

CONTINUE Conversation of Change Event - Report

| | |
|--|--|
| Name of Organisation | Per Esemplio Onlus |
| Country of Event | Italy |
| Report Writer and Email Address | Emanuela Firetto: e.firetto@peresempionlus.org Alberta Buffa: a.buffa@peresempionlus.org |
| Number of Attendees | 28 |
| Description of Attendees | The attendees were a class of students, two members of the student council, two teachers, and four of the participants of the storytelling workshop. |

Short Description/Overview of the Event (3 - 5 sentences)

The event took place in the auditorium of the high school Regina Margherita in Palermo city. The participants involved were a class of said high school plus two of the members of the student council (two students) and four of the participants of the storytelling workshop. All attendees actively participated in all the activities we held and expressed their enthusiasm in being able to share their feelings, thoughts and ideas.

From the discussions at the event, please answers the following:

- **What did you learn about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the lives of young people?**
- **How does this relate to how socially included or excluded they are?**

(10 bullet points approx.)

The attendees highlighted both negative and positive effects the COVID-19 pandemic had on their lives.

Negative:

- Lack of motivation and inspiration due to boredom and the monotony of lockdown;
- Lack of spontaneity and uncertainty of the future: too many new rules that keep changing (curfew, specific territory rules, etc.) and the constant in and out of lockdown renders the planning for the future, even near future, almost impossible;
- Stress, anxiety and fear affected the mental health of young people;
- Lack of human contact: lockdown prohibited teenagers from socialising with peers. Such lack of face-to-face socialisation, which is vital for the development of young people, brought in them more insecurities and made it harder for them to open up to people and build new relations;

- Distortion of time: the two years of pandemic made young people lose touch with time, as they can hardly distinguish if something happened in the first few months of lockdown or now. They feel like they have been robbed of two years of their lives;
- limits of the "online world": school, friendships and relationships are not the same through a computer.

Positive:

- They have learned to appreciate the small things and to not take everything for granted;
- They had the time to think more and reflect about their lives: who they are, who they want to be, what they like, etc.;
- They had the opportunity to stop and observe the world from an “outsider” perspective;
- They had the chance to rediscover and strengthen some relationships with family members and friends.

**What ideas did the attendees come up with for social actions?
(List all ideas)**

The ideas the attendees came up with revolved around the school’s context. All the ideas discussed could be group under three main categories:

1. Psychological support:

- Accessible and inclusive listening and counselling points at school;
- Establishing greater open dialogue between teachers and students;
- Psychological support available at school;
- Raising both teachers and student’s awareness of mutual respect and of social inclusion.

2. Extracurricular activities:

- Weekly/monthly hours dedicated to the study and discussion of current events and topics with a focus on intercultural and intersectional learning;
- Hold meetings in class with associations or specialists in different fields and professions in order to gain different skills and have a better understanding of the world outside of the scholastic context;
- Have the possibility to take part in more extracurricular activities, such as volunteering activities;
- Have the chance to carry out some lessons in the field regularly (e.g. visit a museum/monument related to the historical period being studied) in order to discover more in-depth the history of their own city;
- Dedicate 1 or 2 hours per week/month to socialising in the classroom and create a comfortable and safe space where students can share ideas, opinions and thoughts (self-managed class)

3. The school’s space:



Head Office: The Fort Offices, Artillery Business Park, Park Hall, Oswestry, Shropshire, SY11 4AD.

Email: enquiries@peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk

Website: <https://peoplesvoicemedia.co.uk>

Company No:3083575

Charity No:1059681

- To keep the school's facilities open in the afternoon and provide students with group study rooms and tablets/computers for digital learning;
- Increased use of the school's outdoor spaces (garden, atrium, gym, etc.) for lessons, for socialising between students (not only from the same class) and for other activities;
- Maintain outdoor recess;
- Hold more specific and varied sports lessons to discover various new sports and train different parts of the body.

**What small, immediate actions did the attendees say they would commit to doing?
(List all actions)**

The small actions attendees want to commit to doing now stem from the bigger actions above-mentioned:

- Having more moments dedicated to open dialogue and listening (moments like the Conversation of Change event we held), which can lead to more personal reflection;
- Commit to listening to others more;
- Be more aware of what is going on around them and proactively engage with their surroundings.

Use the space below to tell us any other relevant details or reflections on the event.

The Conversation of Change event represented for the attendees the first time in which they were able to express their thoughts and feelings regarding the pandemic. They felt listened to, which seemed to be of high importance to them, since they are not used to it. They expressed their need to speak up about things that are important to them and that affect their lives. The two of the members of the student council expressed the desire to share the method in other schools.