



Project activity: consultations with care leavers, WP2 D15

Methodological note

The CarInG Project, within the Work Package 2 "Desk Study, preparatory Activities and Consultations", foresees a research action articulated in 4 consultation activities (empowerment workshops) with the care leavers who are followed by the protection system of the Municipality of Florence and of the Società della Salute - Prato. Consultation have been managed by University of Milano-Bicocca, together with SOS Villaggi dei Bambini Italy

What did we explore? The meanings of participation in decision-making processes regarding the construction of the care leavers' life project.

The theoretical framework of the CarInG project is the Capability Approach (CA), a theoretical-practical model developed by A. Sen and M. Nussbaum (Sen, 2009; Sen & Nussbaum, 1993; Nussbaum, 2006) for the definition of basic social justice. For the CA, any intervention that aims to promote social justice must have as its objective the expansion of the "Capability set" of subjects, i.e. the set of real possibilities that are available to individuals in the design of their existential path and, at the same time, the development of their agency, understood as the ability to actively pursue objectives to which individuals attribute value in given contexts (Sen, 1999). The CA, as the project's frame of reference, makes it possible to combine attention to external factors (called constraints and conversion factors in the theory, and which are of an institutional and environmental nature) acting on individuals, with the promotion of individual autonomy, considered central to the effective exercise of a full and conscious freedom. This framework makes it possible to focus not only on the possibility of subjects acting and exercising their rights, but also on the possibility of realising their own life project on the basis of what they consider worthy for themselves.

First consultation

What did we explore? After building a sense of group and sharing with the care leavers the goals of the CarInG project, we explored what it means to participate in making decisions inherent in their own projects through making collages.

How did we work? We chose to use a playful-artistic language since to make the collage there is no need to express oneself through the use of the Italian language and no specific graphic-pictorial skills are required. In addition, this technique allowed us to create a positive and convivial atmosphere, which then allowed the boys and girls to express themselves on sensitive issues related to their lives.

Second consultation

What did we explore? The purpose of the second consultation was to explore the real possibilities of participation of care leavers in the decision-making processes concerning daily choices and one's own life project in the system.

How did we work? This exploration was possible thanks to a biographical collection given by the memories, knowledge and reflections of the group of participants about their own experience outside the family. This collection was carried out through the use of a game, the Goose Game, designed with the participants that took inspiration from 'The Game of Life' (D. Demetrio).



Caring Game

Through reflection, first individual and then shared with other participants, the group explored whether and which of M. Nussbaum's 10 capacities are important in their life project.

What are M. Nussbaum's 10 capacities?

M. Nussbaum's 10 capacities represent a list of conditions necessary for a life worth living for oneself.

But...in practice?

We started from the individual meanings of the collages about participation, we tried to understand if and how in practice care leavers participate in the decisions that affect them, and then we build with them some operational tips to share with the professionals of the protection system in order to give voice to the reflections and needs of children involved.

And now... what's next?

The material produced during the consultations of care leavers, especially the list of operational tips, will be the starting point for the next phases of the CarING project.



We have been inspired by these texts

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