

REPORT

Cittalia's Seminar for media and journalists as part of the final conference of the project BEAMS: "Telling the inclusion in cities, beyond stereotypes"

Venice, 5th December 2014, 9:30 – 13.00

Centro Culturale Don Orione Artigianelli - Zattere Dorsoduro 909/A

Cittalia ANCI Research Foundation, in collaboration with the Association of Journalists of Veneto and with the support of UNAR National Anti-Discrimination Office and Association of Journalists of Puglia, organized in Venice on 5th December 2014 the latest edition of a series of seminars designed in the framework of [BEAMS](#) and targeting mainly local media and communicators. The seminars' format "Telling the inclusion in cities, beyond stereotypes" had already sparked particular interest and fostered participation in other Italian cities. In particular, the event held in Venice followed the seminars organized on 29th September and on 1st October 2014 in Bari and Florence, respectively and – like them – It aimed at sharing good experiences of communication and participation as a way to combat social exclusion and stereotypes.



The event was introduced by the Head of the Press Office of the City of Venice, Enzo Bon, who highlighted the need to make more efforts to produce non-stereotyped or less-stereotyped communication and presented some of the initiatives of the Municipality of Venice, which is one of the most open and tolerant cities in Italy despite the growing presence of xenophobic groups in the region.

Gabriele Guazzo (Cittalia) presented the activities implemented by Cittalia in the framework of BEAMS through a [Prezi presentation](#) and introduced the topics of the seminar, mentioning some examples of "bad communication" as reported by the Venice Antidiscrimination Observatory. Claudia Morini presented the reportages made by Association of Journalists of Puglia in the framework of BEAMS.

Raffaella Maria Cosentino, journalist of Redattore Sociale and member of the team that designed the initiative "Parlare Civile", made a successful 1-hour presentation that was very useful to focus the attention of the participants on the real/correct meaning of some words that are misused by journalists, through concrete examples. The training part was based on a methodology and on a web-portal called "[Parlare Civile](#)" designed by Redattore Sociale and PARSEC, whose objective was to lead the participants into an in depth thinking about the proper meaning of the words that are more frequently used to depict migrants and minorities. Some words are used by journalists in a wrong meaning, they are associated to wrong concepts or used as means to convey misleading messages or stereotyped communication.

Following the discussion with questions and answers, two panels were organized: one presenting some local practices/experiences coming from the Municipalities, in particular the experience of the Commission

for Foreign Citizens of Padua (presented by Egi Cenolli, the young President of the Commission) and the one of Centro Pace embedded in the Municipality of Venice (presented by Luigi Barbieri); and the other one presenting an introduction by UNAR (Marco Buemi, UNAR expert) and the experiences of some journalists that are actively engaged in the promotion of a non stereotyped communication and information (Jessica Cugini, Serena Tosi Santoro, Raisa Ambros).



The concept of the Venice seminar was based on an interactive working framework that included capacity building/training, exchange of experiences and presentation of positive approaches to intercultural communication. In fact, the seminar was conceived on the idea that the right approach to the issue of a “civil” communication at local level on the themes concerning migrants and minorities had to be based on an holistic view that is able to take into account the involvement and interaction of several players: mainly journalists, but also press offices (i.e. city press offices), city administrators (elected political representatives but also city officers and technical staff), representatives of associations, students and young people, citizens in general. This multi-stakeholders approach is based on the idea that the local communication systems, also thanks to the more and more intense use of social networks and to an increasing civil participation, are more and more integrated and they actively involve different professionals, individuals and groups that are able to build new relations between them which cannot be simply confined in the classic relationship “producer – user”.

Around 90 journalists and communicators, administrators and local city officials, school university and masters’ students, associations and individuals active in the field of civic participation attended the seminar in Venice, making the event the most participated among the workshops that were organized in the framework of the final BEAMS conference. The high attendance was achieved also thanks to the collaboration of the Association of Journalists of Veneto and of Veneto Lavoro which promoted the event at regional level. The majority of the participants (around 65 persons out of the total) were Italian journalists.



As mentioned above, the focus on journalists was not exclusive, however the sensitiveness of their role and the frequent episodes of discrimination by and through media occurring in Italy and particularly in the Region of Veneto, as observed and reported by UNAR, Carta di Roma and by different antidiscrimination centres including the Venice Antidiscrimination Observatory, encouraged the organizers to pay particular attention to this category of “producers”. This is the reason why a significant part of the seminar was conceived as an interactive training addressed mainly – but not exclusively – to journalists.