

### Italian Geographical Society's proposal

The Italian Geographic Society intends to submit a project proposal under **Measure 2.3 (Civil Society Calls for Proposals)** of Strand 2 (Democratic Commitment and Civic Participation) of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2014-2020.

Italian Geographical Society (IGS) is a cultural institute and environmentalist association active in the dissemination, scientific research and training of geographical knowledge. It was founded in 1867 with the aim of promoting the progress of scientific geography, also through the organization and patronage of expeditions to Africa, South America, Central Asia and Papua. Today, among the activities of the Geographical Society there is also that of ensuring and protecting the valorisation of the precious heritage it preserves: the specialized library, one of the most well-stocked in Europe, with rare volumes from the 16th century, original maps dating back to the 17th century, photographs, relics and travel notebooks from 19th century explorations. As an environmental association accredited by the Council of Europe for issues related to the European Landscape Convention, the Society is actively involved in the protection sector with its own Landscape and Cultural Routes Council. Since 1868 it has continuously published one of the oldest academic journals on Geography in the world, the "Bollettino della Società Geografica Italiana", with articles, news and reviews, as well as specialist volumes and catalogues. It also organizes meetings, conventions, photographic and cartographic exhibitions, book presentations, photographic competitions, the "Festival of Travel Literature", refresher and training courses. Finally, as part of its activities, it maintains relations with other geographical associations, both Italian and foreign, with other national cultural bodies and with research bodies and public institutions, so as to be an active part of the Italian and international scientific-cultural network.

In line with the specific priority of Strand 2 for the year 2020, the MAP YOUR ROOTS (MAYOR) project aims to promote social commitment, civic participation and intercultural dialogue of young EU citizens through a path that is able to activate in them the values of mutualism, solidarity and mutual respect. The aim of the project is therefore to promote these values during an in-depth study of migration and minority issues through dialogue, exchange of views and teamwork among young students from different EU countries.

To this end it is intended to involve, as beneficiaries of the project activities, young middle and secondary school students from different European countries in a coordinated workshop activity, interacting with each other to produce videos, interviews and digital GIS (Geographic Information System) maps to relate their knowledge, visions and ideas. In order to create an intercultural, interactive and technologically advanced laboratory, a seminar will be organized at the IGS headquarters, inviting experts in the field of education and geography to develop a laboratory methodology suitable for the younger generations. In order to unstigmatize the debated issue of migrants, it is intended to promote reflection on the topic from the experience and knowledge of the young people involved in the workshop, stimulating mutual dialogue between classes from different countries through the use of video-chat web platforms. In addition, classes will have the opportunity to participate and collaborate in the production of materials that will compose the same open access multimedia product: the Story Map. Within the Story Map will be included interviews, GIS maps, texts and video materials made during the workshops by the students. The Story Map becomes an interactive and digital tool to stimulate intercultural reflection on the concepts of borders, migration movement and the values of European integration. The Story Map, by presenting and explaining the activities carried out during the workshops, makes it possible to illustrate a work methodology that can be replicated in all schools in the European

Union; and in this sense it represents the basis for acquiring and reproducing in the future the activities and games of the workshops carried out during the project.

The project is therefore focused on a series of activities aimed at developing the theme "stigmatisation of migrants and minority groups" through the involvement of students in specific workshops and conferences on the issue of migration. In particular, it is intended to be implemented:

- Workshops with young students (11-14 years old) to reflect on migrations, both internal and international, European and non-European (such as the geographical family tree and the mapping of the migrations of their family);
- Conflict resolution games: both in presence and online modes, possibility of remote or co-presence activities through web-cams to bring together classes from different countries;
- Creation of short videos (perhaps the result of conferences or interviews) presenting some themes involving migrant communities (e.g. food production) to be used as a tool for training and reflection (perhaps preparatory to more practical workshops);
- Contest of videos/poems about personal or community life, selection of the best ones and organization of a school-summer trip to present their work;
- Creation of a story map (website with multimedia material) to represent the material of the workshops but which can also be enriched with the passage of time.

These workshop activities have as their primary aim to train young students on European migration phenomena and to bring them closer to a better understanding of the migration phenomenon and the issue of minorities, going beyond stereotypes and discrimination. In line with the general objectives of the project, the workshops will aim to train young people in a sense of active civic participation and belonging to the European Community. In essence, the students will try to make them reflect on the theme, starting from their family stories and the example of their class, and then enlarge the picture, thanks to the contribution of some experts, to the international geopolitical context.

In parallel with the activities to be carried out with the students, a series of dissemination events will be organized such as:

- a conference/seminar (indicative duration of 3 days) to present and explain the project with experts in education and geography from different countries, in order to develop the laboratory methodology suitable to meet the project's objectives;
- the organisation and coordination, in different EU countries, of the workshops described above: each workshop to be carried out by the project partner operating in that country (an active part that each partner will make the children from the Member States involved);
- the organisation of a final and open conference, where students involved in the project will be invited to meet international experts on "migrants" and migration (with possible exhibition/publication of the material produced during the workshops).

The proposed activities allow the participants to engage and participate actively as the students involved are properly asked to express themselves, actively in the first person: expressing themselves creatively, telling their history and origins in an artistic way as well as carrying out oral history research and

interviews. The aim is to stimulate involvement and expressiveness by enabling students to intervene and reflect on new themes and different languages.

The **workplan** is developed in four distinct phases:

- **Phase 1:** Production of preliminary material, a sort of "toolbox": an interactive tool for reflection and training on the theme of migration to organize educational workshops, mainly aimed at students, in the different countries involved in the project. In order to produce the toolbox and a coherent methodology of laboratory activities, it is intended to organize a seminar in Rome, at the headquarters of the Italian Geographic Society (IGS), inviting, in addition to the project partners, some pedagogy experts and associations that already deal with creative and playful dissemination of "stigmatisation of migrants". In order to guarantee a state-of-the-art methodology, the IGS will first proceed with an evaluation and definition of the specific training needs of young European citizens, then with the production of a preliminary material on the laboratory methodology. Starting from the acquisition and verification of this preliminary material, we will proceed with the identification of suitable external actors to provide advice in the field of experimental and intercultural pedagogy during the seminar. In this way the seminar can be a moment of internal training for the staff who will have to coordinate the laboratory activities in the EU partner countries. On the whole, the seminar is questioning and intends to develop a suitable laboratory methodology to allow the younger generations to confront the interaction and understanding of "other" cultures and the phenomenon of migratory movements. The objective is the development of a methodology and the activities that make up the "toolbox": games on conflict resolution; poetry and videomaking activities and competitions; GIS mapping elements. At the same time during this phase each Geographical Society (SG) is requested to identify in its country, through its network of contacts, at least one school interested in taking part in the free workshop.
- **Phase 2:** Organisation at each GS of a workshop to train its internal staff in order to share and disseminate the "toolbox" and the project work methodology to all partners. To this end it is intended to proceed first with the production of the didactic and training material, elaborated during the workshop, by the IMS. Afterwards the material will be presented during the workshops and adapted to the specific local context. Then the staff of the SG partners (or possibly of other associations involved) can proceed with the realization of the workshops at the classes previously identified (according to the specific needs and availability, the workshops can take place either in the appropriate headquarters of the SG or within the spaces provided by the schools themselves). During the workshop it is planned, taking advantage of the possibilities offered by the network, to carry out meetings between the different classes through video-chat and mail correspondence, in order to promote dialogue outside their national borders and promote the spirit of European integration. During the workshop activities the students will produce materials as a form of restitution and expression of the contents learned.
- **Phase 3:** Processing and presentation of the materials. The documents, photos and videos produced by the students will be put together and processed using GIS and video editing technologies. The final product of the project represents a Story Map on the migration issue,

usable by all thanks to the possibilities offered by the web and possible basis for further and future workshops for students. Within the Story Map will be illustrated the methodologies of work, the laboratory activities carried out and of course the materials produced by the students. Overall, the aim is to create the definitive "toolbox" to unmask prejudices, to think about the migratory intertwining, combining the opinion of scholars and activists with the experience of younger people, creating a choral account of the challenges of living together in diversity, offering material to reflect and grow that can be reused even at the end of the project itself.

- **Phase 4:** Finally, in order to present the Story Map, a final conference will be organized in Rome, at the IGS headquarters, inviting experts in the subject and all the students involved in the project (the most deserving, whose work will be selected, will be offered the full cost of the trip).

**The role of the IGS** within the project will be to coordinate, offer technical and logistic support to the project partners. The IMS will provide its expertise and space to organize the work necessary for the realization of the project. Within the IGS' headquarters it is intended to organize the three-day seminar and the final conference according to the project.

In order to ensure adherence to the specific objectives of the programme, IMS staff will follow the workshops organized in the different countries of the project partners, helping the operators in the planning of the workshop activities, in the collection of materials produced by the students during the workshops and in the final arrangement of the materials produced within a multimedia format: the Story Map.

The IGS has a solid experience on this topic and has organized several conferences on migration and its "stigmatization", inviting university level experts and international collaborators to discuss it. The IGS also has its own scientific journal, the Bulletin of the Italian Geographic Society, in which the theme of migration as well as cultural integration and solidarity are addressed and investigated. In 2018, the IGS published its XIII Report entitled "For a geopolitics of migrations". As part of an annual programme of the Ministry of Defence, the IMS then implements projects for alternating school-work. During these projects, carried out from 2018 to 2020, workshops with young secondary school students were held at the IGS headquarters. The students were able to work with the material present in the historical and cartographic archives of the Company, also making their own maps. By making students and researchers work together, several digital maps were created using GIS tools and at the end of 2019 a Story Map (<https://socgeografica.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=744df2f9050543a58ddb42d9fc2d1f47>) was developed as the final product of the project, which tells the work done and the maps produced thanks to the students' participation and research.

The IGS has been teaching geography to young students for many years, deepening in a suitable way the concepts of "border" and the dynamics of migratory movements throughout human history. Working with schools and young people to promote intercultural dialogue, understanding and respect for "migrants" and "minorities" are fundamental objectives of the IGS, committed to the dissemination and production of geographical knowledge. Already during the last two years, the IMS has organized interactive workshop activities that involve the use of GIS tools to make students reflect on the theme of

migration, as an intrinsically geographical issue and of great relevance in the current debate. The experience gained in previous projects already carried out and in the knowledge and skills of the university professors and researchers who are part of the SGI guarantees the feasibility of the project proposal and the possibility for the IGS to realize the provisions of this project.

**Other partners** (currently being identified) will be the geographical societies of other countries, associations of cultural animation, civic education, cultural mediation. It is also planned to involve other institutions and experts on the theme of migration: Baobab experience; Agricultural Coordination Usb, in the person of Aboubakar Soumahoro; Mediterranea saving humans.

We believe that, set up in this way, the Project can adhere to and fully meet **the objectives of the Programme** and those of the specific Strand through the commitment and civic participation involving the younger generations in intercultural, interactive and technologically advanced workshops (thanks to the use of GIS systems), focused on the theme of migration. Dialogue, confrontation and participation of young citizens of the European Union are the tools with which it is intended to promote solidarity, reception and respect for migrants and minorities. The workshops involving young people belonging to classes from different EU countries are presented as moments of intercultural dialogue, and the activities starting from personal reflection stimulate an awareness of the complex phenomenon of migration movements and the meaning of the concept of foreigner and migrant.

Through intercultural dialogue, research and confrontation, the aim is to stimulate the knowledge of the territory and one's own personal migratory history, as well as that of one's peers from other EU countries. The reflection on the "I" and "we" of young European citizens allows to easily reveal the contradictions of the concepts of "migrant", "foreigner" and "other" stereotyped and exploited during the political debate. Diversity, tolerance and respect for common values are the concepts underlying the workshops with young people, which the project aims to develop through intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding between young EU citizens.

**The quality and innovativeness of the proposed activities and the Work Plan** is ensured by the fact that these activities are aimed and calibrated to achieve the general and specific objectives of the project, focusing on active citizenship education, providing opportunities for social engagement, multicultural dialogue and promotion of inclusiveness. The project also has a clear European dimension and all activities are aimed at providing methodological tools to educate young Europeans to respect pluralism and diversity. The conferences and workshops, in particular, aim to provide the necessary basic knowledge to understand the migratory phenomena that directly and indirectly affect every citizen of the European Community.

The project also makes use of innovative methodologies and aims to create a new, potentially and easily replicable laboratory methodology to offer an interactive, fun and technological form of learning about the common values of solidarity, acceptance and respect. The use of GIS instrumentation, in particular, will make it possible to use the most modern and advanced software for the production of digital

cartography<sup>1</sup>, producing documents in multimedia format that can be freely consulted on the web, in open access. In this sense, the IGS's experience in cultural geography, geopolitics and cartography guarantees an in-depth focus on migratory movements, migrants and migrations. In addition, the use of GIS tools will allow young people to confront themselves with the most modern technologies of mapping and study of the territory.

Following the Covid emergency and the related quarantine and social distancing phase, all EU citizens have experienced the importance and possibilities offered by video-chat web tools. Although such tools have already existed for several years, the new attention - and the related efforts of local governments to smooth out the digital divide and adapt internet connection and network - that video-chat tools are the subject of, makes these technologies innovative in the sense of a new way of approaching and using them.

As far as **the dissemination and exploitation of the project results** are concerned, these will be elaborated, discussed and presented at different levels. They will be valorized first of all among the participants of the workshops, who will then have a final feedback, both of their own work and that of their companions from other countries, and they will be able to appreciate the work done with an overview and reflect on it later, after the workshop. The dissemination will then be addressed to the whole citizenship with the diffusion of Story maps and other material created through the web and social channels of the promoting partners and with exhibitions, both in schools and in the offices of the participating institutions.

Not to be underestimated is the multiplier effect of indirect dissemination through social platforms and word of mouth of the young participants with friends, relatives and various groups who, given the simple replicability of some games and workshops, can in turn replicate them in other contexts.

The strategy through which to communicate the contents and activities of the project is based on the public events that characterize it: The project is presented with an initial event at the headquarters of the Italian Geographical Society with guests known nationally and internationally. At this first event, open to the public and/or broadcast via the internet, the aim is to reach many people thanks to the publicity on the channels of the partners and organizations of the speakers, who have a very wide following. The proposing subject includes in its staff a social media manager who will be responsible for advertising not only the big event but also the various steps planned. Together and in coordination with the other partners, it is intended to develop a careful strategy of continuous communication. The web and social channels guarantee effectiveness and efficiency given the low maintenance cost and high performance (i.e. the number of users reached thanks to the partners' network of contacts).

Finally, coming to the impact on citizens, we believe that the project is sustainable and able to generate medium and long lasting effects as it can be easily replicated with other groups and in subsequent periods. The international coordination of this first edition will guarantee visibility, experimentation and,

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<sup>1</sup> Digital cartography is today one of the most widespread technologies (especially about Google Maps) in a wide range of activities (from navigation tools to tourism, logistics, delivery and dissemination services), but basic knowledge about the operation and use of GIS systems is still extremely deficient and limited. On the contrary, the IGS has a great experience in the use of such tools, having promoted scientific research and dissemination through GIS systems and organized advanced level courses at its headquarters.

accumulation of experiences, transfer of knowledge between organizers, teachers and animators. The final report and the elaborated products will be a good basis to be able to replicate the project everywhere and with a non-budgetary budget.

Finally, every effort will be made to involve citizens with fewer opportunities or differently abled: as the theme of reference is not stigmatization, the inclusion of diversity is certainly not only a project aim but an element to be considered in the working methodology. The fact of working with classes makes it possible to know in advance their composition and the possible presence of students with disabilities. The design of the workshops will take this into account and strategies will be developed so that disadvantaged people, in a climate of acceptance and inclusion, can fully participate in the activities.

Finally, the Story map, which represents a concrete, interactive and online tool - always just a click away - to disseminate the outputs of Meet Your Roots, will help to promote the project results in the future and to guarantee the impact effects even after the end of its activities.