
THE EXPERIENCE OF LATINA

Stop undeclared work in agriculture

RAISE UP



Stefano Morea

We have a van, the “Camper of rights” that we use to reach the places where are many rural workers to get in touch with them first. We needed to reach those workers, thousands of workers existing on the territory, who were unable to reach us at our offices.

We understand that things are going well when they come back, when after the first approach they return and submit other problems that go well beyond the processing of paperwork. The goal is not only the ordinary handling of unemployment practices and the services we offer, but to get in tune and find out what the real needs of these workers are.

It is essential to have a contact within the community, a person who

Stefano Morea has been in Cgil since 2001 and from 2008 has been Secretary of Flai Cgil Latina.

helps us interact with workers, it can also be a cultural mediator, a person who is identified as one of them. The hardest thing for us was to find the right person.

We did not have the disposal of real data regarding the number of rural workers, of illegal and legal work, only Flai, both at national and local level, did a very good job of finding data and classification and now these data are the most used when we talk about undeclared work in agro-pontino region.



When we started the sindacato di strada the institutions on the territory, but also the Prefecture, were very cautious.

Our work is day by day all over the year, has a slight decline in the period of December-November because the Sikh community returns home, and because agriculture in our territory is mainly in protected cultivation, like in the greenhouse, where the various harvesting phases follow each other throughout the year.

The importance of our activity is not to approach a single collection campaign, a single cultivation, but it must be a constant activity.

The camper is a place equipped as an office with all its peculiarities, there are all the necessary tools (computer, printer), but we see it more as a meeting place, a place where workers come to talk to us, where we gather their testimonies, where we give them answers therefore, beyond the technical aspect, which is fundamental, it is more a place where we meet and discuss and we make union activity.

Years ago we talked about local trade union, the camper for us is a “mobile local trade union” that we use to move in the territory.

Among the materials we distribute, we don't like to call the gadgets, there are informational materials: contracts, leaflet in Punjab, Romanian and Italian, and information on safety conditions in rural work. We prepared a starter kit for rural workers: they can find their rights inside a backpack that we distribute. We also distribute a k-way we like to think of this k-way as a sort of protection.

We have daily relationships with the institutions.

A task force on caporalato is set up in the prefecture that besides being a meeting place and for mild comparison it does not produce anything effectively, it is not an incisive tool to fight undeclared work that instead must be faced with

more sense of responsibility. We used social media as a communication tool mainly with photos of our activities also to spread the idea of who we are, to be recognizable. In the first phase all the social media were used as a communication tool, then we passed to a more individual approach with Whatsapp which is fast and effective. Traditional media do not speak to our audience often they trigger reactions in contradictions or discussions that do not

With the "camper of rights" many workers who due to security problems or fear could not get in touch with the union were approached.

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interest us and since they are not read from the audience to which we address since they are not listened or seen, we think they are useless and ineffective.

Our typical day starts around 17:00: we go with the camper in the "non-places" those places near the residential area where the communities to which we address mainly live.

What may seem a simple answer to fill out a form for us it is an opportunity to know and enter inside the working conditions of that rural worker.

The worker leave the van with the tax declaration completed, with the deduction form completed, we come back to our office with a wealth of information and above all with the possibility of having explained to that worker that he is experiencing a condition of exploitation and that he can come out of it if all of us tomorrow morning can put on a protest action against his employer.

We also went in the countryside reaching the workers on the workplaces, when it was possible, because the typical companies of our province are well-fenced companies, that do not give you access, but we realized that had negative effects: because at that time we hit the worker, we made him even weaker at the workplace because there have been reprisals.

We went away, but the worker remained there to suffer the threats and harassment of these employers.

Today we have moved on to another strategy that we consider more effective, it's not a retreat, it's a change of perspective, that works and that gives more feedback.

I participated almost in all the experiences that Flai Cgil put in place and they have been very helpful, they have been an opportunity and a thing we must do again because it is the only way to understand where to start when you want to make sindacato di strada even if not every experience is replicable or transferable but in any case they are a starting point.

From those experiences I brought home, beyond the baggage of human experience, a starting point: what to do and what not to do.