CITIZED – T 1.2

REPORTING GRID FOR THE CASE STUDY

Rete Sicurascuola - Safe School network

Section 1: PARTNER INFORMATION

Name of the partner	IIHL - International Institute of Humanitarian Law
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Researcher(s)	Irene Baraldi, Claudio Dondi
Methodology used to conduct the research *(please explain how you conducted the research, whether you used qualitative and/or quantitative research; primary and/or secondary sources)*	This work was carried out through qualitative research methods. To conduct the research, researchers made use of both primary and secondary sources: ● Primary sources: the IIHL team conducted an interview with three members of the Safe School Network, the case study chosen. The Interview took place on March 24th 2021 on zoom platform. ● Secondary sources: books, books' chapters and online articles materials related to the case study were consulted to fill in the report.

Section 2: CASE STUDY

Name/Title of the initiative	**Rete Sicurascuola - Safe School network**
Level of implementation *(more than one field may be indicated)*	☐ International ☐ National ☑ **Regional** ☑ **Local** ☐ NGO(s)' initiative ☑ **Bottom-up** ☐ Other *(please specify……………………………………………………………………….)*
Country/organisation in which the initiative is/was implemented	Italy
Region, city, or area of implementation *(if relevant)*	Mainly Liguria region

Local institution/organisation or other relevant settings	The Safe School Network has collaborated with numerous institutions and entities. Their Network has a consolidated partnership with the Association "The Multiplier" and the Regional School Authority of Liguria. Other relevant partners that collaborated with the Network are the University of Malmö (Sweden), the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (Italy) and the National Association of Time Banks.
KEY WORDS *(please identify some key words that identify the initiatives' topic area)*	Citizenship education, prevention of bullying, active participation, school inclusion, prevention of school drop-out, focus on equal opportunities
Scope of the initiative	☐ **Teachers' training policies** ☐ **Policies generically directed to students and citizens including tools for teachers** ☐ Curricula - related policy ☐ WSA - related policy ☐ **Partnerships**: *please specify*……………………………………………………… ☐ Other………………………………………………………………………………. **Short description** The Safe School Network was created in 2008 with the aim of developing research, training, planning and testing actions to promote safety in schools. The Network acts following the idea that the acquisition of constitutional citizenship principles should be promoted not only through traditional disciplinary paths, but also by promoting in schools practices oriented towards dialogue, trust, participation. The activities promoted by the Network are based on listening to the needs of young people and teachers. The Network mainly promotes a practice called MNR (Methodology of Narrative and Reflection), conceived by the association *The Multiplier*, which is one of the partners of the Network.
Which needs/problems does this initiative address(ed)?	Between 2002 and 2006, the Association "The Multiplier" conducted a series of research in some schools in the province of Genoa. The results of the research showed some main recurrent issues (Caviglia and Peccenini, 2014; Interview, March 2021): 1. The need to promote dialogue and communication-oriented activities among students; 2. A growing frustration expressed by the teachers in managing the classroom. As emerged also during the interview, the sample of teachers that participated in the research expressed a sense of isolation. As the interviewees explain, when there are problems in the classroom, teachers are frequently left by themselves to deal with them. As a consequence of these research results, the Safe School Network was created not only to support teachers in managing the class by providing them

with facilitation activities, but also to create school inclusion and a positive school environment (Baraldi, 2014a).

Description of the initiative *(please provide a full description of the initiatives by addressing issues such as: implementing actors, targeted actors, period of implementation, funds, objectives of the policy)*	The Safe School Network aims to enhance school integration and to prevent possible uneasy situations in schools, such as those linked to violent episodes, bullying, or other similar situations. The Network implements various practices and initiatives, such as: ● Project monitoring and assistance, training support for teaching and managerial staff and evaluation of the school activities; ● Organisation of conferences, training (workshops and seminars) and social research, with the involvement of school communities; ● Establishment of agreements, connections and alliances with local authorities and educational agencies in the area. The Network's main activity is the promotion in classrooms of a facilitation system aimed at enhancing dialogue and openness with and among students, through participatory activities involving confrontation and mediation. This facilitation practice is called Methodology of Narrative and Reflection – MNR. The objective of this facilitation method is to encourage students to reflect upon the possible problematic aspects of their experience, which may regard the relations between peers and parents, the risks linked to their actions and the use of violence. This practice consists of a series of three or four meetings in the classroom during school time each lasting 2 hours. The meetings are supervised by two teachers already trained in MNR (a facilitator and an observer). The facilitator is in charge of coordinating the session, called *focus group*. The session is divided in 4 phases, introduced by a brief presentation of the facilitator. 1. The first phase consists of an individual reading and a reflection of each student on a short narrative, regarding a problematic social relationships involving children 2. The second phase consists of the spontaneous creation of small groups composed by four students. The groups are asked to reflect upon the text and debate what happened in the text. 3. The third phase consists of the whole class debating the text. 4. In the fourth phase, the facilitator summarises the most important elements that emerged during the discussion. Throughout all the phases, the students are provided with a so-called Narrative Sheet (*scheda narrativa)* consisting of a series of guidelines to participate in the activities. All meetings are videotaped: this is a key aspect of the methodology because it allows researchers to write the transcript of the discussion and prepare for the follow-up focus group. **The role of teachers**

| | Teachers play a key role in the practice of MNR. As previously argued, this practice rose mainly as a consequence of teachers' needs of practicing new and more effective ways of managing the classroom. Therefore, teachers' trainings in MNR practice were developed in order to make the teachers able to manage for a long time the relationships with the group (or groups) of all the students. At the same time, teachers need to strengthen those communication skills that allow them to manage the class with educational and didactic effectiveness.

Since 2004, several teachers have been trained to practice the methodology. Currently, the Network supports teachers in the dissemination, consolidation and use of the methodology. |
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| **Evaluation and impact**
(Please specify what impact this initiative could have and cite any relevant impact reports if available) | Since the practice has been implemented for almost twenty years, a certain number of researches have been carried out. In 2011, the outcomes of the activity of the Network were evaluated by the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia and the results were published in various essays and books. The key impacts of the practice can be summarised as follows:

Impacts on students

● According to a research conducted in 2014 (Baraldi, 2014a), facilitation systems such as MNR promote students' active participation more effectively than traditional education systems. This happens for a variety of reasons, such as: the absence of assessments allows students to feel free to express themselves, to contradict facilitators' formulations or to avoid answering facilitators' questions. Similarly, disagreements and alternative perspectives are treated as enrichment.

● Pre-session and post-session questionnaires of a similar research (Baraldi, 2014b) showed that the use of a facilitation system also improves the learning abilities of children. This is particularly true when it comes to their understanding of the perceptions of the consequences of their actions, based on reflection developed in the classroom.

Impacts on teachers:

● Through the MNR training, teachers acquire new skills in classroom management, recognize problematic dynamics and promote constructive initiatives. More recently (since 2015), the training has also focused on competence in conflict management;
● Teachers also have the opportunity to share their experience (both positive and negative) with other teachers. They find a place where they can express their difficulties within the class and collectively work out effective solutions and create a support network. |

Longitudinal dimension of the initiative *(please specify whether the policy evolved throughout its implementation)*	The Safe school Network was born in 2008 thanks to teachers' enthusiasm following a research promoted in 2002. In this year, in several European countries a questionnaire-based study on school violence addressed to students was implemented. Many Italian students participated in the collection of the narratives. The large participation led some of the teachers involved in the project to create a working group on a facilitation methodology. At the same time, a training course for teachers supported by the Municipality of Genoa was created. The idea was to develop a way to manage the class that would involve the active listening to students' needs. This experience led then to propose the questionnaire in some schools of another city of Liguria region, Sestri Levante. Since 2005, the methodology promoted by The Multiplier has been part of the projects of the Liguria Regional Educational Authority: this allowed the implementation of the MNR practice in many schools, with 2 teachers in each school involved in the methodology. Thus many schools were involved, also in the suburbs of Genoa. The following years represented a turning point for the whole practice since a group of scholars from Universities and of school experts became involved in the study of the methodology, in order to give the practice a theoretical basis. At the same time, working groups on researching the methodology were created, involving the teachers already trained in the MNR practice. The implementation of these working groups led to an improvement of competences for teachers in managing the class. These working groups were promoted by the Regional Education Authority once a month. Following these meetings, teachers' enthusiasm led to an increasing willingness to support and train teachers on dialogic communication, facilitation and mediation. This led to the intensification of the training courses also with the collaboration of the University of Malmo and of the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia. A study visit to Sweden was also organised. Throughout the years, the evaluation of the practices has been implemented mainly by the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia and a training course for teachers was organised. The intensive training course that followed highlighted the need to consolidate and revise aspects.
Dialectical dimension of the initiative *(please specify any relevant debates concerning the policy: public opinion's reaction, debates in Parliament; reactions of local communities; etc…)*	Generally speaking, the initiative is positively welcomed in the educational community. ● The MNR practice has spread to 32 schools in the Province of Genoa, involving a total of 500 teachers in training, 250 teachers and about 200 classes. (Caviglia & Peccenini, 2014). ● As argued by the interviewees, there is no great opposition to the practice, although in some cases teachers may not be interested in the practice and may not want to give up one of their sessions for it. ● Even after retiring, many teachers have kept collaborating with the Network.

	● Universities and research institutes keep conducting research on these practices and there is the willingness to further improve it. An interesting point to highlight is how the practice interacts with the new Italian law on Civic Education promoted in 2019 by the Italian Government. According to the interviewees, it could be interesting to realise a training course that links the MNR practice with the teaching of civic education. As argued by the interviewees, the teaching of civic education is structured in a traditional way, where the teaching of knowledge prevails over practical activities learning. The MNR practice may be included in the curriculum of civic education teaching as an alternative to deal with certain topics in a more innovative way, e.g.by starting from students' perspectives.
Critical aspects in the implementation of the initiative *(if any, please specify how the critical aspects were detected)*	The interviewees highlighted 3 critical aspects: 1. The **Covid-19 pandemic** created a great difficulty to the implementation of the practice, which requires in-person interaction. MNR practitioners are currently trying to develop ways to implement an online form of MNR; 2. Throughout the years, many teachers have joined the MNR practice and the interest in implementing this methodology has rapidly grown. Nevertheless, **the new generations of teachers are not easy to involve**. They did not experience the enthusiasm of the beginning and therefore it can be sometimes difficult to involve them in the Network. The same issue regards the involvement of newly nominated headteachers. 3. This is not considered a critical aspect of the initiative, but it may be considered a challenge: the interviewees expressed the **willingness to test alternative ways of implementing the MNR practice**: currently the tool used is a narrative grid and they would like to test other tools, such as comics, or a script of a screenplay.
Upscaling potential *(please explain whether the initiative has the potential to be reproduced on a bigger scale in the future)*	Throughout the years, the Network has collaborated with numerous partners, also coming from other regions. During these collaborations it appeared clear that geographical distances represent a challenge to address. According to the interviewees, the Network does not have an administrative office and it works thanks to the voluntary teachers who believe in the projects. Therefore, creating and maintaining relations with distant partners requires an effort that the Network is not able to put into practice right now.

Innovative elements in the initiative *(please list some of the initiative's elements that can be considered as innovative)*	● **Citizenship education through participatory methods.** While the school is traditionally seen as a tool to teach knowledge, the practice of MNR represents an innovative way to promote active and participatory learning in the classroom. The idea behind MNR, is that in order to foster the acquisition of the constitutional principles of citizenship, in addition to disciplinary courses, relationship practices based on dialogue, trust and participation should be promoted. ● **The continuous research activity allows a constant evaluation and improvement of the practice which brings benefits** in promoting school inclusion; promoting a positive school environment in order to foster democratic citizenship; supporting teachers who are already MNR operators in the work of dissemination, stabilization and use of this methodology; designing and implementing training activities aimed at the dissemination of MNR methodology as a teaching tool. ● **The bottom-up characteristic of the Network can be considered an innovative aspect itself**. The initial willingness of teachers to create a partnerships and to promote strategic actions made schools "training agencies" able to work together with others for the education of all citizens and not just for their own students. ● The large network of schools allows the activation of forms of **sharing resources** for training and classroom interventions (Caviglia & Peccenini, 2014). ● **Flexibility** in facing a large range of problems of communication, inclusion and action in the classroom and outside the classroom, adapting to local needs and emerging issues. ● **Systematic and complex training initiatives**
Challenges addressed	● **Enhancing the students' participation in school activities:** the practice aims to foster encounters and collaboration among students, to strengthen students' civic and social competencies, to promote in-depth study of certain topics of citizenship education, allowing them to protect themselves from exposure to information that damages critical thinking skills and that risks activating experiences that become habits themselves, reinforcing anti-social behaviours. ● **Negative scholastic environment:** the practice aims to promote teachers' better management of the class, to prevent anti-social behaviours like bullying and cyberbullying. ● **Teachers' isolation in dealing with problems in class:** the methodology addresses the need to listen to teachers who may feel isolated and give them collective support. ● **Promotion of democratic principles in schools -** Through its activities, the Network aims to promote **democratic principles** based on the responsibility of each individual, to offer students forms of active participation in the school life and to reflect upon different topics

	• **To promote activities in class that are validated and assessed also on a theoretical level and the active involvement of teachers**. According to the literature on MNR (Caviglia & Peccenini, 2014), "experts" from outside the school were often called upon to intervene on problems of various kinds, especially of educational importance, with debatable effectiveness and with the effect of depriving teachers of responsibility for the problem faced. In this practice, teachers become active practitioners and facilitators able not only to effectively communicate in the classroom but also to operate in order to enhance children's agency.
Any other relevant comments/details or information	
References *(if available, list the references used to conduct the analysis)*	Interview with three members of the Safeschool Network, 24th March 2021 Baraldi C. (2014a), Children's participation in communication systems: A theoretical perspective to shape research. In: N. Nicole Warehime (ed.) Soul of Society: A Focus on the Life of Children and Youth, 63-92. Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing. Baraldi (2014b), Facilitare la comunicazione in classe. Suggerimenti della Metodologia della Narrazione e della Riflessione. FrancoAngeli, Milano Caviglia R, Peccenini R, (2014), La Metodologia della Narrazione e della Riflessione in Baraldi (2014), Facilitare la comunicazione in classe. Suggerimenti della Metodologia della Narrazione e della Riflessione. FrancoAngeli, Milano Randazzo G., Russo M., Vacatello M.T. (2009), MNR. Metodologia della Narrazione e della Riflessione, Erga, Genova. Randazzo G., Peccenini R., Russo M., Vacatello M.T. (23 June 2009), Voci dalla Classe - Promuovere Promuovere la socialità a scuola - La Metodologia della Narrazione e della Riflessione, pp. 11 - 14. Edizioni scolastiche, Bruno Mondadori, Milano. Website Sicurascuola: • Home page: http://www.sicurascuola.com/ • Safeschool Network Manifesto: http://www.sicurascuola.com/chi-siamo/ • Network Agreement: http://www.sicurascuola.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/accordo-di-rete-FIRMATO_SCUOLA_SICURA_signed-signed.pdf • Network CV: http://www.sicurascuola.com/wp-content/uploads/2007/06/CV-RETE-SICURASCUOLA_2021.pdf
OTHER DETAILS	
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Challenges faced in analysing the policy *(if any)*	/