

ITALY



HRYO

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Short Description of the Partner

The organization HRYO, created in 2009, supports local actions led by individuals who, at their own level seek to make the small changes that are bound to bring bigger changes for the society. HRYO promotes nonviolent actions in order to free people from all forms of oppression, uses education to respond to the needs of individuals and of the society. HRYO promotes intergenerational contact, social diversity and intercultural dialogue in order to break down the stereotypes that can dominate. Among its goals, the organization promotes a culture of peace, respect and sustainability.

Introduction: background situation on the topic

- The migratory phenomenon is inherent in the Sicilian capital, Palermo. Unfortunately, among those people arriving in Europe, many of them are exploited by criminal networks. In the streets of Palermo, we are sadly observing an increasing number of Nigerian women forced into prostitution. Palermo is far from an isolated case and it is the same situation in most Italian cities, as well as in more rural areas. When it comes to trading

and trafficking human beings, Europe is the main destination, and the hope of reaching a higher standard of living is its motivation. The numbers are alarming and the consequences for the lives of these women, and minors, are terrible. The promise of a better life in Europe often results with a disillusionment view on the scale of the debt that needs to be paid back to the traffickers. Nigeria, with a population of 190 million, is the country in Africa with the highest number of emigrations, most going to Europe. We see an alarming development in numbers from IOM (International Organization of Migration) when it comes to the number of girls crossing from Nigeria to Italy. In the recent years, the amount has gone from 1500 arrivals to southern Italy, to over 11009 in 2016. Italy holds the sad record of the highest number of Nigerian victims of trafficking. They now represent half of the female victims of sexual exploitation in Italy. Witnesses of this reality and local initiatives have taken shape to provide psychological, medical and legal assistance. Women stood up for their rights and work daily to improve the lives of those who have lost « Ireti » (hope). These are the reasons pushing us to collect the success stories. After listening to the answers from some of our interviews we came to be more aware of another aspect. In addition to the sad reality we can observe in the streets, there is another kind of violence; the quiet and invisible one. We realized how cultural behaviour and mindset can impact the balance of the male- female relation. The extent of psychological violence is a brutal repercussion due to the way women have been, and is still, treated in our society: as weak, inferior, incapable and second hand citizens. This booklet aims to give a voice to every woman.



LE ONDE

Tel : 091 327973

Contact: Mara

Presentation of the organization / project /the success story (How did it start? Who is the leader? How do they work?)

Le Onde Onlus has been a constituted association since 1997 but has been operating since 1992. The organization was born in line with the movement for women's rights that started after the second world war. Nowadays they are working on the form of project work, but it all started with a team of volunteers that step by step made the association bigger and more important. This dynamism helped the organization to become more professional with time. The aim is now to accompany women who are victims of violence to find their way out with the help of psychologists, social workers etc.

A description of a success story (personal journey of the person what happened? How?)

Approximately a year ago a woman showed up at the organization. She was in a situation of high vulnerability. She came here from a foreign country with her kids and an

unstable husband who was threatening her. At that time, her documents were about to expire but with the fact that she came to the organization allowed her to get legal assistance, access to medical care, and to be taken care of in a structural organization. After a year, she did an internship and now she has had different jobs, even though she is still looking for the perfect one. This story shows a long way from the year before when “there was not even hope in her eyes.”

Services offered by the organization/ project

To get in touch with the association the women have to give a call-in order for reaching a professional that will evaluate her situation (she could for example be in a vulnerable situation, where ambulance is necessary). After that she will invited to come to the center for speaking to a female member of the team who works there. The process can be difficult, and on the border of unacceptable, as there can be more people there, which means waiting in line, and maybe only having 15 minutes to explain your tough situation. After the first conversation the support procedure is that the association will provide the current person with legal assistance (civil and penal) and psychological support (therapies whether individual or in groups). Other services they provide is a consulting desk and safe houses. On the other hand, there are also activities proposed by the organization and implemented thanks to various projects such as: writing and theater workshops, dancing classes etc. As the organization is part of a big network on an institutional and local level, it gives the opportunity for the women who need help to later gain professional experience through internships, that not only represents work, but also a way to overcome isolation, low-self-esteem and poverty.

Advice for other organizations to reach their success stories:

As an employee working within this field of violence and desperation, it is not easy to face pain and powerlessness, and sometimes we might want to go fast to solve all the problems at once. However, in Mara's opinion, it is important not to race through the stages and it is necessary to go step by step in a proper way. There is no way to find out the full process of a human being after one meeting, or two, and the direction can always change. The process takes time and the priorities should be defined in order to assemble all the fragments in the end.

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Opening hours:

Monday and Friday: from 9.30 am to 1.30 pm

Tuesday and Thursday: from 3.30pm to 7.30 pm

Wednesday: from 11am to 1pm



CUOCHE COMBATTENTI

CUOCHE COMBATTENTI

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Nicoletta is a local woman from Palermo who has been through a long period of what she calls “a difficult marriage”. Now she is starting a new life as an independent cook, thanks to a wonderful project that she initiated: “Cuoche Combattenti”.

Presentation of the organization /
project /the success story (How did it
start? Who is the leader? How do they
work?)

One and a half year ago, Nicoletta decided to start a new project in order to start a new life. With the help of the anti-violence center which accompanied her, and still does, she had the opportunity to launch Cuoche Combattenti “Fighting cooks”. The idea of the project is to use her passion for cooking pastries to fight against a cultural reality in Italy, where women’s status and voice are often undermined. After spending a lot of time to prepare by developing a business plan, creating a logo, marketing etc. it has seemed like an eternity for her, but now she is finally starting her production in a rented space in Palermo

A description of a success story (personal journey of the person what happened ? How?)

Even though it has been a long journey we can today say that joy lights up Nicoletta's face, and she is a success story alone. In 2015, after two years of trying to separate from her ex-husband, she decided to go to an anti-violence center. She had realized that she could not make it out without professional help. She was at a low point in her life and she didn't feel capable to make decisions about her own life. At the center they assigned a social worker to follow her situation and while she was listening to her own voice telling the story, she realized that the previous struggle of making life- decisions was linked to a form of violence restricting her free will. And she saw that the situation she was in was more serious. Thanks to psychological support, legal assistance, financial aid for her children, and above all the opportunity for an internship with a work grant as a cook, she regained financial autonomy and found her passion.

Services offered by the organization or the project

Nicoletta says, «the project is ambitious, and I am not sure if I will succeed 100% with what I am planning to do, maybe only twenty percent, who knows? ». When facing this energy, it is hard to believe that she will fail. In fact, it is only a year and a half since she started her project and Nicoletta is already starting up the production in the new space that was just renovated. Soon there will be women that comes from the same background as Nicoletta

working as her trainees. She wished to create the same opportunities and dynamic space for the women as she had during her internship. People are afraid to employ workers, but she wants to do so, it is her project and she would like to say that she is a flexible person. The first step will be to create the products (marmelade, pesto etc.) with the women, and sell them in the shop and on the internet. In fact, she already has already received some requests to provide the products to some restaurants as breakfast, and she has also been in contact with an organization from Venezuela that found her project inspiring.

Advice for other organizations to reach their success stories:

The interview with Nicoletta was a proof of courage, ambition and joy. She has lived in a difficult situation where her self-esteem was very low, but now she has the confidence to encourage women that are in that situation to dare having a new life away from violence. As she realized that she deserved to be happy, she raised her voice to tell that “everybody should have this right”. Everything has to come from the person, and she strongly recommends women to go to an anti-violence center where they can find professional support from people such as the social worker she met, that knows how to make a strategy to help you out of the difficult situation.

PELEGRINO DELLA TERRA

Graziella Scalzo

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Presentation of the organization / project /the success story (How did it start? Who is the leader? How do they work?)

The association was founded in 1996 by a local preacher who in his everyday life dealt with the first testimonies that came from women victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation. The organization was born as a cultural association and evolved and changed as the ways of trafficking did. The aim of the association is to provide the victims of human trafficking with tools and strengthen their capacities and skills to become independent. This is hoped to achieve by two essential elements: professional autonomy and linguistic competence.

A description of a success story (personal journey of the person what happened ? How ?

Three years ago, a very young woman who had left Nigeria and her child behind came to us. She left with the hope of finding work in Palermo to provide for her family.

Before she left, she had been subjected to Juju rite, and when she arrived in Sicily she was intercepted by a Madam. She tried to escape many times, but sadly she was stopped every time; she lived under threats because of her economical debt and was therefore forced to work in the streets where she during her period of exploitation suffered many physical maltreatments. Eventually she managed to escape and came directly to Palermo where she met a person who suggested her to come to our association. There were many indicators that she was a victim of human trafficking, and we put her into a national protection system so she could get help from a special structure.

Services offered by the organization or the project

Pellegrino della Terra provides a listening center where there is a social secretarial service that accompanies all those in need of work orientation, administrative help, and orientation regarding health services. There is an Italian language course, which welcomes all those who ask to participate spontaneously, and it is also for women who are following the training internship. When the moms are at the Italian course the children can stay in a space where they are taken care of by an operating woman from the association. There is the possibility of receiving psychological support over a long period of time. For those who are in a particularly disadvantaged economic and social situation, they provide support in form of shopping vouchers of 25 euros per month, that can be used at affiliated centers for the purchase of necessities. And there is also distribution of clothing, books and kitchen utilities.

Advice for other organizations to reach their success stories:

When you are working with humans, in particular people who are coming from vulnerable and traumatic situations, there is no improvising. It is necessary to follow trainings in order to have the necessary skills it takes to carry out this work. Trafficked and exploited women are in a situation where it is absolutely necessary to know what you are doing, who you are dealing with in order to not create more harm and to find the right way to find way to move forward to encourage a new life with independence and joy for living. As we work in the organization, we believe that it is important to have local and institutional partners in order to have protection, linguistic support and the opportunity for internships.

As we work in this association, we believe that is important to have local and institutional partners in order for them to have a protection, a linguistic support and the opportunity to do internships.

Opening hours

From Monday to Friday:
from 9:30am to 1:30pm and from 2am to 5pm



PROGETTO MADDALENA CASA DEI GIOVANI

Stefania Russello

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Presentation of the organization / project /the success story (How did it start? Who is the leader? How do they work?)

The Maddelena project started in 2002 thanks to the people working in the organization Casa Dei Giovani. At the beginning the organization, that has existed for 30 years now, was targeting drug addicts by going in the streets in the evening to create awareness. While walking through the streets of Palermo they saw the increasing number of women in the streets and during by the 2000's they couldn't ignore it anymore. As they were facing the issue, they decided to answer to a ministerial call for finding solutions for these female victims of trafficking and sexually exploitation. This is how the project was born, and it is one of 21 projects in a network working to fight against human trafficking.

A description of a success story (personal journey of the person what happened ? How ?

Despite previous failures that Stefania has faced over time, there are luckily some success stories and she has a broad smile when she thinks about the first women she had to accompany. The story is about a young woman who at the time was maybe around the age of 18 years, who arrived by boat from Albania. She had been sold so many times, assaulted, sexually exploited and abused. After three years she met a person that gave her advice, and that explained to her that she could live a different kind of life. She decided to go to the police and for security reasons she was transferred to Palermo. When she arrived here she was a grown up in many ways, but on the other hand she had some different teenage years than most girls, and she was acting younger than she was, more on the lines of a little girl. She became like a daughter of the center and found work in a restaurant, as well as giving birth to a little girl. And as we can understand, thanks to the Sicilian she speaks now, she worked in the restaurant for so long that she eventually became like a part of the family.

Services offered by the organization or the project

The organization offers many services, and at the front desk they provide; Social counseling, health and medical support, and psychological and gynecological aid. The center offers emergency shelter for a short time, with the possibility of a transfer for women who permanently

needs a safe place to stay. Because they are a part of a big network, they have the opportunity to transfer women who needs to move away for security reasons, or who are in danger of being recognized, to another region. As they are working on raising awareness, they also have a mobile unit within the project that allows women and the social workers to have first contact, communicate on the street, and if needed they can offer them direct assistance. The main aim is to create awareness for the women to know that there are people and organizations who are working to support and help them to understand that there is an alternative life. In the safe houses where the women live, they will benefit for individualized programs, psychological support and legal support.

Advice for other organizations to reach their success stories

When they had to face this new issue of trafficked women in Palermo, Stefania and the social workers started to go step by step to get involved. However, they realized that you can not work in this field without the proper knowledge, otherwise you could take the risk of harming them even more, instead of giving support. This is why they went to Turin to learn from their colleagues and then they started to implement what they learned in a local level. Stefania is also pointing out the fact that the practices, activities and approaches have to evolve with time to respond to the need and reality that they are facing.

Opening hours

Monday to Friday Vicolo Santa Chiara, 15;
from 9h00 to 17h



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empowering women

