



FESTIVAL
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—REALIZZA IL CAMBIAMENTO—



Slow Food Italia

FESTIVAL OF PARTICIPATION 2017

CITIZENS OF SERIES A

L'Aquila, 6-9 July 2017

Festival

From 6 to 9 July 2017 L'Aquila is hosting the second edition of the Festival of participation promoted by ActionAid, Cittadinanzattiva and Slow Food.

The festival is focused on the citizen participation as a **condition and resource for a quality democracy**.

The Festival is a **catalyst** for tangible and intangible resources related to participation, brought by the citizens but also their stakeholders and partners; an **observatory** to define the participation and critically assess the state of health in Italy and beyond; a **convenience store** where experiences, knowledge, successes and failures, opportunities and risks, new and old challenges can be exchanged, learned and transmitted.

The Purpose

The Festival of the participation is aimed at:

- Propose and develop a **factual, articulated and critical approach** to the democratic participation of citizens;
- **Counter reductive, abnormal or dilute visions** of the participation;
- **Evaluate the state of democratic participation** in Italy and Europe by looking at the problems of world;
- Promote a **confrontation with the great challenges that democracy faces** calling citizens to be **not only actors in public life, but also agents of change**.

The Reasons

Italy offers a **rich and plural structure of participation opportunities**. Some forms have origins far back in time and are well anchored in the life of the country no matter of today's processes of change; others have been invented in recent decades by the citizens themselves or their partners. As shown by their most obvious manifestations, these opportunities are used by the citizens for a number of issues of public importance. All the information, representations and reviews on this reality that are all at rage, however, does not provide right



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judgement to this phenomenon. To grasp the extent, however, it would be enough to ask what Italy would be if the citizens were not active in the public arena and would not participate in the government of society and the definition of its future.

There also exists the critical issues that need to be addressed: an uncertainty as what are the shapes, the distinctive elements and standards of democratic participation; the temptation to reduce the citizens to spectators and beneficiaries of the ruling classes, or to mere overseers of the leadership of political morality; accommodative and non-confrontational vision, which makes citizens a crutch for the escape of the institutions of their responsibilities; the re-emergence of the idea that "the best democracy is that of no citizens", so that the investment is not only irrelevant but also harmful; old and new common problems with respect to which it is not enough what you have done so far, or that require responsibility and new ideas.

The task of the Festival is to bring out Italy's participatory soul and address the problems.

The Title

"Citizens of series A" does not mean that there will be in L'Aquila citizens of superior category, but that in a country divided by inequalities, the participation of ordinary citizens in public life at the same time requires and can generate equality. It is to take seriously the call of the President of the Republic in his year-end speech: "There should be no second-class citizens".

The Protagonists

The Festival is **an open place** to ordinary citizens, communities of L'Aquila and the Abruzzo region but also to the curious tourists, organizations with experiences of civic activism, to stakeholders, public and private partners of civic participation, to traditional media and new media, and the worlds of research, culture and art.

They are not just a public, they are a set of participants who are not offered pastimes but opportunities to exchange and discuss information, products, ideas and experiences. **Their role is essential to ensure that the shareholding does not speak in abstract terms, or from ideal models, but in relation to reality.**



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The Promoters

ActionAid, Cittadinanzattiva and Slow Food have decided to promote the Festival in continuity with the experience of "Italia Sveglia!" the partnership that lasts already for three years.

The festival, however, **is not a place for propaganda of their activities, but a space in which the point of observation on civic activism is used to look differently to the problems of development of democracy and opportunities for participation.**

The Place

The Festival is held in the city of L'Aquila not by chance, but for substantive reasons. It is **a symbol - both positive and negative - of an Italy to rebuild not just with public works but also with the participation of citizens**; a place that the country must not abandon; occasion of engagement for everyone. The partnership with the Comune dell'Aquila and other local institutions is a testimony of these meanings.

Events and Activities

The Festival offers a variety of events, informational activities, discussions, mutual learning, art and music, sharing of experiences and tools, distributed during the days. They are organized into a billboard and three thematic axes.

The Billboard of events and activities include testimonies and experiences of participation from the world; an award for civic excellence; lunch in common with the workers engaged in the reconstruction and a guided tour of the construction sites where they work; the recipe for sustainable self-handling; Abruzzo events; a laboratory design of a public policy of the citizens; the joint production of a narrative on participation; cultural events, art and music; stands and exhibition spaces.

The **thematic axes** are the following:

1. **The Ways of Citizens**, where the vocabulary of participation is defined, participants focus on problems, discuss reductive or abnormal visions, transfer and learn the instruments of participation with events such as "Magic Words", "Critical Places", "Technologies of participation".



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2. **Rights**, where the situations of division, conflict and inequality are handled in the light of the participation, where new ideas are brought up for these situations and participants focus on differences in the management of emerging problems, depending on whether or not there is participation, with events and activities such as "Forgetfulness", "The time of challenges", "Making a difference".
3. **Revolutions and Liberations**, where the aim is to reconstruct, using the perspective of citizens, the crucial historical events for the extension or enrichment of citizenship and democracy with narratives, sounds and images.

Each of the three thematic axes is framed by a lecture, "Think big."