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FAMILY BASED CARE FOR CHILDREN IN MIGRATION



YOUR GUIDE TO THE HUMAN LIBRARY



CIDIS



HOPE
For Children



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INIZIATIVE E STUDI
SULLA MIGRANTITÀ



JRS
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por Causa
Investigación, periodismo y migraciones



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INTRODUCTION

The FAB! project Family based care for children in migration has chosen the Human Library as a tool to promote the culture of hospitality and intercultural dialogue for all young migrants arriving alone in Italy.

In particular, the experience of the Human Library focused on informing and sensitizing citizens on the issue of young migrants arrived alone. This practice has made possible a first fruitful approach between young migrants and the people involved in the activity: by telling stories and experiences of alternative reception in the family and foster care system with young migrants arrived alone, the Living Library has challenged - when also overturned - the most common prejudices on the reality of migration.

This practice has proved to be very useful during socialization and awareness-raising activities, allowing citizens to gradually approach the issues of migration through the stories of young migrants, operators and other 'living books'.

Thanks to this practice and its promotion, which took place above all at the local level in Caserta (Campania region, Italy), different cultures, professions, religions, values and stories have been at the center of a widespread and engaging narrative which has simplified the complexity of painful experiences and favored the creation of new relationships and bonds.



YOUR GUIDE TO THE HUMAN LIBRARY



A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY OF THE HUMAN LIBRARY



THE METHODOLOGY



HOW TO ORGANIZE IT



THE TRAINING OF THE 'LIVING BOOKS'



FA.BI!'S EXPERIENCE



THE BOOKS

YOUNG WITH EXPERIENCE OF MINOR ARRIVED ALONE
— IS NICE TO TRAVEL, NOT TO FLEE —

PROFESSIONAL IN THE SOCIAL SECTOR
— MY LIFE IN HOSPITALITY—

INTERCULTURAL MEDIATOR
— LANGUAGES BEYOND THE WALL —

MINOR ARRIVED ALONE
— SEEKING A PLACE TO BE —

VOLUNTEER GUARDIAN
—A SHARED PATH—

WELCOMING FAMILY
— US —



A LITTLE BIT OF HUMAN LIBRARY'S HISTORY

The Human Library is a practice of information and social awareness of great impact that exploits unscheduled meetings to create moments of dialogue between different people and groups.

The idea was born in Copenhagen, from a small group of young people as a reaction to a racist assault suffered by one of their companions in 1993, during a pacific demonstration. Convinced that the 'understanding' was the precondition of 'living together', these young people founded the association "Stop The Violence", quickly reaching 30,000 members among young Danes.

Requested to prepare a large-scale intervention for the Roskilde festival in 2000, 'Stop The Violence' developed the Human Library method® which confronts people with their prejudices by offering a safe and secure space in which to host an open dialogue.

Later on, the practice spreaded throughout the world as a form of activism, to transform opinions and ideas, often result of prejudices. It is currently included by the Council of Europe as one of the good practices for intercultural dialogue and the reduction of social conflicts.

It arrived in Italy in 2011, in Milan, created by the ABC association with the name of Human Library, with the aim of bringing the native foreign citizens and immigrants living in the same city closer together.

The Library immediately achieved great success, triggering an important diffusion on a national level. It became a contact activity used in many commemorative events and anniversaries, such as World Refugee Day, LGBT Pride, International Women's Day.

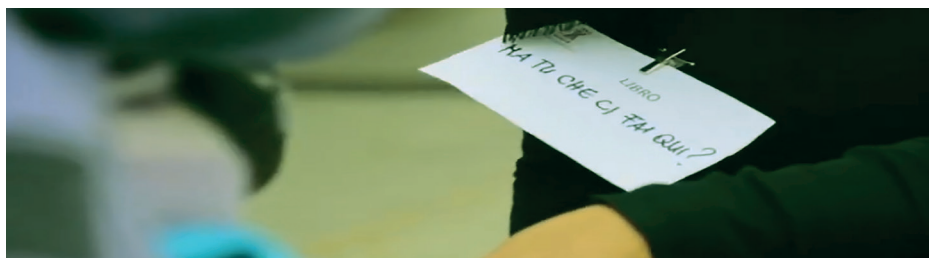
THE METHODOLOGY

The practice of the Human Library is aimed at contrasting stereotypes and prejudices, for this reason books are people of flesh and blood who 'tell themselves', by virtue of their belonging to social categories often subject of discrimination.

Stigmas become autobiographical stories that the living book chooses to share with perfect strangers, the readers. The dynamic is simple: a potential reader, guided by the librarian, chooses from a catalogue the title of the book that interests him the most; at that point, he will have it 'on loan' for a limited time (generally from 20 to 40 minutes) time in which he will be able to listen to the story from the 'living book', establishing a direct dialogue.

The extreme concreteness of the experience allows all readers to get in touch with the person and his story, favoring a change of points of view or preconceived ideas. The Human Library is generally thematic and its concept can vary according to the type of prejudice to be opposed (by age, sexual orientation, social class, gender, racial, religious, disability, etc.).

In order to ensure its widest use, it is important that the titles of the books highlight the narrator's belonging to the stigmatized category, through the use of keywords. For example, in the case of the intercultural theme: 'immigrant' 'African', 'veiled Muslim', 'Romanian farmhand', 'second generation Chinese', 'minor only' and so on. In the construction of the title, then, personal or provocative elements or elements of mockery of clichés, etc. can be inserted.





HOW TO ORGANIZE IT

From a logistical point of view, the organization of the Human Library can take place in both open and closed spaces (provided that they are sufficiently large), set up in such a way as to respond to criteria of comfort and privacy.

Both the books and the readers must feel at ease, comfortably seated, so that they can look and listen to each other confidentially and at the right distance (both from each other and from the other 'readings' in progress), avoiding as much as possible that the presence of external factors (heat, cold, excessive shouting, annoying noises, etc.), can interrupt and/or compromise the delicate moment of what is still an very close meeting between strangers.

The environment can be enriched with decorations, fragrances or availability to consume drinks and sweets, to make the space and the climate more pleasant and familiar, but it is still important to maintain the right sobriety to avoid excessive distractions.

It is essential that alongside the catalog of books, the participant has access to the Library regulations which contain not only logistical indications (how to make the choice, waiting list in case the chosen book is occupied, timing, etc.), but also behavioral rights and duties such as the possibility of asking questions, the prohibition to provoke or offend, the invitation to listen actively, to keep the volume low, etc.



SET UP A LOCAL PROMOTING GROUP OF PEOPLE



IDENTIFY THE TOPICS TO BE ADDRESSED



TRAIN THE 'LIVING BOOKS' AND THE LIBRARIANS



TAKE CARE ABOUT THE LOGISTICS OF THE EVENT



SPREAD AND COMMUNICATE THE EVENT

THE HUMAN LIBRARY'S PHASES



ASSESS THE EXPERIENCE





THE TRAINING OF 'LIVING BOOKS'

Particular attention should be paid to the training of living books. Considering that the Human Library is functional to overcome a prejudice, it is evident that for those who put themselves and their history at stake, the commitment is significant and it is also possible that the reader, however moved by curiosity and interest, nurtures feelings not always benevolent and welcoming towards the category that the living book represents.

For this reason, the training of those who choose to become living books must focus on some crucial aspects:

Make a precise biographical choice

Deciding which aspect, event or life condition you intend to tell and what you want to avoid and omit is crucial. Another fundamental aspect regards the relevance of the story to the general theme and the importance of carefully evaluating the appropriateness of choosing the title of the book: it should be in line with what will be narrated and with the expectations of the reader.

The communication ability

The need to have a good linguistic competence both in listening and in oral reproduction must be taken into consideration, to be able to give narrative coherence, without losing the thread of the story or getting confused, to maintain a welcoming and generous mode of expression, an ability that must be the main concern of the book.

The management of emotions

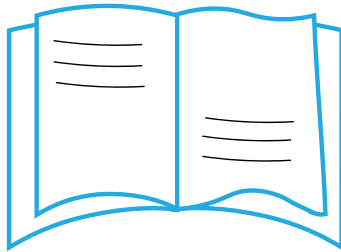
It is among the tasks required to all the books involved to have self-awareness of emotions, especially those that are awakened by remembering and sharing one's experience, to contrast and dominate feelings of anger, to avoid defensive attitudes, to remain peaceful and serene as much as possible possible and not picking up on provocations, managing any conflicts or the frustration of not being understood or listened to, understanding when to interrupt the conversation because the discomfort is excessive, etc.

5 TIPS TO BE A BETTER 'LIVING BOOK'

1 MANAGE THE TIME OF YOUR STORY IN THE BEST WAY

2 IF YOUR STORY CAUSES ANGER OR FRUSTRATION
FIND THE WAY TO HANDLE THESE FEELINGS

3 LISTEN, WELCOME THOUGHTS AND BE GENEROUS



4 CHOOSE THE TITLE CAREFULLY,
THE READER WILL THANK YOU

5 YOUR STORY IS IMPORTANT TO DECONSTRUCT STIGMAS AND PREJUDICES. IF YOU TAKE CARE OF THIS ASPECT, YOU WILL ALLOW THE READER TO ACQUIRE A NEW PERSPECTIVE



FA.BI'S EXPERIENCE

FA.BI Project aims to foster family based care for young migrants in 5 european countries: Italy, Malta, Cyprus, Spain and Greece.

Within the project, the Human Library was used as a tool aimed at making people aware of the stories and experiences of welcoming young migrants who arrived alone in the family.

One of the most important phases of the activity carried out was that of the formation of the future 'living books'. The latter offered 3 different perspectives of hospitality in the family: children welcomed, welcoming families, operators who managed the meeting.

Three appointments of 3 hours each were organized, divided as follows:

The first was dedicated to the presentation of the participants and their expectations. Through the organization of an icebreaking game to create an atmosphere of trust and fun, the first appointment presented the tool of the Living Library and its diffusion as an awareness-raising action and a good European practice.

The second meeting focused on the direct participation of those who had to imagine themselves as living books. Through the writing of one's own personal story, key content emerged. The choice of the title, a particular important moment, takes place in loneliness: you can consult with the operators who organized the appointment, but a possible redefinition is entrusted to the final moment, shared with the group. In this phase, it has been important to work both on the negative prejudices that the subjects experience and which they intend to overturn, and on the lack of information that exists on the subject that we intend to fill. Each one's titles and content were finally shared in group to discuss them and possibly make changes.

In the third meeting, role playings were organized where everyone in turn covered both the role of the listener and that of the speaker. Starting from everyone's biographies, not only the oral story was tested (length, pertinence, expressive correctness, etc.), but also the holding of a hypothetical conversation marked by: emotional baggage, external intrusive factors, possible conflicting exchanges.

The simulations have been an opportunity to work on emotions emerged during the dialogue, as well as on the attitudes and postures to keep. It is also of paramount importance always maintaining one's spontaneity and authenticity, essential factors for the success of the activity.





YOUNG WITH EXPERIENCE OF MINOR ARRIVED ALONE -IS NICE TO TRAVEL, NOT TO FLEE-

I have been in Italy for a year and a half. I arrived after a long journey, which already began in my mind many years ago. I left Egypt and crossed many countries I knew nothing about before arriving in Libya.

I stayed there for five months, alone without knowing anyone, surrounded by people like me who came from distant countries and without really understanding what happened every day.

I worked in a napkin factory, even though I had never done this work in my life but I needed money to be able to pay for the last journey to Italy. My employer never gave me a contract, we were many, adults and children, women and men and we all lived in the same house. It wasn't quite a house but a large room, with a light bulb, very cold. In the evening, after returning from work, they distributed the meal..almost always rice, beans and bread, but I resisted because my dream was more important.

After some time, my turn had come and I left. I don't remember the trip well, I remember the wind, the noise and the rain and around nothing. Arrived in Italy they made me get off, I heard many voices and I didn't know how to answer the questions, I kept telling only my name.

They accompanied us to a reception center, where I finally met a mediator and he explained to me that - as a minor - I had the right to be welcomed, that I would have to wait and do the quarantine, due to the covid.

After the quarantine they transferred me to Caserta, in a minors' community. A real home, with 8 other boys. Many operators, all kind and asking me what my needs were.. I'm fine, I'm no longer afraid and I know that my road from today will be peaceful.

“

Five months have passed, it was my turn and I left. I don't remember the trip well, I remember the wind, the noise and the rain and, around, nothing.





SOCIAL OPERATOR -MY LIFE IN HOSPITALITY-

I have been an operator within a housing community for young migrants arrived alone, for several years now. I decided to become a book not only to tell my professional experience and increase the knowledge about young lonely migrants but, above all, to meet people and raise awareness on the theme of foster care and the Human Library enables me to do so very well.

Telling the stories of “our boys” and showing the possibility of alternative hospitality paths, like foster caring, represents a great possibility both for young people and for those who decide to welcome and accompany them in their life.

As operators, we are aware that our educational work is of enormous support but we are equally aware that relationships and ties within a “family” represent the main form of welcome and support.

The stories told in this booklet, such as that of M. and F. and that of A. and F. (following pages), are an example of how important it is to keep working in this direction, spreading awareness campaigns on the territory to inform citizens about this unique opportunity.

The reception pathways are structured in various phases ranging from training (both for youngster and adult), to informal meetings and profiling and matching activities which lead, step by step, to a real one to one. Meetings of acquaintance in which the main actors, young migrants and families, are supported and monitored during their acquaintance and where no one is left alone.

“

As operators, we are aware that our educational work is of enormous support but we are equally aware that relationships and bonds within a “family” represent the main form of welcome and support.





INTERCULTURAL MEDIATOR -LANGUAGES BEYOND THE WALL-

I am a Moroccan cultural mediator, my first approach to mediation took place unconsciously by assisting and accompanying my relatives and friends in various local services, as they were not able to communicate.

The studies I made allowed me to train and update myself professionally in the specific field of mediation and I decided to turn this into my job! My work allows me to facilitate communication, to transmit - in addition to words - also emotions, which are often not expressed, due to misunderstandings, this job allows me to overcome barriers and act as a bridge between different cultures.

As part of my job, I meet many people and I try to bring them closer by making them overcome linguistic and cultural barriers, bringing thoughts, emotions, ideas closer together and allowing comparison and mutual knowledge. Working with minors specifically, with young migrants arrived alone, I came across various subjects involved in family based care. As a mediator, I was able to support the families interested in joining foster care experience with training sessions, but the most exciting part was accompany and support them in the process of getting to know the minors.

Those have been unique moments of encounter in which I fostered communication between them and in which, above all, I gave voice to emotions, fears, doubts and expectations. Through moments of structured meeting, I am able to follow the progress of the paths
allow me to follow the progress of the paths themselves but which above all act as a moment in which to open up without barriers of any kind.

“

My job allows me to facilitate the communication and to transmit emotions, which are often not expressed because of misunderstandings, being a mediator allows me to overcome barriers.





MINOR ARRIVED ALONE -SEEKING A PLACE TO BE-

I arrived in Italy in 2020. I travelled alone, without knowing anyone, my country is not very far from Italy. Albania is a beautiful land and with a great heritage, but for young people like, me who live in rural areas, it is not easy to emerge and ensure a bright future.

Since I was a child, I have heard of Italy and Europe, I have heard adults talk about their stories and their travels to this country that had given so many possibilities to the newly arrived. One day, I made up my mind and left with some acquaintances. After a long journey, I arrived at the Italian border. I remember the police, big men who spoke to us calmly and trying to figure out if we were adults or children... Finally we managed to say our names and they carefully let us get on a bus going who knows where.

They welcomed me for a few months in a reception center and then they told me that I would have been welcomed in Caserta. I did not understand very well what they told me. I am now living in Caserta since almost a year now, in a community where I feel very comfortable and where I have many friends and above all where they allow me to do many things such as going to school, playing sports, training and volunteering activities. I was lucky, because in Caserta I explored some forms of alternative reception to hospitality in young migrant's centers.

Thanks to a project, I had the opportunity to start an acquaintance journey with an Italian gentleman with whom I followed a training course and who, after the preparatory stages of profiling and matching, I was able to meet independently. We see each other often, we go bowling, eat pizza, take long walks. He helps me with my studies, since he has a technical diploma and I am studying for the same title of study. He has a large family and many friends and he often invites me home to stay with them. I have bonded a lot and feel very close to them. We are planning a trip to Calabria with his whole family and other activities that excite me.

This experience is helping me a lot, I feel safe and I would recommend it to all my friends who live in the community with me. Being able to count on someone, feeling I have references and knowing that my family of origin also supports my choice and feels serene, gives me stronger motivation not to give up in building my future.

“

Being able to count on someone, feel about have references and know that too my family of origin supports my choice and feels serene, gives me an additional urge not to give up in construction of my future.





WELCOMING FAMILY -US-

I am a 60 year old female and a doctor, retired. During my life I have dedicated myself to work in the hospital which has given me a lot of satisfaction and a life full of experiences. Above all, it has given me the opportunity to get in touch with many different people and stories, allowing me to have an open minded vision of life open to dialogue. My job also taught not to have prejudices of any kind.

Once I retired, I dedicated myself to my passions, such volunteering. This has allowed me to get in touch and get to know many associations that in various ways deal with social activities in the area where I live. Along the way, I was lucky enough to meet an association that deals with reception and services for foreigners and I came into contact with a reality I didn't know much about: the welcoming of young migrants arrived alone and all the activities revolving around it, a reality that immediately fascinated me.

With the association I have participated in many awareness-raising events and I learned about the possibility of alternative forms of reception including family based care. I documented, informed and reflected on what this experience could have given me in terms of personal and emotional enrichment. After that, I gave my willingness to welcome a young girl arrived alone.

After a careful process of profiling and matching, F. arrived in my life. A girl arrived in Italy as a minor, without parents, who remained in her country of origin. She has been lucky enough to arrived in a welcoming community. We met some time after her eighteenth birthday: a nice girl, full of energy who, in addition to be willing to work in order to be independent, had the dream of studying to become a health professional! How could I not feel her very close right away?

We met and started our adventure of living together in my house which, until then, had only seen me and my work.

“

Finally, after a careful process of profiling and matching, I was lucky enough to meet an association and discover a reality I didn't know much about: the one of welcoming young migrants arrived alone.





At the beginning, like “serious” roommates, we established our rules and coexistence agreement, also thanks to the operators of the association, and slowly we learned to get to know each other. It wasn't easy, two worlds, two generations, two realities and two opposite characters. I am very sociable, chatty and always active and she is very silent, sometimes shy and with a lot of resistance and fears.

Time has helped us, we have united our ways, we have brought them together, she has trusted me and little by little she has let me enter her world made up of passions, dreams and desires and I have let her enter the my life by offering her everything I had learned over the years. Years have passed now, F. and I still live together, she studies and works and I have become her point of reference, let's share our lives, spaces and our time, we laugh, we talk a lot and yes, - sometimes we argue - but this is precisely what allows us to get to know each other more and more.

This is why I love to tell our story: to give confidence to those who are curious and interested in living our same experience. I feel like sending a message to everyone which is to open our minds and hearts to these young boys and girls who need our experience and who can teach us and give us so much, without prejudice and suspending all fear and all resistance. Your life will be “turned upside down” in a positive way!

#FABCOMMUNITY



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VOLUNTEER GUARDIAN -A SHARED PATH-

My name is M. I am a retired man of over fifty. I worked in aeronautics and in life I have traveled a lot. For work reasons I moved to Caserta, where I have been living for years and where I have found many friends, my 'second family'.

My frequent travelling has allowed me to meet many people and to deal with many different "worlds". Above all, it gave me the opportunity to cultivate my passions, from music to theater to my personal training. In fact, despite my age and the fact that I already possess a degree, I continued to study and obtained two more diplomas.

I met the association by chance which allowed me to embark on a journey of knowledge of the reality of welcoming young migrants alone. One afternoon, fascinated by an awareness activity in a square in Caserta, I was given the opportunity to get to know a new reality. There were many people who told their stories through the activity of the Living Library in which today I became a book too!

I decided to "become" a book to tell my experience. Thanks to the association, I discovered alternative forms of hospitality and I gave my willingness to become a supportive and welcoming family.

I attended a training and started the profiling and matching process in which I met F, a young Albanian boy, living into one of the communities with whom I immediately got in touch. Very nice, brilliant and full of interests and passions. He is my nephew's age and now attends the same school which I attended a long time ago!

“

There were many people who told their stories through the activity of the Living Library in which today I became a book too!





We began our acquaintance accompanied by her reference operators and little by little we organized ourselves independently. We spend a very pleasant time together, like two dear friends who share many passions.

We usually go to the cinema, to the pizzeria, to the bowling alley and I must say that this experience has given me so much: at a personal level, because I have discovered that offering my time and my presence to a young boy with many projects and full of fears helped me enlarging my knowledge of the other realities. At general level, because this experience allowed me to discover new approaches to life.

I am happy to be able to share my experience through the living library to inform and tell - above all to my own generation - that we can be an example and a reference, that we can make a difference in accompanying lonely young people who - like we did - dream of a better future made up of work, family and independence. Each of us, leaving resistance and fear aside, can meet new worlds, can experiment and offer a chance for growth.

“

We spend a very pleasant time together, like two dear friends sharing many passions. We go out to the cinema, at the pizzeria or at the bowling alley.





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AFTER HAVING READ A 'LIVING BOOK'...

Some feedbacks collected during the Living Libraries organized by Cidis in Naples, Caserta and Mondragone as part of the FA.B! Together

“

IT IS ALWAYS EXCITING TO LISTEN TO THE STORIES OF THESE YOUNGSTERS. IT IS SOMETIMES DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND WHERE THEY COME FROM AND WHAT THEY HAVE EXPERIENCED. THEY ALLOW US TO UNDERSTAND AND GET EXCITED BY LISTENING TO THEIR WORDS AND THEIR EXPERIENCES.

“

ASSUNTA

THE PERSONAL STORIES I HAVE LISTENED ARE ALSO COLLECTIVE STORIES. ALLOWING THESE YOUNGSTERS TO INTEGRATE INTO A NEW COMMUNITY, MEANS KNOWING THEM AND HELPING THEM ON THEIR JOURNEY, IT IS A GREAT SIGN OF CIVILIZATION.

“

ENZO

I HAD THE PLEASURE TO LISTEN TO THE STORY OF A YOUNG MIGRANT'S GUARDIAN. I WAS VERY STRIKED BY HIS SENSE OF SOLIDARITY THAT MANY OF US SHOULD REDISCOVER IN THEIR OWN LIFE.

FIORELLA

“

THANKS TO THE MEETING WITH THE BOOK "INTERCULTURAL MEDIATOR", I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FIGURE OF THE MEDIATOR, THE ISSUES THAT THIS JOB ENCOUNTERS, THE COMPETENCE AND PASSION THAT IS NEEDED TO PURSUE THIS MISSION.

MARINA

LEARN MORE ABOUT FAMILY BASED CARE FOR YOUNG UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND FA.B! ACTIONS



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