

Experience in using the empowerment method

Cooperativa IL GRANDE CARRO

ITALY



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The «Il grande Carro» organization

Born in 1996 from a Public Mental Health Day Center in Rome.

From its inception to the present day, the Co-operative operates in close connection with the Day Care Centre itself at which mainly vocational training activities are carried out aimed at the job placement of people with mental suffering. The Co-operative is in fact a social co-operative, but also a production and work co-operative present in various market sectors (catering and catering, green maintenance and social agriculture, cleaning and small portorage, sustainable handicrafts, recycling of materials).





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The «Il grande Carro» organization



50 member

- There is a rather wide variety of figures. Il Grande Carro made up of both so-called “fully fit members” (care workers/trainers/workers) who currently number around 20, and disadvantaged working members (people with severe mental suffering) who currently number just over 30.
- Disadvantaged person is also a member of the board of directors

500 people with mental deceases

- Over the years, the Cooperative has promoted social and labour inclusion opportunities for about . Most of the people involved have found work directly within the Cooperative. Many of those who have also become worker-members have found stable employment in the Cooperative in line with their skills and possibilities
- An analysis carried out some time ago documented that more than half of the members had been working with the Cooperative for more than 7 years. Over the last few years, especially and also coinciding with a greater presence of young and less chronically ill people, the Cooperative's commitment has been directed more towards supporting users in their search for work possibilities outside the labour market, and this is why a specific "tutoring" workshop has been set up, which will be discussed further on.



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Using the empowerment method in practice

The empowerment method for us is mainly about the importance of work. In our daily activities and in our individual and collective projects

- **WORK DOES NOT COME "AFTER" (MEDICATION, PSYCHOTHERAPY, MUTUAL AID), BUT COMES ALONG WITH OR PERHAPS BEFORE:**
- **HAVING OUR OWN WORK ROLE AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES ENHANCES AWARENESS AND MAKES THE THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP POSSIBLE!**



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Using the empowerment method in practice

How long have we been using this method?

Since its establishment, the Cooperative and the "Monteverde" Day Care Center have been using approaches geared toward empowerment and increasing social contracting on the part of its target

Target group?

Our target group is adults aged 18 and older. Among the participants in the organization and work of the Cooperative (and thus among the members) there are no maximum age limits. The Day Center, on the other hand, is increasingly focusing on the younger age groups.. As of this year, a specific project aimed at 18- to 30-year-olds has begun. The Project is called LEO (experiential and orientation workshops) and covers activities in the areas of banqueting (non-alcoholic cocktails), use of social media, tourism and catering professions. The workshops are led by young experts in the different fields, and this is our Project where we think the figure of a peer tutor would be most



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Using the empowerment method in practice

The role of community in the empowerment process
(community created by the organization)?

The role of the community in the empowerment process evidently is very important because a welcoming environment toward all its members gives the measure of a country's civilization. For this reason, all initiatives explicitly aimed at addressing stigma and prejudice mechanisms against people with mental suffering, such as in particular those on dangerousness and low productivity, are crucial.



Using the empowerment method in practice

One of the fundamental assumptions of our approach, therefore, is related to constant integration with the bodies of the territory and in particular with those of the public mental health service. We believe it is equally important to work daily in all those directions that facilitate and increase networking with third-sector entities and that can grow forms of social economy and production processes that are more respectful of the quality of work



What kinds of communities are we creating?

Working specifically on group cohesion and identity forms the primary basis of cooperative work. The Cooperative in this way is not intended to be and is not trivially the workplace, but a place of sense-making, a pregnant context of reference, the structuring element of a new sociality.

We believe that on this point we can derive the most important indications through our m'POW project.

Using the empowerment method in practice

The advantage of the method for clients?

A large proportion of frail people are not very active and undergo processes of passivization: according to ISTAT data, more than 80 percent of people with disabilities do not engage in any social activities throughout the year.



personalization of interventions



Increasing awareness



Grouping



Increasing social contracting (e.g., economic/work autonomy)



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Example of good practice - case study

The TUTORING LABORATORY (Introduced about 3 years ago)

Intervening in an 'early' and integrated way with other services (the senders of the Mental Health Center or hospital service, other day care centers, etc.) trying to support participants around the theme of work.

The activity takes place with both individual and group meetings on a fixed weekly basis with the intent of:

- defining and fine-tuning **skills assessment, resume, cover letter**; support for **job placement registration** or other administrative and bureaucratic tasks
- detection and **consultation of public and private job search sites**
- detection of **public notices or open positions** and support for participation

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GROUP IS CENTRAL for the exchange of problems and solutions (peer empowerment) BUT ESPECIALLY, THROUGH GROUP ACTIVITIES, IT IS TRYING TO INTERVENE ON MOTIVATIONAL AND AWARENESS ASPECTS

Example of good practice - case study

The analysis of the results of the scorecard allows us to detect an increase in scores in all items considered particularly for young people in the lower age groups who seem to be more able to acquire method in job search. It is also inferred that the "improvement" particularly concerns the goals related to the sphere of sociality and awareness, and that expectations (of individuals and their family context) play a decisive role in the ability to define a sufficiently realistic planning.

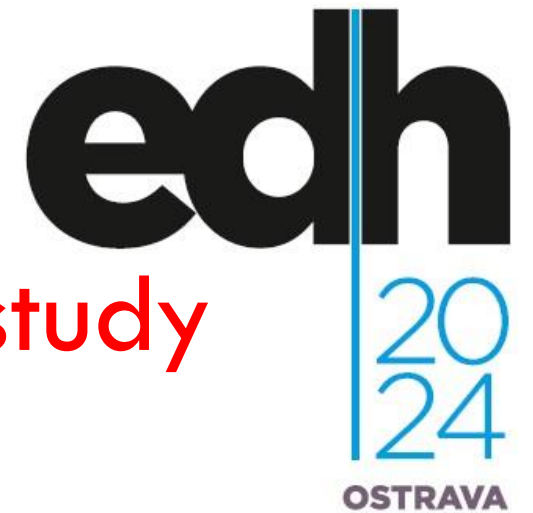
As for 2023, about 20 people participated in the workshop and among them:

- ✓ 1 person was hired part time by the Cooperative following an internship;
- ✓ 5 people were initiated to carry out training internships (3 at production facilities of the Cooperative and 2 at external organizations)
- ✓ 5 of the participants found fixed-term employment
- ✓ 2 persons were in part-time fixed-term employment
- ✓ 1 person was placed in full-time permanent employment

Even following job placement, users continue to be followed individually or, consistent with their commitments, through participation in group activities.



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Example of good practice - case study

With respect to this experience, the importance of community is also crucial. In this regard, the dissemination on the positive experiences of job placement of fragile individuals appears to be of particular importance as they testify how each person can be an asset and not a problem or risk in the workplace, but rather contribute to the positive transformation of production processes



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Thank you!



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