

Annual report 2025

Highlights

Wars, human rights violations, persecution, inequalities and climate crises have pushed the number of people forced to migrate to over 122.6 million worldwide (source: UNHCR Mid-Year Trends 2024). At the same time, the displacement of the right to asylum, the criminalisation of migratory processes and the outsourcing of policies to combat the phenomenon to third countries - including unsafe countries where human rights are violated - make the routes to Europe increasingly dangerous and life-threatening. Desperate journeys at the mercy of abusers who swell the ranks of the networks that traffic and exploit human beings, fuelled by wicked agreements, which have the consequence of making people increasingly vulnerable.

The 2025 Centro Astalli Annual Report details the increasingly complex and challenging circumstances faced by the refugees they assist. This situation is compounded by the tightening of migration policies and the challenges refugees face in accessing adequate reception systems, which are not always adequately equipped to support them. Here's how social inclusion can feel like an obstacle course.

- **Increasingly restricted access to protection**

The **right to asylum** in Italy has been further restricted, marking a particularly complex year. Migration policies and prevailing attitudes towards migrants, both in Italy and in Europe, have led to the progressive exclusion of asylum seekers and refugees from the exercise of fundamental rights. The policies implemented, including direct actions and omissions, have contributed to depriving them of rights and protection, relegating them to a condition of subordination and, in many cases, of real social inferiority. Daily and silent omissions, highly detrimental to their rights and which, in the most serious cases, cause them to fall into illegality.

There are increasing numbers of migrants who are denied attempts to access the procedure for the recognition of international protection, and are trapped in a legal *limbo*. The reduction to just 7 days of the time limit for lodging an appeal against negative decisions on applications for asylum by migrants from countries considered 'safe' has made it difficult to guarantee effective legal protection. Conversely, the waiting period for residence permit acquisition at police headquarters has been known to extend over several months, while the availability of reception facilities is progressively diminishing. The result is an **existential precariousness** that generates frustration, exacerbates people's vulnerability and makes the work of providing support more complex. The repeal of the **special protection** linked to the requirements of work and personal and family life integration has left thousands of people without the necessary safeguards and without the possibility of continuing and consolidating a dignified process of integration. The **legal orientation service** of Centro Astalli has supported **517 people**, including many with permits that are about to expire and with no possibility of renewal. In Catania, 965 people were accompanied through the bureaucratic process of the asylum procedure, 525 in Trento.

→ See *Taking care (data from the Legal Orientation Service), Territorial Network*

- **Asylum seekers in low-threshold services are increasing, as is the demand for basic needs. Precariousness and fragility persist, even in more adult age groups.**

Although there was a reduction in the number of migrants arriving by sea during the year, which suggests that overall there are fewer people who have recently arrived in the Country, those who contacted Centro

Astalli often had immediate survival needs, related to basic needs such as **food and healthcare**, a direct result of the difficulties many have in accessing the institutional reception system. The percentage of **asylum seekers** has, in fact, increased in almost all services, particularly at the **reception desk** and in the **soup kitchen**, where they now make up almost half of the total users. The percentage of people with a **legal status in the process of being defined** - a category that includes those whose inclusion processes have been slowed down or complicated by cumbersome bureaucratic *procedures* - has remained high (15%). The significant number of **meals distributed at the soup kitchen in Via degli Astalli (65,581)** confirms the persistence of a state of **precariousness and fragility** which, unlike in 2023, has also mainly affected the **30 to 60-year-old** age groups, indicating an increasing difficulty in consolidating paths to autonomy even for those who have been in Italy for a longer period of time.

There has been a significant increase in the number of women attending the **outpatient clinic**, from 287 to 452, mainly of Ukrainian and Peruvian origin. At SaMiFo, a regional health centre created through a collaboration between ASL Roma 1 and Centro Astalli, the number of patients using the **gynecology** service increased from 396 to 530, and the service also saw an increase in the number of visits (1,164 in total): just as there was a significant increase in **psychiatric visits** from 875 to 1,283 with only 33 additional users. More people and more fragile. Among the patients there are also 100 minors taken in charge by the SaMiFo minors' team for the Mental Health Protection and Developmental Age Rehabilitation Service carried out at Pavilion VII of S. Maria della Pietà.

→ See *Taking care (data from Reception, Soup Kitchen, Outpatient Clinic, SaMiFo), Hospitality, Social inclusion, Projects implemented in 2024 (Here for you, It's not just a meal, Taking care)*

- **The reception of refugees: vulnerabilities increase and responses become more complex.**

Centro Astalli promotes models of **widespread and integrated reception**, in which individualised spaces for attention and support have been guaranteed to the **1,114 people received**, in the belief that reception means guaranteeing the needs of those who arrive and at the same time creating participatory communities in which refugees can feel at home.

For this reason, the approach to reception is **diversified and aims to respond to the specific needs of each person**, taking into account their different situations and resources. In 2024, among the 227 people housed in centres, family homes and cohousing in Rome, there was a noted increase in the physical and psychological vulnerabilities of the residents, with a rise in the number of people with disabilities, mental health issues, addictions and a history of violence. There was also an increase in the number of LGBTQIA+ people.

In Trento, in 2024, the waiting time for access to a residence or Emergency Reception Centres accommodation has grown exponentially, exceeding 200 days, a situation that forces migrants to wait for months for their right to reception to be recognised, living on the street. An emergency that has been addressed by providing shelter to 160 homeless asylum seekers in the city's dormitories.

→ See *Reception, Social Inclusion, Centro Astalli Trento*

- **Vulnerability is on the rise, but identifying its presence is becoming more challenging.**

The necessity to adapt the services of all the locations in which Centro Astalli operates to meet the changing needs of a user base that is increasingly waiting for international protection, with urgent primary needs and growing vulnerabilities, has made it clear that overcoming a **bureaucratic approach to vulnerability**, which excludes all those who do not fall within the questionable parameters established at a central level, is a priority.

Women are among the migrants most exposed to transnational trafficking, due to a number of factors. These include their gender, the socio-cultural systems of their contexts of origin, and exposure to exploitation and violence (sexual, but not only) during the journey and in the destination countries. It is therefore essential to

recognise the victims of trafficking and exploitation, to facilitate their emergence, and to initiate them into sheltered reception routes. Very often the women who turn to Centro Astalli's services are not alone, but have children and partners.

It is imperative that specific interventions are implemented for refugee families, particularly those consisting of single parents. It is essential that these measures take the needs of the families into account, ensuring that the care of both adults and minors is addressed. Protecting the rights of families to remain together is of particular importance. Family reunions can be postponed or discouraged by the high financial cost of DNA testing for each of the minors involved.

→ See *Caring (Outpatient Clinic and SaMiFo data), Social inclusion, Projects implemented in 2024 (Women on the road from resilience to autonomy, Re-Build)*

- Inclusion: no-stop building

At Centro Astalli, investing in inclusion is a top priority. In recent years, the disorientation of migrants in the face of certain challenges of everyday life has become very apparent, including: access to digital services, regular employment, opportunities to learn or improve Italian.

In 2024, the **Inclusion Space and the Work Orientation Service** in Rome provided support to **over 800 individuals**, **282** of whom were enrolled in the **Italian language school**. There was consistently high demand for assistance in combating the digital divide to facilitate access to public administration services, with 710 beneficiaries (542 in 2023) receiving support, particularly in the areas of virtual residency and the issue of health care cards.

These issues are critical and have a significant impact on the living conditions of many refugees. Even after many years of settlement, their legal status remains precarious, which also has a negative effect on the social, economic, and cultural fabric of the country. As a result, refugees are unable to participate fully and actively in society, their potential remains untapped, and they feel a lack of belonging. Many services were committed to ensuring that precarious and emergency situations were responded to with **planning solutions** that looked to the future of refugees and not only to the here and now.

Within a context marked by economic and social criticalities, and with living conditions for individuals and families having worsened considerably, we have sought to provide concrete answers to urgent needs by implementing projects targeting women, families and students, focusing especially on the most vulnerable people, those experiencing mental distress and those with specific health needs. As in previous years, a number of projects were implemented with the aim of guaranteeing the right to study for young refugees and third-country nationals. Individual tutoring programmes and scholarships were consolidated to support university and higher education courses, thereby improving people's employability and chances of social integration.

→ See *Social Inclusion, Projects Implemented in 2024 (Article 34, Promoting the integration of refugees mobilising their talents, UNICORE), Territorial Network*

- **Omission of rights**

Despite numerous rulings by courts and international bodies that have declared these barriers illegitimate, national and local administrations continue to impose discriminatory requirements in their laws and regulations, hindering migrants' access to essential goods, services, and subsidies. One example of this is the requirement of long uninterrupted residence, which prevents many migrants from accessing social housing, though this practice was recently rejected by the Constitutional Court. In addition to this unacceptable exclusion, there are chronic delays by the public administration in handling residence and asylum applications and all those documents to which immigrants are entitled but which they struggle to obtain due to a slow administrative machine, especially in large cities. These intolerable disservices, which paralyse the exercise

of fundamental rights, damage the lives of migrants: they compromise the regularity of their stay, access to health care and employment, and the use of services such as banking for example, the latter of which has seen an increasing number of people turn to the Social Guidance Point to open current accounts.

The challenges that forced migrants face on their path to inclusion are many and complex. Among the main ones is the **right to housing**, which remains a chimera for many refugees. In fact, once they leave the reception system, the housing process proves increasingly difficult; a critical issue that is affected by inflation and the consequent economic and social marginality, but which is often aggravated by the **absence of solid community networks at a local level**. The stigma of criminality that accompanies migrants in public discourse does not facilitate their integration into housing. The lack of access to the housing market ultimately forces individuals into situations of extreme housing hardship, including forced cohabitation or life on the streets, as documented by local offices in Catania, Palermo and Vicenza. The issue of short-term rentals in urban areas has recently emerged as a factor contributing to housing challenges experienced by vulnerable groups, including displaced populations. In 2024, the Centro Astalli local network has once again sought to address the housing challenges affecting asylum seekers and refugees. Its work has included helping to achieve housing and job stability and providing them with the tools they need to find their way in the housing market.

→ Cfr. *Social inclusion, Projects completed in 2024 (Home sweet home, The challenge of integration, SPRInt), Local network*

- **Recognising ourselves as a supportive community: against fear, more opportunities to meet**

In such a restrictive context, Centro Astalli has intensified its activities of **awareness-raising and advocacy work** to denounce violations of rights and promote more humane and inclusive policies. Collaboration with the international and European offices of the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) has become even more valuable in this area. Immigration policies aimed at containment have contributed to creating a climate of closure towards forced migrants. This is evidenced by prevailing attitudes within society, influenced by propaganda that characterises migrants as adversaries, thus hindering the progress towards inclusion. Therefore, Centro Astalli has strategically collaborated with various cultural organisations (e.g. libraries, universities, associations, institutions) in creating opportunities to meet refugees. One such initiative is 'Ti racconto una storia, ti racconto di me' (I'll tell you a story, I'll tell you about me), through which refugees become **'living books'**.

Centro Astalli has also continued to work with secondary schools, in the understanding that the construction of a more just and united society cannot ignore the active involvement of young people, providing them with the cognitive and cultural tools that will allow them to critically interpret their times. **38,700 students** have participated in projects designed to raise awareness of the right to asylum and inter-religious dialogue. These projects have been carried out in more than 250 schools across 18 Italian cities. This significant figure underscores the importance of fostering communities where young Italians and migrants can thrive together as active participants. In 2024, a total of **803 volunteers** offered assistance to the refugees on their journey: men and women of all ages, Italians, foreigners or second and third generation migrants in Italy, as well as refugees, moved by the desire to be close to, to serve and to listen to those who, fleeing wars and persecution, need above all support and understanding.

→ See *Cultural activities, Projects completed in 2024 (One class, one world, Pathways), Local network*

Centro Astalli in figures

Users 2024: **24,000**, of which **11,000** in Rome

Volunteers: **803**

Entities of the Centro Astalli Territorial Network: **8**

Meals distributed at the soup kitchen in Via degli Astalli: **65,581**

People hosted in reception facilities: **1,114**

Students met within the framework of the Windows and Meetings projects: **38,700**