Generating places of integration. A network model toward the skills assessment of foreign students.

Donatella Bramanti
Catholic University of Milan
Milano, Italy

Matteo Moscatelli
Catholic University of Milan
Milano, Italy

The study shows one or more models of network intervention, qualified as good practice, capable of generating places of integration between Italian and foreign students, with a specific reference to family engagement. We assessed the quality and sustainability of different partnership styles among the school, the public, the third sector and families, working on the assumption that this alliance is particularly appropriate in everyday life to achieve cultural integration between young Italians, foreigners and their families and to spread a network perspective able to successfully address the encounter among cultures. The research has studied 30 partnerships active in Lombardy Region, that has the largest number of foreign students in Italy, adding 3 cases out of Region and 3 projects conducted in other European countries (Feel, La Maleta intercultural, Rucksack). The study has identified specific guidelines to enable and support integrated networks between public or third sector and schools, capable of promoting and managing places of integration. Among the factors considered above there is the consistency and the structure of the network, the type and degree of collaboration between these actors, the type of governance put in place, the level of articulation of the relationship between the network and the socio cultural context in which it operates. Secondly we considered the project methodologies, the operation time, the extent of the catchment area, the level of the experience growth, the expansion of the partnerships. Also important were the methods of assessing the degree of social and cultural integration, educational and academic achievement in relation to skills, business integration, involvement of family background

Keywords: network, partnership, integration, skills, good practices, school

This article presents the results of a study[1] conducted in 2009 on 30 intercultural education projects, in favor of school-age children and their families active in the Lombardy Region that has the largest number of foreign students in Italy. Three cases out of Region and three projects conducted in other European countries (Feel, La Maleta intercultural, Rucksack) have also been studied. These projects are best suited to ensure a strengthening of the chance of integration both in terms of training, and of family, social and cultural development of the students.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Donatella Bramanti, e-mail: donatella.bramanti@unicatt.it

The experiences selected are considered particularly significant in relation to the duration, the variety of beneficiaries, activities and school grades involved.

The projects, investigated through case study methodology, were selected from a large number of intercultural interventions, about 1300[3], as they possessed the following characteristics, detectable ex ante:

a) Network organisation model, formalised as a social partnership between both public (schools, social services…) and third sector actors (associations, cooperatives…);

b) Focus on the wellbeing of foreign children and their families;

c) Intercultural approach, i.e. able to involve all the groups both Italian and foreign;

d) Significantly innovative in supplying educational materials and curricula;
e) Concerned in developing and evaluating Lisbon's [4] competencies.

Purpose and goals of the study

The general aims of the research are related to the need to show one or more models of network intervention, qualified as good practice (Bramanti, 2007), capable of generating places[5] of integration between Italian and foreign students, with a specific reference to family engagement. In fact the families make networks, support the integration processes and build the first opportunity to reciprocity and trust between different cultures (Scabini, Rossi, 2008). In particular, we tried to verify the quality and sustainability of different styles of partnership[6] between schools, public institutions, third sector organizations and households, assuming that the alliance was particularly appropriate to achieve integration in the daily life of Italian and foreign students and their families.

The school is one of the first places where the child experiences the encounter with the other, with its uniqueness, with its peculiarities and its diverse sense of membership. It is at school that the child is exposed to the comparison with 'what is different from me', and learns how to relate to it, reorganizing the meaning and significance of each encounter and relationship (Valtolina, 2009). The challenge that the school faces is therefore to encourage the construction of an intercultural thinking, likely to recognize the difference that separates 'I' from 'Alter' and the consequent need to establish a commonality (a relationship) between these two terms. It may be useful to recall here what Gimenez says: "the school is not required to introduce new subjects or to extend the disciplinary contents, aware of the fact that the intercultural is a new emerging paradigm and is under construction, is not defined nor closed in any of its aspects, must develop a creative educational practice to be able to forge it gradually through trial and error, with an open methodology as a useful tool for the educational project" (2008, p. 176).

However, schools alone can not achieve such an ambitious goal if it is not inserted in an open community in which all the individual and collective subjects are willing to interact.

Therefore the research question which led the analysis of the experiences encountered was: under what conditions a project / intervention is able to generate places of interculturalism?

Certain assumptions have guided the research of good practice indicators.

Firstly, if and insofar as the people who "live these places of interculturalism" act to enhance relations between different subjects:
1) supporting relations with members of their community of origin;
2) sustaining relations with members of the host community.
Secondly, insofar as the subject:
1) invest in relationships and not simply use them;
2) does it together with other people (criterion of action: the advantages of each depend on acting as members of an integrated community).
Third, to what extent people are helped to:
1) see what Alter and Ego have as differences and commonalities;
2) implement forms of recognition relevant to the culture surface (ways of eating, dressing, ...) and the deep culture (the ultimate values that underpin the fundamental choices about life and death).
The fourth, to what extent the school community:
1) gives identity to the parties: who am I and where am I going?
2) promotes relations of mutual belonging;
3) grants appropriate and reflexive acknowledgement to religion and civil society associations;
4) gives values to what is human in different cultural identities: i.e. what is common as well as different.
In summary three criteria can be useful guides to the identification of best practices:
equality: How activities aiming at equality and non discrimination enhance common areas?
difference: What is the place for the right to difference and the enhancement of diversity?
meeting: How relevant is in the program the development of trust and cooperative relations between the children and Italian and foreign families?

Methods

Case study quanti-qualitative method was used to carry out the study of individual experiences. This also included participant observation, interviews to all the different

categories of individual actors: managers, professionals, volunteers, Italian and foreign students and parents. Analysis of school curricula and training was also carried out.

Over 30 leaders of the projects, about 100 teachers, mediators, volunteers, over 100 children of nationalities other than Italian and Italian and 50 families were interviewed.

Each case was studied through a package[7] of tools submitted to the project managers, operators and beneficiaries.

The structural data monitored are articulated on four types of levels:

1) Dimensions of the good practice: the number of students in charge, the duration of the intervention, the size of the working group, the number and types of resources used in carrying out the arrangements for the involvement of the beneficiaries etc;

2) Structural dimensions of the partnership / network: the subjects involved in the network, who takes decisions about the project, the level of participation of the subjects, the effectiveness and ability to involve new players;

3) Economic dimension of the intervention, with particular attention to the per capital cost; to the expenditure sharing between public and private; to economies resulting from the structure of the network, etc..;

4) Assessment of competences and performance measurement through a questionnaire[8] administered: information concerning the levels of competence of the students after their participation in the project, performance increase in relation to the duration of the action, etc.

Finally a content analysis was realized on the interviews texts. Thematic areas / units of analysis were defined and they make up the index of short monographic reports. The process of text re-reading is not only descriptive but also interpretive (from a text, you can derive inferences) and allows identification of the co-occurrence (categories recurring in the accounts). This process was followed by the elaboration of individual research reports, with comments made by the interviewees on topic of particular interest. The research project also implied the dissemination of the model through a public workshop, the publication of materials and documents provided on the dedicated website (www.diesseintercultura. com), on paper, and through Facebook.

Results /Main findings

Areas of intervention and targeted beneficiaries

The activities proposed by most of the projects concern the construction of school protocols to standardize procedures and forms of acceptance; formation and coordination of the teachers, the implementation of L2 courses, workshops of intercultural education of various kinds (in school and after), new consulting services, training and literacy courses for adults, workshops, counseling, entrepreneurial training opportunities.
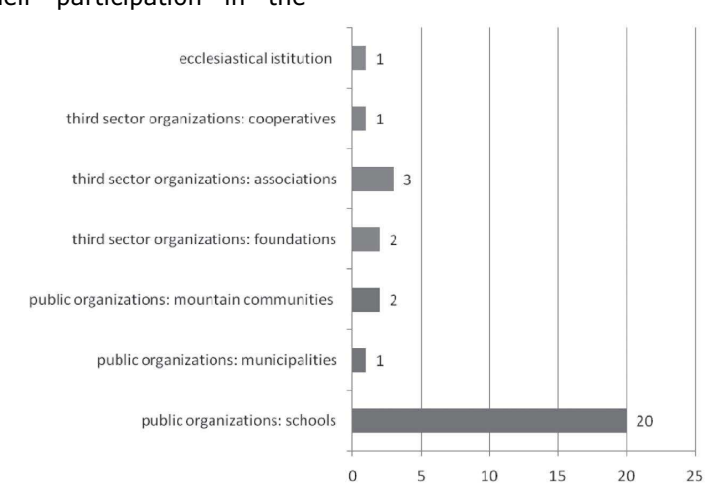

Figure 1 Type of lead institution in the projects under study

Good practices are often across different areas. The indication is that the response to emerging needs in the intercultural field leads the projects to expand in different areas and targets and to involve a larger number of subjects, or enable experimentation that become generative of new places for people to meet, both inside and outside schools.

The leading agencies of the projects analyzed (Figure 1) are in most cases (23 out of 30) public organizations: schools, mountain communities, networks of schools and municipalities. They are followed in number by third sector organizations: foundations, associations and cooperatives.

Investments in projects of intercultural education are concentrated on multiple orders of schools, involving children of different ages, allowing them to address these issues for several years throughout their school career (Figure 2).

Moreover, among the 30 pilot projects analyzed, two have a history longer than 10 years and majority have been active for more than 4 academic years.

Another element that characterizes and makes each project original is the type of beneficiaries. Projects with a major territorial importance have been studied, together with projects with more limited target beneficiaries, yet able to propose effective models for the integration of foreign students.

Among these projects, majority addresses the minors' families and the teachers together (16). There are projects meant only for foreign students (2), or just for Italian and foreign students, or only for the teachers, the ATA staff and volunteers (2). The community, as the set of residents in the area, was involved in 5 projects.

The case studies bear witness to some important changes, because the foreign pupil is no longer the main or the only beneficiary of integration and intercultural education projects. They highlight the importance of overcoming the focus on foreign students, generally and uniformly regarded, and gave importance to a greater understanding of specific needs relatedtothehistory,geographicaloriginandfamilystatusofthesubjects. The family of the foreign pupil is often referred to as direct recipient of integration projects, while some other times it is the indirect beneficiary; in many cases a parent (most often mothers rather than fathers) benefits from proposals to facilitate their relationship with the Italian school, to increase language skills and education. The projects that have a global vision and involve the family can create a crucial link between schools and extra-school environments. The project manager of a high school said, referring to the link with the world of work, that cultural understanding has an impact on the
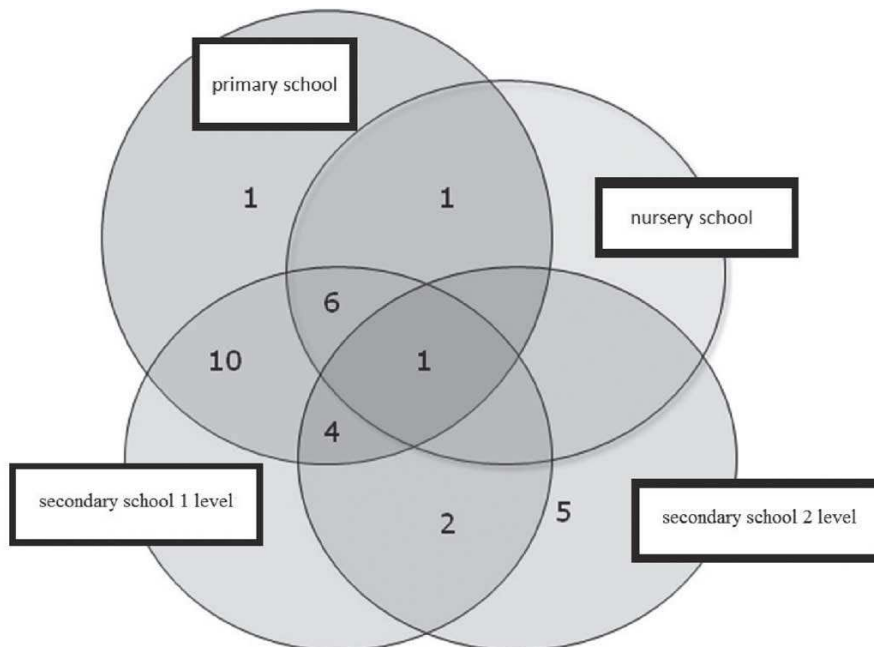

Figure 2 Kinds of schools involved in projects making up the sample under study

147

image that citizens have about immigrants: it's important "to change the heads of those people and let see the immigrant as people who have all the possibilities"; working families can better understand the needs of pupils of other nationalities, they also give greater value to the school experience of their children and are able to bring it into families: think of the spread of a magazine, realized by students of a project studied, intercultural testimony that spreads among the families of the neighborhood. From some people interviewed, in good practices emerge the desire to open up, engage the neighborhood, the city, involving the informal meeting spaces (squares, gardens...) in the territory.

Type and degree of cooperation of partnership

Most projects have a very wide network, involving more than 10 institutions. At first glance, the projects considered, since they involve many agencies, help build mutual understanding and allow in the territory wider dissemination of the integration-oriented issues. The larger the network that underlies every project, the greater the possibility of involving a larger number of subjects. But a closer look at the number of organizations involved in the formal networks, with the signing of agreements, marks a significant decrease: in the majority of the projects the formalized partnership consists of a smaller number of institutions (from 2 to 10).

Partnerships can connect public agencies, non-profit organizations, local community representatives, private for-profit entities, within different formal solutions.

They range from the imposition of legally binding agreements to informal and non-binding contracts. There may be several methods of involvement: a new unit separated from partner organizations can be constituted, or the various entities may remain formally separate, resulting in collaborations on specific projects and activities.

It should be noted that different configurations affect the relational dynamics between the partners.

Among the forms of partnership that we found in the context of Lombardy - the most common are the over-zonal partnership and local partnerships; the first ones are large over zonal networks connecting a large number of schools, often with arrangements that are extended to local services. This is typically the second level

networks that connect the main institutional levels to address (coherently and in a shared manner) cross-cultural issues in the area (usually within the province). These networks are often (but in a variable way) connected to third sector organizations that have long been major players on these issues, with proven experience.

The presence of a number of different actors in the network can generate different responses and multidimensional interventions, which individual institutions would not be able to provide with independent action. In these macro -partnerships, obviously the involvement of individual teachers, practitioners, educators, etc... takes place on institutional basis, on one side granting the interventions more professionalism and stability, but on the other less customization of the networks, which sometimes become stiff and inflexible and should be referred to local networks for the implementation of individual projects.

As is clear from the analysis of good practices, local networks are strongly rooted in the territory which is substantiated also in the use of voluntary partnerships that promote the leading role of families and the associations. This is a really interesting set of experiences for the variety of subjects involved and modes of aggregation. They are particularly linked to the wealth of local communities and territories in which they develop and often animated by the leadership of one or two people who decide to take charge over them even from very different positions. Here, more than the statutory mandate seems to prevail over the strong involvement of someone (a non-profit organization, the school or even a teacher, the president of an association, a group of parents, mediators) who can find their way to make together the decision to start up the project. These partnerships appear to be more fragile in theoretical terms, as they face numerous challenges (first of all, the contraction of funding) but generally are able to re-adapt to changing situations and to find innovative solutions to maximize public resources, available in the area, and use them with intelligence and imagination.

A critical issue that emerges frequently in local partnerships under analysis is the lack of institutional support: when there is no acknowledge, attention to the problem by the public, the projects that are based on a strong involvement of the territory will weaken. A difficulty that is found more in the over-zonal nets is to create the involvement and co-design with children and families.

A mistake to avoid is to underestimate how the governance of a network / partnership is difficult: without a care in the procedure could proceed in an approximate way. The governance of a network requires time and social actors able to connect the nodes. It was found that a mismanagement results in: 1) communication gap, difficulties in the sharing languages among the subjects (Hastings, 1996); 2) difficulties in reconciling the subjects' time and administrative-bureaucratic process; 3)excessive workloads on certain subjects motivated and competent; 4) high turnover in the network that do not allow the stabilization of relations.

Degree of replicability and transferability of the projects

Replicability and continuation in time of these experiences is obviously a critical success factor and an indicator of goodness of the initiative. Often a non-continuous availability of resources (financial, human, intangible), and dedicated staff, puts a strain on the very possibility of replicate these projects over the years.

If the economic resources have been so far sufficiently available in some of the projects studied, in the year 2008/09, scarcity of available resources and / or uncertainty about future funding tend to depress the possibility to improve the activities or to enhance the most experimental initiatives. It is not only an economic resource to be decisive: in these projects human resources are also important. With respect to human resources, it is sometimes difficult to keep up the project due to non continuous availability of colleagues. It is also difficult to provide a lot of personal time, without any real recognition, not only economically, but for the expertise and professionalism of teachers and intercultural contacts. Transferability means making available the conditions of possibility of a project before it can be taken as a model for other contexts. From this point of view there is some weakness in the ability of initiatives to document the trajectories made and then allow access to data by those who are interested in giving origin to new initiatives. The activation of online sites is a particularly useful instrument in this field and can be further enhanced by the presence of the material collected in this research.

Integration places generated in the experiments studied

The research has attempted to identify forms assumed by the places generative of interculturality, according to idealtypes.

Self-reliant places of integration, located mainly in schools and inhabited by teachers and pupils, such as: intercultural library, the editing team of the magazine, the classroom of mediation, the intercultural lab. Those are undoubtedly important areas that make stable the presence in schools of the foreign component, and are equipped with appropriate instrumentation designed ad hoc. The limit of these stations is that they become usable only within the school, in dedicated and specific times, within the curricular activities of pupils.

Other-reliant places of integration, both located in schools but mainly in other areas of the territory, open to the social context, to the neighbourhood, the encounter between groups, between cultures, between generations.

Places of functional integration are initiatives realized at different levels, such as ethnic dinners, L2 courses for adults, courses of remedial teaching, etc… In these cases, the physical space can change, but what is important is the network of people who constitute it. Reality is clearly more complex than models and many times different modalities are intertwined, however these types of places clearly identify the degree of social integration, enrichment and exploration.

Triggered cultural change is the outcome that the best practices are able to get first into the school, then in the local area, for the community. This cultural change also affects those who perform these programs and has an impact on families. According to the interviewees is a great enrichment, for example, the cultural understanding that comes from relationships with immigrants. From the analysis of good practices emerge the importance of the "places" into building the paths of integration. People interviewed say that through a deeper two-way relationship plan with the family, mothers of the students came to school overcoming mistrust, that was born with ignorance of the institutions and people who work there. The foreign families who are related with these best practices have been living the school as a place of acceptance and initial integration with the territory, as an opportunity to even know other local entities. The school, as a place of knowledge and acquisition of knowledge and as the privileged site of

integration processes and comparison, by its nature is designed to respond to the invitation to reflect and to rethink its relations with other cultures, being a place of training in which starts and plays that slow and difficult path that leads to a full awareness of self and others. The school is, in fact, a place where different generations can meet, different actors, and various professions and a place where different instances and tasks emerge.

However, this cultural change is likely to remain a drop in the ocean if is related only to the school. According to some respondents the society and Italy as a nation are still struggling on the theme of cultural integration even if the "Italian way" of integration is one of the most appreciated in Europe. Even those responsible for this climate and the operators noticed a lack of coherence of the cultural message out of active networks and projects they carried out, this impromptu creates a weak place of integration, especially if all the agencies and educational institutions are not in agreement, and equally motivated. If cross-cultural incentives are not uniformly conveyed by the various adults who interface with children, if the family does not convey the same messages, what is built and learned in class can be deleted. So it's important and decisive the link between school and families and how this relation it's manned, as emerged, for example, in many studies of the National Network of Partnership Schools in U.S. and Canada on network qualities across school levels, and as explained the Model for Family-School-Community Partnerships (Epstein, 2011; Epstein, Sanders, 2006)

The method of intervention: the role of the school, the third sector, families and over-zonal networks of support and promotion

Analyzing the projects, it appears necessary a positive redefinition of the role and the many functions of the different actors involved. The school must perform a specific function, unique to its mission which is to remain primarily educational and cultural. We think that for some time, and for understandable historical reasons, even if by some questionable

points of view, the school has had to assume more specific social tasks, prompting the teacher to reformulate its role, having lost one specific and not finding a new one. With appropriate and necessary differences between the kindergarten and primary and secondary school, it should be done a wide-ranging reflection on the function / role of the teacher. Especially in relation to claims for the inclusion of foreign students (as for other issues relating to students with different disabilities) it is noted that the space occupied by more strictly social activities is becoming so important not to allow the teacher, while willing and involved, a fruitful reflection on teaching and sometimes on the methodologies that accompany it. A peculiar aspect, yet at the beginning, would be on the skills of Lisbon, concentrating for example in reaching a good level in all the competencies; from the assessments made by the managers and operators in the questionnaire can be seen that some of them can be improved: the skills "designing a project", "solving a problem", "acquiring and interpreting information", "acting independently and responsibly" are those that projects are able to guard in a lesser extent on which the boys are still far from an optimal evaluation (Figure 3).
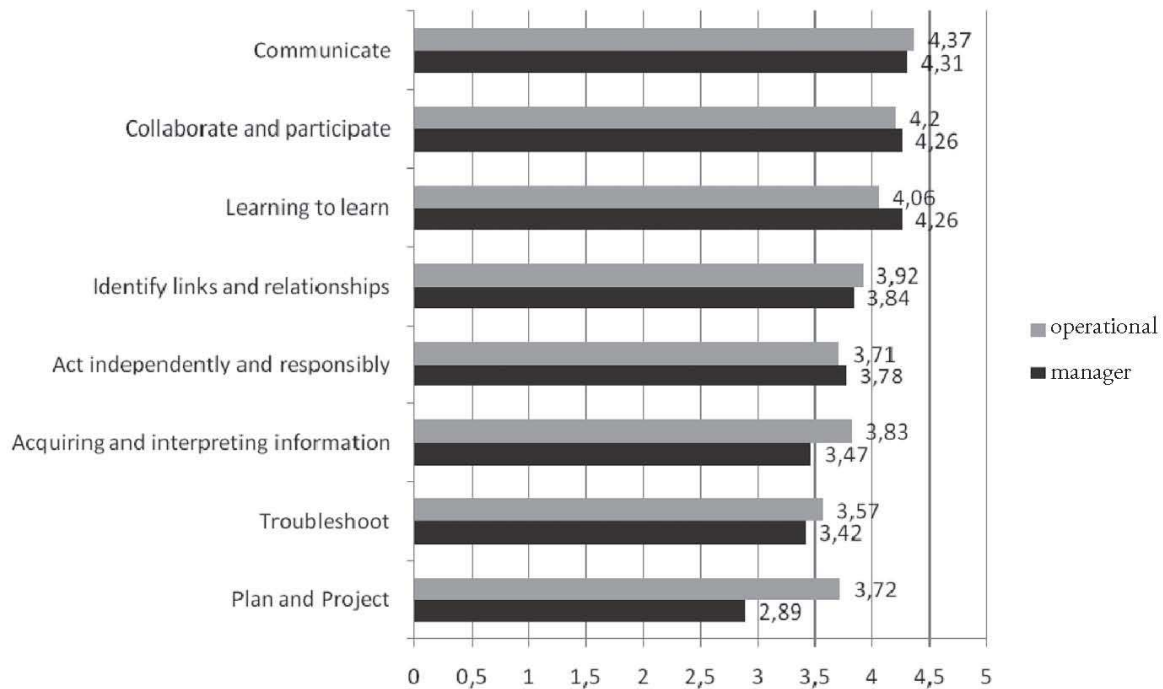
Figure 3. How would you rate the competence level achieved by students? Findings on the Lisbon skill level; managers and operational interviewed (min 0-max 5; 20 managers and 37 operators interviewed)

What should be noted is that in general the schools are still not equipped to evaluate the performance of boys, using these basic standards.

In these projects, the presence of third sector organizations is particularly significant. It should be noted that often these individuals were characterized by an innovative and anticipator role, compared to public institutions and schools, offering answers to the needs of the foreigners. From this point of view, the accumulated wealth of experience is particularly relevant. In addition, they often are in the forefront to create meeting places that go beyond schooling. The networking of these experiences with local schools allows them to step forward and enter into a public space where it becomes important to confront and reciprocally exchange.

Families[9] make up networks and build the first chances of reciprocal exchange and trust between different cultures. It is important to offer opportunities for this to be strengthened and made at the micro social level. Italian and foreign families should be given the project leadership, as it happens already in some of the projects analyzed, either in the form of grassroots groups, perhaps according to ethnic groups, or in the form of the more structured family associations that can give more strength to the presence of parents in formalized partnership.

Conclusion

The hypothesis that guided this work see - as has been briefly documented - the presence of a network consistent with the ability to generate points of integration. Therefore below we try to indicate, from an operational standpoint, what could be a few sizes to supervise the execution of a model of integrated local network subsidiary.

This is obviously ideal and desirable that a building so it must then be tested with the different local contexts, however, because it was built referring to good practices, we believe that it may be appropriate.

In a subsidiary welfare system, particular attention should be given at the time of initiation of a network partnership – the incipit. From the analysis of the existing two directions appear primarily used:

a) From the top by administrative-bureaucratic, top-down direction (Koniordos, 2005);

b) From the bottom by direct, bottom – up direction (Koniordos, 2005). Although both modes are present strengths and weaknesses we believe that from the bottom and the local dimension it is the preferred direction.

151

At this level, four appear to have the prerequisites to create a local network, namely: a) the presence of reciprocal subsidiaries relationships between the entities in the network; b) the co-presence of institutional, market and third sector; c) the presence of intentional actions, collaborative and reciprocal relations based on free activity and characterized by a certain stability over time; d) the activation of a joint decision-making.

Not all projects have moved according to this logic generative, in some cases we are in the presence of significant networks promoted by bureaucratic and administrative.

But without detracting from the validity of these experiences, for the promotional value and often innovative projects that have managed to convey, but it seems that in them is lacking symmetry and a level playing field between players.

The presence of 4 macro indicators – above introduced -in our opinion – is a good predictor of relatedness. This is the ability of social actors to build relationships with sense, under the scheme:

Relation → action-project → relation

This sequence shows that the effect emerging, that is what is expected from the action, is that through the creation of a specific intercultural project, we encourage new relationships that will increase the share capital of that particular community.

The second step, but only at a theoretical level, because in general it is the reading of a need to mobilize people to build in partnership is the complex issue of joint planning within his own organization and participation amongst all stakeholders in the partnership. Again the possibility / ability of the players on the network to take on this challenge is a condition predictive of the success of the initiative and also of its attractiveness.

Just in a cultural context the crucial questions is usually the lack of participation and symmetry between the actors involved in development paths, so the possibility of including in the network, even the weakest, such as family associations, or groups of parents Italian and foreign, in its very design, is a multiplier of the success of the project in terms of results and effectiveness.

Particularly important are thus the three macro-indicators:
a) the pursuit of a common goal and a public utility;
b) the development of a shared, temporally defined on a multidimensional and complex, necessitating the presence of multiple stakeholders;
c) construction of educational and curricular tools that can really be shared and socialized.

A model partnership that could be considered a good practice in human relationships has involved a major asset.

The partnership has specific characteristics that must be taken into account.

In addition, the differentiation of responsibilities can be quite large, but the element that should unite all, is a shared perspective of intercultural, dialogical and not taken for granted. This means that some macro indicators can be suggested:
a) all figures involved at the table must have the same decision-making power with respect to the project, in relation to its affiliation;
b) need for the presence of a person who takes charge of the government of the network, in a democratic and participatory way;
c) presence of diverse professionals, in relation to the projects that you want to achieve;
d) presence of mediators or otherwise of significant figures for the different cultures of belonging of children and families.

As regards the method of intervention, particularly interesting, though for now little used, in the implementation of interventions could be the requirements of the four paths Learning Week.
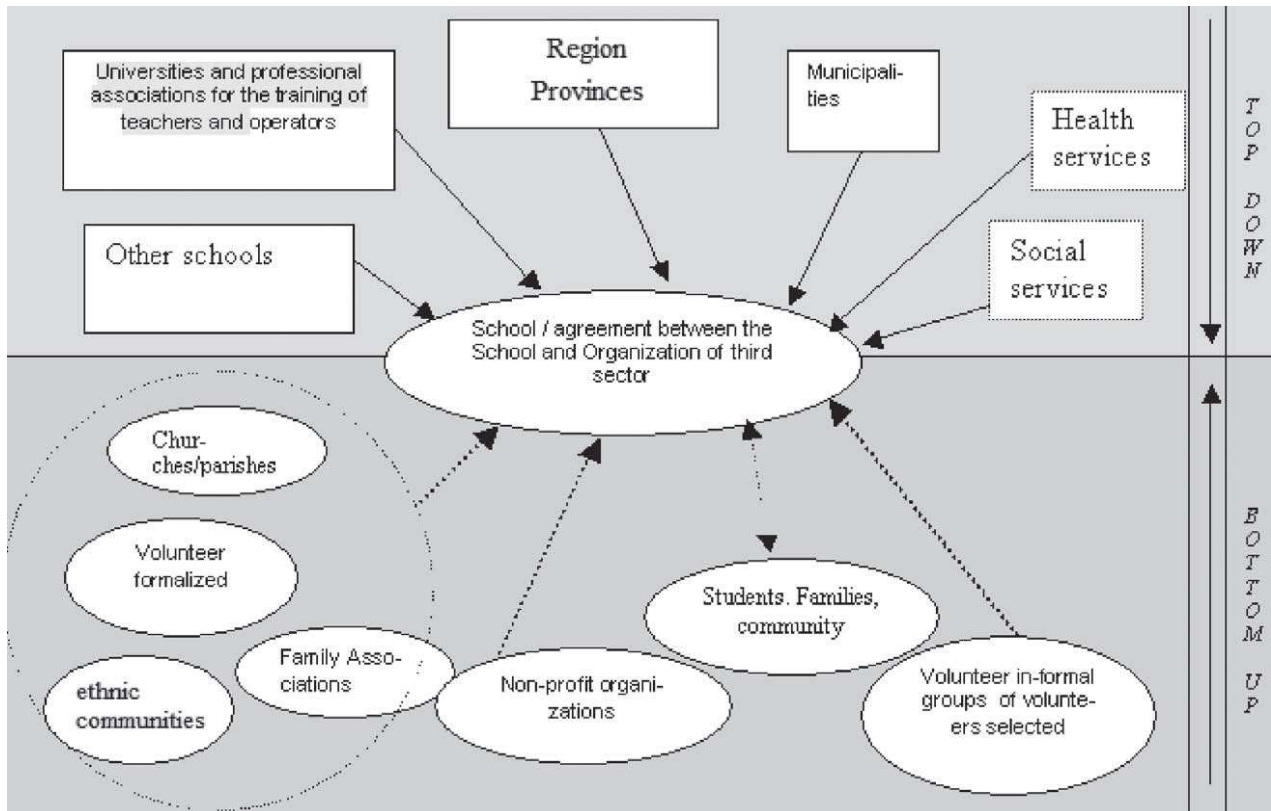
Figure 4 Network model emerged from the study of good practices

Recall them briefly:

a) Easiness, understood as the attention to the emergence of the proposed courses to both children and adults the logical connections between theoretical constructs and practical experience. "It is undeniable, from the experiential point of view, that if you do not understand the meaning and you fully understand the reasons it is easier than doing what you do not understand neither the meaning";

b) Interdisciplinary demonstrated its ability to promote the understanding of operations highly diversified between them. "An effective element from this point of view, is in every field of knowledge to identify thematic hubs that enable an integrated approach to the phenomenon considered";

c) Creativity: being creative means first of all take note of the tools at our disposal, the problems posed by life, the countless possibilities of utilization of tools to solve them;

d) Any method is able to encourage and promote the three methodological foundations outlined above should be considered in the current training framework, innovative. This applies to practices, or theoretical path of an experimental nature (including through the use of new technologies) capable of bringing teachers and students at that grade level, with multidisciplinary and creative considered essential to the educational proposal.

In summary, the proposed model (Figure 4) could be defined as follows:

a) At regional level, general governance functions (resources to be distributed) and the strengthening of monitoring and evaluation;

b) Top-down networks involving regional and provincial education offices, universities and professional associations for the training of teachers and practitioners (facilitators, mediators, teachers referents, teachers and staff) with the networks from

the bottom through the program agreement, with the consortia;

c) Bottom-up partnerships through the consortia, including schools, third sector bodies, associations and local authorities in at least three years duration, to enable various actors to act in a virtuous way to control and improve the results;

d) As a tool of coordination and management of information, creating enhanced communication services (network of sites and platforms) in connection with a portal managed by the regions and intercultural education offices.

This model would produce:

a) in the first place, development of networks from the bottom (with the possibility to accommodate public local organizations and third sector bodies in a more stable manner through the promotion of the consortium as a legal instrument) to enhance the many initiatives in schools and the territory;

b) full use of the top-down networks through an agreement between the offices of government (USP[10], universities and professional associations) and local networks;

c) the function of monitoring and evaluation of the experience taken from the region together with the objectives set at State level. The top-down network should ensure a reliable flow of resources (if not annual, at least three years) and their location in the area of real need.

References

Bramanti D. (2007). Buone pratiche relazionali per la famiglia e la comunità: tre casi a confronto [Good relational practices for family and community: three cases comparede]. In Rossi G., Boccacin L., *Capitale sociale e partnership tra pubblico, privato e terzo settore*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.

Commission of the European Communities (2006). Commission staff Working document: progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training. *Report 2006 based on indicators and benchmarks*, Brussels.

Donati P. (2008). *Oltre il multiculturalismo* [*Beyond multiculturalism*]. Bari: Laterza.

Epstein J.L, (2011). *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Preparing Educators and Improving Schools (Second Edition).* Westview Press.

Epstein, J. L., & Sanders, M. G. (2006). Prospects for change: Preparing educators for school, family, and community partnerships. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 81, 81-120.

Etzioni A. (1993). *The Spirit of Community*. New York: Crown.

Gelli B.R. (2002). *Comunità, reti, arcipelago* [*Communities, networks, archipelago*]. Roma: Carocci.

Giménez C.R. (2008). Interculturalismo [Interculturalism]. In G. Mantovani (Ed.) *Intercultura e mediazione. Teorie ed esperienze*. Roma: Carocci.

Hastings A. (1996). Unravelling the process of Partnership in Urban regeneration Policies. *Urban studies, XXXIII*, 2, 253-268.

Koniordos S. (2005). *Networks, Trust and Social Capital*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Newman J. (2001). *Modernising governance: New Labour, policy and society*. London: Sage Publication.

Rossi G., Boccacin L. (2007). *Capitale sociale e partnership tra pubblico, privato e terzo settore* [*Social capital and partnership: Public, Private and the Third Sector*]. Milano: FrancoAngeli.

Rossi G., Boccacin L., (2003). Generare comunità nella società postmoderna: il ruolo della mediazione [Generating communities in postmoder society: the role of mediation]. In E. Scabini, G. Rossi (Eds.), *Rigenerare i legami: la mediazione nelle relazioni familiari e comunitarie, Studi Interdisciplinari sulla Famiglia*. Milano: Vita e Pensiero.

Scabini E., Cigoli V. (2000). *Il famigliare, legami simboli e transizioni* [*Family identity: Ties, Symbols and Transitions*]. Milano: Raffaello Cortina.

Scabini E., Rossi G. (2008). *La migrazione come evento famigliare* [*Migration as a family event*]. Milano: Vita e Pensiero.

Valtolina G. (ed.) (2010). *Famiglie immigrate e inclusione sociale: i servizi e il territorio* [*Immigrant families and social inclusion: services and the territory*]. Milano: Fondazione ISMU.

Footnote.

[1] The research was carried out in partnership with the teachers of Diesse Lombardia and the Laboratory for Research on Mediation Processes of the Faculty of Psychology at the Catholic University of Milan, within the overall grant "Learning Week" (Axis IV of the Regional Operational Programme Human Capital - European Social Fund 2007-2013). System actions, taken as part of the global grant, are aimed at research, promotion and implementation of innovative and integrative training forms.

[2] The projects are often financed through a variety of different sources: funds to the study of law school, municipal and ministerial funds, such as those for areas with high migration process, from funds of the Law 285/97 and Law 40/98. A minority have benefited from residual funds from private entities, foundations or from the European Social Fund. Projects can be grouped into 3 levels, with respect to costs claimed: those low-cost, medium cost ones (between 8,000 and 40,000 €) and those that have higher funding, over 100 000 €. Those projects are conducted by various bodies in partnership. Other features will be illustrated in the following paragraphs.

[3] Cfr. the Ismu database - Milan

[4] On 18 December 2006, the European Parliament and the Council approved a document on key competences for lifelong learning, defined eight domains of key competences which relate to three fundamental aspects of life of each person: development and personal development (cultural capital), active citizenship and integration (social capital), employability (human capital).

The term "competence" was in fact referring to a "combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context". At the same time, the "core competencies are those which all individuals need for personal fulfillment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment". Should be acquired at the end of compulsory education or training and serve as a basis for continuing educational learning and lifelong learning.

[5] It's possible to identify at least four different ways of thinking about space as a place of community life in relation to intercultural issues: community as a symbolic place with an homogeneous culture; community as a physical place, the territorial space, where we place ourselves on a localist dimension (Gelli, 2002); community as a place of production of meaning and belonging, with a strong emphasis on the level of freedom and voluntariness (Etzioni, 1993); community as a place of building new forms of post-modern citizenship. In this case the community relations are places of belonging where we learn how to re-cognize the other as equal and different from me (Donati, 2008).

[6] The term partnership refers to "a structural configuration characterized by the coexistence of different social actors, by a social action collaborative and reciprocal with one another, which pursuit goals in terms of facts and projects and is based on the activation of relations generally medium to long term" (Rossi and Boccacin, 2007, p. 13). Newman, in particular, suggests four polarity of types of partnership, and shows the different forms of governance and subsidiarity (Newman, 2001). In particular, the social partnership can be identified in an equal partnership between many non-profit organizations, government agencies and businesses. It is characterized by and consists of mutual relations in which the resources, capabilities and risks are shared in view of a multi-dimensional project which is not viable from each of the individual entities alone. The aim of the partnership is therefore the pursuit of common prosperity through the implementation of social relations.

[7] The package consisted of various types of qualitative and quantitative tools, a startup tab of the project description, a structured grid on the partnership, the track for the graphic representation of the network project, the track for the interview to the manager lead institution, the track 's interview with the operational, the track for the focus groups with children to use as an alternative to a track and interview with the children and finally the track for the interview with parents.

[8] The quantitative tool consists of 8 questions on the level reached in the Lisbon's competences (figure 3, shows results) on a scale from 0 to 5, the responses were analyzed with the software SPSS and questionnaires are archived in folders in Diesse Lombardia

[9] The family, which can be defined as a complex organization of kinship relations that has a history (Cigoli Scabini 2000) and that creates history, is characterized by containing within it a variety of roles and a division and allocation of tasks, which outline at different stages of the life cycle of the family.

[10] The School Province Office