



Rome, 19 June 2021

Press release

## Tomorrow, 20 June, World Refugee Day

**Together for a better world:**

*'We call for the full inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers in every area of society'*

**From the Involve project, 7 experiences of integration in Italy, France and Germany**  
(video clip: [https://youtu.be/oLqNJ\\_1m5Ok](https://youtu.be/oLqNJ_1m5Ok))

Cooking together with recipes from different countries; studying languages by swapping anecdotes and fun facts about our countries of origin; working as a team to care for vegetable gardens and produce healthy and natural vegetables; cleaning up ancient monuments to remove weeds and abandoned waste, and many other activities besides. **On World Refugee Day** (tomorrow, 20 June), **the leaders of the Involve project**, which for the past two and a half years has been trialling a social inclusion model that involves local institutions and civil society for regional development in 7 locations in Italy, France and Germany, **will tell a story of virtuous and positive integration**, a far cry from the alarmist reports that often feature in the news.

From Rovigo to Berlin, Paestum to Saint-Aulaye, and Scicli to Veynes: in these cities of different sizes where a number of migrants have been living for some time without fully integrating into the local social fabric, **the encounters and sharing experiences between migrants and residents at the project's Local Community Hubs testify to the effectiveness of environmental and cultural volunteering as part of cultural and civil integration and sharing processes.**

**Around 7 thousand people have been involved in 19 different initiatives** in the 3 countries, working on heritage restoration and development projects that have never completely stopped (even during the pandemic), cooking classes and craft and gardening workshops, **collaborating with 35 local administrations and 70 civil society organisations.**

**An experience well documented by the images of a short video from the 7 locations involved:** [https://youtu.be/oLqNJ\\_1m5Ok](https://youtu.be/oLqNJ_1m5Ok)

'The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted how social fragility and inequality have no colour, language or geographical origin,' says Fabio Brandoni, coordinator of the Legambiente project, 'yet it is always the poorest countries that suffer the worst consequences. Perhaps we should take advantage of World Refugee Day to begin deconstructing the categories with which we look at 'others', instead adopting the perspective that **the relationship between the**

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Project coordinator



Partners



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**Global North and South cannot be solved with closed walls or ports or by putting up barriers, whether real or cultural. The Involve project breaks down barriers.** Our Local Community Hubs are places where migrants and locals meet and interact. Women, men and children who live in these areas, each with their own lived experience and needs, coming together to create experiences of connection and civic participation, whether big or small, imagining a new and more inclusive form of citizenship.’

Thanks to the partnership formed by Legambiente (coordinator), *Solidarités Jeunesses*, CCIVS (*Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service*) and ICJA (*Volunteer Exchange Worldwide*),

Involve is building and trialling a social inclusion model involving local institutions together with civil society, made up of the indigenous population and immigrants who work together to develop and promote the local area. The model is being trialled in selected pilot locations – Rovigo, Paestum and Scicli in Italy; Veynes and the Communauté de communes du Pays de Saint-Aulaye in France; the Pankow and Neukölln districts in Berlin, Germany: small, medium and large towns where immigrants have already settled but are not yet integrated into the social fabric of their host communities. (<http://www.involve.blog/>)

**The videos (from 2 to 10 minutes and in the 3 languages) from all the locations involved in the 3 countries can be found here:**

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLwzS\\_z5O4767TpTi8T7W-um03RzMR8v4O](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLwzS_z5O4767TpTi8T7W-um03RzMR8v4O)

**The press office for Italy (Legambiente): 3490597187**

**Info here: (<http://www.involve.blog/>)**

To learn more about migration, asylum seekers and refugees in Europe:

UNHCR: [https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean#\\_ga=2.156284984.2059623937.1623346766-1786501643.1602677784](https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean#_ga=2.156284984.2059623937.1623346766-1786501643.1602677784)

Data on the presence of non-EU citizens in

Europe: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/statistics-migration-europe\\_it](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/statistics-migration-europe_it)

Global data: <https://www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/5ee200e37/unhcr-global-trends-2019.html>

(but the 2020 edition may be available in a few days!)