

THE EXPERIENCE OF TRAPANI

Stop undeclared work in agriculture

RAISE UP



Giacoma Giacalone

In Trapani there is a permanent table hosted by the prefecture composed by trade unions, employers' organizations, law enforcement agencies, voluntary associations and local mayors.

That table produced a good result because, it has been two years since in Trapani, especially in the municipality of Campobello di Mazara, works an experimental placement in agriculture against illegality.

The sindacato di strada serves to meet workers exploited in the countryside, and above all the immigrants, but it also helps us to know their conditions and make us able to intervene in order to sustain them asking and obtaining their rights.

Giacoma Giacalone is the General Secretary of Flai Cgil in Trapani. She has been practicing the street union for four years in the areas where the great olive and wine harvesting campaigns are based.

It was helpful for them because they often do not know the existence of the union or, if they know it, they are afraid to come to our offices, so we can meet and have a mutual exchange.

You can measure the effectiveness of the sindacato di strada if some workers immediately after the intervention they start attending your union offices and come to visit you in Cgil.

To face a good sindacato di strada experience you need to know the territory where you go to work.

You ask for help your companions working on the territory, in the various municipalities: with their support you can learn more the main problems on which you must focus.

The four conditions that make you recognize a territory where it is important to intervene with the sindacato di strada are: the presence of immigrants and therefore the conditions of exploitation; the presence of ghettos and therefore a degrading living condition; where there are large farming campaigns.

It is important, on the one hand, to know the INPS data and therefore where the days of work on the territory are located, on the other hand, it is important to intervene also through our detached offices, local offices, Chambers of labor, Patronato, services, because they know the socio-economic context in which we operate.

When you organize a day of sindacato di strada it is advisable to form a group as large as possible so, first of all, involve the other internal subjects of the union in addition to your category and have the support of the CAAF, the Patronato or the Secretary of the local Chamber of Labor because the more you are and the more you can attack the territory, you can talk to more people in the shortest possible time.

This is because when you arrive in a square and meet the workers after a while the employers arrive and you run the risk of losing the working day to those laborers and therefore it is advisable to be as numerous as possible.

“We need a lot of good will, a lot of humanity, a great empathy, the will to understand and a lot of spirit of initiative”

It would also be advisable to warn law enforcement agencies in the area where you go to exercise the sindacato di strada in order to also have a coverage from the point of view of safety, of the protection of the territory.

It would be desirable to have a permanent institutional confrontation table, maybe in the prefecture, with the presence of the different figures and the

different actors involved in the fight against exploitation in agriculture, but that table can be useful to have a synergy between the different actors to look for solutions to the problem, but it is not strictly functional to the sindacato di strada which is a trade union activity that serves to us as a union to know and have direct contact with those workers and then to be able to bring a substantial contribution to the table.



The protocol against exploitation and illegal hiring, the only one in Sicily and among the few in Italy, had a positive result, encouraging the public recruitment of many non-EU workers in many Campobello di Mazara and Castelvetrano companies.

When you do the sindacato di strada you go to the squares, to the crossroads, to the bars where workers meet.

You stop there an hour, talk to them or bring material, gadgets to get their attention.

During the day, we take pictures and shoot small videos, always with their authorization, so we inform them on what we are doing, to show on the social networks what the trade union activity is

and at the same time to show citizenship in general what is the condition of these workers on the territory.

At the end of the campaign I prepare a report and I make it public through a press release and we publish it on local newspapers or even national ones if we can.

When I post the photo days on social media I'm often contacted by some journalists who asks me to spend a morning with me in that area and to do with me the sindacato di strada, so it happens to me to be accompanied by journalists who want to know the phenomenon directly.

We meet with the whole group that decided to participate in the sindacato di strada activities and we go to the square, at the intersection, in the bar where we meet these workers, we bring gadgets, informative material (a small brochure explaining their rights very briefly) and we talk to them, we stay there about an hour because in the meantime employers arrive and we run the risk of losing their working day.

At the end of the morning we also move to the countryside to try to meet them at work.

This activity is a bit more complicated and risky because often employers prevent us from entering in the ground, in the greenhouse or in the company.

At the end of the day we go to our union offices and we compare each other. We report on the day: how many workers we met, where they came from, what were their working conditions.

I measure the success of a sindacato di strada initiative first of all if I met many workers, if I managed to convey to them the sense of trust, of respect towards the union, to make them open as much as possible, and if I received much more information from them that I use to build a final relationship to be disclosed to the press, to the institutions and competent bodies.

Following the initiative, if the workers start to go to our offices it's a great result which also allows you to open a dispute on a specific problem of the worker.

It's a success if the journalists call me because it means that the message has arrived also outside the territory.

We need a lot of good will, a lot of humanity, a great desire to understand and so much spirit of initiative because even if it is an old practice that our syndicalist predecessors have transmitted to us we are recovering it so we also need to invent it day by day and mutual exchange serves us to improve this practice and to achieve more and more goals.