

**EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET**

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.)

 Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum.)

| PROJECT                   |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Participant:              | [1] - [Conorzio Oltrepò Mantovano] ([COM])         |
| PIC number:               | [947456910]  |
| Project name and acronym: | [Villages are the center of Europe] — [VillagesEU] |

| EVENT DESCRIPTION   |   |
|---|---|
| Event number:   | [2]   |
| Event name:   | [PANEL FOCUS " ACCESS TO SERVICES AND QUALITY OF LIFE"]   |
| Type:   | [workshop]  |
| In situ/online:   | [in-situ]   |
| Location:   | [Italy], [Suzzara]  |
| Date(s):  | [12 <sup>th</sup> April 2023]   |
| Website(s) (if any):  | <a href="https://www.oltrepomantovano.eu/progetto-villageseu-2-panel-focus/">https://www.oltrepomantovano.eu/progetto-villageseu-2-panel-focus/</a> |
| Participants  |   |
| Female:   | 20  |
| Male:   | 22  |
| Non-binary:   |   |
| From country 1 [France]:  | 25  |
| From country 2 [Italy]:   | 17  |
| ...   |   |
| Total number of participants:                                       | 42  |
| From total number of countries:                                     | 2   |
| Description   |   |
| <i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i> |   |

The event's objectives were the following:

- To foster the dialogue between the twinned towns of Brioude (FRA), Gonzaga (ITA) and Suzzara (ITA) about the need to ensure public social services in small and medium sized rural municipalities in Europe
- To support local governing bodies in receiving political recommendations based on citizens' needs about services to improve the quality of life of residents;
- sharing of good practices implemented or to be implemented in participating twinned towns, focused on the topic.

The panel focus took place in the town of Suzzara (Italy), where the delegations from the towns of Brioude (France) and Gonzaga (Italy) were hosted.

The agenda of the event was the following:

| Time                    | Topic   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Tuesday 11 April 2023   | 17.00 Arrival in Suzzara by French participants<br>19.00 Dinner<br>Overnight stay   |
| Wednesday 12 April 2023 | 9.00 Welcome of the French delegation and Gonzaga delegation and visit to the "Liceo Manzoni" of Suzzara<br>9.30 a.m.: guided tour of the services of the Municipality of Suzzara (social services, cultural services) conducted by the students of the Liceo Manzoni: "Socialis" company (social services in the Suzzara area), Piazzalunga/Informagiovani cultural centre<br>11.00 -12.00 at Suzzara Library: Workshop "Access to services and quality of life in small and medium-sized municipalities". : workshop and discussion between the Italian and French delegations on the topic<br>Lunch<br>1.00 p.m. Visit to Po river natural protected area; visit to Corte Viazza to visit quarries and new planting (transfers by bus)<br>15.30 Visit to 2 companies in the Suzzara area<br>18.30 Meeting with Suzzara Mayor<br>20.00 Dinner |

The aim of VillagesEU project is to share best practices among the Municipalities of Suzzara, Gonzaga and Brioude in order to raise awareness among its citizens about the challenges at EU level and possible responses that small and medium-sized municipalities are urged to implement. Without the realisation that small and medium-sized rural municipalities must respond in a shared way, at the level of all European states, to common challenges, the survival of these small towns is at risk.

With this in mind, the panel focus organised in Brioude (France) focused on one of the working themes of the project: "ACCESS TO SERVICES AND QUALITY OF LIFE". The reason for choosing to discuss this topic in relation to small and medium-sized rural municipalities is that Economic growth and job creation are important, but they need to be complemented by, among other things, a sufficient supply of quality services, housing, education, lifelong learning and health systems to ensure that rural areas are not only sustainable but also attractive places to live

Consorzio Oltrepò Mantovano, together with Partners (Municipality of Gonzaga, Municipality of Suzzara, Brioude Twinning Committee) organized the event addressing it mainly to young generations: for this reason, many participants came from schools, and the whole event focused on involving youth in discussing about the following topic: economic growth and job creation are important, but they need to be complemented by, among other things, a sufficient supply of quality services, housing, education, lifelong learning and health systems to ensure that rural areas are not only sustainable but also attractive places to live.

On April the 11<sup>th</sup>, participants visited first of all the Liceo Manzoni school in Suzzara. Then they visited 2 places which are existing best practices in Suzzara for what concerns services to citizens: "Socialis" public company (social services in the Suzzara area) and Piazzalunga/Informagiovani cultural centre (owned by the Municipality).

After the visits, the panel focus saw the organization of a workshop (realized in Suzzara) where participants discussed about the following topics:

- best practices already implemented related to public services addressed to citizens in Briuode, Gonzaga and Suzzara;
- actions to be implemented to guarantee housing, education, lifelong learning and health for all, regardless of age, education and jobs;
- focus on the needs of young generations and actions to be implemented in the near future to counter the depopulation of small and medium-sized rural municipalities through public services, also supported by the private sector, concerning health, education, fostering the dialogue between younger generations and elderly.

The workshop took place in the Piazzalunga/Informagiovani hall of the Municipality of Suzzara. The invited expert was Mrs. Maria Elena Margonari, Director of "Socialis" company whose headquarters are located in Suzzara and that was visited earlier by the project delegations.

Mrs. Margonari illustrated the "Socialis" public company, which is the Special Agency of the Municipalities of:

- Gonzaga
- Moglia
- Motteggiana
- Pegognaga
- San Benedetto Po
- Suzzara

In the Oltrepò Mantovano territory.

#### *SCOPE*

Management of Services on behalf of of the local authorities consortium members, and it is operational from 1/07/2019.

#### *MISSION*

- Carrying out social support and promotion in response to the needs of citizens through the activation of proposals aimed at all age groups.
- Develop projects that aim to support and improve the realities of families, young people, the elderly and disabled in the area.
- 

Its strength lies in being a company whose governance is entrusted to the municipalities, which unite and network to manage social and welfare services in the area.

#### *CHILDREN AND FAMILY AREA*

This area covers families with underage children (0-18 years) who are experiencing economic, social, housing, educational and socio-medical hardship.

Economic assistance and measures to combat poverty

- Home-based educational services
- Educational services for school inclusion in favour of children with certification pursuant to Law 104/92.
- Support and promotion of fostering
- Interventions to support parenting
- Planning with Day Centres and Residential Communities residential communities for minors
- Collaboration with local schools and service of cultural mediation
- Collection of applications for large family allowance and maternity
- Interventions and planning with the territory in favour of families
- Management and protection interventions for children and minors in compromised family situations also through relations with law enforcement agencies and

the Judicial Authority

- Support and protection for women who are victims of gender violence in collaboration with the services of the and the third sector

#### *NON-SELF-SUFFICIENCY*

The area deals with the problems of the elderly with impaired autonomy and adults with disabilities.

Activation of home care services and meals on home

- Coordination with health facilities for protected protected discharges
- Activation of tele-help and transport services social
- Admissions to residential facilities (RSA) or access to Day care centres for the elderly
- Management of family carers desk
- Activation of socio-educational projects for disabled adults (funding sources from national and/or regional laws)
- Use of the National Fund for Non-self-sufficiency
- Inclusion c/o territorial services for the disabled (CSE/CDD/SFA)
- Work placements for the disabled (work grants for the disabled)
- Anti-poverty measures (citizenship income, economic contributions)

#### *FRAIL ADULTS*

The area covers individuals between 18 and 65 years of age, belonging to households with no minors, who experience a condition of

"fragility" caused by factors of socio-economic marginalisation. The activities of the social services aim to prevent hardship and to

promote paths of social inclusion among the subjects.

Listening and orientation towards paths and/or services that favour social inclusion

- Activation of income support measures:
  - active job search, vocational training job-search guidance
  - social inclusion projects linked to the Citizenship Income;
  - disbursement of economic contributions aimed at maintaining of utilities and housing;
  - activation of socio-economic aid in cooperation with voluntary associations (Caritas)
- Activation of measures to support home care (home services/meals). home services/meals)
- Taking charge and preparing aid projects aimed at inclusion, in collaboration with specialised inclusion, in collaboration with specialised social and health services (psychiatric services, anti-addiction, etc.).
- Housing and temporary accommodation
- Activation of Legal Protection paths (appointment of support administrators, health care support administrators, health protection, right to legal residence, protection of victims of violence)
- Activation of restorative paths (probation projects, works of public utility, etc.). of public utility, etc.).

#### *PROJECTS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT*

The area makes use of the professionalism of communication and fundraising experts by adhering to regional, provincial and foundation tenders through the presentation of projects co-constructed with local actors and other areas by sharing needs, objectives and resources.

- Implementing a model based on the value of social and community ties that can lead to a change in the logic of the Welfare system: from Welfare State (which takes care of the citizen) to community Welfare (Welfare Society) where the community and the person itself promote processes of self-determination (empowerment). This form of support and participation by the community itself can represent a form of prevention, in order to reduce deviant actions or situations of severe social isolation.

- Stimulate a generative welfare, which can interact and fully collaborate with the Public Social Service; the territory is place where problems can find their connotation in collective difficulties and hardships, but also a privileged place for

building ties based on solidarity and active participation, with the active participation, resulting in a progressive improvement of the wellbeing of the entire community.

- Develop new relations and opportunities between social actors from the private social actors and the productive world, to foster participation and social, cultural and labour inclusion.

After the presentation, the "Socialis" best-practice presented was the basis for the subsequent discussion between the delegations of the 3 participating municipalities.

Simone Taddei of the Consorzio Oltrepò Mantovano moderated the discussion. It is evident that the

case of SOCIALIS is a good practice at a territorial level, but not only, and that its replicability also in other contexts is desirable. Associated management between several municipalities of social and welfare services is certainly the road to follow, given that at least in Italy the management of these services is still too fragmented.

Next, the deputy mayor of Suzzara took the floor, stating that the fragmentation of the approach to social protection is also based on a conception of the government (governance) of these matters founded on the conviction that the closer the decision-making, planning and disbursement process is to the demand for protection, the more effective the fight against hardship will be.

This conviction has been reinforced by the importance that the regional dimension has acquired in the process of European integration. In fact, the cohesion policies adopted at EU level were aimed at rebalancing the differences between regions by redistributing resources to the advantage of the most disadvantaged regions.

This evidently stimulated a new prominence of regional governments, which began to have additional resources at their disposal to prepare programmes with which to strengthen their consensus. While implicit tendencies towards subsidisation had prevailed before the 1990s, explicit reforms were subsequently implemented. social policies in the Scandinavian countries, for example, became the responsibility of the municipalities and no longer of the counties, in an overall framework of unification with labour policies. Similarly, in continental European countries, a process of decentralisation has begun, but in favour of the provincial or regional level.

The Brioude delegation intervenes by stating that this has also happened in France (a country known for its strong centralisation), with an amendment to Article 1 of the Constitution in favour of the Departments.

Tirelli goes on to say that the importance of sub-national levels of government is all the more visible in federalist countries such as Germany and Switzerland. Finally, even in a country similar to Italy in the socio-institutional foundations of welfare such as Spain, the delegation to the Comunidad was an important step in welfare reform.

The evidence shows that 1) there is a very strong inter-regional polarisation with regard to the amount of resources allocated to social policies, and 2) that the effectiveness of policies to combat poverty in our country is decidedly lower than in most other European countries.

The situation of welfare policies in the province of Mantua that emerges from the survey presented in the Province's volume entitled "Services for combating poverty" is extremely interesting because it concretely shows the degree of micro-territorial fragmentation that has been achieved (also) thanks to a tool, the indicator of the economic situation (Ise), which was designed to identify "unified criteria for evaluating the economic situation of the subjects who apply for facilitated social benefits".

Thus, the work on the use of Ise in the main municipalities of the province of Mantua reveals that there are very different criteria of application - or non-application - within the same municipalities for different interventions, and between neighbouring municipalities for the same interventions. Not even belonging to the same district and thus sharing the same Area Plan (as provided for by Law 328/00) protects against this fragmentation of social policy application criteria. The case of Mantua is interesting because it shows how even the administrations of an area that is attentive to these issues and virtuous from many points of view, are trapped in a normative and institutional logic that produces social policy structures that are certainly not very efficient and effective.

From these reflections as well as from the need to reorganise the management of welfare services in the entire Oltrepò Mantovano territory, which has shown all its 'rigidity' and lack of capacity to face the challenges highlighted by the Covid-19 emergency. This is true also for what concerns the Brioude area.

Participants to the workshop thus agree on recommending to local decision makers that:

- The creation of Special Territorial Companies for the management of social welfare services in the territories of small and medium-sized European municipalities must be promoted as it is of fundamental importance. Coordination is needed for the alignment of cohesion and adaptation policies in the territories. Governance will have to be coordinated, especially in the social, school and reorganisation of territorial services. Therefore, the idea is the creation of a permanent table with coordinators and managers of societies and administrators to define the role of public actors for system, promotion and subsidiarity policies.
- The integration of social policies with health policies emerges as a fundamental element of the new organisation of territorial welfare services for small and medium sized Municipalities. Not only has the COVID-19 emergency brought this need to the surface, but the organisation of these social and health services that has contracted territorial garrisons in rural areas in recent years has made it clear that this is the main emergency to work on.

After lunch, participants visited a natural protected area in the territory of Suzzara along the Po river, to foster the discussion about how environmental preservation is a topic of paramount importance in providing citizens with quality of life high standards. The tour has been led by local WWF delegation coordinator, Mr. Donato Artoni, who illustrated to delegations the importance of preserving natural areas since they play a strong ecosystemic role.

The Panel Focus then brought the delegations to visit two Suzzara local companies and then, as final activity, delegations visited the “Galleria del Premio” Museum in Suzzara where the delegations also met the Mayor of Suzzara.

Media/articles published:

<https://www.aziendasocialis.it/news/brioude-suzzara-gonzaga-villages/>

<https://mantovauno.it/cronaca/da-suzzara-a-brioude-torna-lo-scambio-culturale-per-i-ragazzi-delle-scuole/>

<https://mantovauno.it/cronaca/la-delegazione-di-brioude-a-suzzara-e-gonzaga-si-rinnova-il-gemellaggio-con-la-citta-francese/>

<https://www.informagiovani.mn.it/postie/newsletter/piazzalunga-i-4-aprile-16-aprile-2023.html>



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Villages are the center of Europe  
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**SUZZARA (ITALY)**  
**12<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2023**

2<sup>nd</sup> PANEL FOCUS

**“ACCESS TO SERVICES  
AND QUALITY OF LIFE”**



*Economic growth and job creation are important, but they need to be complemented by, among other things, a sufficient supply of quality services, housing, education, lifelong learning and health systems to ensure that rural areas are not only sustainable but also attractive places to live.*

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**SUZZARA (ITALY)**  
**12<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2023**

2<sup>nd</sup> PANEL FOCUS  
**"ACCESS TO SERVICES  
AND QUALITY OF LIFE"**

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Comarcio Oltrepiù Mantovano  
BRIQUDE





*Visit to Liceo Manzoni school in Suzzara*



*Workshop held in Piazzalunga, Municipality of Suzzara*

| HISTORY OF CHANGES |                  |                            |
|--------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| VERSION            | PUBLICATION DATE | CHANGE                     |
| 1.0                | 01.04.2022       | Initial version (new MFF). |
|                    |                  |                            |
|                    |                  |                            |