

Ali Aperte Association



Ali Aperte Association Logo
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Location

Province of Trento, Trentino - Alto Adige

Country

Italy

Short summarizing description

Ali Aperte was born in 2016 with the specific aim of helping asylum seekers to find their direction in the wilderness of legal rules and procedures governing their condition. In particular, the activities of the Association are oriented to give legal support to migrants in the delicate and decisive phase that follows the rejection of their request by the territorial commissions for the recognition of international protection. Students of the Law Faculty in Trento were involved in a “help desk” which creates the strongest connection possible between denied asylum seekers and lawyers in charge for filing an appeal against the territorial commissions’ negative decision. Especially due to the enthusiasm of young people, in less than one year, Ali Aperte expanded its objective so to embrace activities aimed at raising social awareness and at building a strong legal culture about the issues surrounding the growing phenomenon of migration, in particular among the generation of future lawyers.

Key Terms

Legal pluralism, Migration law, Integration

Context and background, Which problems/challenges does your measure try to solve/cope with?

The “legal help desk” and other activities developed by Ali Aperte tackle: 1. the persistent difficulties happening in the communicative processes between denied asylum seekers and their lawyers. These issues derive not only from linguistic obstacles, but from deeper cultural and social divergences, from the intricacies of legal procedures, and from constraints given by the lack of time necessary for mutual understanding. Students’ involvement, in particular, copes with the need to build a new generation of lawyers, able to promote equality and access to justice. 2. More general problems deriving from widespread misconceptions concerning the situation of migrants in search for international protection and the social need to understand, in concrete, their lives and experiences.

Which are the key objectives of your measure?

1. Help asylum seekers in understanding their legal situation and in managing the relationship with their lawyers. 2. Ease the communicative processes between lawyers and asylum seekers. 3. Allow students to enrich their curriculum with specific competencies concerning migration law and to get involved in practical activities. 4. Raise awareness about the

condition of people looking for international protection and share positive experiences of inclusion and mutual understanding.

Who are the main target groups and beneficiaries of your measure?

a. Asylum seekers in need to understand their legal situation and to improve the relationship with their lawyers. b. Lawyers willing to get involved in the assistance of asylum seekers. c. Law students willing to strengthen their competence in the field of migration law and to practically test their knowledge. d. General public willing to get in touch with positive experiences of receiving and integrating migrants.

Which actions have already been implemented and which results have been achieved so far?

Set up of a legal help desk to assist asylum seekers in the phase following the denial of their request for international protection. Creation of a task-force of lawyers involved in assisting asylum. Activation of a Facebook page with more than 500 followers (since March 2017) which daily shares news and information about migration legal and social issues. Kick-off event: "Storie di chi emigra e storie di chi accoglie", a public event with the presentation of real-life experiences shared live by migrants and discussed with the attendees (Fondazione Caritro, 30th March 2017). Public projection of "Dove vanno le nuvole" a documentary telling stories about welcoming and inclusion on the Italian territory. Organisation of a first series of seminars, dedicated to Ali Aperte members, concerning the basics of migration law. Participation to students' events, also outside the Law Faculty, to increase awareness and foster discussion around the themes of migration law.

Which were the main problems and challenges you were/are facing when implementing the project and how did/do you (try to) overcome them?

The main problems encountered concerned the need to coordinate our activities with the already existing services offered to asylum seekers on the territory of the Province of Trento. In particular, an extended and active dialogue was carried on to coordinate the "help desk" with the provincial services assisting asylum seekers up to the decision of the territorial commission. A strong internal organization and progressive learning by students allowed to overcome other challenges concerning the difficulties in connecting with users, often disoriented and unable to easily communicate.

Link to website

<https://www.facebook.com/assaliaperte/>

Starting date

2016-06-02

Duration

17 (ongoing)

Regional scale

1 - local (one municipality)

Other involved partners

Supported by: Centro Astalli, Fondazione Caritro, Ordine degli Avvocati di Trento, Faculty of Law - University of Trento

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Category 1, Managing social change

The project is aimed at ease the relationship between the denied asylum seeker and the lawyer in charge for the appeal against the decision of the territorial commission. Even though Italian law provides for the right to access to free legal aid for those who do not have economic means to support a legal action, this right is hardly enforceable due to a lack of effectiveness. The strength of the project consists in creating an operative link between migrants and lawyers, facilitating the exchange of documents, providing for a complete information to migrants concerning their rights and duties and filling a gap in access to justice. The “help desk” is also a means to support legal actions in a sensitive field. The association runs on the free and voluntary dedication of law students, who have the opportunity to get in touch with migrants seeking legal protection and with specialized lawyers.

Category 5, PR impact and awareness raising

Below, some data showing the positive trend of the first years of activity of Ali Aperte. Helpdesk 2016: - Lawyers involved in the Help Desk: 5 - Students voluntarily dedicated to the Help Desk: 5 - Asylum seekers directly supported: 12 Helpdesk 2017: - Lawyers involved in the Help Desk: 12 - Students voluntarily dedicated to the Help Desk: 12 - Asylum seekers directly supported: 43 Members: 50 (mostly university students) Facebook page: more than 500 followers in 9 months Numbers show how many people, coming from different settings, have been involved in the activities offered by Ali Aperte.

Category 6, Innovative dimension

The “help desk” fills a gap between the social services involved in the care and assistance of migrants during the procedure for the recognition of international protection and their legal assistance. The project is innovative because, at a local level, there are no similar services providing for support to migrants during the appeal procedure. The help desk also gives students the opportunity to practically apply their legal skills and to confront with legal practitioners. Students acquire legal and practical competences in a often overlooked field of law, which represent an added value in their curricula. With the coordination of people expert in the field of migration law and policies, Ali Aperte is strongly oriented to an innovative bottom-up approach which encourages students and young people to get involved in activities of dissemination and sensibilization with regard to positive practices of inclusion and welcoming

Category 7, Transferability

A similar help desk might work in any other local area which is dealing with migrants. Especially in areas with a law school, the help desk might serve as a corollary activity for students, in the form of legal clinics, with the aim of enriching their legal skills. In all local areas involved in refugees welcoming, such a “help desk” could serve as an operative tool for the effectiveness of the right to access to justice for asylum seekers.

Category 8, Embedment in a comprehensive welcoming strategy

The “help desk” works in cooperation with the public office in charge for the facilitation of information for migrants (Cinformi). The office is run by the Province of Trento and provides assistance to migrants and welcoming projects. As they cannot provide a link between denied asylum seekers and legal firms, our service fills an effective gap. Therefore, migrants are ensured an effective remedy against the denial received by the territorial commission. Other goals of the association are linked to the spread of a constructive culture of migration rights in the territory and, in particular, among the students of the university.