

# "New Roots", The contribution of asylum seekers in the Italian forest management



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## Location

Ormea (CN), Piedmont

## Country

Italy

## Short summarizing description

The case we are proposing is an attempt to integrate 35 asylum seekers welcomed at Centro di Accoglienza Straordinario (CAS), into work and into the local social fabric of the town of Ormea (CN), a mountain municipality of 1,750 inhabitants. The case offers - through a technical and professional training as well as a real work on the field - the cultural and cultural "recovery" of an abandoned chestnut forest, in which the productive, protective, recreational and touristic value has been restored. In the context of an industry such as agriculture/forestry which easily gathers low-skilled individuals, or people unable to plead their qualifications such as asylum seekers, causing irregular employment, marginality and high risk of injury, the case of Ormea demonstrates how to fight these negative aspects, transforming them into a convenient opportunity for the newcomers but also for the protection and enhancement of the mountain environment and the forest heritage.

## Key Terms

Contrast to irregular work, skills improvement, Sustainable Forest Management (SFM).

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

Ormea's CAS has the objective to overcome the emergency logic by which it has been established and, sharing the reception vision of the Office for Immigration of Piedmont: "a responsibility but also an opportunity", wishes to support the refugees in "re-drawing their own lives", proposing a pathway which takes into account both the expertise and the skills of its guests, as well as the real possibilities offered by the area. The most important thing that Ormea can offer to its "provisional citizens" is the opportunity to benefit from the richness of nature surrounding it, in a sustainable way. In this context, asylum seekers can enhance their knowledge and help to promote the protection of the agroforestry heritage, also increasing, through their work, the natural resources value.

## Which are the key objectives of your measure?

1) Promote and implement the protection and the active management of the mountain territory, in particular of the abandoned chestnut grove to the benefit of the whole community; 2) Promote integration through work; 3) Combat illegal employment, marginality and workplace accidents risks; 4) Acquired certified skills by participating in high quality educational activities; 5) Work in compliance with safety regulations and respecting the political / strategic directions who govern the area.

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

14 asylum seekers, involved in a training/work plan for the acquisition of minimum silvicultural skills, which are deemed to be useful to perform "forestry" interventions such as cleaning the underbrush, cutting of species other than chestnut, recognition and releasing of indigenous species of high ecological value, etc; 11 a. s. involved in training/employment for the acquisition of technical skills, aimed to the realization of rehabilitation and maintenance interventions on dry stone walls.

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

The results obtained in December 2016 are : 25 asylum seekers have completed the training course (with related certificate): 14 in the agricultural/forestry sector with knowledge in "job safety", organization of interventions in the woods, equipment use and maintenance. Five asylum seekers were trained in the use of chainsaw with related certificate. 11 were trained in techniques for the realization of dry stone walls; a piece of "restored" chestnut grove of about 1 ha; Reduction of the hydrogeological risk linked with the abandoned forest; a crop of 14.5 quintals (9.6 kg / ha) of chestnuts, with a cash in of about 810 Euro for the sale of fresh chestnuts.

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

It is being captured the need to include Italian citizens in future planning to increase the opportunities for social inclusion of the guests of the CAS (target linked to the integration process) and to increase the positive impact on the local economy, for these reasons it is being evaluated the establishment of an independent legal entity (eg. a co-operative society) that can be responsible of the aspects that are not specific to the CAS (which is public).

## Starting date

2016-08-01

## Duration

8

## Regional scale

1 - local (one municipality)

## Contact person

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## Category 2: Integrating migrants into the local/,regional labour market

“New Roots” is a project of integration for the CAS guests into the social fabric of the local community, offering them a course for technical and professional training as well as work in the field of cultural and cultural "restoration" of an abandoned chestnut grove, restoring its productive, protective, recreational and touristic value. Asylum seekers are thus included as active citizens in the social environment that hosts them. In addition, they are properly trained in the technical aspects in order not to become exploiters nor exploited in an irregular or illegal labor market, and to regain dignity and ability to improve their condition, giving at the same time a significant contribution to the development of the local communities in which they are living. The income of the sale of the harvested chestnut, organized by word of mouth and by participating in local markets, was divided among the participants.

## Category 3: Improving land use, nature ,protection and regional development

Goal of the project "New Roots" is the restoration and the recovery of the productive, protective, touristic and cultural value of a private chestnut grove, through the implementation of specific and planned cultural and technical works. Therefore the project schedule sees the development of an initial training phase and a subsequent work in the field, in order to ensure the quality of interventions and improvement of professional skills of asylum seekers.

### Further Information



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