City: Messina

Basic info about your city	The city of Messina is located in the north-eastern corner of Sicily and is the third largest city on the island. It sits in a highly strategic position in the Mediterranean. Since the Roman era has been the most important port in Sicily- it is the closest point in Sicily to the mainland of Italy and the city has close ties with the region Reggio Calabria. For centuries Messina has been a major transport hub and gateway to and from Sicily. The city's economy is built primarily on it's seaport (both commercial and military shipyards), cruise tourism, commerce and agriculture

Messina has a long history of trade and migration. Its' early history reflects that of Sicily more generally and it has developed through waves of occupation, invasion and settlement from Greek settlement, Roman rule, Byzantine invasion, Arab rule and Norman occupation. It is a place with layers of history and culture

	going back into antiquity.
	Messina has a total population of 234,293, with 5.1% (11,885) of inhabitants registered as non-Italian. The main origin of migrants is Sri Lanka, the Philippines and N. Africa- mainly Morocco. Messina is an arrival city and key transit point for Europe, particularly for migrants crossing the Mediterranean from Libya to Italy. Between January 2016 and May 2017 more than 18,000 people have arrived by boat including 2,925 unaccompanied minors. About 2,000 unaccompanied children are currently in care in Messina.
	The management of refugee arrivals is through a two-stage reception system. Stage one deals with immediate issues including identification and registration by police, health screening and emergency accommodation in camps. Messina provides 450 places for adults in different camps located in the City. Stage two is focussed on supporting migrants who wish to stay in Italy, known as SPRAR (System for Protection for Refugees that seek Asylum). This is focused on integration, accommodation and employment.
	Messina was a member of the URBACT Action Planning Network Arrival Cities and as a result has recently adopted an Integrated Action Plan for a Multicultural, Smart, Inclusive City. The development and adoption of anti-Rumour activities fits neatly with in this IAP and is part of it's implementation. Additionally, Messina recently joined the Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities network.
Key characteristics of the Transfer Plan?	**Our starting point** Our starting point was that we needed to identify and define which rumours/stereotypes/prejudices to address in transferring the best practice Our ULG decided to focus on three main areas in respect to identifying such rumours:

- Cultural;
- Physical/comportamental/gender;
- Social and Economic.

What were the key characteristics in our Transfer Plan?

Our overall aim was to apply the best practice methodology to the school context involving students, families and teachers.The underlying rationale for this target group was that we viewed younger people as being more open to challenging negative stereotypes.

The students would be the main players of the project. They would be involved in the following ways:

- to develop a communication campaign;
- to build and manage a youtube channel;
- to plan, realize and upload contents on the channel;
- to be "anti-rumour" agents, and finally,
- through the involvement of the students, their families would be part (directly and indirectly) of the process and through the involvement of the schools and students would attract the support of local celebrities.

A number of modules of the good practice would form the basis of our transfer

plan given our target group. These modules are:

- Campaign and Tools for Dissemination;
- Local impact evaluation.

In addition we identified some additional modules for our target groups which related to learning methods and techniques for:

- PR and viral campaign tools;
- Education and young people;
- Technology, apps and city games.

Our Transfer Plan also envisaged the following road map:

- Mapping and Research. This would be a survey defined by ULG using Index Inclusion, administered to a large sample of classes (different grades and quarters of city);
- Thinking a Campaign. The   campaign would be designed to realize a video-format managed by the students and imaged as a box where young people could confront each other about stereotypes, rumours and prejudices;
- Implementing a Campaign. Ideas and content developed would be realized and uploaded in a YouTube channel managed directly by a group of

	students. The contents would be created and edited by the students supported by experts; • Dissemination and Evaluation. Using YouTube and social networks, we would monitor the level of penetration of campaign and the kind of people that react (gender,age, kind of interests). A new survey would be conducted at the end project to compare the data before and after. Finally our Transfer Plan also envisaged expanding our campaign in a number of ways : • Messina becoming a good example of antirumour initiative and help spread this practice to other cities in Italy. • Working with local celebrities to give credibility to the facts and campaign. Expanding the focus of the campaign to deal with a range of prejudices for example prejudice towards those with mental health issues.
What assets/barriers did we have?	**Assets:** • Experienced municipal officers who have worked on practice transfer transnationally and have implemented a range of local projects relating to cohesion and migrants • There is an existing diverse and very committed stakeholder group. • Have recently participated in the URBACT Arrival Cities project which

	resulted in the adoption of an Integrated Action Plan and for Migrant Integration
	Barriers: • Lack of funding and financial resources locally. • Lots of negative media reporting and potential lack of support from media for campaign. • Public distrust of institutions. • No direct experience of anti-rumour campaigning. • Lack of involvement of stakeholders and citizens. • Lack of public trust and belief in the counter 'factual' information communicated through the campaign. • Lack of coordination between different actors of local support group. The budget of the project could be not enough to allow a good level of penetration of the campaign
What were our expectations for the end?	By the end of the project, we were seeking two impacts: • In terms of project outputs, to identify adaptations to the Good Practice, and to approve a plan for starting to implement such adaptions ; In terms of outcomes, we wanted to disseminate in young generation the

	knowledge that rumours and prejudice contribute to build a society made of hate, fear and lack of human rights and democracy.
Part 2: Key Organisational learning points at city level	
Have there been benefits at city level? Has it impacted on partnerships/ networks? Have stakeholders worked in new ways?	At a city level, it is not easy to identify tangible results in this specific field. What was evident and that leaves us satisfied with the work done was the enthusiastic participation of the students involved in the schools. This has happened even more in schools operating in peripheral areas, where there are major problems of social integration. It is possible to state that there has been a greater awareness of the problem of prejudice and that this has been faced in a completely new way for the operators involved. This result is very important in the urban school world in consideration of the fact that an ever-increasing number of children of immigrants are enrolled in our schools. One of the best results achieved by the project was precisely that of convincing some representatives of the school world of this city of the importance of networking. For many of the stakeholders involved, especially the local voluntary associations, the work strategy we offered was not new. On the contrary, networking, discussions with other stakeholders and sharing their problems was

a novelty for some schools. The constitution of this network constitutes the starting point for working together in order to participate in other projects and to solve common problems.

School institutions are certainly the actors most involved in the project. The activities of the project have been agreed with the school administrators from the beginning. The participation of the school world in the meetings of our ULG has certainly been the strong point of our activities. The decision to direct the project activities primarily towards the school world was taken following the significant participation of representatives of local schools from the first ULG meetings

Together with the school managers, the most important decisions were therefore taken regarding the strategies to be adopted to involve the students.

The choice of which students to involve in the production of the videos was for example the result of a consultation between the professors involved, the Koete association and the working group of the Municipality of Messina.

Another example of a concerted decision was that of not to focus on a single prejudice but on all those who oppose different groups of opposing stereotypes: panettone / cannolo, South / North, north / social class, poor / race, foreign / Italian, young / old, thin / fat, to then return to the starting point.

In terms of learning, beyond the specific contents of the project whose results are hardly visible and tangible in the medium and short term, the importance of networking is evident.

	The sharing of experiences and working methods between schools and between these and all the private and public stakeholders involved in the project was fundamental for the success of the project. The result that remains in the territory, even beyond the expiry of the project, is in fact the establishment of a network that is now tested and ready to continue the fight against all forms of prejudice.
Has the experience led to changes (structural, policy, strategic, operational) at city level? What have they learned?	The establishment of a network has already given concrete results on the occasion of the emergency due to the Covid 19 pandemic. In fact, on this occasion the network of local stakeholders, which was tested during the project activities. it was concretely used to cope with the emergency. In particular, the same voluntary associations were involved in order to carry out all aid interventions for the most disadvantaged sectors of the population in the economic and social sphere. The experience was certainly stimulating from a professional point of view for all those involved. Arguments have been addressed and barriers that were naively considered non-existent were overcome. One of the most evident results in this regard was being able to overcome the reluctance of those representatives of the school world who initially considered the topics covered by the project of secondary importance. At the same time, it was concretely succeeded in the intent to convince to

	participate in the project those schools that considered it sufficient to work in their own field to tackle the problem of prejudice. The demonstration of the concrete advantage of networking was one of the major results obtained by the project and at the same time a significant benefit for all the actors involved
Part 3: Personal Learning	
Who have been the key individual beneficiaries in terms of learning? (Civil servants ? Elected officials? NGOs? Others?) What have been the key learning points? Please insert any quotes from individuals involved	From the beginning, the project activities were mainly directed towards the local school world. The participation of school leaders in the meetings of our ULG was constant and significant in numerical terms. The expectation of the schools that joined the project was to improve the quality and equity of their general education system. trying to eliminate all the factors that even unknowingly can contribute to the spread of prejudices. In this context, the debate that has developed within the ULG has been very fruitful. Although often very different ideas were expressed by the participants and also considered the difficulty of coordinating the meetings due to a high number of participants, the depth of the level of debates led to a greater awareness among the teaching staff participating in the project regarding the problem of the spread of prejudices

But the most tangible results were achieved with the students of the schools involved in the project.

In particular, the use of a questionnaire on the problem of prejudice has shown that a problem of racism is practically non-existent, while a problem of ignorance and lack of knowledge of the reality of the migrants' countries of origin is still widespread. The questionnaire was made by Fatima, a girl with a Moroccan father and an Italian mother, and it was a "spark" that lit up a long debate with the students and that brought out their deep desire for knowledge.

There were several phases that were most successful among the students.

In addition to the debates held following the dissemination of a specific questionnaire among the students, the animation activity carried out by the Koete association really sparked the enthusiasm of the students of the secondary schools. In particular, the idea of working directly with students to create a video was particularly successful.

The various stages of the production of the video were an opportunity for the exchange of ideas between students on topics such as "diversity", "the origins of migratory phenomena" etc.

It should be noted that the Covid 19 pandemic has strongly slowed down the production of the aforementioned video which we hope will be completed as soon as the teaching activity returns to normal.

Personal learning stories …. What were your key insights? What people, comments, ideas or words caught your attention? What was the most meaningful aspect of this activity? What was most challenging?	**What were your key insights?** Probably the choice to involve schools in the project turned out to be a reasonable choice. It was therefore decided to identify students as the main target of the project. Upstream of this choice is the consideration that Messina is a city in which no particular and striking phenomena of racism have been recorded. Despite being a small provincial town, Messina, thanks also to its geographical position as the gateway to Sicily and a crucial port in the Mediterranean, has historically been a crossroads of very different cultures. On the basis of these premises, it was decided to focus the attention of the activities on the fight against prejudices and rumors that are widespread in every sector of society and which are the most difficult to eradicate. It was therefore decided to focus on young people with the hope of affecting the education of future generations. The results were more than satisfactory in terms of student engagement and enthusiasm **What people, comments, ideas or words caught your attention?** 1. We were certainly struck by the words used by Fatima a young student who completed her internship at the European Policy Service of the

	Municipality of Messina
	We have already introduced this girl in our Transfer story.
	Following the results of the questionnaire, but we would say in general based on her experience of life in Messina, Fatima reported that a large majority of young people from Messina use the word Muslim as a synonym for terrorist.
	Here, listening to these words, we felt the helplessness of the efforts we are making with this project and how great the difficulties can be to remove ignorance.
	2. Another moment in the life of the project hit us deeply and this time in a positive way. And it was when we saw the videos that behind the scenes some of our colleagues shot in schools while some students participated in the preparation of the videos together with the Koete association. We were really impressed and moved by the enthusiasm with which the boys participated in the work for the realization of the video. In particular, we were able to admire with great satisfaction how students, probably children of immigrant families, were fully integrated into the school context and felt fully at ease in relationships with other students.
	3. **What was the most meaningful aspect of this activity?**
	There are several significant aspects of this experience. Firstly, the project

demonstrates how partnership work is indispensable for achieving results. Although it is a very delicate task that requires a lot of patience, the coordination work of numerous and different stakeholders in the long run produces the desired results.

The results are tangible in terms of the involvement of the main actors of the territory. The experience is undoubtedly encouraging in the long run. It is absolutely essential to preserve the network of stakeholders that has been built up to now in order to carry out other similar projects for the collective well-being of citizens.

Furthermore, in terms of the fight against all forms of prejudice, the project shows how fundamental the actions carried out in schools with the youngest age groups of our society are

4. What was most challenging?

Surely the greatest difficulty encountered was the management of the project during the pandemic emergency. Considering that even the normal teaching activity was radically upset by the pandemic, it is easy to understand how the planning of the project's activities had to adapt to the pandemic Some of these activities have in fact suffered severe slowdowns such as the making of the video

Part 4: Overall conclusions on progress

| What progress has been made in adapting and transferring the Good Practice? What elements of the good practice have you learnt most from and (to some extent) 'transferred'? What have you learnt from other cities/projects through the exchange and learning process? How does this compare to your initial expectations? | The tendency from the beginning has been to draw inspiration from the Amadora model in carrying out the activities

In particular, we tried to get the widest possible involvement of local actors and at the same time to direct the activities towards 2 main directions as designed in the Amadora model, namely:

✓ Contribute to the promotion of cultural diversity and social cohesion through the deconstruction of rumours, stereotypes about immigrants
✓ Promote a change in perceptions, behaviours and attitudes towards immigrants and towards the city.⌐SEP⌐

Anyway, the anti-rumour practice, and this is the main strength, can be applied to any form of prejudice and perception change. The Amadora's approach looked very flexible to any context because is based on a pure method for identifying – mapping – training & informing.

In order to transfer the best practice in the local context, Messina aimed to apply the methodology in the school involving students, families and teachers. Starting from the point of view that the adults are contaminated subject (even if we don't admit), we wanted to train the young generation to grow developing prejudice |

antibodies.

The inputs obtained through the exchange of best practices with other project partners and thanks to the participation in international meetings were many
Based on this transfer of good practices, and considering our target represented by young generations, we have decided to focus our activities on the following areas:
- ✓ Campaign and Tools for Dissemination;
- ✓ Local impact evaluation.

For these reasons we aimed to take in count additional modules to learn methods and techniques for:
- ✓ PR and viral campaign tools;
- ✓ Education and young people;

Technology, apps and city games.

In terms of expectations, the Covid 19 pandemic has certainly conditioned the success of some of the planned activities. In particular, it was not possible to implement the dissemination activities as planned, as it was not possible to realize some of the scheduled events

What supported/obstructed the process? What did we learn from this? Covid-19 how did this change things and how did you adapt and did it lead to new ideas/approaches?	The project budget proved not sufficient to guarantee an adequate level of penetration of the dissemination activities. Furthermore, it was not possible to obtain economic aid from the local economic context as planned It is genuinely difficult to find positive effects of the pandemic on project activities. One of the most evident effects was the transformation of the meeting modality of our ULG, as well as of the international ones, from face to face to virtual. We were able to see on these occasions how the students involved in the project were substantially at ease in using some tools such as virtual whiteboards (eg. Miro) It can certainly be said, however, that the moment of extreme difficulty that our community is still experiencing has paradoxically strengthened the spirit of cohesion and mutual collaboration of the network. The vulnerability of our society and of the human being in general has in fact contributed to raising awareness in the young students participating in the project of how ephemeral any kind of rumors and prejudice can be
Please add any links to your project including publicity, articles, media coverage	http://urbanlab.comune.messina.it/?incontro=rumourless-cities-presenta-i-progetti-al-workshop-on-line https://www.facebook.com/messinaurbanlab/posts/5636744513009909