

1. Premise

Globalization leads to huge changes. In a world characterized by exchanging of people and ideas, goods and services, the points of reference should be continuously redefined. The rhythm of changes does not always allow identifying what remained unchanged in a civilization. Between fatalism of an essentially economic globalization and identity exclusion, the only way to build a common future is to take the lead of this phenomenon. However, it is required to meet two conditions: points of reference should be searched in dialogues; the ambition of building a “common civilization” should be shared by everybody. In the absence of an effort to allow people and culture to meet, it is likely not to achieve the goal. GSI Italia is working to build an international policy based on: the respect, that is the essential basis to start a relationship of any kind; the equality between countries, people, cultures, men and women; the freedom of conscience which should have no restrictions; the solidarity of any kind; knowledge, a basic principle for dialogue and a condition to perpetuate it. This document is the manifesto of GSI Italia, showing its identity and allowing all partners dealing with international solidarity to carry out their actions in a dynamic and constant cooperation.

2. Principles and values

GSI Italia commits to respect and consolidate the following operating and ethical principles: focus on human beings, considered as the main characters of the individual and social history. Each person has the right to live using a part of the resources produced on the Earth and each person should be able to determine his/her own priorities and have the right means to achieve them; promotion of a cooperation aiming at solving problems and creating the conditions for the equality of chances, through a cooperation between civil societies in the form of cultural exchange and fair use of the available technical and financial resources; cooperation with each part of the national or international civil society, without distinctions based on the faith, political beliefs, culture or other, which aims at fighting intolerance, the predominance of market laws, social exclusion and marginalization. GSI Italia believes in an action which respects the goals of the assisted community and its priorities; promotion of associations as an expression of organized citizens who stand for solidarity and are able to promote forms of active citizenship. Public opinion has both the right and the duty to be involved in cooperation and social justice processes. That's why GSI Italia encourages forms of direct and indirect support to the public opinion; active presence on the regional territory to make people understand how to manage public goods and services, how to be involved in the public, political life of their community, how to spread the culture of cooperation and how to live in peace with the “others”. These principles represent the main values that inspire GSI Italia. They are accepted by adherent organizations and are spread among members and supporters. The rising gap between rich and poor countries require a stronger homogeneity of thought and action so that to contrast this trend.

3. Approaches and methods

3.1 Cultural, training and educational activity The association aims at becoming from a provider of services to an actor of political and cultural changes by means of a constant, coherent and skilled action by operating both locally and internationally. The cultural and educational initiatives by GSI Italia reflect its participative and popular dimension and stand out for the democratic participation and the collaboration among groups and local communities. GSI Italia implements cultural, training and education initiatives inspired to the values of solidarity and cooperation between people, which aims at: developing cultural and behavioural changes and relationships among people and identify the situations of gender inequality which limit the social growth of a community; promote civic responsibility towards the current form of social and human marginalization, irrespective of whether they are local or international, which is at the basis of conflicts and of the rising gap between people; stimulate the political awareness on the interconnection of social phenomena, on the relationships between countries and people, on a controlled use of resources, through substantial political and structural changes. GSI Italia tries to influence the institutions of the North and the South of the world and all international forums on the conditions of poor countries so that: to fight against prejudices by knowing the cultural and social heritage of “others” and by enhancing diversity through the dialogue; to promote solidarity as a means of active participation and protection of human rights. GSI Italia commits to establish direct partnerships with all organizations dealing with poverty and the related issues. A network between the different actors involved may generate more

coherent and lasting outcomes; to promote fund-raising initiatives that represent diversities and complexities of a single reality as improper methods may reduce the positive effect of the interventions.

3.2 Cultural and educational guidelines GSI Italia promotes educational methods to make people understand notions such as: solidarity, mutual understanding, participation, responsibility, equality of chances and democracy. This implies a direct involvement so that everybody can benefit from the equality of change from the cultural, political and economic points of view; interconnection of the main economic, political and environmental phenomena; authenticity of relationships and dialogue; interculture as a way to know each other; peace as the utmost expression of the relationships and the coexistence between human beings.

3.3 Operating approaches GSI Italia commits to: operate on the territory to understand and try to solve problems, difficulties, issues of both communities and individuals; cooperate with all social, private and public actors so that to improve the relationships among human beings; be the motor of a cultural change so that to enhance and integrate all cultures; establish networks that involve local authorities, public and private actors, cultural and training laboratories so that to understand problems among cultures, the causes of social exclusion, the complexity of cooperation in an effort to promote and implement concrete actions; GSI Italia is active in the implementation of common projects, in the belief that identities and peculiarities of a particular culture should be preserved. It produces and hands out didactic materials to promote changes and to become a force of cultural pressure. To be part of GSI Italia does not only mean to “have common ideas”; it means to commit to put in practice these ideas and make all actions more effective. The cultural and training initiatives GSI Italia proposes stand out for the innovative methods and techniques which involve participants from the beginning to the end and stimulate the intervention, the open dialogue and the debate.

3.4 Relationships and partnerships As all members of GSI think that cooperation is a means for solidarity and justice, they guarantee their support to those interventions dealing with the growth of the civil society through human and professional training and the reinforcement of associations. All partnerships are focused on these aspects. The members of GSI support the processes that characterize the evolution of local communities for: the democratization and the protection of human rights as they are the expression of a real emancipation and they are at the basis of the fight against discriminations. The members are active in concrete and effective actions that aim at preventing any form of social uprising and developing dialogue and debate; the promotion of the popular economy intended as one of the main responses to the issues of social injustice and resources distribution. The support to local economies is guaranteed by specific interventions.

3.5 Relationships with the institutions GSI Italia and its members commit to: debate with public institutions and respect their role as an independent actor; perform monitoring actions of the public interventions namely concerning the protection of human rights and common goods of all human beings; develop a real capacity of initiative aiming at eradicating the main social problems; promote coherence between policies and interventions at a national level.

3.6 Methodological goals GSI Italia and its members use particular methods aiming at: knowing all cultural, social, historical aspects of the reality; enhancing, supporting and promoting the local associations involved in the establishment of the social and economic relationships; training the partners so that the interventions are well-focused; establishing concrete and effective relationships with the partner which implement social, cultural, educational and productive projects in favour of local communities putting the stress on participation and promotion of coordinated activities; sharing the cultural, technical and human heritage with the partners by involving them both in the implementation of the activities in the foreign regions and in their planning in Italy; promoting civil societies through partnerships, namely the realities that are expression of the local communities and involve them. The partnerships are based on knowing the partner and its reality in order to establish a fruitful collaboration; supporting the organizations that are the expression of local communities, by privileging independent organizations which stand out for the capacity of: promoting an economy that privileges poor people, which is able to generate employment and income and respect the social, cultural and environmental balance; choosing competent collaborators and providing them a constant and professional training; promoting the values of cooperation, social responsibility and solidarity; supporting the organizations on the ground of specific goals; building relationships with other partners; guaranteeing the ethics of the interventions; reinforcing the intermediate associations that should promote the direct, socio-political participation of local communities and diversifying the sources of funds so that to guarantee their independence; implementing all the initiatives where several actors are involved so that to promote common and shared actions.

4. Identity and operating structures

4.1 Associative identity To become a member of GSI Italia, it is required to: represent a group of people; pay attention to update its goals, methods so that to ensure a permanent professional and cultural training; choose competent and responsible collaborators; contribute to establish strong relationships with the partners; promote the values of solidarity and social responsibility; guarantee the ethics of the interventions, their transparency and coherence; diversify the source of funds to guarantee one's independence.

4.2 The adhesion to the GSI networking GSI Italia is not only an association composed of people; it is also an independent network of associations which is open to everybody. The adhesion to the GSI Italia network implies: the active participation in the life of the network, in the initiatives and in the activities; good skills of mobilizing and involving people and resources; the exchange of information; the promotion of a social culture which is attentive to historical changes and which encourages critical debate and dialogue.