

The first conference in Rome was organised by UPP “Un Ponte Per”. Participants from Spain included [“APDHA”](#) (la Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos de Andalucía), the movement [“Somos Migrantes”](#) (We are Migrants) from Seville, “Refugiadxs” (Refugees) from Cordoba, and [“Casa de Palabras Andalucía”](#) (House of Words, Andalusia). [“Antigone”](#) from Greece and “Pank” from Croatia also attended.

The aims of the conference were as follows: to set up workshops on EU migrant policies (in this case in Italy); compose a formal message to be put before political representatives of the EU regarding the topics debated during the conference; organise a volunteering day in support of local social and solidarity initiatives (taking place at the Baobab Experience camp); as well as film and record interviews on participants’ personal and professional experiences at the migration camps (taking place over the days of the conference).



Introduction of the different organizations present at the Conference. Ciutat dell’Utopia, Rome-25th January 2017.

25th January 2018



PIUCULTURE <http://www.piuculture.it>

PIUCULTURE is a non-governmental organization, set up in 2011, which works with migrants in transit in large cities.

One of its many aims is to integrate migrants with locals. To achieve this social integration it diffuses stories of migrants in Rome, in District II.

The team is made up of journalists who research and write reports on discrimination.

Their projects range from photo journals in significant places of Rome which are out of bounds. They show the daily lives of migrants in places such as on public transport, in demonstrations, life in the camps and street action; with an aim to raise awareness among the local population. The features are also divulged in workshops run by migrants themselves.

Their most successful project is a magazine called PIUCULTURE, founded in 2008 by migrants and locals. It is also diffused online and can be found on the organization's webpage.

The webpage pools together information on the different resources available for migrants such as regarding health services, religion, finance and culture. It also provides information on Italian classes for both children and adults, in thirteen schools with over a hundred students, as well as summer camps for children.

Their work with children in Rome who are waiting to be "relocated" with their parents is fascinating. They organise fun activities such as sports events and cultural activities, as well as religious activities in particular, so as to encourage and develop tolerance.

Through dance and theatre they try to break psychological and ideological barriers, since “dancing both connects and crosses borders”.

LEGAL CLINIC ROMA TRE



<http://www.uniroma3.it/news2.php?news=1214>

This organization started off organizing seminars and today collaborates with the Faculty of Law at the University of Rome. It teaches students how to offer legal assistance to migrants, both in theory and in

practice. The aim is to foment cooperation between activism and academic training. A current example of this is a student's association called “Di.Fro”-Diritti di Frontiera (Border Districts).

They currently offer legal assistance to over 170 applicants, and have a success rate of over 60% for appeals against refusal to grant asylum. They also examine the legal practice of such appeals in Turin, Bari, Florence, Bologna, Naples and Rome. These reports were unofficial to start with but, since 2016, can now be used as evidence in court.

The Legal Clinic condemns basic human rights violations. It works to ensure the implementation of the right to present a defence, of equality, the right to a public hearing, to fair trial and to be heard without being judged throughout the entire process. Since there are legislative gaps in the system, particularly when it comes to asylum seeker reception centres, the organization helps migrants before and during their stay in centres, as well as throughout the legal process and resolution of the appeal for asylum.

One of the most well-known cases was that of 69 Nigerian women who were deported back to Nigeria. However, they had clearly been victims of human trafficking and were therefore potential asylum seekers.

The student body has a vital role in these investigations. It has particularly helped in cases such as the ROSANO-Calabria case, the CAPITANA PLAN, VENOSA, NARDO and BARI; whereby the working conditions of migrants in agriculture is being looked into.

These cases condemn exploitation in the workplace and advocate respectful work environments, both in terms of production and working conditions.

26th January 2018

Laboratorio53 <http://laboratorio53.it>



In “Laboratorio53”, the “laboratorio” (laboratory) stands for a kind of social experiment and “53” for the principle: “My dream is to have...” The idea is to walk hand in hand with migrants by means of active participation and mutual help.

It is a small organization which started out as a group of friends, who were philosophy and anthropology graduates, working for an NGO and voluntary medical association against the torture of refugees.

This organization thinks about the person requiring medical assistance as a whole and provides a social as well as medical vision. It works as a team but also offers individual care. This interdisciplinary vision allows for a holistic approach to people. In contrast to how the government administration currently handles the services and processes in place for migrants, “Laboratorio53” takes into consideration aspects which are exclusive and unique to different people’s lives.

The team is also made up of people who have migrated to Italy. They have an active role and form part of the decision-making body. Although the organization has a facilitator, any member can make decisions.

Those who founded this organization saw the need to work out of the city centre and into the homes of migrants. To start with, they carried out only small interventions in key areas where migrants lived.

Art and theatre, in particular, are used as a way of returning beauty and complexity to life, whilst trying to rediscover oneself in a new society. The organization also works with radio shows, film talks, dance therapy and photography; all of which include social content. One project which stands out is the making of an audio-guide in Rome. A migrant's voice is used to describe the city and includes their own experiences, since the historical centre is off-limits to them.

In addition, they offer Italian classes at different levels: beginner, intermediate and advanced. The teachers come from other organizations.

The legal assistance they offer consists in trying to get past the gaps in the legal system in order to set a precedent to respect rights for migrants. Even so, they still have a lot of problems with administrative bodies. For example, two migrants who attended the conference said that since having found out they were members of the organization, they feeling of intimidation and being pressurized had been ever more frequent.

LIBERI-NANTES Football Team¹. <http://www.liberinantes.org/new/>



The “Liberinantes” is a football team whose aim is to give a bit of normality back to the players’ lives, all of whom are migrants, as well as share experiences through sports. Since the training sessions are in Italian, it also provides the opportunity to learn the language.

¹ Get in touch with the Alma de África- jerez team <http://almadeafrica.com> and there has also been a proposal to do the same with a team in Croatia.

The football team trains at facilities in a suburban neighbourhood. The local population here is quite reluctant when it comes to sharing experiences and space with migrant people, as they too have to fight against stereotypes.

These public facilities have been built by migrants themselves together with locals in an old sports centre, with the help of donations and fund raising events.

Despite being members of the federation and playing in the professional league, they cannot be promoted to other professional categories; due to pending applications for asylum or refugee status of their players.

In the long term, the “Liberinantes” are thinking of setting up a children’s football school. They plan on getting sponsors so as to raise awareness, and for the migrants themselves to find a place to share their experiences with the locals.





Messages on the walls of the sports facilities

27th January 2018

Baobab Experience <https://baobabexperience.org>

The “Baobab Experience” is a group of volunteer activists from various different organizations. They carry out legal, health and humanitarian aid at an “illegal” migrant camp in Rome.

They are situated on the outskirts of Rome near an old residence centre for migrants; currently considered to be in ruins, due to aluminosis. It is a mobile camp as they have had over twenty eviction orders from the authorities, including forced evictions with the use of machines which have destroyed the site, since they started working this year alone.

The organization aims to denounce the policies which violate basic human rights, particularly those referring to free movement of migrants in the capital.

With the help of donations (such as a marquee from a Mormon church, where as well as having set up a canteen, Italian classes are also given) they try to improve the daily living conditions of migrants; compared to conditions in governmental reception and of temporary stay centres.

About a hundred people are currently staying at the camp, most of whom are men since women and children generally stay in shelters run by international organizations, thanks to Baobab Experience's intervention. They are of different nationalities who, according to the state, are not entitled to seek asylum. These people have either chosen Rome as their destination, are in transit, or have been deported from other European countries back to the first place where they arrived in Europe.

They have to overcome the obstacles the authorities place before them on a daily basis; for example: a fence with concrete gates so that they cannot transport food or water with vehicles, water and electricity cuts, not being allowed to install showers due to possible environmental threats, no rubbish collection., as well as constant raids, meaning they have teams of guards on watch round the clock.

In 2017 they decided to form a legal association so as to be able to exert pressure at a political level.



28th January 2018

Claudio Puoti: Marenostrum Operation and Rava Foundation. Baobab Experience.



Claudio is a doctor. He is a specialist in internal and emergency medicine and has worked in collaboration with the “Marenostrum Operation”: the first humanitarian operation run by the Italian government in the Mediterranean. Since this mission, all others have been military operations.

Whilst on board an aircraft carrier for over six weeks, they rescue boats trying to reach the Italian coast. The ship has had to carry up to a thousand people for periods of over seven days at times. This causes difficulties for the organization; for example, Claudio has experienced various riots on board due to the large cultural differences and language.

The conditions Claudio has to face are complex, particularly because he can never be certain of how many people he will need to assist, in addition to the fact that he is the only doctor.

His day to day ranges from taking care of common diseases (such as fever, burns and bruises) to much more serious ones. He has delivered fifteen babies himself, as well as witnessed many deaths, since there are no gynaecologists on board.

Above all he highlights that, although he is not personally in favour of military operations, his experience with the Italian armed forces has been rather positive. The reason he collaborated with this operation was the need to feel useful, and the impossibility of making it happen through any other way than through the government.

Claudio compares the migration policies currently in place to those which existed during World War II, and therefore believes them to be racist. He claims that this refugee crisis is the same as that during WWII. Although there are some differences, from an ethical point of view there are none.



According to Claudio, anyone and everyone should have access to health services. The camps should be removed and all countries should work together and create networks so as to, at least, develop useful strategies.

Baobab Experience: Legal assistance for migrants.

The legal team at Baobab Experience set up a workshop for us on: Italian legislation with regards to migration, the situation of migrants in Europe, and the violations of migrant human rights.

In the presentation named “Refugees’ Crisis”, we learned about the reasons for which people moved from their place of origin (economic reasons, natural disasters, unequal access to primary resources and wars), about the migratory flows in Europe, and the types of programmes European countries have had in place since 2015 to control them.

Over 65 million cases of forced migration exist around the world, and they are divided into three large groups: those taken in by ACNUR, those who are displaced within the territory of their own countries, and another large group of asylum seekers.



Europe's answer to this situation has been to build walls, such as with the Dublin Regulation the EU and the Turkey Agreement.

In addition Italy, whose main aim is to reduce the arrival of migrants at any cost, has made agreements with Libya. Not only does it pay the country's armed forces but also the militia, while at the same time turn all of those people who do arrive on Italian territory into illegal

migrants. Italian organizations therefore demand to know the destination, point of origin and the economic amount for which these agreements were settled.

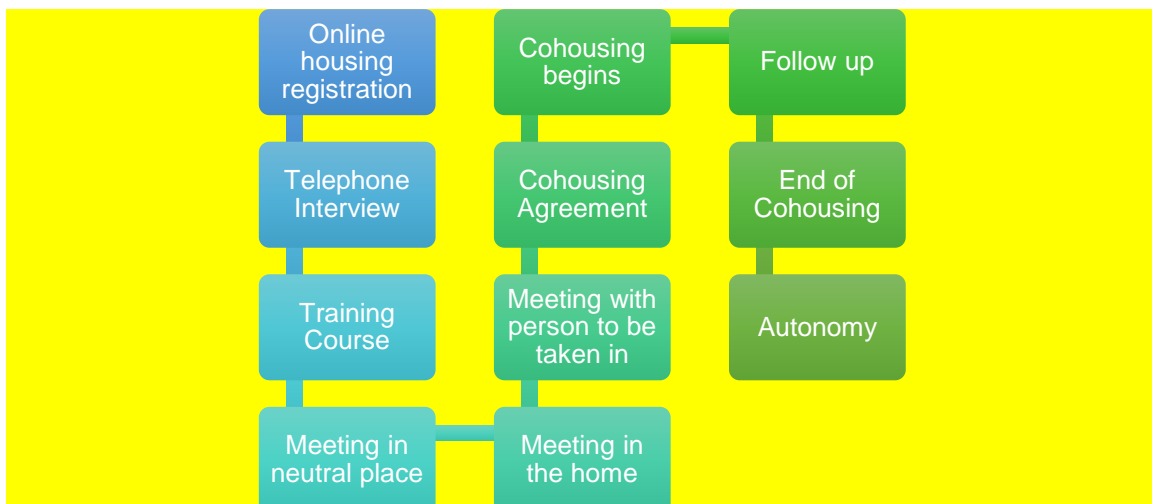
The legal team at the camp has managed to modify the administrative situation of many migrants by means of various legal loopholes. This has been achieved through mediation commissions between migrants and citizens following various riots and confrontations, such as the ROSANO case in 2010.

29th January 2018

Welcome Refugees Italia <http://refugees-welcome.it>

This organization aims to involve citizens in new forms of participation, such as by hosting refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. Its mission is to facilitate the integration of migrants in the city, by acting as a bridge between citizens and migrants.

It offers continuity following institutional care, that is to say; after using up the time offered by government establishments, the organization helps migrants follow a process, while at the same time involving the community. To do so, they place migrants in houses, with people who would like to give migrants a place to stay:



The ultimate goal is for the person who has been taken in, during the cohousing process together with the follow up, to achieve economic independence. Each cohousing process follows a personalised protocol. There are seventeen local groups spread around Italy, with over 100 activists. There are also 350 refugees and over 600 homes ready for coexistence. 50 people are cohousing right now and another 30 have managed to become completely independent.

Un Ponte Per <https://www.unponteper.it/it/>

Domenico Chirico, Director of the department of cooperation for the Middle East, told us about the CCCM CLUSTER programme: Supporting displaced communities. This programme carries out humanitarian aid and mediation in Turkey, Palestine, Syria, Iraq and Jordan, among others.

We are currently experiencing the largest displacement and refugee crisis since Palestine in 1948. There are over a million refugees living in camps.

This humanitarian aid involves hospital assistance, education, conflict mediation, human rights and support for civil society.

One of the most renowned projects is the “solidarity connection”. It provides supply systems for refugee camps in Greece and Serbia. In Palestine for example, the project involves olive picking, in small groups of volunteers. The work with Palestinians happens directly in the refugee camps in other countries.



Stamp Staffette Taranto Project <http://www.stamproma.info>

Daniela Galié.

The Stamp project involves mobile help (that is to say: legal, linguistic and health assistance, information about cities, help with media, computers and the internet), which moves about the whole country.

The aim is to get rid of the barriers which exist within countries and cities themselves, by means of various organizations collaborating together.



Casa dei diritti Social-CDS <http://www.dirittisociali.org>

Carla Baiocchi begins with an introduction into the history of migration in Italy. The first flow of migration took place in 1968 and as mainly people from Tunisia, most of whom went to Sicily following the decolonisation of certain territories; it was therefore people returning to Italy. The fall of the wall also meant a lot of people came to Italy from Albania.

The flow of migrants to Italy is due to two main reasons: its geographical position and the criminal organizations which make this type of migration possible.

The first migration law in Italy was passed in 1990, when the first temporary detention centres were established, which until 2008 were called CIEs. In 2008 it was modified and family reunification was introduced, in addition to identification by means of finger prints and photographs, as well as procedures for seeking of asylum, possibility to appeal and the final sentence given by the Supreme Court.

CDS' objective is, above all, to contribute to the integration of migrants through fun activities. To do this, they put on plays, organise film talks, New Year's Eve parties and many chess competitions, as this game has a universal language.

CPIA Viterbo. Teaching Centre for Adults.

<http://www.cpia6viterbo.it/index.php/home>

After viewing the facilities we were received at the school theatre.



“CPIA Viterbo” was set up in 1991, and in 2015 became an independent institution. It organizes activities in run-down centres. This one is situated in a rather conflictive neighbourhood, since quite a few racist assaults by organised far-right groups have taken place here; which, in turn, has a negative influence on its inhabitants.

Furthermore, problems occurring at the centre do not rely on government help. CPIA manages these independently, via mediation between students and specialist teachers.

Its activities are generally aimed at three groups of people: those who have not been able to finish compulsory studies at the usual age, migrants who cannot speak Italian and migrants who have lived in Rome for over twenty years and want to learn the language as well as graduate from school.

The teaching method is tailored to students' individual needs, as each student is at a different level. Their main aim is to create trust between teachers and students, depending on each situation. They cannot follow the established programme for formal education because they do not know what they will have to face each day.

They also have the support of the "Erasmus Europe Plus" volunteer and exchange programme.

Among the activities they organise are excursions to Rome to practise Italian, history or art courses and general knowledge. They also teach other languages: English, Spanish and French, and offer a certificate in Italian so as to get asylum, as well as literacy courses for adults.

Following an introduction to the activities and the teachers' participation, we were given speaking time with the teachers and the students present, most of whom were migrants. The objective was to share experiences from the school, what it was that drew them to give classes at the centre, and above all, to hear about the hopes, problems and answers to a range of questions that the migrants at this educational centre were asked. ■

