 1) Value the difference: be able to accept each person as they are and create the best conditions to help each individual be successful in his/her life, as well as an effective and satisfying growth of the whole group, by creating a learning environment that accepts everyone for their own characteristics.
- 2) Teaching people to be independent and free in everyone's social life. It is important to give deaf people or people with other impairments the growth possibility where they can meet many different people. Creating contexts that are not specific for and dedicated only to people with



difficulties; creating situations where also people with difficulties can grow together with people without their difficulties.

- 3) Believing in research, study and exchange. Experimenting learning situations and methodologies that are different and not related to well-known habits nor one single pedagogic theory. Believing in change, an important word that goes hand in hand with studying and researching, since we can never stop researching the best methodologies for the children.
- 4) Stimulating change. Proposing ideas and thoughts on inclusion coming from good practices and actual facts. Having a practical and willing attitude that can understand real needs and work on them in a serious, accurate and professional way; documenting and verifying experiences and communicating effectively the results.
- 5) Being in the network and creating a network with the schools, health and diagnostic and rehabilitative facilities, in order to implement effective, continuous and accurate action for the integration of people with hearing and linguistic impairments. Create a network with people coming from different professional backgrounds to offer ever increasing information to create and educating community, because we cannot do anything alone. Because real thoughts can question and accept more than just one point of view.



Good practice n. 3

Title: Task Force at school

Implementing organization : Gualandi Foundation for deaf people; Bologna, Italy;
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Target group: deaf youth and young adults

Short description, including reliable theoretical background (objectives, target groups, context, undertaken activities, results, impact):

Proposal for the support and training of teachers and students through the organisation of training and lab activities.

Context:

The city of Bologna. It is a medium to large city, with 380,000 inhabitants. In middle schools with deaf children and adolescents we can often note the difficulties of these children to feel included because of their communicative and linguistic difficulties.

Sustainability: This project was established in 2017/2018. The Gualandi Foundation offers the expertise of two specialised youth workers that organise, together with the teachers, labs in the classrooms where deaf children are present.

Methodology:

Training sessions with the teachers (3 sessions of 2 hours each): the sessions focus on general topics inclusiveness and strategies to best welcome the child with their personal characteristics. We address themes related to inclusive didactic strategie, such as employing books with images so that everyone can participate actively. Moreover, we address themes specific to the situation in each classrooms, such as in-depth analysis of deafness and language problems.

lab activities in the classrooms to experiment inclusive didactic modalities (3 sessions of 2 hours each): we present working "kits" related to a specific theme or story and we propose different materials that can boost the most the participation, understanding and challenge all the students. These kits facilitate in particular the approach to and the strengthening of the written Italian language.

Donation to the teachers of didactic "kits": the material proposed during the lab activities at school are given to the teachers, so that they can work on them for a longer period of time.

supervision (8-10 hours per class): together with the teachers, monitoring on the use of the proposed materials. Definition of specific objectives, tailored propositions depending on the needs and the characteristics of the children and the class, possible repetition of the activity.

Innovative aspects: to experiment and raise awareness on inclusive didactic strategies and methodologies.

Evaluation (what are the final, measurable results and how are they evaluated?):

Final evaluation with the aid of a short survey for both the students and the teachers.



Potential for replication: the practice can be replicated through labs that are organised depending on the requests and needs of the local schools.

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- 2) Teaching people to be independent and free in everyone's social life. It is important to give deaf people or people with other impairments the growth possibility where they can meet many different people. Creating contexts that are not specific for and dedicated only to people with difficulties; creating situations where also people with difficulties can grow together with people without their difficulties.
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Good practice n. 4

Title: Everyone's road

Implementing organization : Gualandi Foundation for deaf people, Bologna, Italy;
www.fondazionequalandi.it; Beatrice Vitali – beatricevitali@fondazionequalandi.it

Target group: Deaf youths and young adults

Short description, including reliable theoretical background (objectives, target groups, context, undertaken activities, results, impact) :

Lab to raise awareness and to provide fundamental information on civic education and road signage, both from the point of view of bikers and pedestrians.

Context:

The city of Bologna. It is a medium to large city, with 380,000 inhabitants, where there are many migrants. In the last few years, the number of foreign deaf children and adolescents who come from countries inside and outside Europe has increased. Coming here when they are already adolescents/adults, they have great communicative and linguistic difficulties: they often have not developed a linguistic competence in their mother tongue, nor the sign language or the Italian language. In particular, they have difficulties finding their way around the city, they don't know the traffic rules or the use of personal means of transportation (bicycle, scooter). Italian deaf youths, too, have this difficulty, especially when getting their driving license.

Sustainability:

This project was first established in 2018. It is implemented together with the local police of Bologna, a driving school of Bologna, the ACI (Italian club for cars), and the staff at the Gualandi Foundation that provides youth workers who know the sign language in order to support the project.

Methodology:

The projects consists of: sessions in classrooms and practical tests to simulate routes both on the road and on the track race.

The sessions focus on the following topics:

- Knowing each other and first approach
- Role of the Local Police, rules of the road
- Signage and the road, meaning and use of symbols and signals
- Test on car track
- Rules of the road
- Signage and the road, meaning and use of symbols and signals
- Test on car track or cycle track

Innovative aspects:



Working in a team to have a comparison with others and an in-depth knowledge on fundamental topics for the inclusion of deaf people, as well as a real, impacting methodology for the acquisition of skills.

Evaluation (what are the final, measurable results and how are they evaluated?):

Final evaluation on the acquired competences through a short questionnaire.

Ethics :

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