



HOW TO SUPPORT MH

The Mediterranean Hope project is an initiative of the Protestant churches. It is largely sustained by "Otto per mille" (Eight for Thousand) funds of the Waldensian and Methodist Churches. An important contribution also comes from Protestant Churches in Germany, particularly in Westphalia. Contributions, even small, are therefore very important as an expression of encouragement and a resource to strengthen the project.

However, MH also relies greatly on the vocational spirit of sisters and brothers who stimulate, follow, accompany and support it. There are many ways to support MH:

- *Participate in initiatives proposed in Scicli and Lampedusa*
- *Offer to do volunteer work, even for short periods of time*
- *Distribute the MH newsletter*
- *Promote fundraising for specific MH initiatives*
- *Organise meetings on the theme of Mediterranean migration inviting MH operators*
- *Organising visits and travelling seminars in Sicilia on the theme of Mediterranean migration*

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MEDITERRANEAN HOPE

A project of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy (FCEI)



MEDITERRANEAN HOPE

Mediterranean Hope (MH) is a project of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy, born from the awareness of the dramatic situation of migrants from countries in North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East who try to reach the coast of Sicily by sea and, in particular, the southernmost point of the island of Lampedusa.

Accredited international sources estimate the tragic average of one migrant death per day, for the most part managed by organised crime. Over the years, the Mediterranean has therefore become a giant cemetery that, according to the Fortress Europe Observatory, since 1988 has witnessed the deaths of almost twenty thousand people along the route to Italy. The institutional and political response to this tragedy has so far been inadequate and lacking. A sea rescue program, called Mare Nostrum, was only launched by Italy after the massacre of 3 October 2013, which saw almost four hundred migrants die a few miles off the coast of Lampedusa. After one year, during which the program obtained important results from a humanitarian perspective, Europe did not take it over, choosing to start another program oriented mainly to combatting irregular immigration.



STRUCTURE OF THE PROJECT

Mediterranean Hope is divided into four closely related units: analysis and information on migration flows via the Mediterranean; reception and orientation of migrants and asylum seekers; integration programs; actions aimed at promoting effective migration policies that respect human rights.

The Observatory on Mediterranean migration is based in Lampedusa. It ensures constant spreading of information on migrations flows in the Mediterranean to churches and society in Italy and abroad, even thanks to special correspondents. The association also collaborates with local associations for the reception; it maintains regular relationships with local and regional institutions; promotes intercultural initiatives to create awareness on the issue of global migration; manages the training of volunteers, both Italian and international; provides advice to associations, journalists and researchers interested in the social dynamics of the Mediterranean; promotes ecumenical and interfaith initiatives focused on the theme of migrant reception.

The House of Cultures (Casa delle Culture) is based in Scicli (Ragusa, Sicily). It is a multipurpose facility able to accommodate up to 40 migrants and is committed to creating various intercultural programs aimed at both guests of the House and Sicilians. At this stage, the House of Cultures provides shelter to vulnerable people such as unaccompanied minors and single women with children. In keeping with its name, the House of Cultures also promotes social and cultural actions of integration, dialogue and intercultural exchange. Even in Scicli, MH promotes collaborative actions with other local associations, including secular, ecumenical, and interfaith organisations.

The relocation desk is a service designed to accompany and guide migrants who pass through the House of Cultures. It is a guidance and counselling service that interacts with protestant communities in Italy and abroad willing to support the integration paths of individual migrants and migrant families.

“Humanitarian Corridors” is the proposal by Mediterranean Hope aimed at offering humanitarian protection to migrants in need, allowing them to obtain an entry visa to Italy and Europe so that they can travel in safety and therefore escape the blackmail and violence of people smugglers and criminals who manage human trafficking in the Mediterranean. To test this good practice, MH has opened a dialogue with Italian authorities as well as institutions and associations operating in Morocco. The right of migrants and asylum seekers to move freely in Europe is a key element of this intervention model. This part of the project is promoted and implemented in consultation with the Community of Sant'Egidio.

