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# Erasmus+

## We train with equity

### INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 3

*Workshops, Parish maps, narrative interviews and questionnaires*

*Collectively reflecting on the daily life of our places of life is essential to know them, learn to manage and take care of them. This implies having to put aside prejudices, interpretations and absolute values, and devote time and energy to the critical and joyful rediscovery of the distinctive characteristics that animate them. And, through this process, develop the feeling of belonging of the inhabitants to a place. The Community Maps retrace a creative path, a local, collective and inclusive reflection in the different contexts that experience them.*

by Donatella Murtas  
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## *Index*

What does Community Maps mean?..... 3

How has the concept of Community Maps evolved over time? ..... 6

What innovation has the "We train with equity" project brought? ..... 9

What were the steps for the creation of the Equity European Map? ..... 11

Sitography ..... 15



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## What does Community Maps mean?

The Community Map, also called receptive or cognitive map, is a tool with which the inhabitants of a territory have the opportunity to identify the most varied elements considered culturally representative of local identity.

It is a spontaneous map that depicts places as they are perceived by their inhabitants on the basis of direct experience and memories handed down; not only buildings, waterways, valleys and reliefs, but also distinctive characters, typical dishes, uses and local crafts, festivals and moments of socialization, animals, legends, cults and natural or historical events that have marked the community.

It is a map that finds meaning in the dialogical comparison between the social actors themselves, so that the memory associated with a place gives continuity to the collective memory by spreading knowledge. A sort of 'sentimental' landscape rich in history, culture and identity.

This conception of space evokes frank sensations because it enriches the places with one's own experience; it fills them with music, everyday life, scents, flavors, events, as they are alive in the social echo, which seems to be closely linked to the territory they belong to.

The concept of Community Map, as we understand it today, was born in England between 1982 and 1983 from a sensitive and engaging vision of the Common Ground. Geologist Sue Clifford, fashion designer Angela King and documentary filmmaker Roger Deaking are the founders of this non-profit environmental association whose purpose is and has been to connect nature with culture and the benefits that people can bring to their territory.

The project initially took the name of *Parish Map* whose term "parish" refers to the concept of British ecclesiastical parish or measure of the landscape, but also of the close



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link between people and places; *"the smallest arena in which social life takes shape, the territory for which you feel affection, which has meaning for you, of which you share some knowledge, for which you can easily feel indignation and a sense of protection, the neighborhood you know, which in some way contributed to your formation"*.

The concept is perfectly similar to that of morecommunity because it returns the anthropic and cultural aspect to which each place refers, as well as the interaction of the community with these characteristics. From the point of view of a *Parish Map* that wants to be the story of a place, repository of knowledge, collective and individual memories, realities perceived as a value by the community, Sue Clifford together with the Italians Maurizio Maggi and Donatella Murtas imported the model in Italy giving it the analog name of 'Community' '.

The term 'community' largely reflects the everyday dimension of inhabiting places. And it is precisely the everyday places that deserve more attention, so as not to fall into silence and become indifferent to us. "This is not because they have nothing more to say, but because they have absent-mindedly lost the ability to observe them, to listen to their messages and their stories, to distinguish their countless details, to understand their stratifications and their invisible plot, the reassuring everyday life, antidote against strangeness, disorientation and indifference.

To fill the inadequacy of existing maps, the community map sets aside absolute and immutable values through the critical and joyful rediscovery of a place by those who live there.

The construction of a community map takes place according to the logic of participatory planning which increasingly shifts the idea of territorial development towards a cultural conception linked to the aims of permanent education and active citizenship. From this point of view the 'local' takes on a wider and more tested dimension and this is precisely





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the aspect that we wanted to extrapolate and highlight in our personal and innovative project to create a sociological map, inclusive and didactic at the same time.





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## How has the concept of Community Maps evolved over time?

The *Parish Map* appeared in Italy with the name of 'Community Map' about thirty years ago, acquiring the British approach method aimed at enhancing and rediscovering the territory from the point of view of those who are local through experience and perceptions of people, without claiming completeness, rigor or impartiality.

Land *Parish Maps* give back to the maps a local and personal dimension focused on sharing, on handing down unwritten and specific knowledge to a place, in documenting and accompanying changes, in using personal attitudes, in indicating the relationships and the links between people and places and in revealing an overview as well as the details. The maps, thus conceived and created, are presented as an incredible tool within everyone's reach.

Initially, the most involved were the elderly, called to document the local tangible and intangible heritage through memory. Thanks to the transfer of knowledge, the interest has expanded involving other generations. In recent years the trend has been to stimulate children and young people to redevelopment projects, thus combining the new territorial perspective with the exercise of skills such as active citizenship, flexibility, creativity, passion, enthusiasm, organization, ability to team up, to work in groups and, in the event that the web version is envisaged, it would become a gym for the development of digital skills, nowadays transversal to any activity. Thus conceived, the Community Map is transformed into a wide-ranging tool for critical knowledge of the world and for the multidisciplinary educational approach.

Maps are a practical learning tool, through experience in the field. What is created is a path in stages that leads to the definition of the identity card of a territory through the perception that the people who live there have of it, obtained through a cultural process of participation and involvement.



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There is no collective memory that does not find a place in space, so the transmission of the cultural heritage of a given place, in addition to indicating its identity, indelibly marks its experience.

The original idea of Parish Map is to face the problem of a representation of places in the way they are perceived by those who live them every day, are the best connoisseurs. However, being landscape and population, as well as their bond, based on constantly evolving balances, even the Parish Maps are works in constant evolution, changing as new awareness is acquired.

The differences between the maps of the '80s and the current Maps of Italian Communities are not only temporal but also of the purpose of the instrument placing itself more and more in a more technical and less artistic dimension, of the increasingly understandable representation techniques and of the methods of drafting whose tendency is to entrust the investigation projects to technicians and experts for the practical realization.

7

Community maps intended as a process of revaluation are also becoming a valid preparatory tool for technical interventions to recover the territory, but above all for the recovery of the wise link between communities and nature.

The maps built in Italy since 2000 are just over twenty and show peculiar traits depending on the place. In the last twenty years they have more than doubled as a demonstration of the interest they arouse among people and almost all these maps are linked to the concept of ecomuseum, understood as a museum of time and space in a given territory; an innovative museum form, a dynamic process through which communities preserve, interpret and enhance their heritage according to sustainable development. Inserted in this context, the community map becomes a sort of guide, a map to orient oneself among the streets and paths of the ecomuseum.



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The Faro Convention, which entered into force on 1 June 2011 and was ratified by Italy in September 2020, promotes a broader understanding of Cultural Heritage and its relationship with communities and society. The convention encourages recognition that objects and places acquire importance for the uses they make of them and the values that people attribute to them and not just as such.

The construction of the identity map, in line with the principles of the Convention, increases in those who develop it the awareness of the historical, cultural, environmental and economic heritage that surrounds them in order to stimulate the skills of active citizenship and avoid the danger of abandonment of the territory or the homologation of the same to the thousand surrounding realities, with the risk of losing the characteristics that make it a special place.

The final result is a collective novel, built on the basis of the stories of the people involved in the common research activity, which will remain as a heritage of the communities in question and can be, why not, also an instrument for the promotion of tourism in the territory.





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## What innovation has the "We train with equity" project brought?

Each map is a specific experience, so there are many ways to make it. There is no standard classification procedure, however, the analysis of the experiences already examined has dictated the very precise intention of our project which is to abandon the territorial dimension in favour of a community ideal of inclusion and belonging in more generic terms.

The innovation lies in having used the Community Maps tool not from a geographical, cartographic or architectural point of view, but from a sociological, inclusive and didactic point of view. An original way to photograph and record the present state of cultural integration. We did this by approaching young people through workshops that involved them culturally, psychologically and physically. A heartfelt participation in the workshops was felt in all the realities involved in the three participating States.

9

The online training on inclusive soft skills and participation in the workshops were therefore fundamental for the phases of the choice, the argumentation of the choices, the spatial composition and the construction of the community maps.

The conceptualization of these activities through community maps would allow, even in wider and differentiated contexts, to restore value to everyday life and to enrich it with inclusive elements.

To have a track as realistic and potentially replicable as possible, the administration of a survey to all the students who took part in the realization of the "We train with equity" Project and in particular in the experimentation of the new training and awareness model, a moment that allowed to probe the role of the individual, the perception that young people have of themselves and the bond they have or would like to establish with others and with the territory in which they live.



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With this project we also wanted to launch a further challenge that consists in creating an Equity European Map with all the contents achieved by the students and that will contribute to the replicability of the project itself.

Given the multitude of variables at stake related to the different European countries involved, the heritage, the community, the perception of values and the way they are represented, each map can be unique and surprising. The uniqueness that distinguishes each map is a matter of content, form and subjectivity, since it tells the point of view of a group taken as a sample in a given historical moment; for this reason, it is distinctive and unrepeatable.

Once all the elements that characterize the map have been identified, the representations that follow our experimentation can be very free and may include the purposes of enhancing transversal skills, the territory, inclusiveness or any other knowledge that highlights the fruits of a path of broad community involvement, be it local, school, work or cultural communities.



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## What were the steps for the creation of the Equity European Map?

To achieve the realization of the Equity European Map, the first step was the administration to the students of a questionnaire with precise questions that allowed each of them to grow both as individuals in terms of awareness of their abilities, willingness to listen, curiosity and desire to engage in the first person; both as part of a community, in the care and enhancement of the quality of their relationships and the places in which to cultivate and protect them.

The observation of the target groups involved in the project activities has made it possible to understand their desire to build their own reality, with their own points of reference, which most of the time are not the conventional ones, to develop the soft skills essential to make the world more inclusive.

To provide a concrete vision of the survey activity, we provide below the questions of the questionnaire in which the students took part:

1. In which place do you feel most comfortable? And why?
2. Which place help you to express your personality to the fullest?
3. Where could you test the following soft skills, you learned with the "We train with equity" project?
  - a. "Critical thinking, public speaking and team working"
  - b. "Analytical thinking and self-awareness"
  - c. "Soft skills against discrimination"
  - d. "The power of the right words"
  - e. "To combat social exclusion and early school leaving"
4. What is the place where you feel you have developed the most awareness of your identity and openness to others?





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5. Which is the place where knowledge and comparison of other cultures is promoted? And what attitudes and best practices are adopted?
6. What would you do to promote intercultural dialogue? And what place will be the best to do it?
7. What new ways of tackling discrimination and promoting equal treatment opportunities would you adopt in your...
  - a. School
  - b. Family
  - c. Sports-recreational club
  - d. Another place to recommend?
8. How would you imagine a map of the places you just described?
9. Would you give more space to physical places, or would you devise symbols to recognize and include knowledge, uses, cultures?
10. If you had to think of a sentence to describe the community map what would you describe?

12

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In the development of the initiative, interviews were necessary to confirm or refute some feelings about the orientation that young people have regarding space and non-formal learning. The use of standardized scales would have proved inappropriate considering the answers given by the teen-agers. The goal is therefore to provide them with a support that helps them to extricate themselves in the places where their skills are at their highest and to recognize and strengthen their resources.

The questionnaire went beyond mere quantitative research, in some cases the survey takes on a narrative dimension to compose a general framework that relates people, places and behaviors. The awareness of these entities, which thanks to their expression through the questionnaire, lose abstractness, will allow the target audience to feel more and more comfortable in the contexts of everyday life and in general allows us to draw universal guidelines that can be spent in similar areas.



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In this way we have been able to create a permanent and always updatable 'archive' of people, places and their attitudes in reference to the realities considered, to prevent this knowledge from being lost. The contribution of future patrons will add value to this heritage of collective awareness.

Going into more detail we see that the analysis of the answers has made it possible to collect all this information and to draw national and collective trends. The questionnaire, whose answers we will deepen below, was administered to over 100 students of Italian, Polish and Romanian nationality between 15 and 18 years old in such a way as to guarantee them anonymity and this allowed us to have an honest result, without conditioning of any kind.

Most of the adolescents sampled consider the home, widely understood, friends and school contexts in which to feel at ease and best express their personality. Regarding the maximum expression of oneself, the practice of sports and hobbies, contact with nature and to a small extent religion have also emerged to be synonymous with the manifestation of freedom.

The school is also the place where transversal skills and anti-discrimination attitudes are not only taught and transmitted, but also where they are put into practice through dialogue and confrontation between friends. In this regard, the Erasmus+ program through European Days, exchanges, classroom training and good practices plays a key role in promoting intercultural dialogue and equality.

With the questions we went beyond making the children think about their actions and places of everyday life; we also asked them how they would imagine a graphic representation of what was expressed and, having reached a greater awareness of their needs and abilities, what a community map could mean for them.



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Obviously, we did not expect it to be a simple concept to assimilate, that of community maps, even more so if distanced from the purely geographical context and instead many answers have been able to surprise us and give us ample ideas for growth.

The community map for most of the young people involved is the graphic representation of the places that make them feel good, where they can feel respected and accepted, free from prejudice and external conditioning that can limit the maximum expression of themselves. These places, both physical and symbolic inclusive of knowledge, customs and cultures, could be represented by colored flags or even rainbows linked by paths of inclusion and dialogue activities involving young people.

A further innovative suggestion was to make the map usable as an internet service accessible from a website or from a mobile app, like Google Maps, so that other young people with the same needs can orient themselves in this community of purpose.



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## Sitography

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