

Report about Italy IIT, July 15-24th, 2022

Organisers: Angela Attianese (Italy), Elena Masi (Italy), Fabio Comacchio (Italy)

Trainers: Giacomo Poleschi (Italy), Christlin Rajendram (Sri Lanka), Gabriele Grunt (Austria), Irmtraud Kauschat (Germany), Karoline Bitschnau (Austria), Shona Cameron (UK)

Translators: Aldo Riboni (Italy), Davide Facheris (Italy), Kim Meyer-Cech (Austria), Lea Müller (Germany), Monika Winkler (Austria), Shera Lyn Parpia (Italy)

Castel Coldrano - South Tyrol/Alto Adige - Italy

We chose South Tyrol - Alto Adige because this region of in Italy is the crossroads of two languages and cultures. A painful chapter of history in the last century still affects the life and coexistence of people here as well as the relationship between the two neighbouring countries Austria and Italy. As most Italians themselves are unaware of this situation, we chose to support connection between the different cultural groups by working in three languages, English, Italian and German. This complex and challenging undertaking infused all our meetings in the 3 years leading up to (we started preparation on 10 August 2019), the event and the IIT itself. A BIG thank you to the team of translators who supported us in doing this.

This three wsy translation is intended to honour and build on the work Karoline Bitschnau, Gabriele Seils and Gabriele Grunt who have been sharing NVC for years in this region.

We had 70 participants and a team of 15, so we were 85 in all. 41% Italians, 29% Austrians and 14 other nationalities.

21 participants were Certification Candidates and 42 were first-time IIT participants, 32% were beginners.

We celebrate that about 20% of the participants were under 30 years of age and about 27% were male. We also celebrate that about 25% of the participants were able to receive a scholarship for participation.

The trainer team celebrates the organisers, in short, they held a space of care and an eye for detail, all with an integrity of living NVC. Everything was held together by them and enabled us to offer with ease.

The organizers celebrate the 'magic wall' brought by Giacomo, which made it possible to keep track of all the offers day by day, contributing to creativity, play and overview.

Participants were invited to bring musical instruments and right from the first evening we were blessed with music and creativity.

The castle added a magical feel and we were well looked after.

The collaboration between the trainers was smooth and we enjoyed each other's companionship and contributions. We especially valued Chris' contribution being available for face to face meetings with participants who were in some distress. This contributed to easy flow during the sessions.

At one point, there were tensions in a group of participants that we could use as an example for mediation. The members of that group had asked for support and agreed that the mediation should be public for anyone who wanted to participate. The mediation was conducted in German and there were some witnesses who did not speak German. However, they found it useful to be there and perceived a change in the atmosphere, body language and the way participants interacted with each other.

We also celebrate that despite many changes in the organiser team in the course of several years of pandemic before the IIT the organisers and trainers kept in close connection and went through the challenges together. This contributed to the connection we all enjoyed.

Overall, a strong container was created- where we learnt to stretch into the work of translation, meet each other beyond differences and grow and learn together. .

We have an idea that many strong connections were made for building projects and for collaboration and support. We moved as a group with everyone included and resources coming from all- not just the team.

We checked how our dream of connecting the German speaking community in South Tyrol, a minority in Italy, to the Italian speaking majority unfolded:

Here are a few comments from participants regarding the special experience:

The meeting with the German-speaking Italians. I did not know they were there, we were not connected. I heard how lonely and frustrated they were. We built connections. Thank you for taking this effort to translate in two languages to make this meeting possible. At the beginning some complained about double translation and then the whole group learned. How beautiful, that is how social change can be. We lived it together. It is not convenient in our language. It is taking an effort, sweating (as Gabriele said :), this is needed in our societies to integrate minorities and discriminated groups. I am amazed and grateful that CNVC thinks of that when planning IITs. That is living integrity and very inspiring for me. Changed my worldview: it is less about the content of the training but even more about what we live by setting it up and how we interact. After so much talk about social change I heard this was different. Amazing.

That (the IIT) took place in South Tyrol. Marshall lived in Switzerland and the IITs took place there. Since then, German-speaking IITs have not been accessible to Swiss people, as they only take place in Germany. South Tyrol is easy for us to reach, even without flying. And the multilingualism of the IIT has brought Swiss people with different mother tongues together. Unique! And the end of a long dry spell, when Switzerland was closed to international CNVC training. Thank you for this being taken into account by CNVC. I am also fascinated by the targeted use of IITs to promote political minorities. For many, little was

known about the situation and everyday life in this German-speaking region of Italy. It was fascinating and educational to learn about and I got the impression that many bridges were being built. Not only to Austria and Switzerland, but also to the Italians, who obviously didn't know this region at all. To be honest, as a Swiss I had the impression beforehand that the CNVC talked a lot about social change but did little (transfer of power from countries like the USA, Germany, France, cooperation with ethically difficult companies like Zoom!!! etc.) The IIT has this picture totally changed. People were at work here who exemplify social change.

hats off

Thank you Karoline and Gabriele for this initiative! Thank you Angela and CNVC for the effort in translating this IIT into German and Italian. Only in this way was it possible for the Italian NVC people to finally meet across this language barrier. It has strengthened our region and I hope that there will be an IIT in South Tyrol again in a few years. I hope that Switzerland will have a turn again, there are similar problems there. Thanks to the lady from CNVC who worked to ensure that not only the big countries are empowered but all people count and the weaker ones are empowered.

It was an eye opener 1. I did not know about this completely different culture in my own country. It is not just a few German-speaking people. The whole substrate is German speaking, everything is written in German, they have different language and culture. And as the Italians do not know they are separate and alone. Thank you for making the IIT in this region and for translating it into two languages. It was an eye opener in many ways! And it will change something for the NVC community in Italy! Definitely!