



2020 Annual Report by Centro Astalli

Summary and Highlights

While this Annual Report is being released, the world is being affected by a very serious health crisis, which is upsetting our lifestyles, relationships, and future perspectives.

This Report illustrates a year, 2019, in support of the refugees and asylum seekers, with data and statistics on the services offered to the 20,000 people we met (of which 11,000 in Rome). It shows how the restrictive, narrow-minded -and even discriminatory- migration policies which characterized last year, affect life, exclusion and irregularity even more, making our entire society more vulnerable.

The data we are presenting show how high the price to pay is in terms of social security for not having invested in protection, hospitality, and the integration of migrants.

- **The real emergency is not the arrivals but the instability that forced migrants face**

All the services offered by Centro Astalli have been affected as side effects of the enforcement of the security decrees. The abolition of humanitarian protection, the procedures for obtaining lodging being made more complicated with the consequent reduction of rights, and more in general, the increase of bureaucratic burdens at all levels, are excluding a growing number of forced migrants from the circuits of hospitality and territorial facilities.

The request of basic services (canteen, showers, clothes, medical assistance) is high in all the territories. More than 3,000 people have benefited from the canteen in Rome: among them 35% are entitled to humanitarian protection. They are people who, having been deprived of assisted hospitality, are compelled to attend the canteen again, as they have no alternatives. The day center in Palermo has hosted 850 new people. In Trento, in order to face the cuts on social services, was born the project "Una Comunità Intera", which is a hosting and assistance service for more than 250 asylum seekers and homeless refugees.

Among those who benefit from the medical center in Rome, the number of migrant women has increased, especially those from Somalia and Nigeria, who have recently arrived in Italy. Many of them, although very vulnerable, are excluded from the circuits of hospitality and live in conditions of serious marginality, with repercussions on their health.

→ See sections *Accettazione, Mensa, Ambulatorio, Accompagnamento persone vulnerabili, Rete territoriale* (Reception, Canteen, Medical Surgery, Support of vulnerable people, Territorial network)

- **Concern about the "too many migrants that are actually not arriving**

In 2019 thousands of migrants lived confined in a sort of limbo. They were forgotten in Libyan prisons, in the camps of the Greek islands or even on the ships which had rescued them, left at the mercy of the waves for days and days while Italy and the European Union engaged in a shameful arm-wrestling on who should host handfuls of people.

Only 11,471 landed in Italy (reporting a decrease of more than 50% compared to 2018 and a 90% decrease compared to 2017).

We have more than once denounced, also through the Tavolo Nazionale Asilo (National Asylum Panel), that the decrease of the arrival is connected mainly to the increase of the operations of the Libyan coast guards: in the last year 8,406 people intercepted in the Mediterranean were taken back to Libya and are detained there in conditions which the United Nations have declared as unacceptable.

About 35% of the patients who went to see SaMiFo were found to be victims of torture or ill-treatments, of slavery, female genital mutilations and affected by post-traumatic disturbances.

From their stories, the dramatic scene of the Libyan detention centres came out: strongly traumatizing places, where tortures and violence of all kinds are inflicted daily on defenseless men and women, leaving deep scars on their bodies and in their minds. For this reason, Centro Astalli is among the promoters of "Io Accolgo" (I welcome), which has the objective of giving voice to that vast part of civil society which refuses to accept that the Mediterranean becomes a cemetery, and Italy as responsible for the rejection and the death of thousands of migrants.

→ See sections *SaMiFo*, *Media relations*, *Campaigns and Advocacy*, *Photographic inserts*

- **The Hosting Programs developed throughout the past years are losing their effectiveness: a hard blow on the integration programs for forced migrants.**

Many of the people we met have had difficulty in obtaining or renewing their stay permits. Their unstable lives clash with the changes in regulations and with the procedures of the single offices, thus making the bureaucratic matter a potential labyrinth with no way out.

In 2019, the number of people visiting the counselling center in Rome increased (by 29%), especially those who, due to the abolition of humanitarian protection, suddenly risked finding themselves deprived of their stay permit. Compared to last year, the people who have availed themselves of this service without any valid means of identification has widely increased (by 79%). Consequently to the security decrees, added complications have resulted and were introduced by the injunctions of the Police Headquarters, who no longer accept as a valid place of residence the fictitious address either for the asylum seekers or the people entitled to humanitarian protection. As a result, they find themselves deprived of what is essentially required to convert the stay permit into a working permit.

About two thirds of the people who visit the medical clinic are not registered with the National Health Service. In most cases, they are people who have lived in Italy for a long time, but due to difficulties related to their place of residence or their stay permit have not been given the right or have lost their right to public health assistance.

Even the radical transformation of the system of hospitality in Italy has dealt a severe blow to that widespread hospitality that had been given in recent years by the engagement of many entities at the service of forced migrants. The main change has regarded the possibility of accessing the system itself: in fact, asylum seekers and the people who were entitled to a stay permit for humanitarian purposes are excluded from *Siproimi* (e.g. Sprar) hospitality.

The reduction of social services in the (centres for extraordinary hospitality) *centri accoglienza straordinaria* (Cas), has made the emersion and the immediate cure of these vulnerabilities more difficult. It is not by chance that in centres run by Centro Astalli in accordance with *Siproimi* regulations, compared to the previous year, the number of vulnerable hosts has risen from 30 to 40%.

The entities belonging to the territorial network of Centro Astalli in 2019 hosted 835 people in all, following a form of intervention which is based on the promotion of the individual and that develops integration from day one.

A system of hospitality which is fragmented and postpones the opportunity for inclusion to a “second phase” accessible only to a few affects the paths to hospitality and integration. It becomes more difficult to motivate people who are granted shorter periods of hospitality and who urgently need to find any job to invest their time in the learning of Italian, in education and training. This reduces the quality of their future in Italy.

→ See sections *Accettazione, Mensa, Centri Siproimi, Centro di ascolto, Scuola di italiano, Rete Territoriale, Progetti realizzati nel 2019 (ALF – A lawyer for friend)*

- **The integration of political agendas disappears but commitment silently continues.**

Centro Astalli continues to believe that investing in integration is a priority, even if in 2019 we found less support on this point from the institutions.

During the year, the service of accompanying towards autonomy in Rome has supported 349 people. Even in Catania the work front office has recorded a considerable increase seeing the number of interventions triple in one year. 200 people (single individuals or families) were hosted with the project *Comunità di Ospitalità* that Centro Astalli runs in cooperation with 30 religious congregations in Rome, Trento, Vicenza and Padova.

The projects developed by Centro Astalli are mostly based on the implementation of the services and activities that are meant for social inclusion with particular care for the forced migrants who are in a condition of particular vulnerability: illiterate, in transit, who have just become legal adults, asylum seekers and refugees with serious problems concerning physical and mental health. The planned actions were based on a double direction: to promote a more inclusive society through the prevention and the contrast of discrimination and to favour equal exchanges between citizens and forced migrants for a real participated and sustainable integration.

→ See section *Accompagnamento all'autonomia, Comunità di ospitalità, Scuola di italiano, Centri di accoglienza, Rete territoriale, Campagne e advocacy, Progetti realizzati nel 2019 (FARI 2 – Formare Assistere Riabilitare Informare, ALI 2.0 – L'Alfabeto per il Lavoro e l'Inclusione, XING CROSSING – Percorsi di inserimento per giovani migranti, FACCIAMO QUADRATO: accogliere, proteggere, promuovere, integrare, INTERCULTUR(A)CTION – Intervento per l'empowerment di*

richiedenti asilo e rifugiati, OPEN MINDS, UNLOCKING POTENTIAL: Matteo Ricci Center for refugee education and empowerment, INCLUSIONE ATTIVA - Misure di sostegno per l'integrazione dei migranti forzati).

- **Let's invest in the social heritage of our communities.**

We believe that it is important to invest in the social heritage of our communities, making the most of the diversities which we make them richer and stronger. In all the locations that are part of the Centro Astalli territorial network, developed centres for citizenship and justice help find solutions to the needs of the refugees and of the society hosting them. At Grumo Nevano (NA) the canteen and medical facility have been enlarged to receive also Italian citizens in state of need. In Palermo, the project *Generazione intercultura 2.0* has empowered the professional skills of a group of young people living in the city, independently from their nationality. In Trento, 13 asylum seekers and refugees, in the *Combouniversitaria* project, have had an experience of living with Italian non-resident university students. In the projects of Centro Astalli, awareness raising took place in about 200 schools in 15 Italian cities were involved 25.679 students. It is a quantity which encourages and motivates towards the creation of communities where young people and migrants can be protagonists together.

We were supported in this task by the determined and indispensable collaboration of 617 volunteers. Just to mention the centre of Rome, more than 200 people offered to volunteer: Italians, foreigners, or second and third generation migrants in Italy and even refugees, who desire to commit themselves for a more open-minded and just society.

→ see sections *Rete territoriale, Progetti nelle scuole, Rapporti con i media, Formazione volontari, Progetti realizzati nel 2019 (CHANGE - Student Ambassadors & Migrants Together for Inclusive Societies, FINESTRE SUL MONDO - Percorsi di valorizzazione delle differenze e di promozione dei diritti).*

- **Clear signs of hope**

This Annual Report shows a year which was decidedly complex for migrants. In this context, Centro Astalli has wanted to give tangible signs of hope, trying to create spaces which go towards a future together. In 2019, the Matteo Ricci Centre was opened, which offers two different services: lodging for 20 women refugees and Spazio Inclusion (Inclusion Centre), a project devoted to forced migrants, with a particular accent on the youngest and most vulnerable people, to offer them the opportunity to develop new skills. The Matteo Ricci Centre is meant to be a place for meetings, dialogue and the creation of new opportunities involving migrants, single citizens, associations, public and private entities to build together a more compact and open-minded community, where diversity can be a resource for the common good

www.centroastalli.it