



WHO CC for Research and Training in Mental Health Trieste - Azienda Sanitaria Universitaria Integrata di Trieste

FRANCA AND FRANCO BASAGLIA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL - THE PRACTICE OF FREEDOM

The right [and opportunity] to have a [whole] life

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL & CONFERENCE

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Best practices for empowerment, self determination,
community resilience, wellbeing and human rights

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ABSTRACT FORM

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Title of the contribution/Titolo del contributo	The work of Community of Sant'Egidio to improve mental health		
Objectives/Obiettivi	Improving quality of life of people living with psychic and social discomfort in Italy and Albania; Improving quality of life of migrants and refugees.		

Contents-text/Contenuto-testo:

The Community of Sant'Egidio has the purpose of including people with mental illness fighting for their rights to have a good and whole life

In Rome and other towns of Italy volunteers of the Community of Sant'Egidio have been helping people with mental illness for many years. They were often completely alone abandoned to themselves, at home, or within a psychiatric hospital or other institutions, in other cases wandering aimlessly in the street. In the Lazio Region the situation is particularly hard. Many of these people were neither attended nor taken in charge by the Centers for Mental Health.

In particular in Civitavecchia the Community of Sant'Egidio has started, since October 2012, to realize a network of safe housing where people living with psychic and social discomfort could live in a good urban context, near to commercial services and with the opportunity of attending Mental Health Centers. This project was realized by means of the collaboration between Sant'Egidio, ASL Roma 4 (at level of the

General Director and the Department of Mental Health), and through a memorandum of understanding to be signed in the next days. The main purpose of this agreement is to reduce the number of people locked in big and institutions or homeless in the street, improving the number of those living together in house-communities.

Within the same spirit and ideas, Sant'Egidio has worked in Albania in order to overcome the old psychiatric chronic ward in the Tirana hospital shifting people to house-communities.

A more recent work for mental health is that in favor of migrants and refugees: in particular the Humanitarian Corridors for people coming from areas were implemented. It is a pilot project carried out by the Community of Sant'Egidio, in collaboration with the Federation of Evangelical Churches and the Waldensian and Methodist Churches of Italy. The main goals of this project are:

- preventing journeys by boat in the Mediterranean sea, which have already caused a high number of dead, including many children;
- preventing human trafficking, exploitation of women, children and men fleeing from wars;
- granting people in "vulnerable conditions" (victims of persecution, torture and violence, as well as families with children, old people, sick people, persons with disabilities) a legal entry in the Italian territory with humanitarian visas, with the possibility to apply for asylum.

Once in Italy, the refugees are hosted in houses at the expense of the promoting associations. They are taught Italian language, while their children attend school; the Community of Sant'Egidio promotes integration in Italy and helps them to find a job. Between February 2016 and August 2017, about 1000 people have already arrived, they are Syrians fleeing from the war. The project will continue with other 1000 people according to an agreement signed with the Italian Ministries of Foreign and Home Affairs.