

A JOURNEY TO FREEDOM

For the voices lost in the desert and sea, for thsose who didn't make it



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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SPECIAL THANKS TO
OMAR, EBRIMA AND SENY,
WHO CORAGEOUSLY
SHARED THEIR STORIES
AND MADE THE VOICE OF
THE VOICELESS HEARD.

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ASSOCIAZIONE DON BOSCO 2000

The Don Bosco 2000 Association - Social Enterprise was founded in 1998 in the structure of the Borgo Hostel in Piazza Armerina, Sicily, a structure originally intended for the reception of pilgrims and tourists.

The objective the main of association the is to promote integral formation of by man paying special attention to young people and the emergencies of our time. The Association is inspired by the preventive and educational pastoral system of Don Bosco, a great saint who was able to anticipate the times with his vision and educational system and an effective key to overcoming the injustices and inequalities of the time, even today extraordinarily relevant and effective in Italy and around the world. Since its inception, the Don Bosco 2000 Association - Social Enterprise has devoted significant resources to the partnership networking and planning, at the national European level, but since 2016 it has focused its efforts more on international cooperation. Cooperation and planning are at of the association's the core activities.

In the reception area, the Don Bosco 2000 Association operates through specific and multidisciplinary interventions in the areas of legal assistance, support psychological and rehabilitation, health services and educational offerings. The interventions intended are to support minors, migrants, young people, women and families, Italian and foreign, direct and indirect victims of any form of physical and psychological abuse and/or discrimination and its work is spent on promote activities favoring the effective integration of foreigners, with particular regard to applicants asylum seekers and refugees.

The association plays а fundamental role in organizing moments of dialogue and confrontation between institutions, in the promotion of actions in favor of the most vulnerable segments of the population and in the development of the potential of the territory.

As of 2018, the Don Bosco 2000 acquires the qualification of social enterprise.

"We need to increase funds for cooperation and organize pre-departure training for those who want to migrate to Europe and, at the same time, manage a serene policy of flows. Let's work to ensure that migration is no longer a divisive phenomenon, but inclusive among peoples"

Agostino Sella

CEO Don Bosco 2000

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GLOSSARY

Asylum-seekers are "individuals who have sought international protection and whose claims for formal refugee status have not yet been determined." (COE)

Hotspots are governmental centers where migrants may be hosted upon their arrival in Italy. Currently, there are four hotspots: in Lampedusa, Pozzallo and Messina in Sicily, and Taranto in Puglia. (Refugee.info)

Migrant is umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. (IOM)

Migration is the movement of persons away from their place of usual residence, either across an international border or within a State. (IOM)

Reception Centers are locations with facilities for receiving, processing and attending to the immediate needs of refugees or asylum seekers as they arrive in a country of asylum. (European Commission)

Refugee "is someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion." (COE)

I. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

From Latin "migratus", migration has various meanings that have changed throughout time. It can refer, among many definitions, to the seasonal movement of animals from one region to another; as well as the process of a person or people traveling to a new place or country. The common concept in these definitions refers to movement. For this report, the meaning we will consider, from now on, will be the following: "The movement of persons away from their place of usual residence, either across an international border or within a State" (IOM).

The aim of this report is that of analyzing the migration context in the Reception Centers of the Don Bosco 2000 Association in Sicily. This analysis serves as a sample of migration trends occurring in other centers in Sicily and Italy. Through these analysis, the context and migration trends can be better explained.

The methodology behind this research is composed of quantitative data analysis from the different centers located in Sicily from 2019 to 2021. This primary source data has then been analyzed and divided into different sections of relevance in order to provide a wider range of data outcomes. The quantitative data has been retreived through interviews made with migrant refugees and workers from our centers. The qualitative aspect is fundamental, as it strives to give a human aspect to this research. The combination of both has allowed this report to be as complete as possible on the quantitative and qualtitative aspect of the centers, representing the trend of the last three years.

II. MIGRATION

II.I Historical and Geographical Context

Sicily has an area of 25,711 km2 and a population of approximately 4,969,147. It is the largest island in the Mediterranean and one of the 20 Italian regions.

Located in the heart of the Mediterranean, Sicily is no stranger to migration. Greeks, Phoenicians, Romans, Arabs, North Africans, Normans and Spanish all lived in Sicily throughout different periods of time. Yet, regardless of its migratory past, the term migration and migrant has gained a negative undertone.

II.II Present Migration in Sicily

In the present, Sicily is one of the main hotspots. This is due to various reasons, but in particular, its proximity to Northern Africa influences this trend. According to the Operational Data Portal from the UNHCR, as of 11 December 2022, Italy has received 97,765 sea

arrivals, of which 72,816 just in Sicily. Many do not choose Sicily as their final destination, but a point where to move to other bigger Italian or European cities.



Source: Depositphotos

II.III Types of migration

There are different types of migration that can be distinguished according to various factors, such as: motives, legal status or the duration. According to the Council of Europe (COE), the categories are the following:

- Temporary labour migrants (also known as guest workers);
- Highly skilled and business migrants: professionals, who move within the internal labour markets of transnational corporations and international organisations;
- Irregular (or undocumented, unauthorised) migrants: people who enter a country without the necessary documents and permits;
- Forced migrants: refugees, asylum seekers, or people forced to move due to external factors, such as armed conflicts or environmental disasters;
- Family members: who join their close relatives who have already migrated;
- Return migrants: people who return to their countries of origin after a period in another country.

In the case of Don Bosco 2000's centers in Sicily, irregular, forced and family members migrants are the most common. In addition, the Association works with return migrants through a project known as "circular cooperation" that seeks to provide migrants with the possibility to return home.

III THE JOURNEY

MIGRANT STORIES

Source: Pixabay



migrant's journey and experience, before reaching the European borders is never the same for each individual. From the moment they take the decision to leave, to the moment they reach Europe, months and in some cases even years have passed. Some have traveled through the desert, while some have taken airplanes. Some have crossed different borders, while others have just crossed the sea. Some have come with their families, others left their families behind.

Most have come to follow their dreams, yet some were forced to leave in order to survive. Most leave at a young age, while others leave as adults.

Every journey is different. Different reasons, different paths, different ages, different nationalities, different experiences and expectations.

The following stories are told by migrants from Don Bosco 2000's centers which were willing and ready to share their stories.

Seny left in 2013, not with the intention of going to Europe, but that of staying at a friend's house in Libya for work. Not long after his arrival, his friend was killed in front of his eyes. Being filled with fear and suffering, he could no longer stay in Libya, so he decided to return back home. The trafficker he met on the way told him that he could only help him to go to Italy. With few options left, and the desperate need to leave Libya as soon as possible, it took him a month to cross the desert and take a boat to Lampedusa, Italy. Regardless of the length of his journey, it nonetheless a difficult one.

After a week in Lampedusa, he was transferred to a reception center in Castellammare del Golfo, where he stayed for a year. Then, he was transferred to Aidone, at Don Bosco 2000's reception center, where he was able to learn Italian at school. His time at the center was very useful for him, as he was trained.

According to Seny, Don Bosco helped him accomplish his dream: help people like him, just like Don Bosco 2000 helped him.



"My intention was not to go to Europe, but after they killed my friend, I had to leave Libya"

He started working as an intercultural mediator, and had the possibility to go back to Senegal together with the Association's president and director explore Senegal and possibilities to work there. Soon after, Don Bosco started programming development projects in Senegal, as well as training 35 women and men for a project in Wassadou. In the present, Seny still works for Don Bosco 2000 at their Unaccompanied Foreign Minors Center and often goes to Senegal as part of the Circular Cooperation Project.





"I don't think that the Italian population is racist, but I believe that politics shows a wrong image of migration that needs to change"

Ebrima left Gambia at the tender age of 16 in 2016, and arrived in Italy in 2018. He was born and raised in a small village, close to the sea.

There are various reasons that brought him to leave Gambia, but the most important one was the lack of support from his family to help him keep on studying. He had completed middle school, where he had to walk eight kilometers daily to reach the school. Once he graduated, he was prevented from studying and forced to work. This brought him to seek for a more secure future.

The Gambain Constitutional Crisis emerged in 2016, and as a consequence, soldiers were put at the border. When Ebrima decided to escape, the soldiers stopped him at the border and did not let him cross, since he was a minor. He moved somewhere else in Gambia, where he worked as a bricklayer and tried to study at the same time, but soon realized he could not do both things at the same time. He felt there was no future for him in Gambia and believed that there was more liberty in Europe compared to Africa. It was a very hard choice, leaving his country, as he did not know when he would come back and hug his loved ones.

He went from Gambia to Senegal first, and then to Mali, where he stayed for a while. The road to Mali was very difficult, he was afraid they would take advantage of him. His next destination was Burkina Faso, where there was a war at the moment of his arrival, making it harder for him to travel there. Thinking back at the journey, if he was asked to do it again, he would never do it. He does not advise it to anyone, "it is not worth risking your life. The

trip in the desert is more dangerous than the one by sea. Sometimes the driver gets lost, other times there are terrorists waiting. Information does not leave the desert, we only know the deaths in the Mediterranean because it is monitored. And then, it is not sure that once you arrive in Europe, you will make it". Ebrima's trip is an example of what often happens in the desert. Many pay a trafficker to secure the journet. In his case, the bus driver left him and a group in the desert at night, where temperatures decrease, as he was scared of terrorists. Fortunately, the driver had come back, but Ebraima had already lost hope. In the group, no one knew each other, and no one knew the bus driver. Different languages were spoken, making it difficult to communicate with each other. This was one of the hardest things he had gone through.

He started getting in touch with his family when he was in Mali. They begged him to come back, as they had no money to pay for him in case he got abducted. He did not listen.

In 2021, he went to Gambia for a month as a mediator for Don Bosco 2000. He played football with the kids of the villages they visited and tried to explain to them the reality of the trip. He helps the team where he played as a goalie when he was younger by donating balls and other material. His priority at the moment is to study, and then work. In his free time, he plays football. He is in his last year of hospitality high school and would like to continue his studies in hospitality at the university. This choice comes as he likes to be in contact with people and would like to open a hotel.

He does not believe that the Italian population is racist, but he believes that politics shows a wrong image on migration that needs to change.



He left in the summer of 2015 from Gambia in order to pursue his dream to study, a dream that he believed could be accomplished in Europe. His first stop was Mauritania, where he worked for three years in order to finance his journey. His time there was filled with unfortunate series of events. From sleeping in the desert, to being robbed of all his property on various occasions, it is needless to say that his stay in Mauritania was far from his dream. Yet, he always worked to gain his liberty, so he persevered. When he traveled to Libya, popular destination for many looking to get to Europe, he was robbed of his belongings again. Another year passed before he left for Europe.

It was his bold decision to drive the boat that caused him to get in trouble with Italian authorities, who rescued the boat once they arrived at the Italian coast in 2018. Underaged, he was arrested and taken to Juvenile Court. After two nights in prison, he had his hearing and was let free. Not too long after, he was summoned again, as the Public Ministry did not trust his words. He was moved to a welcoming center, where other people who have committed crimes were hosted, his liberty was reduced under the condition of the court giving him a second chance. For Omar, instead, this was a test. He had the possibility to go to school, and ended up landing a 2 month internship. In addition, he had to do voluntary work at church 2 days per week. Finally, on the 15th of August 2020 his trial ended.



"When I came, I cam to fullfil my dream. My dream was to study and this is what I am doing at the moment."

Omar moved to San Cataldo, Sicily, where he found a job as a barista and waiter on September 15th 2019. Due to covid-19, he was fired in November 2020. Up until then, he had been independent, but the pandemic made it harder for him to pay his bills, so that same month he contacted Cinzia. representative of Don Bosco 2000 that had hosted him for one year at the centers from beginning of 2018 to beginning of 2019. Omar's plan was to stay just two weeks and go work in the fields, but Cinzia convinced him to stay and work for Don Bosco in the hospitality world, as well as keep studying. He decided to stay and started school again. At the moment, he is studying hospitality in high school, working part-time at the hostel, and playing football and modelling in his free time. He would like to do a lot of things in the future, such as studying at university, being a model and becoming the head of a company.



IV THE DATA

DON BOSCO 2000 RECEPTION CENTERS



Source: Vectorstock

he centers that will be analyzed are those of the Don Bosco 2000 Association in Sicily. As of 2021, there were six centers, most of them located in the province of Enna. Each center, specialized in different types of reception submits data collected throughout the year regarding the beneficiaries of the center. The data that will be analyzed has been provided by these centers and divided into subtopics for the purpose of the report.

The following data analyzed from the different comes centers in Sicily reception coordinated by the Association Don Bosco 2000. This data is considered to be as synthesis of the real situation. When it comes to "category", "nationality", and "average age" the 2021 data will be presented in order to keep a standard among centers. On the other hand, the "type of "number" permit", the refugees welcomed, and the "type of system", has been calculated in averages of the last 3 years (2019-2021).

Data has been kept as anonymous as possible for obvious reasons, but the essence.

When it comes to category, we have considered men, women and children (anyone under 18 years) hosted by each center.

Regarding nationality and average age, this data was retreived by the initial interview done with the migrants on their arrival to the different centers.

The type is established depending on the status of the refugee, duration, and other characteristics. In general, when а foreian person enters Italy, legally or not, they have the right to apply for international protection to the Italian State by Law.

The different permits are the following*:

Resident permit for international protection.
 This permit is provided by Italian Constitution. It gives by law the right to asylum or international protection to a foreigner who, in his home country, is denied the actual exercise of democratic freedoms.

*data retreived from Migrant Digest

The two types are: Permesso di Soggiorno per Asilo Politico and Permesso di Soggiorno per Protezione Sussidiaria.

- Resident permit for special cases. This type of permit permit for encompasses: medical treatment. for disasters. for of acts particular civil value. for social protection permit, for victims of domestic violence. and for labor exploitation
- Resident permit for regular cases. This type of permit is given in regular cases, including: for turism, for work including freelance work, for students, and for family reunification
- EU Long term resident permit. This type of permit replaces the residence card. It allows them to enter Italy without a visa, enter another country of the European Union, apply for maternity and disability benefit and work.

In this report, "richiesta di asilo" and "asilo" were united in order to provide a standard among years.

For the number of refugees welcomed, an average of the refugees welcomed by each center was done taking into consideration the year opened up to four years.

There are two main types of system: the "Center for Extraordinary Reception" (CAS) and the "Reception and Integration System" (SAI). The difference between both is that migrants are moved from the CAS system to the SAI system once they receive international protection.

PIAZZA ARMERINA

Data from 2019 to 2021

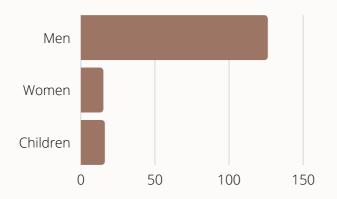


System

SAI 39,3

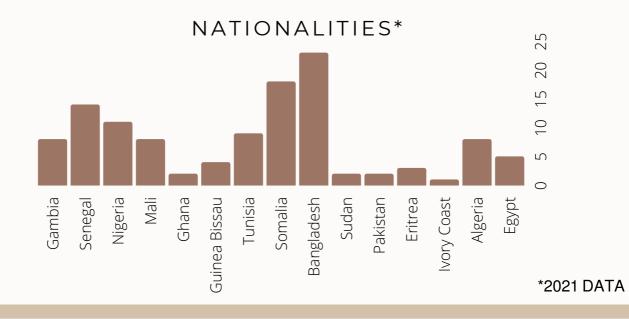
CAS 51,5





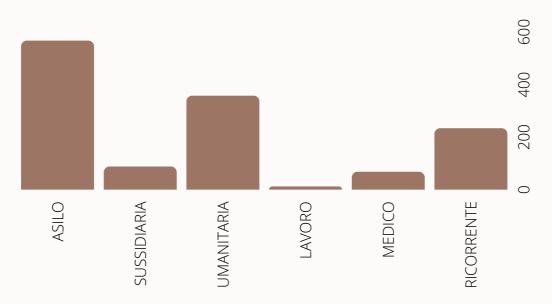
AVERAGE AGE*

BETWEEN
6 MONTHS
AND
35 YEARS



PIAZZA ARMERINA

TYPE OF PERMIT



KEY FINDINGS

- The reception center has been hosting migrants since 2011
- Most migrants are placed in the CAS system
- The majority are young male, while women and children belong to nuclear families
- The majority of migrants coming from a single country come from Bangladesh
- In total, most migrants come from the Sub-Sahara Africa area
- Humanitarian, asylum and work permits are the most common
- Since 2019, there have been 37 exit processes, 17 families have been welcomed and 61 project work and contracts have been activated

AIDONE

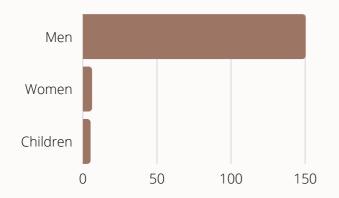
Data from 2019 to 2021

System

SAI 67,5

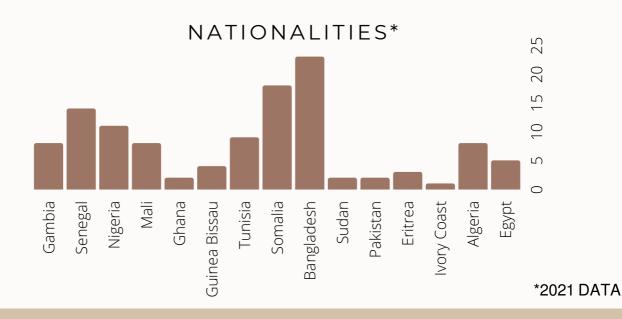
CAS 58,8

CATEGORY*



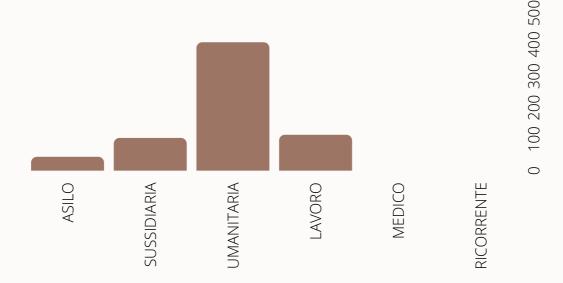
AVERAGE AGE*

BETWEEN
0 MONTHS
AND
38 YEARS



AIDONE

TYPE OF PERMIT



KEY FINDINGS

- The reception center has been hosting migrants since 2014
- Most migrants are placed in the SAI system
- The majority are young male, while women and children belong to nuclear families
- The majority of migrants coming from a single country come from Bangladesh and Tunisia, followed by Gambia
- In total, most migrants come from the Sub-Sahara Africa area
- Humanitarian and asylum permits are the most common
- Since 2019, there have been 59 work contracts

AIDONE-MSNA

Data from 2021

28

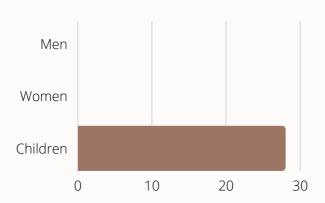
Average in 1 year

System

SAI C

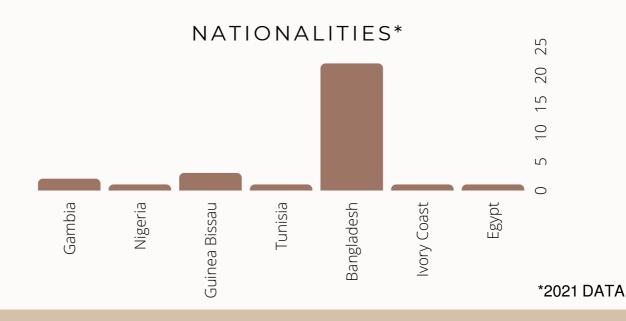
CAS 28

CATEGORY*



AVERAGE AGE*

BETWEEN 14 AND 17 YEARS



AIDONE-MSNA

TYPE OF PERMIT



KEY FINDINGS

- The reception center has been hosting migrants since 2021
- This type of Reception Center hosts foreign unaccompanied minors (MSNA). They are all male between 14 and 17 years of age
- The majority of migrants coming from a single country come from Bangladesh
- The trend analyzed shows that from an approximate of 120 minors that have been transferred to the center, most of them do not stay for more than a month
- Since they are minors, they are not legally allowed to work. Yet,
 5 of them were able take part in a project work

PIETRAPERZIA

Data from 2021



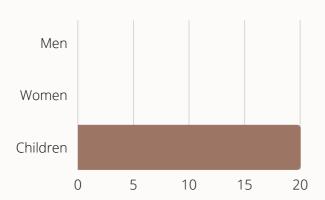
Average in 1 year

System

SAI

CAS 20

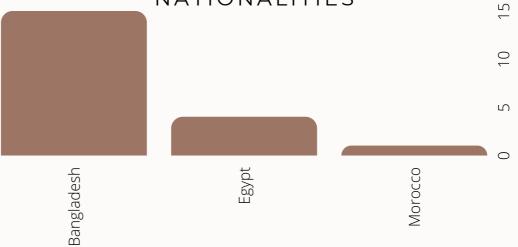
CATEGORY*



AVERAGE AGE*

BETWEEN 14 AND 17 YEARS

NATIONALITIES*



*2021 DATA

PIETRAPERZIA

TYPE OF PERMIT



KEY FINDINGS

- The reception center has been hosting male foreign unaccompanied minors (MSNA) between the ages of 14 and 17 since 2021. In the past, the center hosted adults and served as a reception center during the COVID-19
- The majority of migrants coming from a single country come from Bangladesh
- Since they are not legally permitted to work, no work contract has been activated

RAGUSA

Data from 2021

22



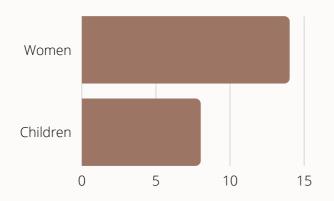
Average in 1 year

System

SAI 22

CAS 0

CATEGORY*



AVERAGE AGE*

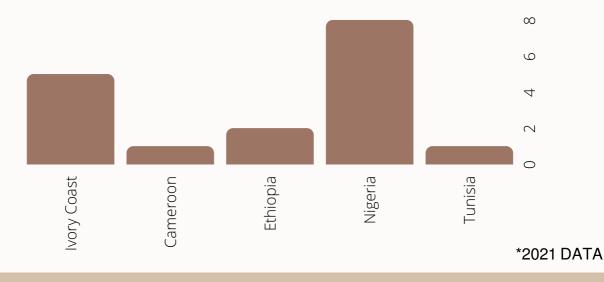
BETWEEN

0 MONTHS

AND

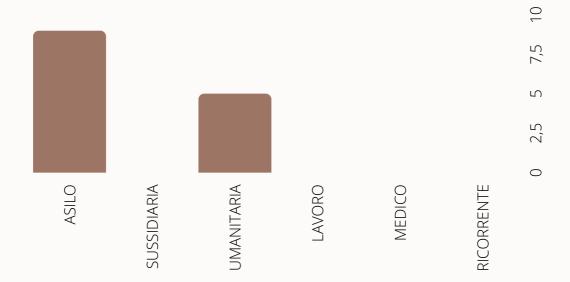
35 YEARS

NATIONALITIES*



RAGUSA

TYPE OF PERMIT



KEY FINDINGS

- The reception center has been hosting migrants since 2021
- All migrants are placed in the SAI system
- This center hosts mentally and sanitarily vulnerable women. They are either single mothers or women without children
- The majority of migrants coming from a single country come from Nigeria
- In total, most migrants come from the Sub-Sahara Africa area
- Humanitarian and asylum permits are the most common permits
- There are 6 single-parent families

VILLAROSA

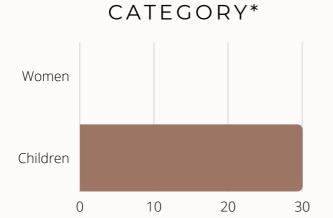
Data from 2021



System

SAI 30

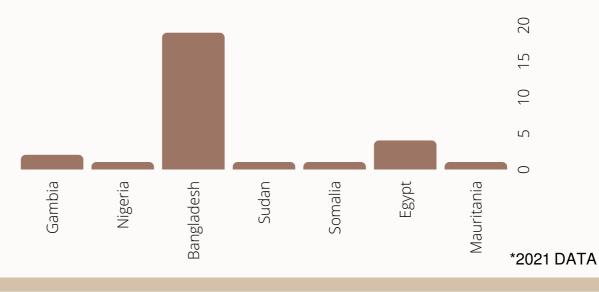
CAS 0



AVERAGE AGE*

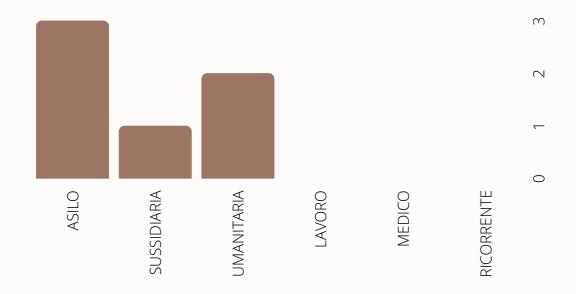
BETWEEN 18 AND 45 YEARS

NATIONALITIES*



VILLAROSA

TYPE OF PERMIT



KEY FINDINGS

- The reception center has been hosting migrants since 2021
- All migrants are placed in the SAI system
- This center hosts single men
- The majority of migrants coming from a single country come from Bangladesh
- The asylum permits are the most common permits
- Three internships, one project work and one contract have been activated

V ANALYSIS

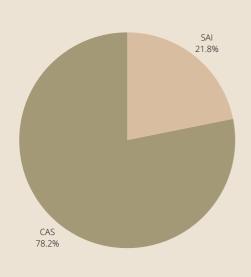
Looking at the data* from the different centers, the following points can be highlighted:

6 CENTERS +16

NATIONALITIES

20-126

PEOPLE HOSTED



HOSTING SYSTEM

ASILO

SUSSIDIARIA

UMANITARIA

PDS LAVORO

RICORRENTE

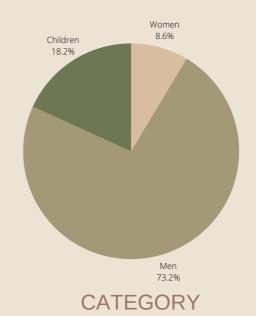
0

25

50

75

CURE MEDICHE



TYPE OF PERMIT

*data taken from 2021 for all centers

100

125

V ANALYSIS

In the 6 different centers located in 5 different cities in Sicily, Italy, there have been 403 migrants hosted in 2021. These migrants come from more than 16 countries, most coming from Bangladesh. The macroarea where most migrants come from is Sub-Saharan Africa. Most of the migrants hosted are young men, followed by male children under the age of 18.

Apart from being hosted, migrants undergo a process of integration in the communities, where they learn Italian, are helped with the internship and job process, are given legal and psychological help with the aim of helping them become independent.

On the other side of the Mediterranean, Don Bosco 2000 has been working since 2016 in Africa, with the aim of creating projects for development. The idea behind these projects is to provide job opportunities for locals and provide awareness of the reality and dangers of the trip to Europe.



*data taken from 2021 for all centers

VI PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

Circular Cooperation

The Association Don Bosco 2000 has worked in the field of international cooperation and development since 2016, when it implemented "circular cooperation". This innovative according which model, to migrants who have landed in Italy are welcomed in Don Bosco 2000 centers, undertake paths of integration and training for work and then become cooperators (circular cooperators to be precise). The circular cooperator, therefore, is the one who returns to his or her country of origin, with the help of the expatriate cooperators of Don Bosco 2000. disseminates he/she has learned in Europe in order to start sustainable economic realities in the long term.

Beneficiaries: 40 villages reached - 15,000 youth sensitized (local children and young people)

If you are interested in knowing more about circular cooperation, you can find our book on the following link:

<u>La Cooperazione Circolare</u>

Vegetable Garden

DOUDOUD A WASSADOU IN SENEGAL (2016-present)

This was the first development intervention in Senegal, implemented with the help of the first returning migrant, Seny Diallo, in the Tambacounda region. The garden was started on a one-hectare plot of land, owned by Seny's family, cultivation was not possible due to the aridity of the soil during the eight months of the dry season.

With the circular cooperation project, the land was fenced and three solar panels were implemented for drip irrigation and built the 3,000-liter well for water. As of 2018, the garden produces okra, peppers, tomatoes and watermelons, which are used to feed the village and for sale in the market, creating additional job opportunities for young people.

Beneficiaries: four young Senegalese men, coordinated by Seny, assisted by other young people who are continuing their training

ADAMA A NETTEBOULOU IN SENEGAL (2018-present)

The project, a replica of the model of the Doudou garden, developed in the small village of Netteboulou was born with the idea of creating a small agricultural start-up to support the entrepreneurship of the young people. The project continued with the start-up of the garden through soil preparation, planting and cultivation. At the plot, which is owned by Adama, a well was also dug a well that is essential for irrigation.

In 2019, okra, tomatoes, chilies and additional local vegetables were sold at local markets. At the conclusion of the funding provided by Don Bosco Missions, the Association continued to support the project in order to implement the activities started, enhancing its impact on the ground

Beneficiaries: four young Senegalese men, possible migrants

SIAKA A KEKUTA KUNDA IN GAMBIA (2018-present)

After the positive experience of the circular cooperation project in Senegal, it was decided to try it in Gambia as well. In 2018, Siaka, a migrant who arrived in Sicily in 2015 and welcomed in the Center of

Aidone, returned to his village in Kekuta Kunda in Gambia along with a delegation from the association, to build a sustainable vegetable garden. The foundations of the garden were built with solar panels and a drip irrigation system. The production of fruits came in 2021.

Beneficiaries: four young Gambian men, possible migrants

Chicken Farm

VELINGARA PONT CHICKEN FARM IN SENEGAL

Thanks to fundraising proceeds in 2019 in the Village of Velingara Pont, Senegal, a chicken farm run by the youth and women of the village was established.

This project allows the use of animal manure to fertilize the vegetable garden itself and, conversely, the use of garden waste to feed the animals.

The food needs of the local population are ensured, and the simplicity of management also allows the involvement of women, increasing the direct recipients of the intervention.

Beneficiaries: 10 village women, 10 young potential migrants, 2 circular migrants

VII CONCLUSION

The Association Don Bosco 2000 has more than 10 years of experience in hosting migrants. Throughout the years it has collected data regarding these migrants. The aim of the report was to use this data in order to analyze the migration context in Sicily, by looking at the historic and geographic past and present, and find trends that are representative of other centers in Sicily and Italy, by looking at data. In addition, as strong believers that each migrant is an individual person and that their voices should be heard, three interviews were caried out in order to provide their point of view. This report can conclude that each travel is different in origin, but overall, most of the migrants come from Bangladesh. Yet, there is a strong presence of people coming from Sub-Saharan Africa. Most migrant refugees are young male placed in the CAS system. The type of permit, due to their origin and other factors, is the "richiesta di asilo" and "asilo". This is due to the fact that in many cases, the migrant is not considered to be applicable to international protection. The number of people hosted has changed thoughout the past three years, with a decrease during the Salvini Decree. The trends previously described can be seen in the different centers in Sicily and Italy, not only the ones by Don Bosco 2000.

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