



Combating Inequalities through Innovative Social Practices  
of and for Young People in Cities across Europe

**WP7 Case study: Innovative Practice  
'Venezia Cricket Club'**

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## Cover page

<b>INNOVATIVE PRACTICE/PROJECT TITLE</b>	
<b>Venezia Cricket Club</b>	
<b>City</b>	Venice
<b>Pilot type</b>	It is not a Pilot, but a project implemented by private residents of Marghera that have created an Amateur Sports Association (ASD) aimed at using sport – in this specific case the cricket game – as tool for social inclusion of young people, especially (but not only) young people of migrant background.
<b>Type of target group</b>	motivated for integration into mainstream society but in need of support; aiming for ‘alternative’ ways to get ahead, with sufficient competences and/or social support
<b>Type of practice</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Learning and counselling; social capital; matching/bridging;</li> <li>2. Offering opportunities;</li> <li>3. Empowerment: developing ambition, competences and social network;</li> </ol>
<b>Aims/objectives in brief</b>	Give to young people of migrant origin the same opportunities to practice sports activities of their peers. To give to the most marginalized young people, such as the ones of migrant origin, training, working, relational, educational and experiential opportunities.
<b>What needs, what inequalities</b>	To have access to recreational and sports places, to improve social and relationship capital; inequalities in using neighbourhood spaces and resources, in making recreational and sports experiences.
<b>What (activities in brief)</b>	Managing and organizing an official and structured cricket team and its activities; having opportunities related to sports management, promotion of the cricket game, issuing certificates of different types (coach, umpire, scorer, first aidetc.) that can be used in the labour market.
<b>Who (actors)</b>	Private third sector (association and volunteers), municipal social services.
<b>How (involvement of the actors, their roles)</b>	Young people are involved in the cricket team, and in its activities within the school, through flyers, newsletter, promotion events, public events, etc. Sport is used as tool for social inclusion, social integration and education.

<b>Scope: number of the participants of practice(s)</b>	About 30 young people (mostly boys of Bangladeshi origin, some boys of Italian origin, some boys of Pakistani origin, some boys of Sri Lankan origin, a girl of Bangladeshi origin)
<b>Duration (when the project/practice started)</b>	From 2006 until today
<b>RESOURCES</b>	
<b>Financial</b>	From 2.000 to 4.000 euro per year. The financial resources are accumulated <i>year by year</i> through self-financing, private sponsors, public funding, voluntary work carried out by users/players in public structure (sports fields, parks, etc.). Private sponsorship and/or public funding are not guaranteed every year and for this reason the economic resources vary so much.
<b>Personnel</b>	4 persons
<b>Other</b>	A meadow as field, a locker room, a room for meeting.

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## **Introduction**

Here, the innovative experience of Venezia Cricket Club will be analyzed in depth. The Venezia Cricket Club was born as the Amateur Sports Association (ASD). It has been an idea and project of the founder Alberto Miggiani, who lives close to a meadow where young people of immigrant origin (mostly of Bangladeshi origin) used to informally play cricket. The founder has a long background and involvement in the scout movement and wanted to introduce practices, visions and methods of Scouting – activity/movement that can involve mostly native young people – into a new project and for new users in a position of social vulnerability and with different references and practices than the ones of young natives. The young people of immigrant origin – that, in the specific context of Marghera and Mestre, are mainly young people of Bangladeshi origin.

So, the Venezia Cricket team is aimed at providing young people between 8 and 25 years of immigrant origin, mainly from the Indian subcontinent and Bangladesh (the geographical and national origin of the major component of the population of immigrant origin residing in the Mestre and Marghera neighbourhoods) the opportunity to be part of a sports team and to be able to have the opportunity to play and practice sports in an “official” and organized framework, like their peers of native origin. The native youth, in fact, being interested in the most popular sports in Italy, such as football or basketball, have many more opportunities than their peers of Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani or Afghan origin to become part of a team and to live the experiences of organized sport and not just the self-managed sports, “street-sport”, informally practiced in parks and public spaces. These are often unfit to the sports practice, in contact with the deviant or marginal part of the society, public disturbance and discomfort element and, for these reasons, stigmatized or hindered by local institutions.

The Venezia Cricket Club sees in sport a vehicle for broader social inclusion of young people from the disadvantaged components of society, such as immigrant populations, and an instrument of intercultural education for young people with an immigrant background and recently arrived in Italy or with a small social capital. But also to provide a protected relational space to let young people to have organizational, work and self-learning experiences through a self-management organization of the team activities. The Venezia Cricket Club offers the young member of the association job opportunities related to sports management, promotion of the cricket game, issuing certificates of different types (coach, umpire, scorer, first aid, etc.) that can be used in the labour market and earn about 10€ per hour.

## **1. Evaluation methodology**

To evaluate the innovative practice we have adopted mainly qualitative methodologies because we have considered those methods most appropriate to assess the impact and the effectiveness of the project, which is aimed more at; improving the quality of the social integration, inclusion and well-being of the young participants, offering them better opportunities for individual and collective growth and triggering reflective processes and virtuous dynamics in neighbourhoods, rather than quantifying a much wider catchment area or even to count a specific number of contingent goals achieved.

So we have decided to conduct in-depth interviews with the subjects that founded the Venezia Cricket Club (the president of the association and some of his collaborators), with different stakeholders that co-participate in the activities of the innovative practice (social workers and street educators working in the neighbourhoods; operators of social services, the president of the municipalities), young people that animate the project, that benefit from its activities: young people, especially of Bangladeshi origin.

We have carried out the campaign of interviews through a targeted selection of the first respondents (the president of the association, the president of the municipalities, some service operators) and then we have continued using a snowball sampling, in which the first respondents have presented further potential respondents (social workers, collaborators of the president of the association, the young participants of Bangladeshi origin). Eight stakeholders and six practitioners/participants have been interviewed. Almost four months of participant observation – at the training meeting and at the official matches in Marghera and Mestre neighborhoods – and site visits have been carried out. Other sources consulted were the Venezia Cricket Club website ([www.veneziacricket.eu](http://www.veneziacricket.eu)), the book, written by the academic researcher Davide Zoletto, “Il gioco duro dell'integrazione. L'intercultura sui campi da gioco” [“The challenging sport of integration: Multiculturalism on the fields of play”] (Raffallo Cortina, Milano, 2010) and the one, written by the journalists Giacomo Fasola, Ilario Lombardo and Francesco Moscatelli, “Italian Cricket Club. Il gioco dei nuovi italiani” [“Italian Cricket Club: The game of new Italians”] (Add, Torino, 2013).

There is no specific monitoring of the results and effects of the project, partly because those results and effects can hardly be measured in empirical terms and especially in the short-term. There are about twenty-five practitioners/participants (some of them are both players and trainers), two or three training days a week from autumn season to summer season and an official match every week from spring season to summer season. The Venezia Cricket Club has four association meeting every year and takes part in four or five social event in the neighbourhood every year.

It has been preferred, therefore, to deepen through qualitative tools the experiences of social inclusion and the trajectories of social mobility of the users involved in the social innovation (young people of immigrant origin). Through their stories and through those of the social workers in the same socio-territorial context as the one of the founder of the association, that is, we have attempted to delineate the virtuous trajectories in terms of experiential, self-promotion, self-empowerment, employment, training, relational opportunities. We have observed the improvement of relations between the subjects involved and the socio-territorial context of the neighbourhoods of residence (and implementation of the project /practice) and the level increase of involvement and interactions of the different social actors.

As the interviews with different actors (young people, president of the association, social workers, presidents of municipalities) have been conducted in separate contexts and separate moments, we think we have been able to shed enough light on all the points of view and aspects of the project/innovative practice, showing contradictions and ambivalences, strengths and weaknesses. For these reasons we have not found particular difficulties and problems in the results and effects of the project Venezia Cricket Club monitoring process.

## 2. Project/Practice Design

### 2.1 Social Issue(s) addressed

Context of the project:

a) Regarding the main features of Marghera (WP3 and WP4), some of them seem to sum up in a thorough way what is specific to this area (Barizza and Cesco, 2007; Barizza *et al.*, 2007; Marghera Social Services, 2009; 2010; 2011; 2012; Municipality of Marghera, 2015)

- Compared to the city average there is the highest share of households dependent on social assistance and in particular of children distanced from their families (by juvenile court and social workers) and inserted in other families through foster care or, much more frequently, in minors residential centres.
- Drug dependence among young and very young people is another critical situation, which also characterizes Mestre.
- The working class is greatly representative of the Marghera social fabric. Moreover, the educational qualifications of the inhabitants are lower compared to the city average.
- There is a strong sense of community and a strong engagement of the citizens towards the common good. There is a lively civil society either in terms of informal committees of citizens or in formal organizations. Parishes, sport associations (but mainly football/soccer and basketball) and scouts have a significant and fundamental role in tackling the social problems of the neighbourhood. For this reason especially Marghera is a fertile context for the project.
- A high rate of people with an immigrant background live in this part of the neighbourhood and in another part called Cita (Marzadro, 2010). It is a big area with more than 900 social housing flats located inside huge buildings. Almost 2,500 persons live there and currently about 800 have an immigrant background, mostly Bangladeshi. The share of foreigners living in Marghera has always been significantly higher than the city-wide average, for both the population in general and for young persons. In 2010 the most represented nationality is Bangladeshi.

b) Regarding the neighbourhood of Mestre (Casarin and Saccà, 2009; Mestre Social Services, 2012), it has been influenced by the development and then the decline of Marghera Harbour in terms of increasing unemployment (WP3; WP4).

- From the annual Mestre's Social Service report we know that the number of households in receipt of social services has slightly increased from 2009 until 2012. In 2012, almost 40% of the households dependent on social assistance have an immigrant background. In 2010 the most represented nationality is Bangladeshi.

- The most problematic area in Mestre is around the rail station (Piave street), where the largest part of immigrants live and where there is intense drug trafficking. The drug trafficking is also intensely present in the numerous green areas and parks of the neighbourhood. These areas are those where young people use to go and play sports (football, cricket, etc.) or to do other activities (parkour, break-dance, etc.). Among the young people a heavy issue is the drug dependence and the drug trafficking, in particular heroin (it shares this problem with Marghera).

The problem is that particularly vulnerable subjects – such as young people of immigrant origin, often alone in the immigration context, with small social and relational capital and

often with a distant family because they are engaged in extended work-shifts – can get involved in risky activities and illegality, or not so much a constructive use of their time, skills and passions.

The project, therefore, provides a kind of family-friendly-social support within which young people can fit, stimulate their empowerment, enhance their skills, and assume collective and individual responsibility towards the association and the team.

The causes and symptoms are mainly structural, but also individual.

From the structural point of view, we must mention: the levels of unemployment that characterize the residents in the neighbourhoods of Mestre and Marghera, connected to the de-industrialization of Porto Marghera and the economic crisis that is particularly strong in Southern Europe and Italy (Gallino, 2011); the condition of social and material vulnerability of immigrant families connected to Italian (and European) migration policies that link regularity of residence to stable employment; the widespread racism both at institutional level as at “popular” level; the scarcity of resources and protected areas in the neighbourhoods; the rapid increase of drug use and trafficking that is featuring Italy and, above all, some cities in the northeast of the country such as Padua and Venice (Sacchetto and Sbraccia, 2006; WP3; WP4).

From the individual point of view, we must mention: the condition of socio-relational vulnerability of the so-called “second generation” of migrants and of young people arrived in Italy through family reunification, connected to the experience of migration – especially if they arrived in an age sensitive period, such as adolescence and pre-adolescence.

The project tries to cope, on the one hand, with the lack of sports facilities dedicated to the sports practiced by young people of immigrant origin and especially those of Bangladeshi origin, the most numerous immigrant nationality in both neighbourhoods and the one with a very large youth population; on the other hand, the project tries to divert young Bangladeshis from public spaces where they used to play cricket: activities that caused them to be socially stigmatized and proliferated racist representations by the native resident population and put them in close contact with at-risk situations, such as drug trafficking.

At the same time, the project aims to use sport as a tool for education and social inclusion. But also as a resource which provides young people some job opportunities: 1) exploiting the social capital of the Italian founders of the association; 2) making it possible for children to attend courses that will provide certifications and credentials (referee, coach, scorer, first aid, etc.) that can be spent in the labour market (cricket leagues and championship, schools, etc.); 3) increasing the organizational and managerial skills of the young players learning, so, to manage by their own the team activities (budget, travels, corporate management, etc.).

The innovative aspect is the self-management nature of the team, the active and bottom up involvement of all the members of the team in every activity – organizational and co-decision – of the association (not only in the sports ones), acting as a form of empowerment, engagement, training, part-time employment. At the same time, the Venezia Cricket Team, is embedded with the social services network within the neighbourhoods to “give hospitality” to the young people targeted by the social services projects that want to make these young persons play their social re-integration experience through sports.

## ***2.2. Project goals and plans***

The members of the target group are young people of migrant origin and particularly young people of Bangladeshi origin. They can be described as young people motivated for integration into mainstream society but in need of support and, at the same time, young people aiming for “alternative” ways to get ahead, with sufficient competences and/or social support.

The official goals are to create greater social cohesion among residents in the neighbourhood and to promote the social integration of young people of immigrant origin, to give to all the young people of every cultural and national background the same opportunities to “feel at home” in the neighbourhood and to be full citizens of the city.

To reach these goals the project provides to the young people between 8 and 25 years old of immigrant origin, mainly from the Indian subcontinent and Bangladesh (the geographical and national origin of the major component of the population of immigrant origin residing in the Mestre and Marghera neighbourhoods) the opportunity to be part of a sports team and to be able to have the opportunity to play and practice sports in a “official” and organized framework, like their peers of native origin. The project uses sport as a tool for education and social inclusion and as a resource through which provide young people some job opportunities. The project tries to make available to young people of migrant origin the social capital of the Italian founders of the association; to provide to the young people of migrant origin certifications and credentials (referee, coach, scorer, first aid, etc.) that can be used in the labour market (cricket leagues and championship, schools, etc.) and earn about 10€ per hour; to increase the organizational and managerial skills of the young players learning, so, to manage by their own the team activities (budget, travels, corporate management, etc.).

The program theory is the same theory of the scout movement. Venezia Cricket Club is characterized by a non-formal method of education and a code of conduct, whose ultimate aim is to give a chance to young people to become “good citizens”, “full citizens”, responsibly engaged in the life of their neighbourhood and city and prepared to be future “citizens of the country” and “citizens of the world”, willing to improve the society and brotherhood among peoples.

The philosophy of the project is based on the principle of “learning by doing”, which outlines the personal growth of individuals through active experience, developing accountability, participation and decision-making skills.

The results are not directly measurable in quantitative terms, but the interviews show a reasonable level of associative involvement, social engagement and self-empowerment of young people. Some of these young people have found, through the experience of Venezia Cricket Club, the opportunity to round up the family (and individual) budget and the opportunity to work part-time for the team and in other fields. The project also gave to the young people of migrant origin the opportunity to leave the city of residence and employment of the parents for a while (due to the championship duties or other team activities) and to know other cities in Italy that otherwise they could hardly have had access to because of the poor economic resources of their working class family.

Another aim is to let, and facilitate, the social integration of the young people of Bangladeshi origin into the neighbourhood social context, to make them active citizens and members of the city/neighbourhood in which they live. More generally, cricket has been seen as a driving force for the wider integration and the inclusion of the entire Bangladeshi collectivity.

The core values of the project are based on self-management and bottom-up participation to the activities of the team, on the sport as a tool for social inclusion, on the responsibility of the older member of the team toward the younger ones.

For example, players of the first team train the children of the second and third team, manage the keys to the gym, organize fundraising and keep the association's cash/budget. Moreover, the idea behind the project is that it is always possible to learn something from everyone, even the older members from the younger, with a view of co-education/mutual-education. Here, then, the project's founder wanted to use sport as a tool for growth and empowerment of young people of immigrant origin, but he did not know anything about cricket and asked the young players/practitioners/users/members to explain the rules, tactics, styles of training to him. That is, he asked the boys to do the same with him.

The goals are sufficiently concrete, achievable and meaningful according to social issues addressed, but not immediately measurable. Actually, despite having achieved excellent results (not only from the sports point of view, of course) the project has not provided a moment for the evaluation.

Some important aspects/activities have been:

- the self-organization of the Venezia Cricket Club activities and the opportunity, offered to the young people of migrant origin, to take part to an organized sports team, specifically, to play in an official cricket team;
- the maintenance of the link between Cricket and other “cultural” aspects of the Bangladeshi young people country of origin. The members of the team started to spend their time and energies also on the organization of cultural activities of the national collectivity of their parents (Bengali New Year, Mother Language Festival, etc.);
- the networking and the inclusion of the association with(in) social services of the neighbourhood. Venezia Cricket Club has organized several social and spontaneous activities for the neighbourhoods and the entire resident population, such as the summer camps for children.

The combination between these two things together have enabled Bangladeshi young people to discover and develop their national and family roots, but at the same time to be citizens of the City of Venice and to “feel at home” in the context in which they live their daily lives.

The project addresses the area of sports, employment, education and empowerment and the activities of the association. The project supposed to have an effect on employment and education because it tries to make available to young people of migrant origin the social capital of the Italian founders of the association so they can have an easier access to the local labour market. It tries to provide the young people of migrant origin with certifications and credentials (umpire, referee, coach, scorer, firts, aidetc.) that can be used in the national labour market, although into the specific niche of the sports industry related to cricket game (cricket leagues and championship, schools, etc.) (about 10 euro per hour); and to increase the organizational and managerial skills of the young players learning, managing on their own the team activities (budget, travels, corporate management, etc.), so they increase the abilities they can use in the labour market.

The project was created in 2004 as an informal group and has been institutionalized on 13th June 2006 as Amateur Sports Association (ASD). In the same year it was inscribed at the Italian National Olympic Committee and at the Italian Union Sport for Everyone Federation.

After two years it started to work with the Social Services network of Marghera's neighbourhood. The association has small economic contributions from the State, sometimes from some private sponsors, in 2008-2009 the association won a public funding of 5,000 euro from the municipality of City of Venice (with the project "Gener-actions").

The Venezia Cricket Club started its activities in a meadow in front of one of the local churches, but as they have had some problems with some residents that did not appreciate that young people of Muslim origin used these public spaces, the association moved to another parish.

In 2008, the association moved to the center sports for athletics and then in another municipal area that the local institutions gave to the team in exchange for the maintenance and cleaning of the spaces – activities done by some young members of the team paid with money saved from not using a fee-rented field.

Initially, the president and founder of the association had some problems with the local Bangladeshi collectivity that saw in the cricket team led by a native a threat to the hegemony of the leaders of the local Bangladeshi associations (especially when the cricket team intervened in the organization of the public events and festivals of the immigrant collectivity). These frictions were later resolved by knowing one another, through the intervention of the young players themselves, through the mediation of social services and services for the social integration of the City of Venice.

There are about twenty-five practitioners/participants (some of them are both players and trainers), two or three training days a week from autumn season to summer season and an official match every week from spring season to summer season. The Venezia Cricket Club has four association meetings every year and takes part in four or five social events in the neighbourhood every year.

### ***2.3 Competences and resources required***

No special skills are required – neither to have talents to play cricket, as the sports aspect of the project is not the main aim of the project itself – and every interested member is accepted. The collaborators of the project are asked to approve and support the philosophy and the objectives of the project, to share their time, their educational and sports skills. The users are requested to approve and support the philosophy of the project (and not to emphasize and focus their attention purely on the sports dimension), to maintain good school results. The users are also request required to pay an annual membership fee (from 30 to 50 Euro for children and adolescents, 100 euro for adults), but as many of these do not have the opportunity to bear this expense, is not requested a narrow and rigid observance of this rule. Often, however, a contribution in time and energy is requested, to make the activities of the association possible and for the preparation of the game structures (the preparation and the maintenance of the field, for example).

The financial resources of the project vary from 2.000 to 4.000 euro per year. The financial resources are accumulated *year by year* through self-financing, private sponsors, public funding, voluntary work carried out by users/players in public structure (sports fields, parks, etc.). Private sponsorship and/or public funding are not guaranteed every year and for this reason the economic resources vary so much.

The founder of the association has social, educational and intercultural competences due to his experiences into the scout movement accumulated before creating the Venezia Cricket Club.

## ***2.4 Degree of organization***

The practice addresses the micro-level, because of the individual and collective self-empowerment and social/civic-engagement of its Bangladeshi young people. The practice also addresses the meso-level because of its networking within the neighbourhood to which different social actors are linked (Venezia Cricket Club; social services, other sports and/or cultural association, parishes, citizens committees, scouts, schools, etc.) and its attempts to include and integrate the young people of immigrant origin in the social and associative fabric of the context in which they live, and to give them the same opportunity of their peers of native origin to make an institutional sports experience. The project also attempts to address the macro-level, trying to facilitate the access into the labour market of single users, even if this can be done at most partially and for individual persons .

If from the founders of the project and his collaborators' point of view, the project is certainly a conscious/deliberate practice. From the users' point of view it is a "routine" practice, which enters into their daily lives becoming part of their settled *habitus* that structure their everyday lives through Cricket training, game facilities preparation, activities organization, a school performance suitable to keep the place in the team, etc.

At the same time, it is a practice that involves more people (the founder of the association and its collaborators, services and institutions of the district) and a strongly "organized" practice, although within an organization from below. In addition the involvement of more social actors as described, requires a formal structure (president, vice president, staff, coaches, members-players each one with different responsibilities in the team, but also in the association), a financial and economic organization and self-managed (supported through self-financing, public notices and public resources, sponsors, etc.) and demarcated division of tasks and responsibilities (the founder of the association and his collaborators, but also the users depending on their age and inclinations of each one).

The project tried to involve some Bangladeshi commercial activities (such as grocery stores, bar, shops, phone centers), but the owners were not interested.

The association has got national links – in the cricket scene (the National Cricket Federation, different cricket teams all around Italy, etc.) and with other associations (Youth Alpinist Association) – and international links, with other cricket federations in Germany and the UK.

## ***2.5 The logic of intervention***

The practice can be classified as aimed at social integration (SID) because the project clearly tries to create social ties among young users and the neighbourhoods of residence, networking with the different social actors present into the neighbourhoods, encouraging, therefore, integration between young people of different backgrounds and origins and social inclusion. But it can also be classified as aimed at elevating morals (MUD), because it tries to promote values of cooperation among young users according to the logic that the older one(s) advocate, monitor and help the younger one(s). As anticipated, however, the practice can be classified as aimed at redistributing resources (RED). Actually, the project tries to give to the

young people of migrant origin the same opportunities to participate in institutional sports experiences as their peers of native origin and to have an equal access to the public space, sports resources and social capital within the neighbourhood. It could be identified as forms of resource redistribution.

So, the project offers resources and opportunities, addresses (social) competences and standards of “normality” within the neighbourhoods of Mestre and Marghera, even if in a different way.

The practice can be placed in the follow typology of Social Innovation:

- Learning and counselling; social capital; matching/bridging: as the project aimed to give to the users the opportunity to increase different skills and to attend extra-school training courses so the users can have certification and diplomas; as the project aimed at share the association’s social capital within the members and create/increase the users’ social capital.
- Empowerment (developing ambition, competences and social network): as the project aimed to stimulate self-empowerment between the young people of immigrant origin, who are usually marginalized by the immigration society and stigmatized in public spaces, through their civic engagement, their maintenance activities of the structures responsible for the game of cricket, their bottom up self-management of the association activities.
- Bridging: to reduce the distance between young people and the social actor active in the neighbourhoods. Through the increased or created social capital and networking the young people get informed about the opportunities and the existence of other social realities (services, association, etc.).
- Stimulating and enabling entrepreneurship; co-creation; “communing”/tackling decay: the project has created a sense of family and a sense of community among the users/players/members and sharing of every-day life problems solving. They feel they belong to the family-team-association, but at the same time they feel they belong to the neighbourhoods and they start to feel at home in the neighbourhoods (the users themselves, almost all young people with Bangladeshi origin, have chosen the name of the team-association: in the Italian language and referred to the City of Venice). These ingredients have lead to social inclusion processes in order to co-create a sense of aggregation open to young people to reduce isolation and social decay.

## ***2.6 Transfer adaptations***

The practice was not transferred to/from another city.

## **3. Organisational context of implementation**

The project is an Amateur Sports Association (ASD) officially inscribed at the Italian National Olympic Committee and at the Italian Union Sport for Everyone Federation.

The organization of the association states that there must be a president, a secretary and a treasurer. Initially these three roles were covered by three different people, specifically by the

founder of the association (president) and two users/players (secretary and treasurer). Subsequently to some budget problems and some serious economic losses, however, the three figures have been concentrated in one person, namely the founder of the association. Now the project has repaid the debt and is still going on with this organization and there is not a real turnover of the charges. The concentration of responsibilities in a single person, not including a renewal of the leading actors of the project or the progressive replacement of the roles may be an element of weakness for the project. Actually, it may result that if the figure of the founder and president of the association should leave, the project would not be able to survive and continue growing.

The association includes a club of advisors and the guys that show particular maturity, a good level of participation, good school and sports results are assigned positions of responsibility within the project. The users/players are involved in courses to become, for example, coaches. Some of these become coaches of the younger categories in the same Venezia Cricket Club: that is, the older become trainers of the younger. Players of the first team train the children of the second and third team, manage the keys to the gym, organize fundraising and keep the association's cash/budget. Moreover, the idea behind the project is that it is always possible to learn something from everyone, even the older members from the younger, with a view of co-education/mutual-education.

Others become collaborators of the president, others are engaged in arbitration or count points in the Italian Federation.

Every four months there is a meeting of all members of the association. In these meetings, the decisions with respect to the activities of the association are voted for by show of hands by the participants – such as the name of the association/project.

The project was created in 2004 as an informal group and was institutionalized two years later. In 2008, it started to work with the Social Services network of Marghera's neighbourhood. The Venezia Cricket Club started its activities in a meadow in front of one of the local churches, but as they had some problems with some residents that did not appreciate that young people of Muslim origin used these public spaces, the association moved to another parish.

In the same year, the association moved to the center sports for athletics and then in another municipal area that the local institutions give to the team in exchange for the maintenance and cleaning of the spaces – activities done by some young member of the team paid with money saved from not using a fee-rented field. So the project has been going on for quite a long time. It was not been the result of a pilot, but was born from the private individual initiative of the founder.

As described before, the president and founder of the association has had some problems with the local Bangladeshi collectivity that saw in the cricket team led by a native a threat to the hegemony of the leaders of the local Bangladeshi associations (especially when the cricket team intervened in the organization of the public events and festivals of the immigrant collectivity). These frictions were later resolved by knowing each one, through the intervention of the young players themselves, through the mediation of social services and services for the social integration of the City of Venice, but also as the Venezia Cricket Club has taken a step back compared to the participation of the organization/management of the Bangladeshi collectivity public events.

A second turning point in the history of the project was the moment of centralization of the main responsibilities and roles in a single person as a response to a difficult economic-managerial moment for the project. This led to leave the moment of impasse, but – as mentioned – can be interpreted as a weakness element for the project itself.

There are about twenty-five practitioners/participants (some of them are both players and trainers), two or three training days a week from autumn season to summer season and an official match every week from spring season to summer season. The Venezia Cricket Club has four association meeting every year and takes part in four or five social event in the neighbourhood every year. It should be emphasized that the number of young people of Bangladeshi origin between 15 and 26 years in Mestre and Marghera neighbourhoods number several hundreds.

As mentioned the project has the following capacities/potentials:

- to create and improve social capital;
- to match/bridge between different social actors and social realities within the neighbourhoods;
- to reduce the distance between young people and the social actor active in the neighbourhoods;
- to improve and stimulate the empowerment of the young people, to develop their ambitions, competences and social network capacities;
- to stimulate and enable entrepreneurship;
- to create a sense of family and a sense of community among the users/players/members and to share every-day life problem solving.
- to improve young peoples' skills and capacities and to facilitate their access to the labour market.

The young people enjoy playing cricket in an official and organized team, to feel legitimately part of the neighbourhood and to be recognized as members of the city, to be able to find work placements through the Venezia Cricket Club and its social capital.

It should be stressed, however, that there are not quality standards of the services provided and that is not possible to delineate quality standards because of the long-term timespan of the project intervention and for the difficulty in measuring results from an empirical point of view, as mentioned in the evaluation methodology part of the present report.

The results are not linked to the achievement of the specific goals, as the process/path towards these goals, to the personal resources invested by the young people in this process/path and to the participation in the management of association's activities. One element of success can be constituted by the passage/switch done by the young users/players from the mere participation in the sports activities of the team to the participation in the association's activities and decisions processes and to the users/players attendance to the different courses related to the project (umpire, coach, first aid, etc.).

The personnel resources are sufficient although the ethnic-national and linguistic-cultural uniformity among the personnel is complained about. Most of the young people involved, in fact, is of Bangladeshi origin and it is very difficult to involve young people of other national origins, including the native one.

The financial resources, however, are not fully sufficient to fully cover the activities expenditures of the project. Sponsorships are not continuous and not guaranteed every year and neither is the public funding. Although the municipalities and local institutions provide its facilities almost for free, there are often unexpected expenses. This means that the president of the association and his family provide for some expenditures (food and transport, for example), anticipate with his own resources to cover the expenses or the team cannot participate at the championship in the first division.

There is a good level/degree of coordination and integration of the institutions/agents /governance structure in providing the activities, especially at local level. Venezia Cricket Club work and collaborate within a coordination of different social actors (formal policies structure, NGOs, others cultural and sports associations, parishes, scouts, Etam – that is to say the Community Animation Service of the Municipality, etc), local institutions (the municipality), agents of governance (the social services and Etam). The project network with all these subjects, and is well known among them. As mentioned, the association has participated in some public projects, such as Gener-Actions which provides cooperation between different local actors in the cultural, social, sports fields coordinated by the local institutions (the Department for Young People Policies of the Municipality of the City of Venice).

As mentioned, especially in Marghera (where the Venezia Cricket Club is based) there is a strong sense of community and a strong engagement of the citizens towards the common good and the social context. There is a lively civil society both in terms of informal committees of citizens and formal organizations. Parishes and associations have a significant and fundamental role in affording the social problems of the neighbourhood. It create a dense associative and third sector network and, at the same time, an intense communication, cooperation and coordination between local institutions/municipalities (with the institutional social services) and civil society/association/NGOs. For these reasons the municipalities and the local institutions provide public infrastructure for free (transports, spaces, fields and sports facilities, etc.).

Some specific examples of collaboration are constituted by the inclusion of foreigner unaccompanied minors (attending training courses and social inclusion project in Italy) in the team by NGO dealing with young refugees and foreign unaccompanied minors (ComuniCare association, Coop. Don Milani, etc.). Or even by some projects, written by the social services of the municipality of Marghera, aimed at the neighbourhood's young people, that provide "monitored" games and sports activities with Venezia Cricket Club.

It should be emphasized, however, that these experiences of coordination and cooperation do not find a structural and institutionalized place within the activities of municipal social services or in those of other services/projects/subject, but are born and coordinated by the individual will of single social workers. In any case, this is exactly the example in which cultural, leisure and sports activities are practiced by both NGOs and the youth themselves as an initiation of their engagement, and empowerment, representing the first step to continue with other activities/practices like training, learning, job-search, increasing skills. These involve and motivate young people, bring self-confidence and trust and, specifically for the Venezia Cricket Club, facilitate a social inclusion process. Actually, cooperation between the different social actors operating in the neighbourhood is not structured and planned in the long term, but develops from time to time and day by day.

## **4. Project implementation and outputs**

### ***4.1 Targeting of the program***

The project is open to all young people aged between 8 and 25 years. Initially, the project was aimed primarily at young people of immigrant origin, in the area of Marghera and Mestre, this meant specifically the component of Bangladeshi origin. Obviously, this did not mean the exclusion of anyone. Besides the young people of Bangladeshi origin (the most present within the neighbourhood, especially in young age cohorts), young Pakistanis, Sri Lankans,

Afghans (that is to say young people coming from national contexts, geographical and cultural context in which cricket is very popular) and also a few Italians took part in the project.

Currently, however, the founder of the association is trying to involve a greater number of users/players of native origin, with the aim to create a more diverse and “heterogeneous” group to increase social inclusion and intercultural integration, but this seems to be difficult as the young natives are most attracted by other sports (especially football) and they perceive cricket as a game “for immigrants” and, therefore, a subordinate and stigmatized sports.

Another difficulty is that a generational change is also missing among the players/users. If young people of native origin who take part at the association are a limited number, the young people of so-called “second generation”, like their Italian peers, are not very interested in cricket as they are more attracted to sports that are most popular in the social context in which they were born and in which they have been socialized (Italy) more than in the one of reference of their parents and their brothers who arrived in Italy with family reunification, but born in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Actually, mostly of the users/players of the Venezia Cricket Club are born in a foreign country and arrived in Italy after having spent some years in the country of their parents’ origin.

So, the same reasons that limits the involvement of young people of Italian origin, also limits the engagement of young people of immigrant origin but who were born and have grown up only in Italy.

After having done a reflection with respect to national origin and generational/cultural “identity”, a similar depth must be made also in relation to gender differences.

Actually, although in several countries of the Indian subcontinent female cricket is widespread, in the Italian context and even more in that of Marghera and Mestre, the girls who want to take part in the Venezia Cricket Club are almost nonexistent. This must be related to the social construction of a gendered habitus that diversifies the interests and the ways of living leisure and sports activities among boys and girls. But this must also be related to the construction of gender norms often effective within the Bangladeshi collectivity in migration and to the tight social control existing in the Bangladeshi collectivity of Marghera and Mestre. Both of these elements, in fact, discourage the use of public spaces, the public engagement in civil events and contacts with the male component of the peers for the young Bangladeshi girls.

The experience of a girl of Bangladeshi origin (sister of a player and coach of the team) is exemplary. She took part in the project, but has been pushed to leave such engagement/involvement by family and community pressures or, better, by the pressure the family has had on her, due to the fact that the community has pressured her family.

However, the association want to be as inclusive as possible and the founders of the project are trying to engage and include in the practice everyone, regardless of the context of national origin, language spoken and gender. Users are invited to participate in all activities of the association and of the team since the beginning of their involvement/engagement.

The main publicity/dissemination tool are: flyers and presentation in schools, different newsletters in different fields (social work, sports, activities in/of the Municipality), promotional cricket matches and festivals, City or Municipality festivals, internet and social networks.

## ***4.2 Addressing needs***

The better addressed needs are not only the need to be citizens of the residence and life context, the need for bottom-up engagement, the need for social inclusion and the need to practice a collective activity in a formal, structured and organized framework/setting, but also the need to have the to participate in a series of extra-sports experiences that young people of immigrant origin, because of the material and economic conditions that characterize their families (at least of certain nationalities in the context of Mestre and Marghera), usually cannot afford. Examples are trips out of their cities, traveling, having recreational and cultural exchanges with other cricket teams or during the matches and the championship, making new experiences like going to the mountains and trips through collaboration between different groups and associations involved in the neighbourhoods. It should not be forgotten, then, the opportunity to attend training, formative and specialization courses that can, at least partly, facilitate access into the labour market. All these aspects are connected to the (individual and collective) social capital of the association, and of its founder, in the districts of Mestre and Marghera and in Italy, as mentioned by some respondents:

It depends on whether he [the founder of the association] knows how to do it or not; sometimes, if I have a problem.... For example, now that I leave the job because I want to do another job and go to the professional course program, I went to Alberto [the founder of the association] and I told him: “now I would like to stop to work because I would like to go to a training course to become bartender, in the meanwhile can you find something for me? Can I train the kids in the schools?”  
(Man, 20 years old, bartender and student, Venezia Cricket Club players)

For me, Venezia Cricket Club has functions that goes beyond sport, in the sense that they play cricket in Venice, but not only play cricket, but for example the fact of going into schools and teach children to play cricket is a very useful experience.  
(Man, 23 years old, bartender, cricket coach and student, Venezia Cricket Club players)

There are about twenty-five practitioners/participants (some of them are both players and trainers), two or three training days a week from autumn season to summer season and an official match every week from spring season to summer season. The Venezia Cricket Club has four association meetings every year and takes part in four or five social events in the neighbourhood every year. Almost all players attend to these meetings with high engagement and intensity. As anticipated, the interviews with the young people reveal high subjective satisfaction and, above all, the importance that the practice plays in areas different from the sport one. A positive result that should be emphasized, moreover, is the network that has been created (and that is being strengthened and widened) between the different sports, cultural, social and spontaneous associations within the neighbourhood of which Venezia Cricket Club is part. This became more and more evident during the pilot project.

A success factor but, at the same time a result, could be the enlargement of the project size, its rootedness and the expansion of its network and its social capital. That is to say the strengthening of the informal associations network of which the project is part and the increase cooperation between the associations of the neighborhood.

The social capital that the project can unfold emerges as a key factor for the success of the practice itself. Even the self-management/bottom up aspect of the activities of the association/team seem to be a success factor for the purposes of the project.

### ***4.3 Empowerment, engagement and choice***

Empowerment and engagements, as mentioned, are the most characteristic aspects of the project and the ones that make the project innovative. The young people can take part in decision making about the activities/practices of the project and they are invited to do it as much as they can. An element of success is the engagement into the decision making and their direct contribution to the management and to the organization of the project's activities, budget, courses, matches, networks and so on. So, young people, then, have the opportunities to make decisions in all aspects of the project. In the recent past, they played the roles of secretary and treasurer – although this has not been done with due skill, and there have been some problems in the economic management of the association, as the founder of the project told us during some interviews.

Actually, young people are in the role of actor and principle agent in the project, although if they are involved and engaged in a top-down dynamic it is by an actor that is in a position of greater visibility, with greater symbolic power and social capital, in a higher position into the so called “civic stratification system” – that is to say the founder of the association.

Young people use the opportunities to choose and engage themselves in the decision making and into the associative activities, although not all at the same way. There is a consolidated core of young people who have practical and organizational roles in the project (coach, scorer, organizer of trips, organizer of the match schedule, promoter game of cricket in schools, etc.). Others do not directly perform tasks in the association, but attend and participate in all meetings and membership assemblies and participate in decision-making and others, however, who are only involved in the purely sporting aspects of the project. One of the founder's objectives for the project is that more and more young people will fully embrace a vision of the team as a social practice project and that a greater and greater part of the users/players will be involved in all aspects of the association and not just in the sports ones, which is only a means, a pretext, to reach other purposes (of social character social), but not the main objective/aim as the founder of Venezia Cricket Club repeated to us:

I was very interested in... not only the sporting aspects, but also cultural and social ones. It pleased me that boys commit themselves to the mother tongue festival, or to the Bengali New Year and that kept a relationship with the culture. [...] Among the results there is that some guys make the active “democratic step”, participating in the meeting, into the association life, into the decisions of the club. The results are there, but there is not a reflective moment... I don't care about the sport results, sport comes later. I am more interested in the path done together, the social and civic path. The results are that some of the guys participate to the social and civic activities into the neighbourhood. Some guys did a first aid course to become an asset to the team, other made courses for referees and so on...

(Man, 50 years old, full time Architect, Founder of Venezia Cricket Club)

### ***4.4 Stakeholders involved***

The stakeholders involved in the project are some social workers from Mestre and Marghera's Municipal social services, some members of other associations (sports associations and “social promotion” associations) in the neighbourhood context. But their involvement has been quite shallow. At the same time, however, it must be said that as the project took shape and grew stronger over the years, networking and collaboration between

the different social actors working in the area/neighbourhoods (both at the institutional and formal level) has intensified, as mentioned previously.

#### ***4.5 Competences and resources involved***

The competences of the stakeholders involved during the project have been to manage social projects, and to include the Venezia Cricket Club within the ranks of social subjects within which it is possible to place young people who must follow paths of social integration (unaccompanied minors, young people involved in alternative social path to the prison, young people in condition of social marginalization, etc.).

It should be underlined that the competences of the founder and principal agent at the same time are the most important device of the project.

The resources involved in the project have been/are monetary resources although if, from the quantitative point of view, are very limited, insufficient and, probably, less and less over time. Other kind of resources are the free use (or in exchange for maintenance work) of public spaces and sports facilities, free access to public events, ability to have access to the school and services network to promote the project.

Actually greater financial resources, better sports facilities and equipment, a van would be necessary.

#### ***4.6 Process evaluation criteria***

As mentioned, the Mestre, but especially Marghera, neighbourhoods constitute a fertile social context for the implementation of the project/practice and there had not been particular obstacles or barriers of any kind to the implementation of the project. As anticipated, there have been some interferences from the Bangladeshi collectivity that initially perceived the Venezia Cricket Club, led by a native, as a threat to the hegemony of the leaders of the local Bangladeshi associations (especially when the cricket team intervened in the organization of the public events and festivals of the immigrant collectivity). It has led to mafia-type threats (car tires cut, for example) against the founder of the Venezia Cricket Club. Other members of the Bangladeshi collectivity (or, better, leaders of political Bangladeshi migrant associations in Venice that were seeking visibility and power within the compatriots collectivity in Italy) tried to buy the club / team, because they saw in this an instrument of economic profit, completely misrepresenting the material reality of the association (closer to a debt situation than to a profit situation) and, especially, its social purposes.

I found holes in the wheels of the van just came back from the trip. In Marghera, some Bangladeshi were responsible for that. The infighting between Bangladeshi associations... it was a mafia message: "You help the people you should not help". One asked me to buy the club, because some wanted it would be propriety of a Bangladeshi association. The great political fragmentation that is in Bangladesh has been reported in Italy. As I was not ceding sovereignty of my president role, they supposed it was for me a great source of wealth. I was an enemy for some bangladeshi associations.

(Man, 50 years old, full time Architect, Founder of Venezia Cricket Club)

As mentioned, these problems were later resolved by knowing each other, through the intervention of the young players themselves, through the mediation of social services and services for the social integration of the City of Venice, but also as the Venezia Cricket Club has taken a step back in relation to participation in the organization/management of the Bangladeshi collectivity public events.

Another obstacle, although not directly connected with the implementation of the practice/project, is the subtle anti-immigrant racism, particularly anti-Bangladeshi, which remains on an informal level (although sometimes fed at the institutional level) that stigmatizes young people involved in the project:

At the beginning they used to play and train in a former parking of a transport company, in front of a church. The pastor just arrived made us realize that we were not in line with the projects of the parish. Even the people of the neighbourhood started to say: "They are muslims, in front of the church! They are foreigners, Indian, here!?" They were starting some useless dynamics of conflict. (Man, 50 years old, full time Architect, Founder of Venezia Cricket Club)

#### ***4.7 Innovativeness***

The areas of innovation are sport and leisure, education and training, employment and, more generally, social integration and citizenships.

The key innovative elements consist of: the decision-making and organizational methods (self-management and bottom-up decision-making methods) that provide for the involvement of young people; the fact that young people of immigrant origin – especially from Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Sri Lanka – can find a safety and protected space (both from the social and the urban point of view) that, at the same time, constitutes a space of social inclusion in the wider context of the neighbourhood in front of the native residents and a space in which they can legitimately spend their free time in front of the community of their parents' origin. A space, that is to say, where young people of immigrant origin can form relationships with the neighbourhood, its social actors and with their native peers, which is also a space in which they can hold together the different social and cultural worlds to which they belong.

At the same time, this allows them to be and feel socially included and to be able to enjoy a more equal redistribution of material and symbolic resources in the socio-territorial context of residence; to create and share social capital and to use this form of capital as a collective resource (that does not include economic costs) both collectively and individually.

As mentioned, the practice can be classified as aimed at social integration (SID) because since the project clearly tries to create social ties among young users and the neighbourhoods of residence, to network with the different social actors present into the neighbourhoods, therefore, encouraging integration between young people of different backgrounds and origins and social inclusion. But it can also be classified as aimed at elevating morals (MUD), because it tries to promote values of cooperation among young users according to the logic that the older one(s) advocate, monitor and help the younger one(s). As anticipated, however, the practice can be classified as aimed at redistributing resources (RED). Actually, the project tries to give to the young people of migrant origin the same opportunities to participate in institutional sports experiences as their peers of native origin and to have equal access to the public spaces, sports resources and social capital within the neighbourhood. It could be identified as forms of resources (of different nature) redistribution.

The practice expects and provides a solution in networks of the different social actors at different levels (mixed solutions), as it starts from the individual idea of a single person (the founder of the association), that involved the young people of migrant origin that used to play cricket informally. At the same time, the responsibilities have been concentrated on a single person and the project, until now, does not include a renewal of the leading actors or the progressive replacement of the roles. As mentioned, it may be an element of weakness for the project.

The figure of the founder and president of the association started using informal networks such as family-kinship and friends network (his first collaborators were members of his family and friends working in the neighbourhood social services). But it has been improved with the engagements of the young people (of course) and the institutional neighbourhood level, that is to say the NGOs, the other associations and the social services of the neighbourhood and the local institution of the City of Venice.

The key dimensions on which the project is focused are neglect, trust and engagement. The project, in fact, provides a kind of family-friendly social support within which young people can fit, stimulates their empowerment, enhance their skills, assume collective and individual responsibility towards the association and the team, include the young people of migrant origin in the social (and territorial) context of the neighbourhood, try to remove the social stigma with which they are labelled and to construct a positive image of them.

The practice can be placed in the following typology of Social Innovation:

- Learning and counselling; social capital; matching/bridging: as the project aimed to give to the users the opportunity to increase different skills and to attend extra-school training courses so the users can have certification and diplomas; as the project aimed to share the association's social capital with the members and create/increase the users' social capital.
- Empowerment (developing ambition, competences and social network): as the project aimed to stimulate self-empowerment between the young people of immigrant origin that are usually marginalized by the immigration society and stigmatized in the public spaces, through their civic engagement, their maintenance activities of the structures responsible for the game of cricket and their bottom up self-management of the association activities.
- Bridging: to reduce the distance between young people and the social actor active in the neighbourhoods. Through the increased or created social capital and the networking the young people are informed about the opportunities and the existence of other social realities (services, association, etc.).
- Stimulating and enabling entrepreneurship; co-creation; "communing"/tackling decay: the project has created a sense of family and a sense of community among the users/players/members and to share every-day life problem solving. They feel they belong to the family-team-association, but at the same time they feel they belong to the neighbourhoods, and they start to feel at home in the neighbourhoods (the users themselves, almost all young people with Bangladeshi origin, have chosen the name of the team-association: in Italian language and referred to the City of Venice). These ingredients have led to social inclusion processes in order to co-create a sense of aggregation open to young people to reduce isolation and social decay.

The experiences confirm that the driving forces for the development of social innovative practices in this target group are not young people themselves, but require an external actor who creates the project, gives support, manages the project (at least at its initial phase) and gives motivation and a concrete initiative in create the project. As already described, it also constitutes the element of weakness for the project. Actually, it may result that if the figure of

the founder and president of the association (in this case) should leave, the project probably would not be able to survive and continue growing.

#### ***4.8 Success factors and conditions, critical implementation barriers***

No significant changes in implementation have been made compared to the project design. The only changes have been the gradual wider and wider access to facilities and public spaces more and more suited to the project and, especially, the centralization of some managerial positions in one person (the founder of the association). The latter change, in addition to constituting, as already said, a point of weakness, can be seen as a temporary and partial failure of the project.

There were no similar services/practices in the area nor services/practices addressed to this specific target group.

The actors/practitioners consider the critical success factors to be both internal and contextual factors. Internal factors such as the social capital-networks of the founder that facilitated the implementation of the practice; the profile target group and for its social inclusion (and, of course, to be part of a cricket team). That means that the founder of the project has been able to identify some specific social needs of a part of the resident young people; the wider overall philosophy of the project that fits with the neighbourhood background and with the target groups' needs and skills. This last element is directly linked with external factors, such as the strong sense of community and the tradition of strong engagement of the citizens towards the common good of Mestre and Marghera, but especially Marghera, there is a lively civil society either in terms of informal committees of citizens or in formal organizations. As mentioned before, parishes, sport associations and scouts have a significant and fundamental role in addressing the social problems of the neighbourhood.

These success factors have been implemented through the design and development of the project itself. The association, in fact, has used its own social capital to achieve the objectives (individual and collective social capital), involving various social actors (both at informal and institutional level) in the neighbourhoods, thus contributing to increasing social networks, collaborations, the sense of community and the civic sense of the residents of Mestre and Marghera (and that one of the same practitioners, of course).

Some obstacles/barriers have been initially raised both by natives residents and by the Bangladeshi residents. The natives do not take kindly to youngsters of immigrant origin, often of Muslim origin, using public or parish parks and spaces for playing cricket. Some Bangladeshis, because of the leaderism that regulates the balance of power inside their collectivity/community and their associations, seeing the excellent results of the cricket team (in this case, they have been focused only on the purely sports results), wanted to use cricket to (im)prove their power in front of their compatriots and wanted to buy the team/association. Faced with the refusal of the founder there have been some mafia style warnings (e.g. someone cut the tires of the car of the founder).

## **5. Project results/outcomes (effects)**

We believe that the goals of the project have been accomplished and are still going to be accomplished. In fact, the goals of the project are not something achieved once and for all, but constitute a long-term process. For this reason, as mentioned in the evaluation methodology part of this report, it is not possible to delineate and monitor results and effects of the project, partly because those results and effects can hardly be measured in empirical terms, and especially in the short term. The results, in fact, are not linked to the achievement of specific goals, as the process/path towards these goals, to the personal resources invested by the young people in this process/path and to the participate in the management of the association's activities.

Positive unintended outcomes has been:

- that cricket has been a driving force for the wider integration and inclusion of the entire Bangladeshi collectivity;
- the common use of the Italian language done by the practitioners with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. It means improved language skills and, consequently, greater opportunities for social inclusion of the practitioners; the creation of a kind of “every-day multiculturalism” in the neighborhoods and lets arise the attention of the same practitioner (predominantly Bangladeshi) about not excluding other practitioners with other linguistic and cultural background (including Italians).

The project is continues positively and, as anticipated, the only negative elements are: the partial failure of a completely bottom-up management of the association and the subsequent centralization of some roles in a single person; the lack of generational turnover of practitioners. Another limitation is due to the scarcity of economic resources.

As there are not similar practices, is not possible to compare their costs.

## **6. Final reflections**

### ***6.1 The role of the project/practice***

We believe that this project has started to change some mechanisms and patterns of inequalities. On the one hand, the project has made a more equitable distribution of social (such as social capital and associative networks), symbolic (such as representation and contrasting stigmas), spatial (such as the possibility to legitimately use spaces and places) and sometimes materials (such as public founs and facilities) resources possible among young people of immigrant origin and those of native origin in the neighbourhoods. On the other hand the project mitigated the sense of not be listened to, deemed important and feeling strangers of young people of migrant origin, while it emphasises their interests, backgrounds, active role in the social context, their citizenship path and encourages them to put it together with other persons; creating social inclusion within the neighbourhoods and between young people with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

## 6.2 Innovation

The areas of innovation are sport and leisure, education and training, employment and, more generally, social integration and citizenships.

The key innovative elements consist of: the decision-making and organizational methods that provide for the involvement of young people; a more equal redistribution of material and symbolic resources in the socio-territorial context of residence; a self-managed cooperation and a kind of “cooperative learning and training” in which the older users help and support the younger ones. For example, players of the first team train the children of the second and third team, manage the keys to the gym, organize fundraising and keep the association's cash/budget. Moreover, the idea behind the project is that it is always possible to learn something from everyone, even the older members from the younger, with a view of co-education/mutual-education.

The practice can be classified as aimed at social integration (SID) because since the project clearly tries to create social ties among young users and the neighbourhoods of residence, encourage networking with the different social actors present into the neighbourhoods, therefore encouraging integration between young people of different backgrounds and origins and social inclusion. But it can also be classified as aimed at elevating morals (MUD), because it tries to promote values of cooperation among young users according to the logic that the older one(s) advocate, monitor and help the younger one(s). However, the practice can be classified as aimed at redistributing resources (RED). Actually, the project tries to give the young people of migrant origin the same opportunities to participate in institutional sports experiences as their peers of native origin and to have an equal access to the public space, sports resources and social capital within the neighbourhood. It could be identified as forms of resource (of different nature) redistribution.

Key dimensions related to the practice:

- learning and counselling; social capital; matching/bridging;
- empowerment (developing ambition, competences and social network);
- bridging: to reduce the distance between young people and the social actor active in the neighbourhoods;
- stimulating and enabling entrepreneurship; co-creation; “communing”/tackling decay.

Key dimensions related to the target group:

- motivated for integration into mainstream society, but in need of support;
- aiming for “alternative” ways to get ahead, with sufficient competences and/or social support.

Key innovative elements:

The method used by the founder of the project to involve young people and create empowerment. They have been supportive but not pampered. They tried to manage the association activities, to support each other, to improve their skills and make them available to put themselves at stake as a group. Gradually the founder of the project assigns them more responsibilities so that they could perceive the project as their project, and not simply a project they could take part in.

Project addressed the need of the target group to feel like citizens of the neighbourhoods and of the whole city, to feel they are important and capable, to be protagonists of their neighbourhood and also to give legitimacy both in front of the national collectivity of their parents' origin and in front of the native residents and groups of native peers.

### ***6.3 Success factors***

No significant changes in implementation have been made compared to the project design. The only changes have been the gradual wider and wider access to facilities and public spaces more and more suited to the project and, especially, the centralization of some managerial positions in one person (the founder of the association). The latter change, in addition to constituting, as already said, a point of weakness, can be seen as a temporary and partial failure of the project.

The actors/practitioners consider the critical success factors to be both internal and contextual factors. Internal factors such as the social capital-networks of the founder that facilitated the implementation of the practice; the profile target group and its focus for social inclusion, that means that the founder of the project has been able to identify some specific social needs of a part of the resident young people; the wider overall philosophy of the project that fits with the neighbourhood background and with the target group needs and skills. This last element is directly linked with external factors, such as the strong sense of community and the tradition of strong engagement of the citizens towards the common good of Mestre and Marghera.

These success factors have been implemented through the design and development of the project itself. The association, in fact, has used its own social capital to achieve the objectives (individual and collective social capital), involving various social actors (both at informal and institutional level) in the neighbourhoods, thus contributing to increasing social networks, collaborations, the sense of community and the civic sense of the residents of Mestre and Marghera (and that one of the same practitioners, of course).

Some obstacles/barriers have initially been raised by both native residents and by the Bangladeshi residents. The natives do not take kindly to youngsters of immigrant origin, often of Muslim origin, using public or parish parks and spaces for playing cricket. Some Bangladeshis, because of the leaderism that regulates the balance of power inside their collectivity/community and their associations, seeing the excellent results of the cricket team (in this case, they have been focused only on the purely sports results), wanted to use cricket to (im)prove their power in front of their compatriots

### ***6.4 Policy recommendations, transferability***

We believe that the pilot could easily be transferred and implemented by local stakeholders, both public and private. The best solution could maybe be a private-public partnership: private associations and organizations could lead the project, while public stakeholder (first of all, the municipal social services) could have a facilitating role, e.g. facilitating networks, co-projecting social inclusion paths, making the bureaucracy less tight, giving spaces and facilities.

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