

CASE STUDY

Country	Italy, Riace
Title	Riace a refugee reception model well known all over the world
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	<p>Website</p> <p>http://www.comune.riace.rc.it/</p> <p>http://www.sprar.it/</p> <p>Facebook Page</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/Riace-InFestival-843053969108143/?fref=ts</p>
	<p>The hilltop medieval village of Riace on Italy's south coast was almost a ghost town 15 years ago. Houses were derelict and the local school was near to closing.</p> <p>The village was in danger of becoming extinct as residents disappeared to northern Italy, and abroad, for jobs during the economic boom.</p> <p>Since then Riace has seen a change in its destiny, by openly welcoming a controlled number of migrants, who live and work as part of the community.</p> <p>This transformation was instigated by the mayor, Domenico Lucano, who set up a scheme, funded by the Italian government, to offer refugees the abandoned apartments and training. It has helped to rebuild both the town's population and economy.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project wants to demonstrate how welcoming of migrants is possible but also beneficial to the hosting community. - It provides integration and vocational guidance to the refugees. - It promotes integration and multi-culture guidance to the hosting population. - The project is running with positive and encouraging outcomes since 15 years. - The project is now spreading through neighbouring towns.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting equality and civil rights, the project has also the intent of tackling mafia organizations and corruption present in the territory. - Because many migrants have no financial support and are jobless, the TownHall instituted a “coupon system” where local money is printed and distributed to be spent inside the community. In this way, local goods and services can be purchased, improving both locals and migrants condition. -Locals are directly involved, and paid, in the training and support activities for the refugees and asylum seekers.
	<p>The village of Riace had seen its population drop from 2,500 to 400 since the 1990s, when people moved to northern Italy for better economic opportunities.</p> <p>Domenico Lucano, Mayor of Riace, saw the flow of refugees in Italy as an opportunity.</p> <p>About 450 migrants, drawn from more than 20 countries are living in Riace; about a quarter of the village's total population.</p> <p>Some of the children are originally from Ethiopia but have grown up in Riace and speak fluent Italian, in addition to English and their native tongue.</p> <p>Riace's model offers migrants the ability to participate in their new society, free from the extreme economic and social pressures many have faced as they tried to earn enough to sustain themselves.</p> <p>Migrants are then able to focus on inclusion, learning the local language, interacting with locals and getting the skills they need to build a better future for themselves.</p> <p>The very economic crisis affecting Italy, which substantially diminished the number of work places in the country (especially in Southern Italy), does not ensure a job in Riace for everybody. Some decide to stay and start a new life in the village, even if struggling with money; others prefer to go somewhere else looking for better economic situations. However, all of them have the chance, during their stay, to experiment inclusion and integration. This has an impact also at a psychological level, as these people will start a new life with a first positive experience in their mind, enabling them to have trust in institutions and in the new civil society.</p> <p>The fact of including asylum seekers and refugees in small villages such as the one of Riace, is a way to answer at the refugee crisis in a more</p>

	<p>affordable way then building refugee camps or centres. Both at an economic and social level.</p> <p>Moreover, refugees and asylum seekers often experienced violence in their past, so that they need an initial period to heal and have time to rebuild their identity and life. Small villages like Riace are the ideal and optimal setting to have some time to recover, instead of crowded immigration camps or busy big cities. The small dimension of the town-hall and of the Italian community, make the refugees living there protected and free at the same time.</p> <p>The town-hall rented from the citizens the many already empty houses of the village at a small price. In this way both landlords and refugees have a beneficial outcome.</p> <p>Associations like Città Futura, co-manage activities and programs with the town-hall with funding from the Inter Ministry.</p>
	<p>At a local level the “Riace model”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Provided wealth and prosperity in a deeply disadvantage setting.- Organises activities and informative sessions for the local population in order to prepare the people to welcome and integrate migrants.- It rewards those citizens or companies who decide to enter in partnership with the TownHall.- Promotes inclusion and integration with celebrations and events (the patrons of the town, celebrated once a year, were actually migrants from Syria during the mediaeval time) <p>At a national level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Riace represents one of the few local projects where the major and the town-hall take positive actions to generate wellness and social change in their community.- Riace inspired other similar realities in the territory around, but also in more distant regions of Italy; and it is now a symbol representing how positive outcomes can be generated from a multicultural citizenship.- The Riace project and other similar ones, are funded by the government and not by private actions or NGOs. In this way Italian institutions take responsibility for the activities and people involved; but also safeguard the project’s aims and ideas.

	<p>- The Riace's project also proved to be more effective in making refugees independents and not creating dependency relationships promoting agency and advocacy of the people involved.</p> <p>At an international level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Riace became e symbol of integration and good practices around the world and it has been cited in many articles from BBC to Al Jazeera. - The Major of Riace was named in 2016 by Fortune magazine as one of the world's 50 greatest leaders. The honour puts him in the company of names such as Pope Francis, Apple chief Tim Cook and Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau. - The village hosts nowadays trainings and workshops, provided by different companies, to train officials and workers in the sector, representing an example of good practices and positive outcome.
	<p>All the material will published on our website and social media resources: https://www.facebook.com/InDialogueEu-1683535785271230/?fref=ts</p>

Pictures



A refugee working for a couple of elders

Pottery workshop



Kairos Europe KA1 staff mobility course in Riace

