

Annual Report 2026

Key Points

The **global context** that forms the backdrop to this Report is one of weakened multilateralism and growing geopolitical polarisation. The massive cuts to USAID funding and similar measures adopted by other Western governments have translated political indifference into immediate, concrete consequences: humanitarian programmes suspended, organisations forced to scale back field operations, people in flight deprived of essential services. The repercussions have reached the Italian third sector too, **jeopardising the continuity of indispensable services for reception and inclusion**.

In **Europe**, the decline in so-called “irregular” arrivals has gone hand in hand with a tightening of regulations that has broadened the criteria for inadmissibility of asylum applications and redefined the concept of safe third countries: measures that do not address the root causes of forced migration, but erect **ever more sophisticated barriers to access to protection**.

Italy has moved in line with this approach, prioritising border control over inclusion, in a context where **migrants** continue to contend with **marginalisation, high levels of poverty, low-skilled employment and delayed pathways to citizenship**. A wasted potential, to the detriment of all.

Against this backdrop, the **Centro Astalli Annual Report 2026** underlines that the surest path is to **invest in inclusion** — not as an act of discretionary generosity, but as a **clear-sighted public policy choice**. The data bear this out: labour market integration works when it is supported; the educational levels attained or already held by refugees would enable them to make a significant contribution to the country; a reception system oriented towards inclusion from the very first day produces tangible results. What does not work is the context: a poorly accessible housing **market**, ever longer **asylum procedures**, an increasingly fragile *welfare* system, and policies that continue to prioritise **border control** over inclusion. Geopolitical instability, global inequalities, Italy’s demographic decline and the transformation of the labour market can become factors of disintegration — or an opportunity to build a different future. The choice lies with politics, institutions and civil society. It lies with us.

- **Widespread vulnerability and growing needs: structural questions that cannot be ignored**

Every day, thousands of people queue along Via degli Astalli in Rome. This is not a seasonal emergency: it is a structural, constant demand that does not abate. In 2025, **1,205** people accessed **the Centro Astalli’s low-threshold services** for the first time; **2,543** turned to the **canteen**, where **62,162 meals** were distributed. **1,650** received assistance at the **health clinic**, whilst **693** people sought help from the **legal advice service**. There is a growing presence of Peruvian families, often excluded from public reception circuits, and of men from Bangladesh. Both nationalities are classified as coming from “safe countries” — evidence of the limitations of an approach based on

containing arrivals rather than on a structural reading of the phenomenon. **49%** of **canteen** users are **asylum seekers**, a proportion that has risen for the second consecutive year, demonstrating that **legal uncertainty translates directly into material vulnerability**. Moreover, 154 people used it more than 100 times — a picture of **persistent marginalisation that does not resolve itself and that calls for public policy action**.

The **legal service** handled **2,480 cases**, of which 29% concerned **people with multiple vulnerabilities** (victims of torture, single-parent households, young adults who had recently come of age). **SaMiFo** — the Regional Reference Centre for the health of forced migrants, established in collaboration with ASL Roma 1 — assisted **2,667 patients**, carrying out **11,977 consultations** and 28,975 mediation interventions in 34 languages, alongside specialist clinical care in psychiatry, developmental mental health and forensic medicine in support of protection applications. The data on **children's mental health** — **1,057 consultations** for **151 children and young people** — represent perhaps the most urgent signal to emerge from the Report, because it concerns stories and needs that cannot be deferred.

→ See Section 'Caring'

- **A form of reception that holds: the system put to the test by complex needs**

In 2025, **Centro Astalli in Rome provided accommodation to 199 people**, distributed across SAI centres, family homes, semi-independent living programmes and co-housing. There has been an increase in the length of stays in reception centres, owing to the **growth in complex profiles**: 22% of residents are over forty years of age, and serious health and psychiatric cases have risen. This has resulted in increasingly limited turnover, not least because the ability to leave reception programmes is contingent on securing adequate living arrangements, a difficulty compounded by an increasingly inaccessible housing market, in Rome as across much of the country. **Over 30% of residents are in employment**, confirming that **continuous, personalised support programmes foster labour market integration** — but finding independent accommodation remains the most critical challenge, with direct consequences for the sustainability of the entire system. Employment alone does not guarantee **housing independence**. High costs, barriers rooted in prejudice, and the gap between bureaucratic timescales and the rhythms of daily life all weigh heavily. The difficulties increase for **lone mothers**, who often lack adequate means to reconcile care responsibilities and employment. In this context, **semi-independent living and co-housing programmes**, supported in part by flats made available by religious congregations, are proving to be strategic. They represent not merely temporary housing solutions, but environments in which relationships, shared responsibilities and a sense of belonging are developed.

Across the various centres of the **Astalli** network— from Bologna to Trento, from Palermo to Padua and Catania — **reception** takes different yet converging territorial forms. The **widespread model** demonstrates that inclusion is achievable when it is underpinned by clear political will and an active social fabric. This is not simply a matter of providing beds, but of building — day by day — concrete paths that restore to people not only a home, but the capacity and opportunity **to shape their own future.**"

→ See Sections 'Reception' and 'Territorial Network'

- **Inclusion: an obstacle course — in-work poverty and delayed rights**

Inclusion is not an isolated intervention, but an articulated **process** that requires time and the right tools: **language learning, access to employment, housing solutions, social networks and services.**

In 2025, Centro Astalli accompanied **934 people** through the **employment service**, carrying out **2,344 guidance sessions** (634 more than the previous year) and facilitating **230 job placements**. In parallel, the **Italian language school** ran 9 classes for **224 students; 38% of them hold a university degree** — a figure that highlights the presence of advanced skills, often hampered by linguistic and bureaucratic obstacles. These figures bring to light a structural contradiction: on the one hand, migrants participate actively in the labour market, with rising educational levels and children who perform well at school; on the other, as the OECD report on integration in Italy (2026) notes, employment remains concentrated in **low-skilled roles**, whilst high levels of poverty and **overcrowded housing** persist. On top of this, citizenship regulations continue to slow paths towards full inclusion.

The **social support service** followed **810 people** through **644 interventions**, many of which were dedicated to accessing **digital public administration services** — which, at the Rome centre, reached 516 people: an increasingly significant barrier, affecting women in particular. Other recurring difficulties include administrative delays, a **shortage of housing** and **poorly protected work**, as well as the lack of effective support for **single-parent households** — who make up around 30% of the families encountered — to balance work and care.

Similar dynamics are observed in other cities of the network: in Trento, the phenomenon of **in-work poverty** is growing; in Catania and Grumo Nevano, after-school activities for minors are being strengthened; in Palermo, language learning and autonomy support programmes continue. A common thread running across all locations is the **difficulty of accessing digital public services.**

→ See Sections 'Social Inclusion' and 'Territorial Network'

- **Defending: countering the narrative that dehumanises**

Accompanying and serving refugees is not sufficient if the social context continues to regard them as a problem to be managed. For this reason, Centro Astalli complements its reception activities with a sustained commitment to **cultural, educational and advocacy work**, which forms an integral part of its mission.

In a media and political climate often marked by **oversimplified and securitarian analyses**, defending the rights of refugees means acting on multiple levels: fostering cultural awareness, influencing institutional debate and countering disinformation.

In 2025, the *Finestre — Storie di rifugiati* [*Windows — Stories of Refugees*] project involved **21,170 students across 998 classes in 197 schools throughout Italy**. The *Incontri — Percorsi di dialogo interreligioso* [*Encounters — Pathways of Interreligious Dialogue*] project reached **10,073 students**. These figures speak to more than a broad reach: they represent a concrete alternative to the dominant emergency narrative. **57 refugees brought their own testimonies into schools, and 26 witnesses from different religious traditions helped foster genuine knowledge of the pluralism** of contemporary societies. At the level of institutional advocacy, Centro Astalli took part

in the first National Conference on rescue at sea and, together with the Tavolo Asilo e Immigrazione, contributed to monitoring the Italy–Albania Agreement at the centres in Shëngjin and Gjadër, whilst also drawing public attention to the shortcomings of the new European Pact on Migration and Asylum.

→ See Section ‘Advocacy’

- **Projects and resources: a system under pressure**

In 2025, Centro Astalli carried out **17 projects**, with cross-cutting priorities directed in particular at **refugee women** — often lone mothers — **labour market integration**, the **right to education** and **addressing economic and social fragility**.

During the year, **408 direct payments** were made, totalling €114,093, allocated to **meeting essential needs and strengthening routes to autonomy**: medical expenses (medication and consultations), education, rent, food, documents, DNA testing for family reunification, driving licences, transport, internships and training. This is not a form of welfare dependency, but rather the **removal of concrete obstacles that prevent people from achieving genuine independence**.

The shrinking of public and private funding — exacerbated by the closure of USAID — has forced the organisation to operate under growing uncertainty, prompting it to seek new project opportunities and partnerships.

Against this backdrop, the **877 active volunteers across the national network** — of whom 306 are regularly engaged at the Rome centre alone — represent a **fundamental resource**. In a year marked by growing regulatory and media pressure on solidarity with migrants, their presence is the **most tangible expression of an idea of living community** that continues to resist.

→ See Sections ‘Serving’ and ‘Volunteering’

- **Another model is possible: the Rete Astalli across Italy**

Centro Astalli is not just Rome, but a network of active organisations in **Bologna, Catania, Palermo, Grumo Nevano, Trento, Vicenza and Padua**. In total, it serves **approximately 21,000 people**, with **1,118 accommodated** in reception facilities and **31,243 students reached in schools**. Whilst operating with legal and financial autonomy within their respective local contexts, the Rete Astalli shares a common mission: **to accompany, serve and defend refugees**. The shared challenges are **the housing emergency, bureaucratic barriers that paralyse vital processes, in-work poverty and precarious work, mental health, and the growing complexity of the profiles of those received**.

The response is articulated through low-threshold services, personalised support and advocacy activities at local and national level. In **Catania**, over 1,460 people received first reception assistance, and the new street outreach service “Orme di Astalli” (Astalli footprints) was launched to reach those living in conditions of complete invisibility in the city’s neighbourhoods. In **Trento**, those supported show rising employment levels, yet an inaccessible housing market and the prejudice of some private landlords continue to stand in the way of housing independence. In **Palermo**, low-threshold services are largely sustained by volunteers under 30, in a context marked by a persistent housing crisis. In **Vicenza**, 135 people housed in flats spread across seven municipalities demonstrate the viability of a model of reception integrated into the urban fabric. In **Bologna**, the focus is on building social networks

and relationships to foster inclusion. In **Padua**, activities and projects have been strengthened through collaboration with national and European partners. This network demonstrates that a different approach is possible: despite the limitations of the system — and sometimes precisely within those limitations — concrete paths of inclusion are built every day.

→ See *'Territorial Network'*

Centro Astalli in Figures

Users 2025	21,000 , of whom 11,000 in Rome
Volunteers	877
Member organisations of the Centro Astalli Territorial Network	8
Meals distributed at the Via degli Astalli canteen	62,162
People hosted in reception facilities	1,118
Students reached through the Finestre and Incontri projects	31,243