



„Improving the Integration of Low-Skilled Adults Through Developing Mathematical Skills and Community Support“  
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## My success story

### ABOUT ME

I'm Alhagie Sankareh, 19 years old, from The Gambia. I am a student .

### OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

#### BECOMING PART OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

I was born in The Gambia and in April 2016 I went on a long trip to Sicily.

The idea of leaving my country was born from the need for a new place where I could live a quiet life and that would allow me to help the family who stayed behind in The Gambia. At the beginning I didn't have a clear idea of where to go, but through talking about it with other people, I decided to travel to Italy.

Thanks to the educator of the reception center where I initially lived, I got in touch with some local associations. They proposed to me to participate in projects addressing the topic of social inclusion.

I think the school was a fundamental element to really feel like a member of the local community. I started again attending middle school. Afterwards I I didn't know whether to take a longer path to become a cultural mediator or learn a trade that would allow me to quickly enter the labour market. I chose to go to the school for electricians, where I am now in my second year.

Alhagie from  
The Gambia,  
currently  
living in Italy

## FACING CHALLENGES

When I arrived, it didn't seem real to me. I was happy because I was touching the ground and I felt safe, but later I started to feel lonely. I didn't know anyone, and I didn't speak Italian. In the community I started to create relationships with people who spoke English and my own language.

Thanks to the Italian course of a teacher who taught it in the community where I lived, I started to understand and then to speak Italian. This allowed me to really get in touch with the community of Palermo.

## BEING PART OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Through CESIE I took part in the "Cocora" project, which aimed to strengthen young people's self-confidence by providing them with new knowledge and experience and encouraging them to actively participate at the local level.

Another very interesting experience and a moment of personal growth was the participation in the initiative of the Centro Santa Chiara of Palermo, called "Arte Migrante". Their mission is to promote social integration through Art, by organizing open, free and regular gatherings to provide common spaces for artistic exchanges. Each meeting begins with a round of presentations, and continues with a social dinner in which everyone brings something to share. Those who want can share their Art, understood as the freest and most personal form of expression possible, such as singing, dancing, a tale of oneself, music, an imitation, a poem, a joke, etc.

For me it was a fundamental experience to be open to the community, in fact in the last year I became one of the facilitators of the initiative.

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*“The key to integration is social and cultural participation.”*

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## RECOMMENDATIONS TO YOUNG MIGRANTS

- It is important to have an open and confident attitude towards the local community and not to think that only others should be ready to take a step towards us (e.g. new arrivals).
- Commitment to learn and improve the language of the arrival country
- Take all the opportunities offered by local associations to get in touch with people in the local community.
- The educators represent a second family, and that's why I think they could involve even more the people who come to the reception centre and to encourage to learn the language. Sometimes I wished that educators would put more effort in making people respect the rules in order to understand the importance of going to school, as it allows us to know the country where we arrive and make new contacts and friends.



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