



„Improving the Integration of Low-Skilled Adults Through Developing Mathematical Skills and Community Support“
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A success story from Palermo

ABOUT ME

My name is Diassigui Khaoussou and I'm 19 years old. I was born in Senegal where I lived until 2016 when I set off on a long journey to Italy.

It was hard in the beginning, I found myself in a forest dark. The first reception centre, “Casa Marconi”, accommodated 300 people. I could talk with my fellow Senegalese friends in our own dialect, but I couldn't speak with others.

Anyway, I immediately enrolled as eighth grade student and I managed to get my middle school diploma 5 months later.

I do love learning, therefore I decided to keep studying. With the help of a student organisation, I managed to skip three grades and complete a special learning programme in one school year.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

BECOMING PART OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

“Exodos” - a student organisation - helped me overcome several challenges. They allowed me to start an integration path in my new community by asking me either to take part in cultural events or to be involved in voluntary activities, i.e. workshops and private lessons targeted at migrants who face several challenges at school or in their integration process.

Then I enrolled in some workshops promoted by “Ragazzi Harraga”, a project targeted at non-accompanied minors, which aims to help them create their life project.

Thanks to these workshops I managed to share and get together with my peers and be part of a learning experience which allowed me to test different active learning methods.



Diassigui
from Senegal,
currently living
in Italy



FACING CHALLENGES

As for the city, I did not know anyone in the beginning. Therefore, I didn't go out at all. I was facing a language barrier, as I could not speak Italian nor English. As a result, I felt like I didn't fit in. Teachers working at my middle school facilitated my relationship with others as they suggested I approached "Exodos". I have always wanted to enhance my education. I think that what helped me the most was that I was ready to get in the game and be open to the hosting community. In fact, I participated in several activities and managed to build and be part of a strong network which provides support for the integration of young migrants.

BEING PART OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

My school gave me the opportunity to do a five-month internship in a restaurant where I now keep working as assistant cook.

Later I applied to become cultural mediator in the frame of "Ragazzi Harraga" workshops as I felt more at ease and I believed I had competences that could be of use. My dream is to create an organisation of young Senegalese people in order to promote our culture and enhance integration processes. Some youngsters and I have already founded an organisation. Today, I am the vice-president of Niofar.

We are now implementing a project in partnership with UNCHR. We carry out several activities such as a Wolof online courses, awareness-raising campaigns concerning integration issues in schools and communication courses.

At the moment, I manage the help desk: a meeting point and guidance service for youngsters living in Palermo area who would like to receive more information concerning learning opportunities, healthcare issues and other activities offered by the city.

After having overcome some initial hardships, I believe I can look at my experience as a positive one. However, I am convinced that I can really improve my situation only if I attend university.

I believe that factors such as commitment, perseverance, trust, luck and meeting good people ensured my successful integration in the local community.

*“Winning is an attitude.
The leader’s attitude determines the pace of the group. “*

RECOMMENDATIONS TO YOUNG MIGRANTS

- Start a learning path in your hosting community so as to enhance your education.
- Keep in touch with local organisations.
- Build up rapport with youth workers and teachers you are in touch with.



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