



Fondazione
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Onlus di ricerca scientifica
di rilevante interesse sociale



The Role of the Local Community in Improving the Wellbeing of People: Results from Two Italian Experiences

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Two experiences in Italy



1. Based in the North West of Italy and focused on the development of a local network of partners devoted to increasing the wellbeing of **children** (range 0-6 y.o.).
2. Based in the North West of Italy and focused on the development of local projects in 6 different municipalities, involving a network of citizens called "sparks" and working with them for improving the **local community**.



Project n° 1 – Children 0-6

Question:

How is it possible to increase the attention of the local community (different stakeholders) in the growth of young children? This attention will increase a timely identification of frail families and an increased attention to prevention.



How to overcome a siloed approach?





Project n° 1 – Network





Project n° 1 – Connecting activities





Project n° 1 – Target and Tools

Target

Parents

How to engage families in a training path aimed at improving their parental competences?

Children

A network is effective if it is focused on the wellbeing of children, not only in the activities performed inside the project

Partners

How to engage partners in a shared process that values young children?

Tools

Scale of Family Potentials for measuring changes in parents attending the training path

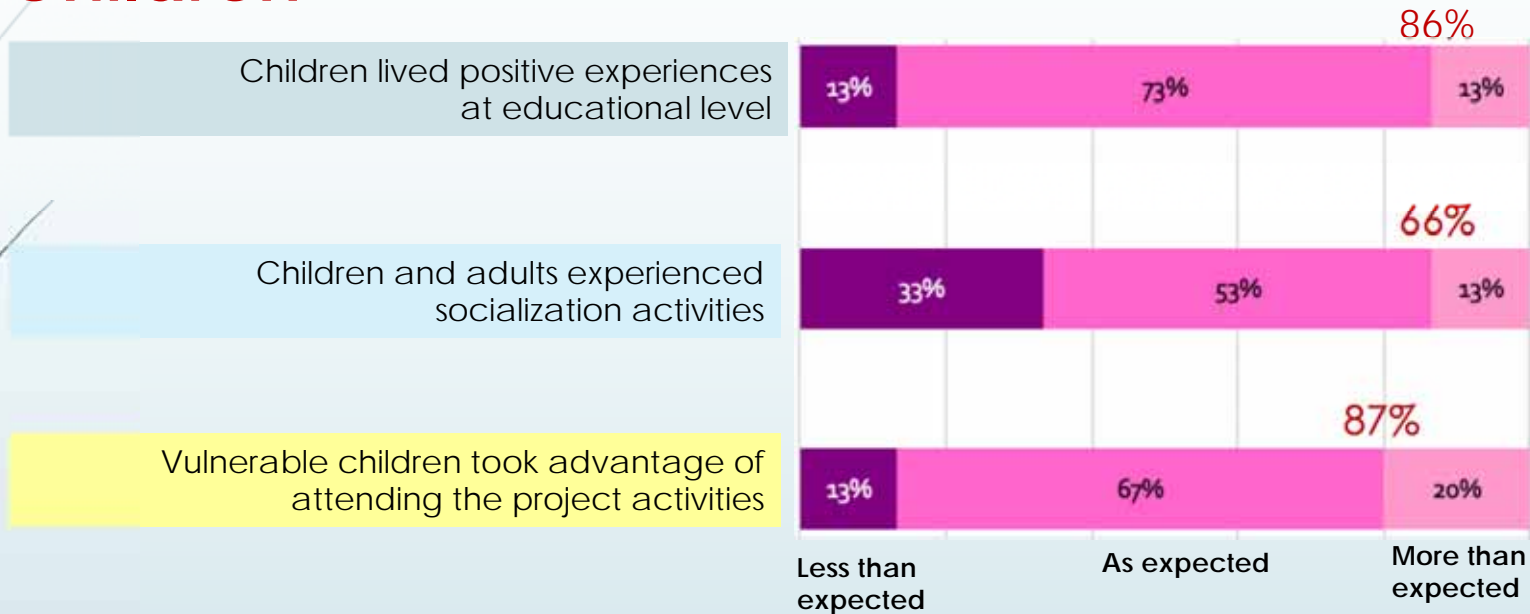
Two indicators for measuring the level of wellbeing and involvement of children attending early childhood services

Questionnaires for assessing the “strength” of the partnership and understanding the point of view of teachers



Project n° 1 – Results (point of view of partners)

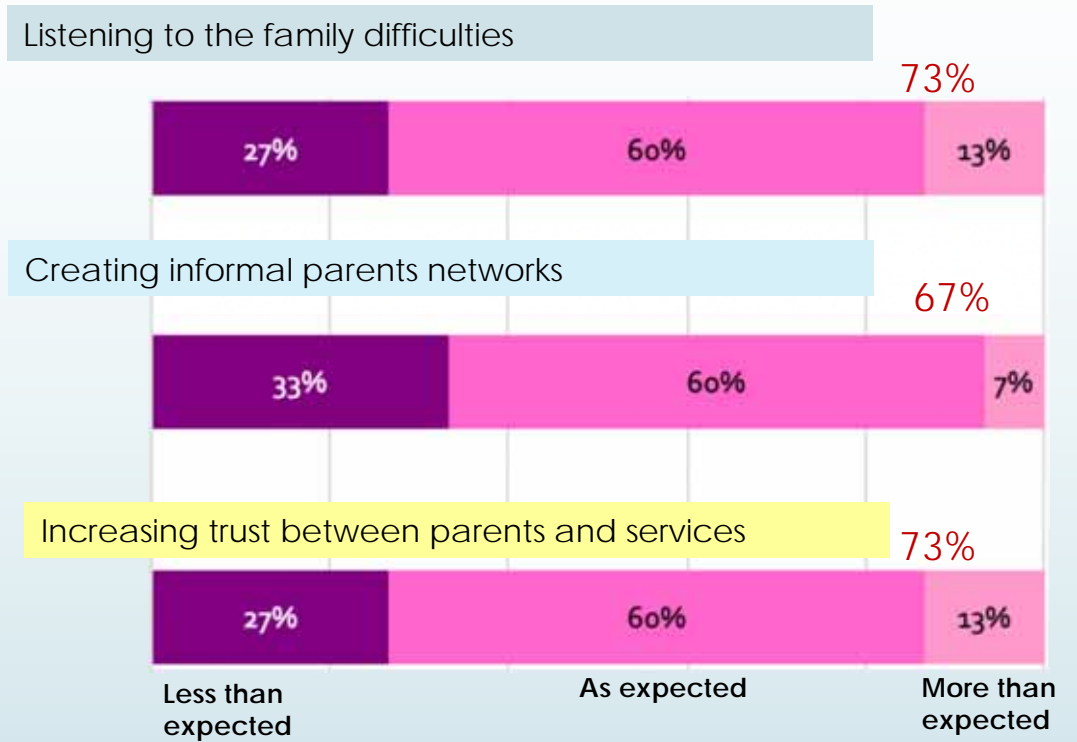
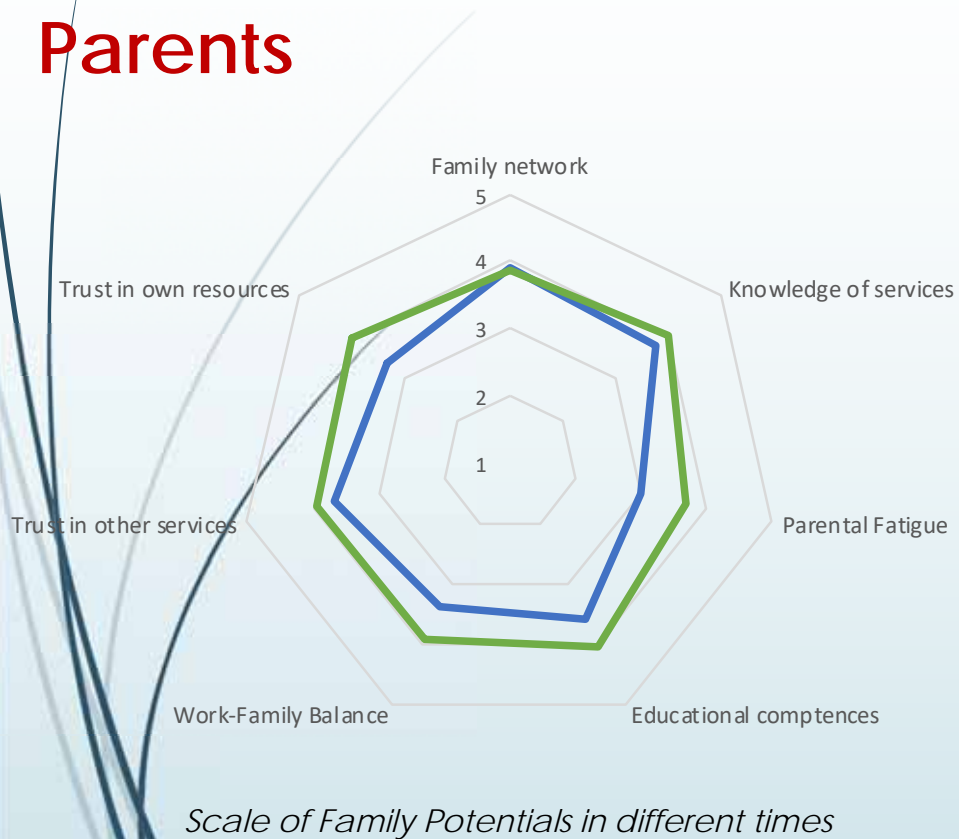
Children





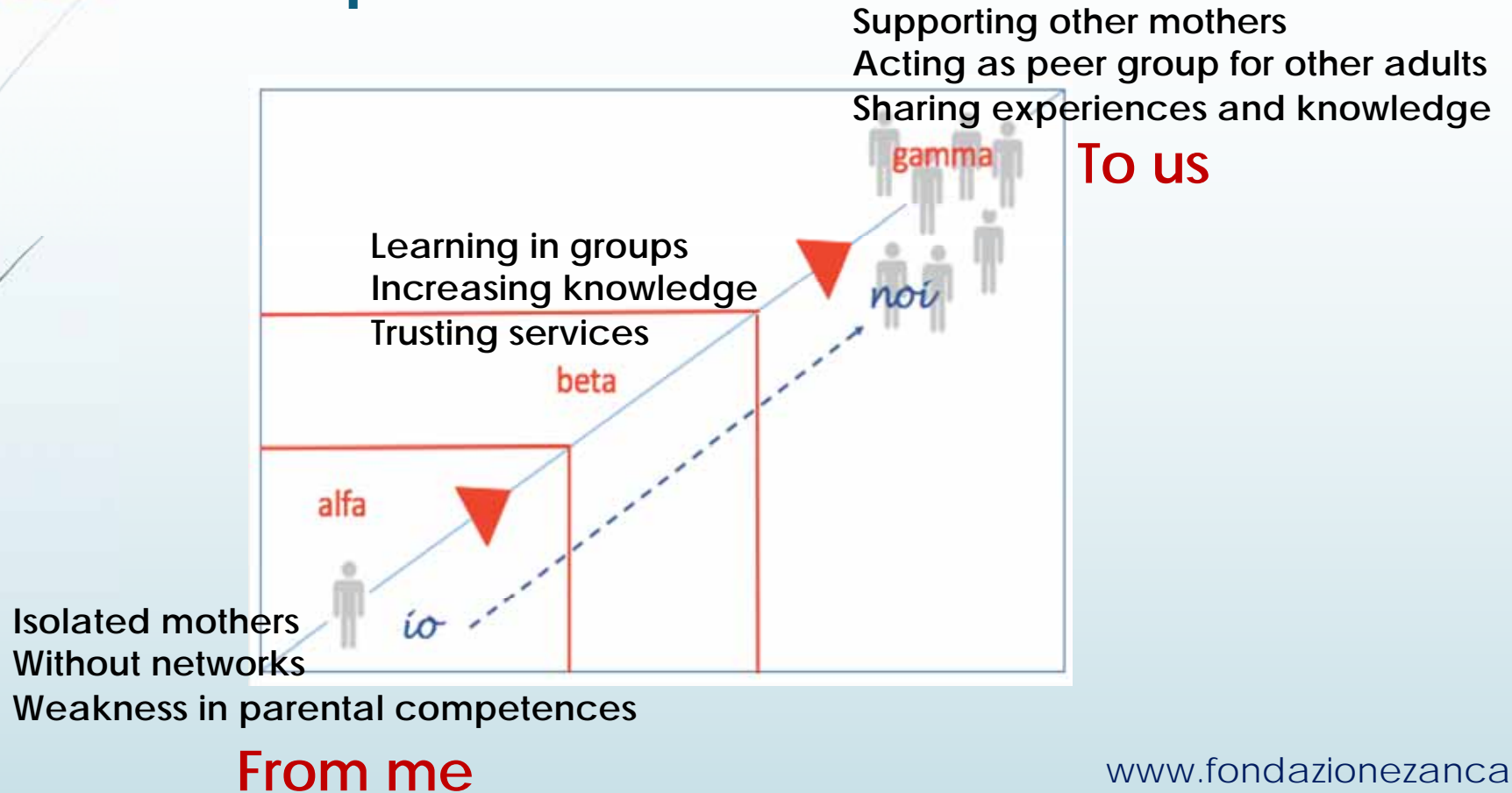
Project n° 1 – Results (point of view of partners)

Parents



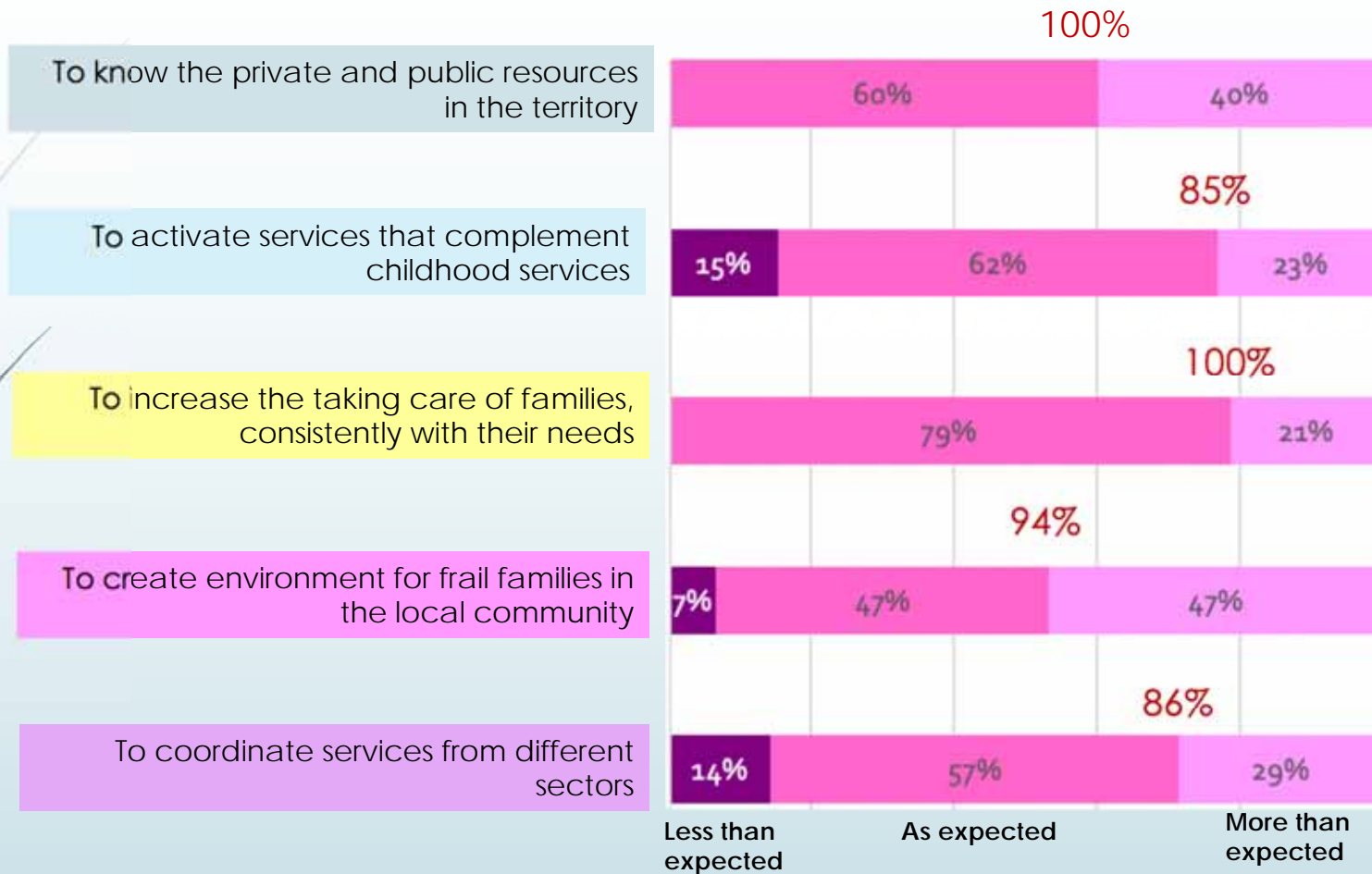


Project n° 1 – In a generative perspective, the role of parents





Project n° 1 – Results (point of view of partners)





Project n° 1 – Lessons learned

POSITIVE

The network was able to keep alive the relationships among partners during the pandemic

Involvement of users in a generative perspective: some mothers become peer-mother in training groups

The project is now considered a “brand” that guarantees high quality activities for children and families

NEGATIVE

A network needs to be «maintained», taking into consideration that each partner has its own specific characteristics

The Covid pandemic lead to the closure of most services and this implied an interruption of activities and a distance between schools and families



Project n° 2 – A community project

Main goals

Goal 1

Promote community development and identify reciprocity and proximity solutions in response to the loneliness increasing in the territory (absence/fragility support network)

Goal 2

Bringing social work back into the territories, promoting a change of approach among professionals, from public and private organisations.



Project n° 2 – A community project

Expected changes

Before Covid

Changes for
people living
in the local
community

Reducing social isolation,
activating community
leaders, and increasing the
capacity of practitioners to
work inside the local
communities.

Changes at
system level

Building alliances to create
links between institutions and
citizens but also creating
places/spaces to bring
services closer to citizens.



Project n° 2 – A community project Goals for the local municipalities

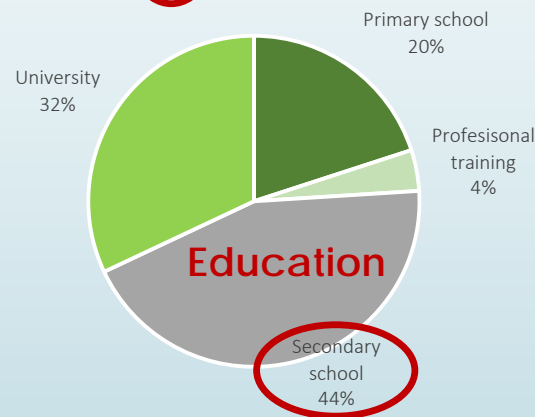
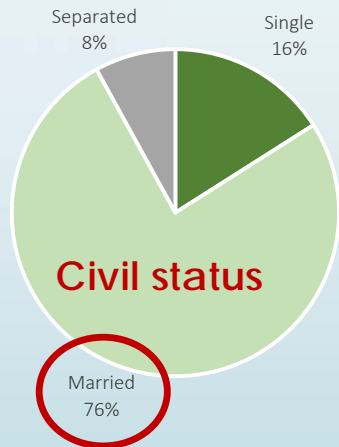
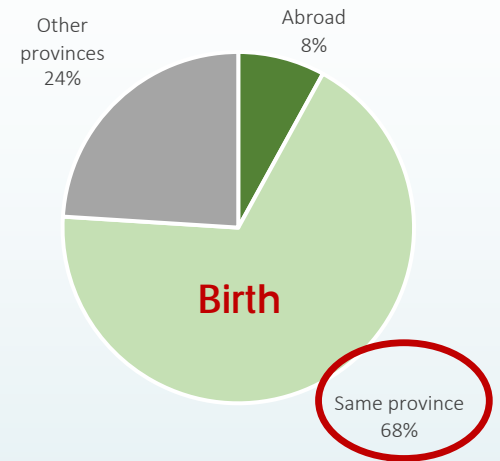
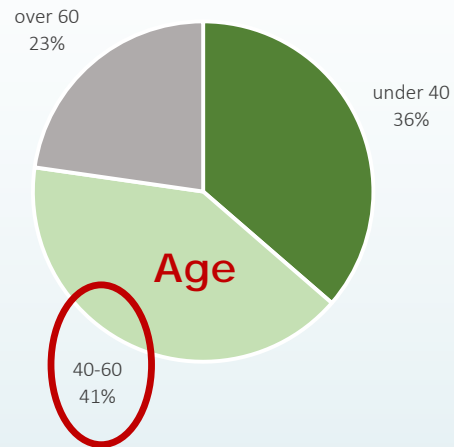
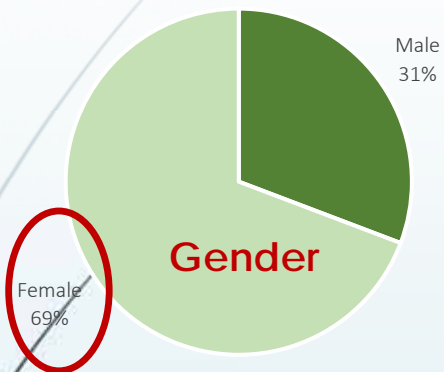
Local Municipality 1	Local Municipality 2	Local Municipality 3
To promote public participation in the care and improvement of neighborhoods	Reconnecting the community through the promotion of a group of «sparks» citizens	Building a cohesive community
Local Municipality 4	Local Municipality 5	Local Municipality 6
Promoting a sense of belonging through the promotion of the group of spark citizens	Increasing the quality of life of people with disabilities (children with autism) and their caregivers	Create a cohesive community that takes care of its inhabitants

6 main goals, 6 local projects, 6 «animators», 6 groups of citizens organising the activities in the community



Project n° 2 – A community project

Profiles of the **spark** citizens





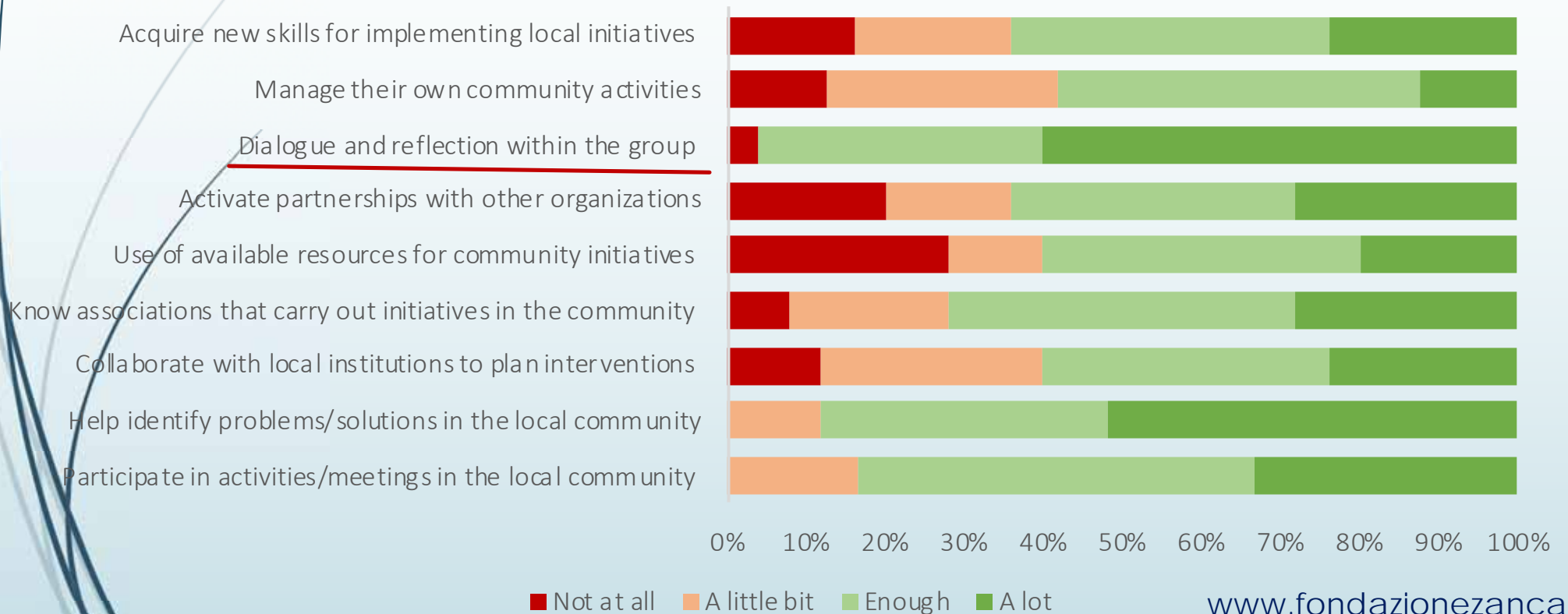
Project n° 2 – A community project Motivation for the involvement

	% on the total (26)
Doing something useful for neighborhood	57,7%
Creating socialization activities	23,1%
Meeting other people	23,1%
Personal motivations	11,5%
Supporting others (self-help group)	7,7%

46% is a volunteer



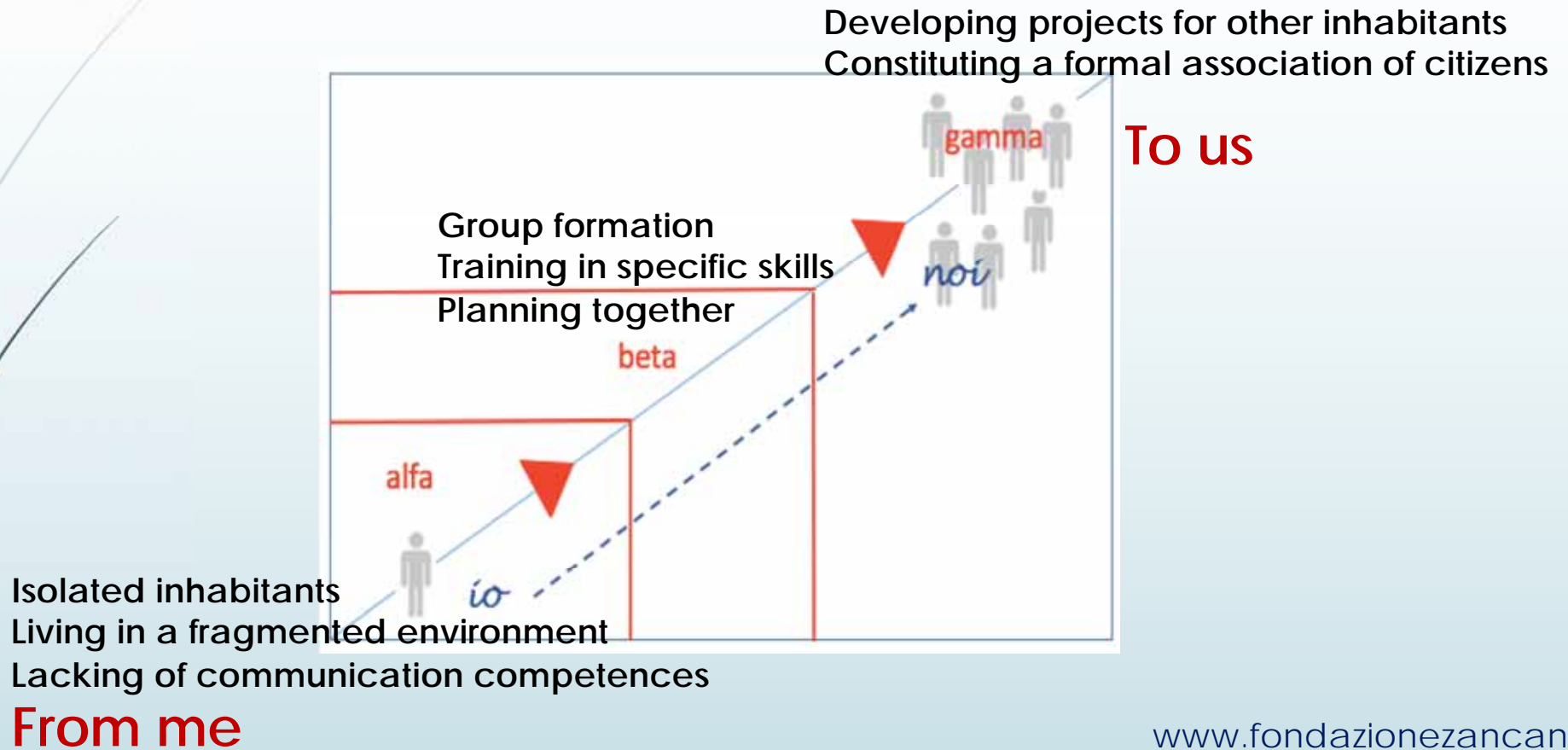
Project n° 2 – A community project Results identified by spark citizens





Project n° 2 – A community project

The role of spark citizens





Project n° 2 – A community project

POSITIVE

To believe in the project and in the idea of doing something for the community

To share new ideas

To share training and learning new competences for developing local project

Development of a group, recognised in the community

NEGATIVE

Difficulties in implementing activities due to the pandemic

Low economic resource and lack of transparency in the procedures

Difficulties in involving other people in the neighborhood

Confusing community work with generative practices



Challenges from the projects

1. To contact and engage people at local level, in the long term, especially those who are already welfare beneficiaries (*from me to us*)
2. To share and plan together, but also evaluate the results in terms of process performed but also in terms of *outcome* and *social impact (measurement!)*
3. To connect the community level to the institutional level in order to improve relationships between formal and informal levels, helping professionals to adopt a "generative" perspective in terms of "*I cannot help you without you!*"



Thank you!
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