



Rights without borders

Marist initiatives
for the care of
Migrants and Refugees



FMSI

For the benefit of children

Marist International Solidarity Foundation Onlus

**Dados Internacionais de Catalogação na Publicação (CIP)
(Câmara Brasileira do Livro, SP, Brasil)**

Rights without borders:Marist initiatives for the
care of migrants and refugees / FMSI. --
1. ed. -- São Paulo : FTD, 2017.

ISBN: 978-85-96-01060-3

1. Direitos fundamentais 2. Igreja - Trabalho com
migrantes - Brasil 3. Igreja - Trabalho com
refugiados - Brasil 4. Imigrantes - Brasil - Aspectos
sociais 5. Migração 6. Refugiados 7. Refugiados -
Brasil - Aspectos sociais I. FMSI.

17-04352

CDD-304.8

Índices para catálogo sistemático:

1. Imigrantes e refugiados : Aspectos sociais 304.8

DATA SHEET

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Publisher:

FTD Education

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MARIST INITIATIVES FOR MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES **WORLDWIDE**



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Presentation

Our world is facing a high level of human migration without precedent. Even though for many of these migrants the possibility of moving to a better place is very positive, the high number of people being forced to leave their country of origin is one of the highest historical points.



The “New York Declaration” adapted by the UN General Assembly in September 2016, points out that *“the number of migrants increases much faster than world population, and in 2015 has risen up to 244 million. There are 65 million people forced to move out. Among them, we find 21 million refugees, 3 million asylum seekers and more than 40 million internal migrants”*.

65 million

PEOPLE FORCED
TO MOVE OUT

21 million

REFUGEES

3 million

ASYLUM SEEKERS

40 million

INTERNAL MIGRANTS



We believe that this situation requires us to work collectively, to know how different parts of the world are responding to the needs of migrants and refugees and the protection of their rights.

The following points describe a general idea of what we are doing and our working style:

- **Primary care** (but not exclusive) to children, young people and their families.
- **Promoting education** through extra schooling support, non-formal education and ongoing formation
- **Education** in local languages and culture at points of arrival, while attempting to nourish history, culture language of origin.
- **Networking** with other institutions in order to articulate actions and to follow up situations of migrants.
- **Collaborating** with other Governmental organizations at different levels (national, regional and local) to develop projects.
- **Legal support** of migrants.
- **Organizing** local and international volunteers.
- **Use of different material and human resources** and infrastructure from Marist schools and universities.

The main concerns in these experiences are: lack of opportunities for children to enter the public education system (not only for schooling but also to access educative resources); risks of human trafficking; social rejection, discrimination and hostility from civil laws against migrants; difficulties in social integration due to lack of local language skills; psychological problems caused by trauma and stress for the future; poor living and job conditions and their emotional consequences.

The “New York Declaration” has engaged to improve protection of migrants and refugees in these ways - protecting human rights and fundamental freedom of children, and giving primary consideration at all times to the best interests of the child, working to provide for basic health, education and psychosocial development (Nº 32); providing quality primary and secondary education in safe learning environments for all refugee children (Nº 81); supporting early childhood education for refugee children, and also promoting tertiary education, skills training and vocational education (Nº 82).

FMSI and the **Marist network** strongly wish for these commitments to become real and therefore, we offer our experience, resources and capacities to find long term sustainable solutions, in order to ensure human rights recognition to children, young migrants and refugees.



South Africa



Three2Six Project —
Education program
for migrant children,
Johannesburg, South Africa



This program focuses on the protection and education of more than 150 refugee children. Most of them are part of families who come to South Africa from countries affected by war, economic deprivation and political problems (DRC, Burundi, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Ruanda, Malawi, etc.). This poses obstacles to guaranteeing the minimum required schooling for their children.

The Three2Six team is made up of 6 teachers, 1 coordinator, and 4 foreign volunteers in addition to benefitting from the support of the school community of the Sacred Heart College, with whom they share the space. Marist students provide support as volunteers after their classes and during vacations.

The main purpose of Three2Six is to improve the quality of life of those who suffered painful circumstances through education, the development of skills for life, science, art, among other academic strategies.

A six-grade program (first to sixth) helps children become familiar with the English language which is essential for communication and school performance in South Africa. Ideally, along with the overcoming of language barriers (reading, writing, conversation and comprehension) it seeks to prepare their entry to High School or other public schools in the neighbourhood.

Those with more difficulties are assigned to a special class to improve their level until they attain the skills of their age group. Three2Six has its own library with plenty of books that students can check and take home.

The program does not intend for children to attend all grades. Once they are ready to join a regular school, parents are asked to register them at the

same. The students are then supported by providing them with a uniform and the supplies they need to perform well in school.

The curriculum of the program includes every year excursions to learn about the history and culture of South Africa and different artistic expressions of the country. Thus students have the opportunity to take a break from studies and have fun while acquiring valuable skills for life and polish their social capabilities. So, instead of being locked up and bored in their homes during the holidays, the program allows them to stay busy, safe and happy.



+ FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.three2six.co.za

Thailand

Samut Sakon Project for
migrant children from
Myanmar, Thailand



The city of Samut Sakhon is located about 40 kilometres away from Bangkok and it is especially an industrial centre for the production and processing of fishery products. Many of the employees in this industry are undocumented migrants from Myanmar living in highly precarious conditions; in Samut Sakhon there are approximately 200.000 Burmese migrants.

The growing population density has enhanced the social problems faced by both Burmese workers and their children in areas such as malnutrition, difficulties in accessing health care, child labour, discrimination, etc.

In this context, the educational Project of Samut Sakhon was a result of the invitation by the current Cardinal of Bangkok to the Marist Brothers to establish an educational centre for children and teenagers of both sexes, migrants from Myanmar and for the most part undocumented. The goal of this project is for them to be eventually accepted into Thai schools which is impossible for many since they do not speak the Thai language.

The Project began in 2010 in a roofed space provided by a Catholic school. The Brothers took charge of the education of these children and adolescents who had never sat in a chair or held a pencil in their hands. Difficulties with the language were not long in coming and more Brothers had to be prepared to overcome communication problems as the children from Myanmar did not speak Thai but Burmese, and the Brothers had only studied Thai. Subsequently, the Archdiocese of Bangkok asked the Brothers to leave the building they occupied and move to another part of the city.

The age of the students ranges from 4 to 15 years. The subjects taught are: English, Thai, Burmese, computer science, arts, physical education and religion. Educators try to adhere to Myanmar educational programs

since many of these children's families return to their country of origin after spending a few years in Thailand.

Religion classes are given by a Buddhist monk from Myanmar since most of the students are Buddhists. The attendance is quite high and at this moment there are about 120 children at the centre.

At present the Archdiocese of Bangkok has three such centres in Samut Sakhon, funded by Caritas. One centre is run by the Diocese, another by Dominican Sisters and the third by the Marist Brothers, supported by a group of Thai and Burmese teachers.



Rwanda



Educational Program for
young refugees from DR
of Congo, Rwanda



There are five refugee camps in South West Rwanda where approximately 75 thousand people from the Democratic Republic of Congo have lived for over twenty years. These people can not obtain the Rwandan nationality but they have difficulties in returning to their homeland since they are lacking the minimum requirements to survive, such as land and homes. In addition, the population does not accept them because they fear the perpetrators of the genocide in Rwanda.

THE UNHCR OFFICE
HELPS THEM WITH FOOD,
HEALTH CARE AND
PRIMARY EDUCATION.

The UNHCR office helps them with food, health care and primary education; junior high school education is provided by a North-American organization. However, they have no access to high school. They also have

no access to training programs that allow adults to generate any income. Some of them do small agricultural work in nearby lands but chances are scarce since Rwandan families prefer to grow them themselves.

This situation leads to such effects as involvement of the young in sexual exploitation and prostitution; children use drugs and alcohol when they find some money and there is a high incidence of single mothers. Conflicts also break out with the surrounding Rwandan population when young people steal crops from farms near the camp.

The Forum for Young Congolese Refugees is an organization created by a group of young refugees who succeeded in finding opportunities to study and work in Rwanda. They now wish for other youngsters who have experienced the same circumstances to have the chance to develop.

Therefore, they invited the Marist Brothers to visit the camp, become familiar with the educational reality and assess alternatives for the care of these young people.

The project led by the Marist Brothers seeks to attend to 80 youngsters who live at the refugee camp, between the ages of 15 and 18, who have successfully passed junior high school at the schools of Save, Mururu, Bymana or at the refugee camps of Gihembe and Kiziba.

Although they receive no funding from the State, the Ministry of Education grants an official certificate for the studies that follow.



Lebanon



Fratelli Project —
Socio-educational activities
for the inclusion of Syrian
refugees in Lebanon



This Project is the result of an inter-congregational action of Marist and La Salle Brothers to respond to the crisis experienced by displaced people at the border between Lebanon and Syria. In 2015, there were over one and a half million.

Due to the government's ban on refugee camps, most live in private accommodations or abandoned buildings. As they are unable to find a regular job, nine out of ten Syrian families depend on some form of external aid.

In their country, children were victims of serious acts of violence. Most suffer the consequences of the traumas generated by war, the loss of loved ones, fear of strangers, etc. Their education is a real challenge. The Lebanese government makes great efforts to provide them with education in public schools, however, many are left out or present major obstacles to their reintegration. Most lost one or more years of schooling, requiring support classes. In addition, they must overcome language difficulties since in Syria classes are taught in Arabic, whereas in Lebanon they are in English or French.

The **Fratelli Project** seeks to offer stability and regularity to some 150 to 200 children and youngsters through an initiative of formal education in a familiar and safe environment, including sports and artistic activities. Its main goal consists in promoting access to education favouring their inclusion to the Lebanese context through the following activities:

- **Pre-school education** for children between 4 and 6 years old, emphasizing social, cognitive, emotional and physical development. They are prepared to enter primary school. The program includes art workshops, introduction to writing and reading, outdoor games and group games.

- **School support** for children from 7 to 14 years old, with special attention to those with greater learning difficulties, those who need to develop language skills or suffering from post-traumatic stress.
- **Youth club for teenagers** from 14 to 20 years old, where they are supported in developing their skills, with English and computer classes and they are offered support to return to school.
- **Classes of professional training** for mothers and young women in cosmetology, information technology and English.
- **Nutritional support** for refugee children who need it.
- **Basic health care** and childcare program for mothers.

The **Fratelli Project** is carried out in Beirut in a leased building in the town of Insa and at the Marist School Our Lady of Fatima in Rmeyleh, near Sidon. This is a small town of 50 thousand inhabitants that welcomed 30 thousand Syrian refugees over the last few years.



Spain



Marist Project: Land of All,
Granada, Spain



This is an association connected to the School 'La Inmaculada' and attached to the Foundation Marcelino Champagnat. It was established in 2012 following the "Colloquium about the Marist Mission in Europe", which calls for the support of groups of immigrants.

It attends to people of different nationalities, including Spanish, referred through Community Social Services of the Chana district or through informal networks. The most frequent nationality is Moroccan, followed by Spanish, Ecuadorian, Romanian and Senegalese. The socio-economic level is low: individuals may be unemployed or with precarious employment; they have not gone through the educational system or have partially attended primary school; there is a high proportion of single-parent families.

Land of All focuses its action on the educational program while it deals with aspects such as employment, administrative matters or basic needs such as clothing or food. The programs offered include:

The Educational Program. The objectives pursued are: promote the learning of Spanish language and culture to non-Spanish speakers; support children between the ages of 3 and 12 in their studies to prevent school failure, provide them with education in values, healthy living habits and social skills, through recreational, educational, sports and socio-cultural activities; provide pre-employment training to young adults who are enrolled in or have attended the High Intensity Program of the City of Children in Granada; and provide family reconciliation of fathers and mothers with dependant children. The 2016-2017 academic year will include: Spanish language and culture classes, school support classes for children and primary education, playful Saturdays, support classes in pre-work training and summer school.

The **Social Program** provides information about the social resources of the city and the same association. It involves different stages:

1. Reception, to learn about the general situation of the person;
2. Intervention, involving a commitment to join the activities and/or referral to other social resources;
3. Monitoring of the person's evolution.

The **Employment Program** aims at responding to the employment situation of individuals, providing them with information about the labour market, training resources, the improvement of their social skills and tools for an active job search.

Awareness Program to divulge the difficulties associated with immigration and promote attitudes that favour cultural diversity. On occasion of the Christmas Campaign, an initiative is carried out at the school La Inmaculada involving workshops at different levels.



+ FOR MORE INFORMATION

<http://www.obrasocialmarista.es/tierradetodos/>



Mexico



Marist Migrant Support
Centre, Marist University
of Querétaro, Mexico



Querétaro has been ranked as one of the safest cities in Mexico with one of the highest GDP and economic growth in the country. In addition, since it is in the middle of the territory, many migrants cross Querétaro along the train tracks. Most of them are men between the ages of 18 and 41, coming from Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, México and Nicaragua.

In response to this situation, the Marist Migrant Support Centre (CAMMI) was established in 2014, attached to the Marist University in town. Its mission consists in generating social awareness through concrete actions for the benefit of less privileged people, attending to their fundamental needs and inviting civil society to build a better environment for migrant brothers and sisters.

ITS MISSION CONSISTS
IN GENERATING SOCIAL
AWARENESS THROUGH
CONCRETE ACTIONS FOR
THE BENEFIT OF LESS
PRIVILEGED PEOPLE

The services it provides include: Showers, clothing, wardrobe, telephone calls, health services, legal counselling, hostel information and breakfast rooms.

In 2015, the CAMMI helped over 600 people. During January-November 2016 the people assisted were a total of 450; not including the recipients of the Saturday breakfast service.

It also benefits from the support of young students for the promotion of social awareness. Volunteers can help in general tasks at the centre or provide knowledge for specific projects based on their field of study.

The CAMMI is part of the "Documentation Network of Organizations for the Defence of Migrants" (REDODEM) that includes 15 centres, homes

or hostels providing direct attention to the migrant population located throughout the country. They all maintain the same database for the registration of individuals. Any demographic information, violation of their rights and any other relevant aspect is recorded to capture characteristics and changes in migration flows. It has proven to be a useful tool to identify candidates for refugee recognition, advocating and displaying diversity in the migrant population.

With regard to children, the CAMMI has accompanied some cases with the objective of monitoring their detention processes. There is a concern that the attention and channelling protocols may not be observed for all of them. However, the lack of transparency on the part of State organizations allows little room for action.

They believe it is essential to disclose violations of federal laws in the presence of actions such as: direct transfer of children to migration stations without offering alternatives to detention; they are not informed of their rights or the possibility of applying for refugee status; they are not placed in contact with relatives; they are given medical attention conditioned by their migration status; they are not guaranteed access to education during their stay in the country and they have even been denied their right to identity.



Australia



Marist180's settlement and
asylum seeker services,
Australia

Marist **180**



It is a non-profit organization offering services at the different stages followed by those seeking to settle in Australia. The program is financed by the Border Immigration and Protection Department and it offers access to safe housing, education, employment and social welfare. It includes two main programs:

- **Unaccompanied Minors** (UHM, *Unaccompanied Humanitarian Minors*): it provides support for children and youth arriving through the Government Humanitarian Program with no parents or caregivers. They are offered

support 24/7 in an environment that favours their care and personal and cultural development.

Caregivers and social workers are trained in the personal assistance of people between the ages of 4 and 18. They help them create their own

THEY HELP THEM CREATE
THEIR OWN CARE
PROGRAM, DEVELOP SKILLS
FOR INDEPENDENT LIFE AND
LEARN THE LANGUAGE.

care program, develop skills for independent life and learn the language. Also, they support their access to education, medical assistance and mental health services.

The team focuses on therapeutic care aimed at connecting each youngster with his or her culture of origin and religion while they are encouraged to become familiar with the new Australian context. Currently, assistance is provided to minors from Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Liberia.

- **Status Resolution and Support Services** (SRSS). A program to help those processing an immigration status depending on the circumstances

and needs of each person: financial support, health care, English classes. One of the objectives is to foster the connection among the asylum seekers and their new community. The families are tied to groups from the local community, they are assigned a mentor and they share cultural and religious celebrations.

Accommodations and 24/7 support is also offered to unaccompanied minors from Sri Lanka, Iraq, Afghanistan and Yemen. Also, the SRSS works with single adults and vulnerable families; the majority is originally from Iran, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Iraq.

- **Cultural Support and Community Engagement Team:** it focuses on the social inclusion of asylum applicants through guidance in practical matters such as public transportation, English classes, registration of children to school, etc., thus trying to achieve a smooth transition. However, insertion in Australia does not mean forgetting the culture of origin; that is why the celebration of cultural and religious feasts is encouraged.



+ FOR MORE INFORMATION

<http://marist180.org.au/>



Uruguay



Reception of Syrian
refugees in Uruguay



In October 2014, the first families of Syrian refugees arrived at the Marist San Jose House in Montevideo from Lebanon. The initiative of the President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay was implemented with the arrival of five families, all with reference adults and most of them with children and young people; a total of 42 individuals.

For approximately three months, a space for intimacy, security and comfort was developed. Several teams of Marist professionals and other organizations implemented projects so that the newly arrived individuals

FOR APPROXIMATELY THREE MONTHS, A SPACE FOR INTIMACY, SECURITY AND COMFORT WAS DEVELOPED.

could learn the language, become familiar with the Uruguayan culture and work toward greater independence to be integrated into the local society.

The Government dictated the integration of all children into the educational system and provided for a

definite accommodation for each family as well as employment possibilities for the adults.

The Marists were responsible for two projects in the socio-educational context within the framework of what the UNHCR¹ refers to as “first reception”. Prior to being transferred to their final destinations, the following projects were implemented:

- **Cultural Insertion**, to adjust to the Uruguayan context, become familiar with spaces, customs, characteristics and potential for life in the country, the aspects of everyday life they must learn to reach their own decisions.

¹ Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Refugiados (en inglés UNHCR, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees).

- **Recreational Accompaniment** to develop capabilities and acquire tools in an atmosphere of respect and reciprocity.

The specific objectives in this proposal include: foster an atmosphere of encounter, respect, work and reciprocity among the children and recreation attendants; foster the development of the expression capacity of children through the exercise of different tools and resources; encourage the exploration and encounter with the natural and cultural surroundings in Uruguay, promoting reciprocity, exchange, respect and care for the environment; encourage the discovery of the body as an instrument of enjoyment and deployment of capabilities; foster teamwork, collaboration and collective actions as a privileged means for the resolution of situations; acquisition of playful tools for the social insertion of children in the Uruguayan culture.

The following were some of the modules offered: expression as an opportunity for development, integration with the environment, cooperation as a life option, Syrian games and Uruguayan games, the body as a possibility for enjoyment, among others.

The activities were led by a group of seven professionals and were carried out on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm.



Brazil



Working Group on Human
Mobility – Pastoral and
Solidarity Centre, Catholic
Pontifical University of R o
Grande del Sur, Brazil



The PUCRS achieved various actions since 2015 to support immigrants and refugees who seek in Brazil a space to establish their life with dignity, respect and better quality of life.

In 2015, the University press office helped the articulation among employers required by workers and immigrants and refugees seeking employment in Rio Grande do Sul. Also, the PUCRS began participating to the Municipal Committee for the Care of Immigrants, Refugees, Stateless

immigrants and refugees who seek in Brazil a space to establish their life with dignity, respect and better quality of life.

individuals and Victims of Human Trafficking in connection with the Municipal Secretariat for Human Rights. This is an instance to debate and plan joint actions.

In 2016, the Working Group on Human Mobility was created consisting of different areas of the PUCRS: the Pastoral and Solidarity Centre, the Communications Department, the Institute for Social Development and Culture, the School of Humanities and Social Services. The Law School also participates.

One of the first initiatives of group work was to identify the most urgent needs of immigrants and refugees who live in Rio Grande do Sul, thus helping them based on the possibilities of the University. They planned to begin legal consultations, classes of Portuguese and psychological assistance in 2016. A food collection campaign was also carried out.

The Legal Assistance Service offers free guidance to migrants with regard to labour law and social security, refugee applications, applications for naturalizations and option for Brazilian nationality.

In 2017, plans include the continuation of the legal service and a course in March of Portuguese language in collaboration with Caritas of Porto Alegre and the Santa Clara Parish, where Franciscans already attend to nearly 200 families of Haitians and Senegalese immigrants.



+ FOR MORE INFORMATION

<http://www.pucrs.br/blog/imigrantes-recebem-atendimento-juridico-gratuito/>



Brazil



“Comunidade Ativa” Program of
the Catholic Pontifical University
of Paraná and Marist Solidarity
Network of the Province of
Brazil Centro Sur, Curitiba, Brazil



PUCPR
GRUPO MARISTA



The Catholic Pontifical University of Paraná through the Centre for Human Rights and the Institute of Science and Faith, has developed the Program “Comunidade Ativa”, which involves a series of actions with the migrant population of the city of Curitiba.

The main activity is a course of Portuguese language for the Haitians who live near the university in the area of Vila Torres. The objectives of the Project include developing the knowledge and skills of production and oral comprehension of the Portuguese language; develop said skills for the

THE MAIN ACTIVITY IS A COURSE OF PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE FOR THE HAITIANS WHO LIVE NEAR THE UNIVERSITY

production of documents such as letters of introduction and CV. Other initiatives also involve university students in working with the migrant population.

In addition to the Haitians (about 2000 in the city of Curitiba), there are cases from Syria, Bangladesh and many

African countries. Actions consist of legal aid, some scholarships at the university, commemoration of important days for them (such as Haitian Flag Day), holding of public hearings to obtain progress in legislation and public policies and networking discussion meetings.

The work is carried out in a network with the support and cooperation of the following organizations: United Nations Development Program

(UNDP); Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); UNICEF; UNESCO; Centre Rio+; Centre of Excellence for Food; Secretary of Human Rights of the Presidency of the Republic; Inter-American Institute for Human Rights; Institute of Latin American Studies (Federal University of Santa Catarina — UFSC); Centre of Support to the legal offices of Rights Constitutions; Reference Centre for Human Rights (Caritas); and Euro social Program.

The Network of Marist Solidarity also has its eyes on the care of children and young people in this population who suffer during their transfer with their parents, or when travelling alone to a distant territory.

Thus, these cases are accepted into the different Social and Educational Centres of the Solidarity Network in 5 Brazilian States: of the 26 social units included in it, eight have already taken in migrants or refugees. The service rendered focuses on educational, psychological and social assistance; it also aims at social impact, public policy and the guarantee of rights.

+ FOR MORE INFORMATION

<http://ndh.pucpr.br/2015/06/15/projeto-visa-atendimento-ao-publico-haitianoresidente-na-vila-torres/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XuVUbFhaG5c>



United States

Marist international
community — East Harlem,
New York, United States



In New York city, there are a lot of immigrants. East Harlem is a place where there is great social vulnerability, most of the immigrants come from Latin America and live in Unites States without legal documents. Due to recent changes in immigration policies, a lot of people have been threatened with deportation.

A LOT OF PEOPLE HAVE BEEN THREATENED WITH DEPORTATION.

Many of the immigrants have resided in USA for many years, their descendants, like children and grandchildren, are born in USA and are American Citizens. This real situation begets many social, emotional and cultural difficulties. More help and welcoming spaces are needed for support and integration.

The Marist Province of United States started an international community in East Harlem in 2014. The community was proposed to be one of the international communities "LaValla200>" in 2016. This program has been created by Marist Institute to found several new communities with Marist brothers and laypersons at marginal areas around the world. Brothers and lay Marists from the "LaValla200>" program started to arrive in January 2017.

The New York Archdiocese, Catholic Charities and Marists (lay, brothers and students) are working together to help the community in different areas. They all work hard at "Comunidad Juan Diego" to offer English, Citizenship and Computer classes as well as handicraft classes.

The Marist students also offer tutoring classes for children at Our Lady Queen of Angels School and any other student from public schools. Most

of Comunidad Juan Diego activities are held at Our Lady Queen of Angels School, a Catholic Elementary School next to the Marist Community, and some others are held at the Marist residence.

The Marist Community tries to be a welcoming space and a help to strengthen the relationship among people in East Harlem. The community Holds a weekly meeting with women and youth ministry.

The Marist International Community hopes for a continuous and permanent growth of the people in the community in East Harlem.



Italy

Marist international
community — Siracusa,
Sicilia, Italy



In the last years, on the south border of Europe, many immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa have arrived. The Marist region of Europe has chosen to establish an international community in the south of Italy. The La Valla 200 community is comprised of two brothers and two lay people and was established in October 2016.

Thousands of immigrants arrive in Sicilia, who afterwards, the Italian government locate in different places around the country. Marists chose Siracusa as a strategy point to collaborate with the Church and other institutions due to the high number of unaccompanied minors.

“Freedom home” is a shelter for minors who have no company of an adult, and it is there that the Marist community has initiated its presence.

Most of these children have been rescued from boats trying to get into the country. They remain in this center with the hope of getting a tutor that will process their residence in Italy.

**MOST OF THESE CHILDREN
HAVE BEEN RESCUED
FROM BOATS TRYING TO
GET INTO THE COUNTRY.**

The Marist community visits “Freedom Home” every afternoon to share their time and presence. Part of their ministry is to assist the young people with the Italian language. They organise different games and activities for them as well.

Since the beginning of 2017, the Marist community has started to get in contact with other institutions and communities around the city including:

- Collaboration with “Accoglierete”, teaching Italian to young people that live in a centre of temporary accommodation.

- Teaching Italian language at “Santa Rita” parish, where there is a shelter for single mothers (most of them the African origin)
- Alongside the Scalabrini Sisters (whose charism is to work with immigrants), organising awareness workshops about “a welcoming culture”. After the first meetings it has become more clear the possibility to work one to one with these young people.
- The Marist community has visited already “Cavadonna” prison that imprison 700 people, most of them immigrants. The objective is to meet them and to offer them material needs like clothing, shoes or reading glasses. At the same time, it is an opportunity to build relationships, to listen to their difficulties and stories of life.



Mexico



Volunteer Service of the Potosino
A.C. Institute at the House of
Charity Home of the Migrant,
San Luis Potosí, Mexico



San Luis Potosí is a key point in the transit of the migrant population from Mexico to the United States, because the train route separates towards the borders of Piedras Negras, Nuevo Laredo and Reynosa.

The migrant population is mostly from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala; a small part is originally from Nicaragua, Cuba and other parts of the world. National migrants are also taken in. The majority are between the ages of 16 and 40 years old. However, there are also children who travel accompanied by their parents.

They reach San Luis Potosí after months of travel. At this point they have already suffered extortions, assaults, persecutions and mistreatment by police, immigration agents, migrant companions and society in general.

The House of Charity Migrant Home is located in the immediate vicinity of the train tracks. It has capacity for more than one hundred people and provides various services such as food, lodging, spiritual, psychological, legal and health support.

Eight years ago, this Marist volunteer service began with the participation of students, alumni and teachers from the Potosino A.C. Institute.

It began with a group of five people on Saturdays at noon, intending to accompany, encourage and show solidarity to the migrant brother during in his brief stay in San Luis, bringing clothing, sweets and hope. The members of the group increased in number and within a short time, the institution

was part of the benefactors of this house of charity. Every year, the school contributes a substantial part of the funds raised in the annual collection.

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE GROUP IS TO HAVE A MOMENT OF PRAYER AND REFLECTION WITH MIGRANT BROTHERS.

The objective of the group is to have a moment of prayer and reflection with migrant brothers and then share experiences and coexist with them. This year we have sought to include more activities such as board games, crafts, football games and even English classes.

Migrants and volunteers are calm and confident during sessions. Some of them open their hearts to volunteers and speak of their experiences along the way; it is pleasing to achieve this since it is a relief for people in transit; it raises awareness and encourages those who listen to act.

It is worth mentioning that sometimes the impact of migrants on volunteers is such that the youth return during the week to follow up and support the migrants who are there.



Mexico



Pedro Martinez Vazquez School
volunteering at Migrant shelter
in Irapuato, Mexico



San Juan de Dios



Pedro Martinez Vazquez School does a similar service at a Migrant shelter in Irapuato, it is a place where the migrants pass by, as well as Aguascalientes, Zacatecas and other cities in order to get to United States.

The migrant shelter in Irapuato is located in “La Pradera” a place nearby the railroad. There is a limit availability due to the fact that it is a regular house with three bedrooms, each room has a triple bunk bed

and sometimes the living room is set to receive migrants if needed. The house can receive a max of 50 people per day.

THE SERVICES ARE: LODGING, FOOD, BASIC MEDICINES, CLOTHES, BACKPACKS AND THEY PROVIDE A WAY FOR THEM TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEIR FAMILIES.

The services are: lodging, food, basic medicines, clothes, backpacks and they provide a way for them to communicate with their families. Unfortunately the lack of infrastructure has stopped a bigger development of the project.

The school contributes by donating clothes or food, cleaning the house or preparing the food. They also help when they are required for something specific, for example the time when they provided lunch for the women who were looking for their missing children, children who get lost along their way to United States.

People from Irapuato help migrants in different ways, however, it is becoming more difficult to help them because of the crime issues and people who take advantage of the project, due to these two aspects migrants are rejected and people are afraid of them.





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Roma 2017

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