

# **TERRAINGIUSTA** Unfair Land

**APRIL 2015** MEDICI PER I DIRITTI UMANI

Report on the Working and Living Conditions of Foreign Agricultural Workers

## **SUMMARY**



in collaboration with



Associazione  
per gli Studi Giuridici  
sull'Immigrazione



Legal Clinic  
UniRoma3





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with the support of



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## **Images Within the Report**

Photography by the Medu Team

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*Medici per i Diritti Umani (MEDU) is a humanitarian and international solidarity non-profit organisation, free of any political, union, religious and ethnic affiliation. MEDU proposes to bring medical aid to vulnerable peoples in crisis situations in Italy and abroad, and to develop democratic and participative spaces within civil society for the promotion of the right to health and other basic human rights. The actions of Medici per i Diritti Umani are grounded in the militancy of civil society and on the professional and voluntary commitment of doctors and other health operators, as well as of citizens and professionals in other fields.*

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# INTRODUCTION

In 2013 there were more than 320,000 immigrants, from 169 different countries, working regularly in Italy's fields. These workers undertook approximately 26 million working days, equal to 23.2% of the overall working days declared by both Italians and foreigners this year<sup>1</sup>. As Coldiretti, one of the most important organisations of agricultural entrepreneurs in Italy, admits, "the productive districts which reflect most highly the excellence of all that is *Made in Italy* can only survive thanks to immigrant labour, from the barns of the north where the milk to make Parmigiano Reggiano is sourced to apple-picking in the Non Valley, from the tomatoes of the south to the great grapes of Piedmont". Moreover, according to Eurispes' data, submerged labour involves 32% of the agricultural sector<sup>2</sup>, of which workforce around 100,000 individuals, mostly foreign, are the subject of severe exploitation and forced to live in unsanitary and derelict housing. The presence of a significant number of foreign labourers hired on a seasonal basis, especially during harvest time in less skilled trades, places itself within a very complex picture where the contribution of immigrant labourers shows itself to be decisive for the continued survival of Italian agriculture.

In the past few years, numerous investigations and research projects<sup>3</sup> have denounced the unacceptable living and working conditions to which foreign labourers are subjected to in the Italian countryside, particularly in the South: off-the-books or grievously irregular employment, sub-minimum-wage employment, illegal recruitment, excessively long working hours, lack of workplace health and safety, difficulty in obtaining basic medical aid, disastrous living and hygiene conditions. Moreover, this worrying picture is marked at all levels by an institutional incapability to provide credible answers. Institutions which are often obliged to emerge from an attitude of inertia and indifference only when the seri-

ousness of the issue becomes a matter of national debate during particularly heinous episodes which reveal "the tip of the iceberg". Such events include the Rosarno revolt of 2010, or the first strike by immigrant labourers in the Nardo' countryside in 2011. And it is precisely from our first action in the Rosarno slum, a place bereft of any respect for human rights, that the *Terragiusta* (Just Land) project was born in 2013.

As an independent humanitarian organisation, Medici per I Diritti Umani (Medu) proposes to bring medical aid to vulnerable populations and to locate and expose, from the starting point of medical practice, human rights violations and obstacles to access to medical aid. The *Terragiusta, Campaign against the exploitation of migrant agricultural labourers* project undertaken by Medu in cooperation with the Association for Judicial Studies on Immigration (Asgi) and the Laboratory of Theory and Practice of Rights of Roma Tre University (Ltpd), proposes to promote the protection of healthy living and working conditions of migrants employed in the agricultural sector of some of the most *critical* territories in Italy's Centre-South Region. The operation also holds the specific objective of improving knowledge, access and fruition of migrant labourers' basic human rights, especially the right to health and employment rights. Besides humanitarian intervention, the project also proposes to explore more deeply the dynamics of each key territory and to understand if *something is changing* in this picture of marginalisation and exploitation. The *Terragiusta* report is born of this investigative work.

For eleven months, from February to December 2014, Medici per I Diritti Umani's mobile units provided first aid and socio-sanitary direction in different locations throughout Southern and Central Italy. Following the cycle of agricultural seasons, Medu's teams moved from the Gioia Tauro plain in Calabria to the Sele Plain

1 *I lavoratori agricoli stranieri*, Romano Magrini (Coldiretti), Dossier Statistico Immigrazione 2014, Centro Studi e Ricerche IDOS/Immigrazione Dossier Statistico (October 2014), p. 277.

2 *Sottoterra. Indagine sul lavoro sommerso in agricoltura*. Eurispes, Uila, 2014, p.7.

3 *I frutti dell'ipocrisia*, Médecins Sans Frontières (2005); *Una stagione all'inferno*, Médecins Sans Frontières (2008); *Agromafie e caporalato*, Osservatorio Placido Rizzotto Flai-Cgil (2012 e 2014); *Lavoro sfruttato. Due anni dopo*, Amnesty International (2014).

in Campania, from Vulture Alto Bradano in Basilicata to Lazio's Agro Pontino. During the summer, we monitored tomato-picking in the Capitanata, Puglia. 788 migrants were interviewed<sup>4</sup>, of which 744 received medical aid for a total of 876 medical consultations. Asgi and Ltpd also undertook a painstaking analysis of the so-called *Rosarno Law* and its effectiveness in contrasting labour exploitation two years after its ratification.

This report is thus the product of eyewitness accounts and data collected from the starting point of medical aid on the ground. An investigation which, without laying claim to being a statistically valid study, may nonetheless represent a useful tool for understanding the phenomenon of migrant worker exploitation throughout Central and Southern Italy. In this sense, *Terraingiusta* is attempting to be a photograph of the current situation and its most severe issues, the attempts at change, the few good practices and possible solutions. A report which, to use an expression by Davide Lajolo, poet and farmer, has tried to "look at the grass from the roots".



Medu's mobile clinic during routine health aid near an abandoned farm in the Taurianova municipality (Medu/march 2014).

4 788 migrants were interviewed (736 men e 52 women), of which 694 workers (671 men e 23 women).

# METHODOLOGY

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This report was produced under the aegis of the *Terraggiusta: Campaign Against the Exploitation of Migrant Agricultural Workers*. The project, focussing on five regions of Southern and Central Italy (Calabria, Campania, Basilicata, Puglia and Lazio) began with a preliminary phase in which a specific location within each region was identified as a viable operating area based on the following criteria: severity of workplace exploitation, with particular attention devoted to consequences in terms of healthcare; severity of critical issues with housing and care; lack of local organisations and primary care institutions. The operational areas were also defined taking into account the movements which immigrant labourers undertake on a seasonal basis, following the agricultural cycle.

In three of the areas identified, a medical service was then established during the periods of greater migrant labourer influx: Gioia Tauro Plain in Calabria (February-march and November-December) the Vulture-Alto Bradano area in Basilicata (July-October) and the Sele Plain in Campania (April-July). A Medu team composed of a coordinator, a medic and several cultural mediators (these last selected on the basis of the most common nationalities within the operating areas), made use of a mobile ambulance unit to undertake daily activities and humanitarian-medical assistance, operating closely with Asgi staff (a lawyer and a paralegal) and with Roma Tre University's Laboratory of Theory and Practice of Rights (a coordinating lawyer, a legal expert and two students) as far as concerns legal support and the monitoring of access to basic human rights. In Puglia, the team undertook a three-month observation (July-October) in the Foggia province, while in Lazio a second team, composed of a coordinator, medics and socio-legal volunteer operators, carried out an intervention-assessment of one week's duration in the Agro Pontino.

Within our four areas of direct intervention (Calabria, Campania, Basilicata, Lazio) the Medu team carried out a low-impact proximity service, mapping and visiting the immigrant labourers' living quarters, providing basic

first aid, information and socio-sanitary orientation. Through the completion of a vital statistics datasheet and a clinical datasheet for each patient visited, the team also monitored the workers' socio-sanitary conditions, with particular attention given to the collation of epidemiological data, to the relationship between working conditions and health conditions, to judicial status and to living conditions and access to medical aid. We also proceeded to map the local medical facilities, identifying services which were capable of ministering, in terms of accessibility and practicality, to the health needs of migrant agricultural labourers.

In each case the accounts of the migrants were collated and interviews were carried out with the main actors involved: experts and civil society associations, representatives of local and regional institutions, union and employer agents. Within the selected operating areas, lawyers and legal consultants working for Asgi and Ltpd held workshops for paralegals and local associations on the new law *Rosarno Law* and the subject of workplace exploitation, thus guaranteeing a continuing legal consultancy and assistance service. Within each operating area, the *Terraggiusta* project aimed to create a network of links with local civil society through seminars, workshops and focus groups.

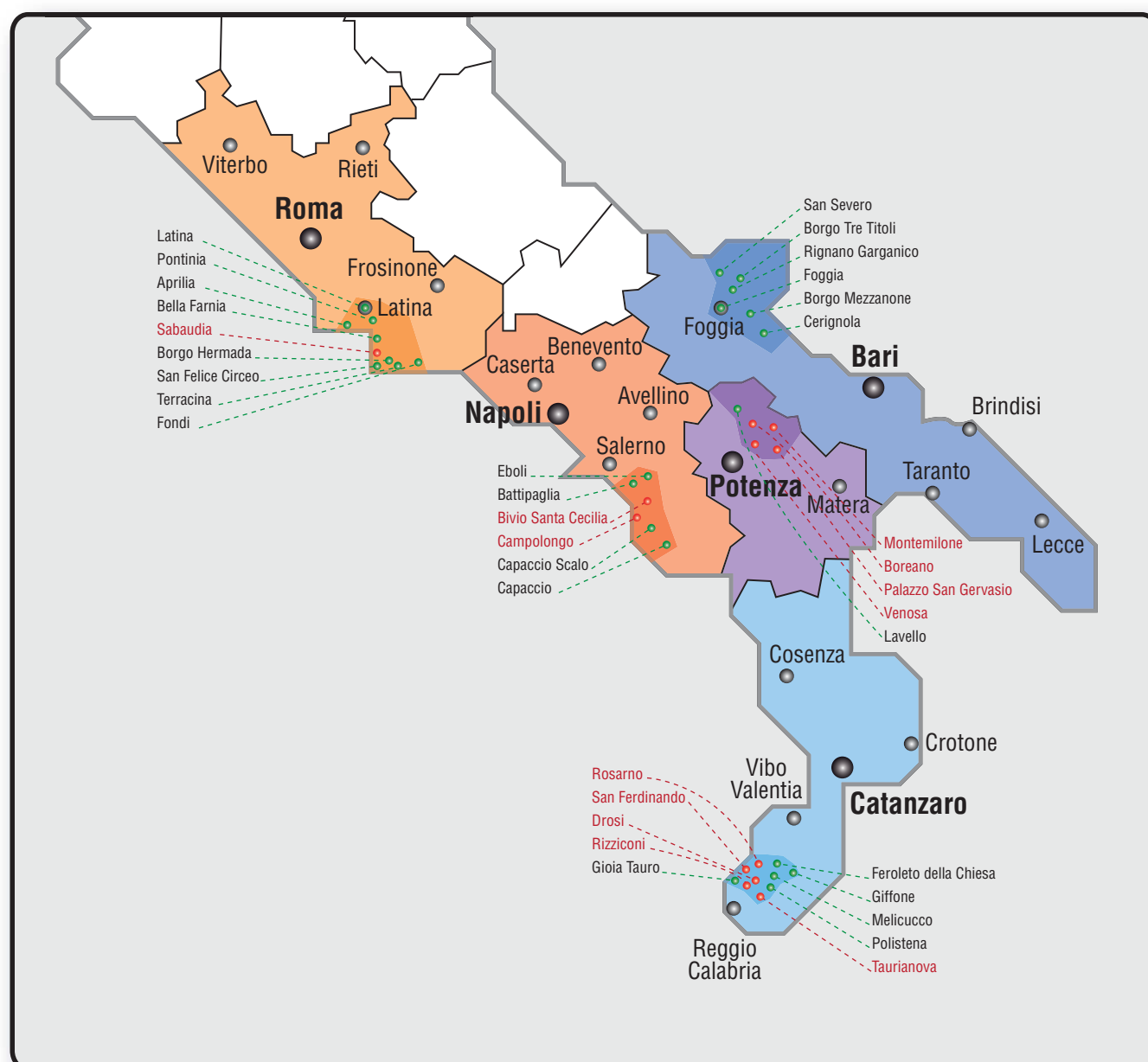


# TERRAGIUSTA PROJECT

## Operating and Analysis Areas

- Regional Seats
- Provinces
- Operating Areas
- Areas of Interest

- Lazio: Agro Pontino
- Campania: Piana del Sele
- Puglia: Capitanata
- Basilicata: Vulture
- Calabria: Piana di Gioia Tauro





# OPERATING AREAS

## CALABRIA - Gioia Tauro Plain

### Citrus Fruit Picking on the Forgotten Plain

During the citrus fruit season (November-March), over 2000 labourers travel to the Gioia Tauro Plain every year, most of them from Subsaharan Africa. Despite the fact that within the municipalities of Rosarno, San Ferdinando, Gioia Tauro, Rizziconi and Taurianova this phenomenon has now repeated itself for years following the same MO, nothing changes on the Plain, where season after season a veritable “safe zone” seems to have coalesced within which all dignity and basic human rights of migrants are waived.

The Medu team undertook two operations: the first during the months of February-March 2014 and the second, still ongoing, from November 2014 to April 2015. The data from the November-December 2014 period is presented below. The mobile clinic carried out medical assistance and socio-sanitary aid in the camp located within the industrial area of San Ferdinando and within an occupied factory in the same area, as well as at several isolated settlements on the Gioia Tauro Plain and at the day clinic for irregular aliens (STPs) in Rosarno.

Among the most critical issues identified are: off-the-books labour, underpayment, non-existent care facilities, neglect and a grievous lack of resources for public clinics for the migrants. 79% of the labourers assisted by Medu's mobile clinic live in temporary shelters lacking sanitation services, water and electricity, while one migrant in five is forced to sleep on the floor due to lack of beds. The ongoing nature of illegal practices, such as illegal recruitment, falls within a picture marked by a grievous lack of credible revitalisation programmes for the agricultural sector which might boost the local economy. These appear to be completely non-existent, and must come before such issues as a careful planning of the seasonal reception of immigrant labourers, and the lack of political will to tackle what is one of the most severe, and indeed shameful, immigration-related issues within our country's borders.



<b>CALABRIA</b> <b>Gioia Tauro Plain</b>	
<b>TYPE OF CROP</b>	Citrus Fruit (November-April).
<b>MIGRANTS ENCOUNTERED</b>	279 of which 234 agricultural labourers, mostly men aged on average 30.
<b>MEDICAL ASSISTANCE</b>	384 medical consultations given, including 279 first, 90 second and 15 third visits.
<b>LENGTH OF STAY*</b>	Seasonal Population: 95% will move at the end of the season.
<b>MAIN NATIONALITIES</b>	Most labourers are from Mali (23%) Burkina Faso (23%) and Ghana (15%).
<b>LENGTH OF STAY IN ITALY</b>	72% declared they had been in Italy for more than two years, of which 24% for more than five years.
<b>LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY</b>	63% has a good or basic understanding of Italian.
<b>EDUCATION</b>	43% declared they had received no formal education.
<b>LEGAL STATUS</b>	The majority of interviewees has a permit due to international protection (18%) or humanitarian reasons (38%). 12% have a work permit. Illegals make up 20% of the whole.
<b>CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT</b>	The majority of labourers does not have a contract (83%). The majority of those who do do not know if they will receive a payslip or pension subsidies.
<b>AVERAGE SALARY</b>	The average daily salary is of 25 Euros. Pay is dispensed at a daily rate (25/30 euro) or on a piecework basis (1 euro per crate of tangerines, 0.45-0.50 euro per crate of oranges).
<b>ILLEGAL RECRUITMENT</b>	64% of labourers declared they had availed themselves of the services of an illegal recruiter.
<b>LIVING CONDITIONS</b>	79% of labourers lives in temporary dwellings without access to washrooms or drinking water.
<b>HEALTH INTEGRATION</b>	50% of migrants with a residency permit does not possess a Health Card.
<b>EPIDEMIOLOGICAL PROFILE</b>	Heavy prevalence of illnesses affecting the digestive system (23%) and the respiratory system (21%) – directly correlated to the state of destitution in social and living conditions – and musculoskeletal complaints related to work activity (16%).
* From this section onwards, all data pertains exclusively to migrants who declared they worked in the agricultural sector.	

# OPERATING AREAS

## CAMPANIA - Sele Plain

### Exploitation of Workers in “Italy’s California”

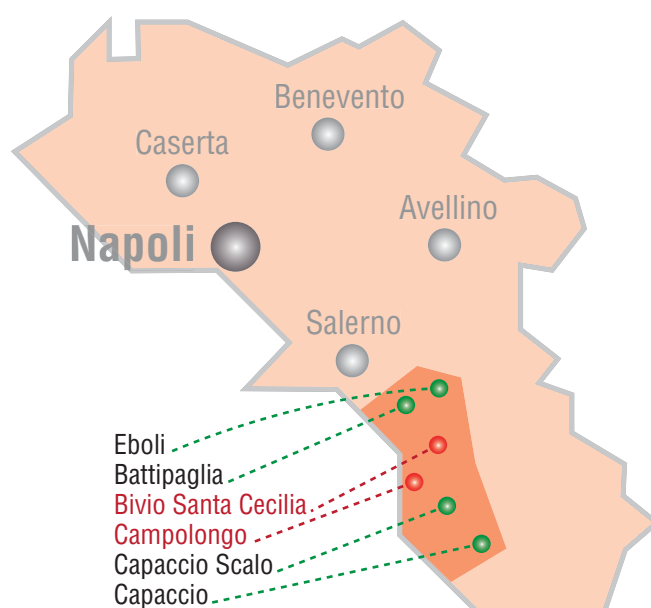
The ghetto of San Nicola Varco – which was host up to 2009 to over a thousand labourers in deeply deprived living conditions – no longer exists, but the exploitation of migrants employed in agriculture on the Sele Plain remains serious.

In the months of May and June 2014, Medu's team operated out of the Flai-Cgil offices in Santa Cecilia (Eboli) and along the Salerno-Paestum coastal road (Campolongo region).

Based upon the accounts and the data collected, it appears that although two out of three migrants are legally resident in Italy and 60% of them possess a contract of employment, there are continuing, pervasive issues of underpayment, fraudulent practices and illegal recruitment. The average daily pay is 32 Euros.

The migrants are the butt of illegal practices which range from pay and subsidy irregularities, which constitute the norm among both Italian and foreign labourers, to the sale of false contracts of employment which may cost up to 6000 Euros. Furthermore, serious conditions of social marginalisation are endemic, with severe effects on the access to health services: only half of the migrants interviewed who possessed a residency permit was registered with the national health service.

This situation appears to be all the more unacceptable given the fact that it occurs in an area which, due to the richness of its agricultural output and the excellence of the crops it produces, is known as “Italy’s California”.



CAMPANIA		Sele Plain	
TYPE OF CROP	Hothouse Crops (year-long), livestock breeding.		
MIGRANTS ENCOUNTERED	177 of whom 153 agricultural labourers, mostly men aged on average 36.		
MEDICAL ASSISTANCE	143 medical consultations given, of which 133 first visits and 10 second visits.		
LENGTH OF STAY*	Permanent population: 96% of labourers lives in the area year-round.		
MAIN NATIONALITIES	Most of the labourers interviewed is from Morocco (84%).		
LENGTH OF STAY IN ITALY	80% declared they had been in Italy more than two years, of which 56% more than five years.		
LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY	More than 70% of interviewees has a good or basic proficiency in Italian.		
EDUCATION	Half of the labourers has attended primary school (35%) or secondary school (15%). 17% is illiterate.		
LEGAL STATUS	Most have a residency and subordinate employment permit (60%) Illegals make up 28%.		
CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT	60% declared they possessed a contract of employment. 36% did not.		
AVERAGE SALARY	Average wage is 32 Euros a day. Most labourers declared they were invoiced less days than they had actually worked and that they were unsure of how many would be invoiced in future.		
ILLEGAL RECRUITMENT	25% declared they had availed themselves of an illegal recruiter's services.		
LIVING CONDITIONS	Most of the migrants interviewed lives in a rented property, usually with four other of their countrymen. 8% declared they lived in abandoned buildings in precarious living and hygiene conditions.		
HEALTH INTEGRATION	52% of the legal residents interviewed declared that they were not registered with the national health service. Among those already diagnosed and undertaking treatment with local hospitals there appears to be a lack of compliance with treatment.		
EPIDEMIOLOGICAL PROFILE	Heavy prevalence of musculoskeletal and connective tissue injuries (22%) aggravated or created by work activity; diseases of the digestive system (16%); diseases of the respiratory system (16%) and infectious, parasite-borne diseases (14%). 15.6% of the labourers interviewed declared they had been in direct or indirect contact with pesticides. 80% of these declared they did not use protective equipment when doing so.		
* From this section onwards, all data pertains exclusively to migrants who declared they worked in the agricultural sector.			



# OPERATING AREAS

## BASILICATA - Vulture - Alto Bradano

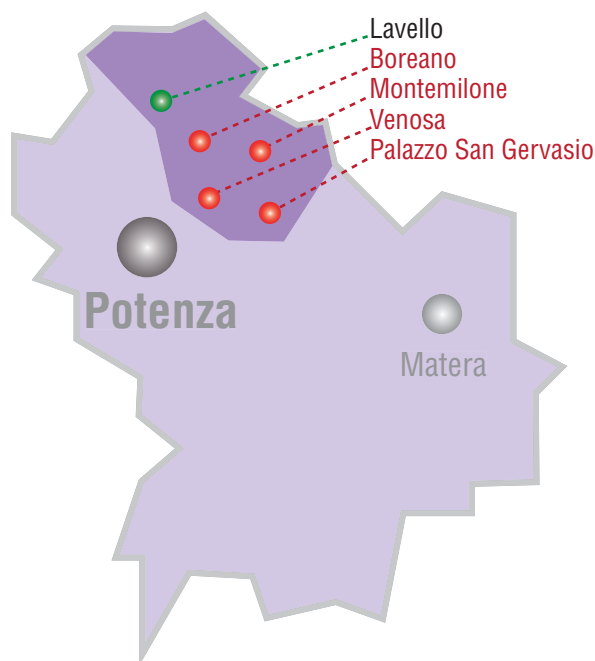
### Tomato picking amid off-the-books employment, illegal recruitment, and struggling reception centres

In the August-October period, the Vulture-Alto Bradano area sees a significant influx of migrants employed in the tomato picking industry.

From the month of July to the first week of October 2014, Medu's mobile ambulance service visited most of the farmsteads located in the countryside around the municipalities of Venosa, Lavello, Palazzo San Gervasio and Montemilone.

During the past season, Basilicata's regional administration set up a Task Force with the specific objective of facing up to the serious lack of support and reception facilities for seasonal workers. Despite this, the living and working conditions of the over 1000 foreign labourers, mostly from Sub-Saharan Africa, remain critical. Due to the late opening of the reception centres in Palazzo San Gervasio and Venosa, the migrants continued to live for most of the season in disastrous conditions inside abandoned farmsteads with no water, electricity or working lavatories.

The vast majority of labourers (92%) possesses a valid residency permit but, in most cases, is still hired through an illegal recruiter who holds back 0.50 Euro for every crate of tomatoes filled. The majority of the migrants also claimed not to know how many days' work were logged by their Italian employers for pension purposes. With a view to the coming season, it is essential that the Basilicata administration's plans go beyond mere emergency measures, implementing more effective practices along more suitable timelines.



<b>BASILICATA</b> <b>Vulture -Alto Bradano</b>	
<b>TYPE OF CROP</b>	Tomatoes (July-October).
<b>MIGRANTS ENCOUNTERED</b>	250 seasonal labourers, aged on average 31.
<b>MEDICAL ASSISTANCE</b>	267 medical consultations given, of which 250 first visits and 17 second visits.
<b>LENGTH OF STAY*</b>	Seasonal population: 96% of labourers will move on at the end of the season.
<b>MAIN NATIONALITIES</b>	More than 80% of the labourers is from Burkina Faso.
<b>LENGTH OF STAY IN ITALY</b>	84% declared they had been in Italy more than two years, of which 38% more than five years.
<b>LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY</b>	The majority (72%) of interviewees has a good or basic proficiency in Italian.
<b>EDUCATION</b>	44% declared they had never received any formal schooling.
<b>LEGAL STATUS</b>	In 92% of cases the patients possessed a regular residency permit, most for international protection or humanitarian reasons (44%) or for subordinate employment (30%).
<b>CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT</b>	55% declared they possessed a contract of employment. 24% did not. Most of the labourers who did have a contract declared not to know if they would receive payslips commensurate to the hours they had worked.
<b>AVERAGE SALARY</b>	During the first phase – when the fields are prepared – work is paid 5 euro an hour. The average daily salary is of 36 Euros (gross wage, excluding transport costs of about 5 euro). During the second phase – the picking period – pay is on a piecework basis, 4.3 Euros per 300 kilo crate. Average daily wage is between 64.5 and 86 euros.
<b>ILLEGAL RECRUITMENT</b>	In the first phase three workers out of four admitted they had made use of an illegal recruiter's services (57%) or refused to answer (20%). During the second phase 80% of the interviewees admitted they had used an illegal recruiter. The recruiter is paid 0.50 Euro per crate filled.
<b>LIVING CONDITIONS</b>	98% of the labourers assisted lived in abandoned homesteads with no water, lavatories or electricity.
<b>HEALTH INTEGRATION</b>	Only 62% possessed a Health Insurance Card.
<b>EPIDEMIOLOGICAL PROFILE</b>	Heavy prevalence of injuries directly related to work activity and the state of poverty and social degradation the workers were subjected to, such as musculoskeletal and connective tissue injuries (32%) and digestive system diseases (15%) and parasitic infections (15%).
* From this section onwards, all data pertains exclusively to migrants who declared they worked in the agricultural sector.	

# OPERATING AREAS

## PUGLIA - The Capitanata

### ***Capo Free Ghetto Off, an incomplete project***

In the area of the Foggia Province historically known as the Capitanata, there are over 20,000 migrants from Eastern Europe and Africa employed in the agricultural sector, working as fruit and vegetable pickers year round and, during the summer months, from July to September, as tomato pickers. These are the months in which the number of immigrant labourers reaches its highest peak, 6000 of whom are forced to live in temporary shelters, dilapidated farmsteads or slums, in extremely critical hygiene and health conditions.

From July to October 2014, Medu's team, while running their simultaneous socio-sanitary project in Basilicata, monitored the living and working conditions of the labourers in the Foggia province. The most important temporary settlements inhabited by migrant labourers were visited: the so-called "Great Ghetto of Rignano", the "Ghetto Ghana House" ten kilometres from Cerignola; the "Bulgarian Ghetto" near Borgo Mezzanone, the settlement near the landing strip of the former military airport next to the CARA (Reception Centre for Asylum Seekers) of Borgo Mezzanone.

The recruitment of foreign labourers takes place in a systematically thanks to illegal recruiters, with most employees usually being underpaid or paid on a piecework basis, subject to contractual and fiscal irregularities. During the past season, the *Capo Free Ghetto Off* project, a Task Force organised by the Puglia regional administration, tried to give a concrete response to these serious problems through actions aimed at improving work, reception, medical assistance, transport, legal support, fighting illegal recruitment, and support for ethical businesses. Despite the involvement of several civil society actors in the development and application of the project, the results remain extremely limited to this day. The plan remains for the most part a "wish-list", due also to the serious lack of planning and operational solutions.



<b>PUGLIA</b> <b>The Capitanata</b>	
<b>TYPE OF CROP</b>	Tomatoes (July-September); fruit and vegetables year-round.
<b>MIGRANTS ENCOUNTERED</b>	21168 regularly registered migrants in the Foggia Province in 2013, plus 15-20,000 off-the-books labourers <sup>5</sup> .
<b>LENGTH OF STAY*</b>	Permanent and regional (especially during tomato-picking season).
<b>MAIN NATIONALITIES</b>	Main nationalities among the regularly registered workers in 2013: Romania (11204) Bulgaria (3803) and African nations (2948), especially Morocco, Mali, Tunisia, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Guinea and Nigeria <sup>6</sup> .
<b>LEGAL STATUS</b>	Mostly members of the European Community or in possession of a residency permit for international protection or humanitarian reasons <sup>7</sup> .
<b>CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT</b>	Foggia is the province with the highest percentage of off-the-books employment (over 50%) and the lowest average number of declared working days (39 per person) <sup>8</sup> .
<b>AVERAGE SALARY</b>	Pay is almost always on a piecework basis and averages around 3 to 3.50 Euros per 300 kilo crate. In a 12 day working hour a labourer usually manages to fill around ten crates for an average of 25 to 30 euros per day. From this sum must be deducted the illegal recruiter's fee (around 5 euro) <sup>9</sup> .
<b>ILLEGAL RECRUITMENT</b>	Recruitment of foreign labourers is systematically carried out by illegal recruiters <sup>10</sup> .
<b>LIVING CONDITIONS</b>	during the tomato picking season, around 6000 migrant labourers live in temporary settlements: derelict farmsteads, shacks, tents. Numerous ghettos are present, the main one of which is the "Great Ghetto of Rignano", inhabited by around 400 people year-round and around 1500 during the summer months <sup>11</sup> .
* From this section onwards, all data pertains exclusively to migrants who declared they worked in the agricultural sector.	

5 *Agricoltura e lavoro migrante in Puglia*, Flai-Cgil, Leonardo Palmisano and Domenica Casella, 2014, p.27 and 64.

6 *Agricoltura e lavoro migrante in Puglia*, Flai-Cgil, Leonardo Palmisano and Domenica Casella, 2014, p.36.

7 Interviews to Flai-Cgil and "Io ci sto" association.

8 *Agricoltura e lavoro migrante in Puglia*, p.39-40; *Immigrazione Dossier Statistico 2013. Dalle discriminazioni ai diritti*, Centro Studi e Ricerche IDOS, 2013.

9 *Agricoltura e lavoro migrante in Puglia*, p.83.

10 *Agricoltura e lavoro migrante in Puglia*, p.104.

11 From the Medu monitoring and the publication *Agricoltura e lavoro migrante in Puglia*, p. 99.



# OPERATING AREAS

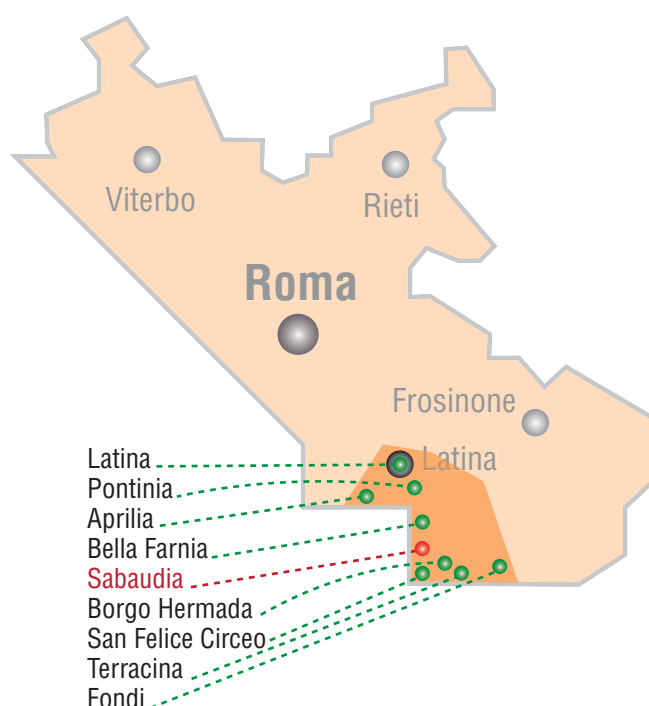
## LAZIO - The Agro Pontino

### The Pontino Punjab: Irregularities and Exploitation among Fields and Hothouses

For more than twenty years the province of Latina has been one of the most important agrarian food production areas in Italy in terms of the presence of foreign labourers, mostly hailing from the Indian Punjab and Eastern Europe. Located mostly in the southernmost section of the Agro Pontino, the Punjabi Sikhs represent one of the most important groups in the area in terms of numbers. They make up a structured community, most of whom are settled, male migrants, although in the past few years there has been an increase in the number of females present due to the first family reunions taking place.

In the month of September 2014, the Medu team carried out monitoring and social and health assistance at the Gurudwara Sikh temple in Sabaudia where, every Sunday, at least two thousand people gather to worship. All patients visited were from India, especially from the Punjab, and of Sikh faith.

99% of the migrants helped by Medu possessed a regular residency permit and 70% of them worked in agriculture. Among these, 86% possessed a contract of employment. On the other hand, the condition of the Indian migrants in the Agro Pontino proves that possession of a contract of employment frequently does not protect the foreign workers from having their rights infringed. Among the most critical aspects, as well as working hours, underpayment, and fiscal irregularities, we must number the phenomenon of illegal recruitment, which in this area acquires the characteristics of a full-fledged trafficking ring which starts with recruitment in the workers' country of origin. As far as concerns integration, while 78% of the labourers interviewed was registered with the National health Service (78%), almost half of them had little or no understanding of the Italian language despite having lived in our country for over five years in two thirds of cases.



<b>LAZIO</b> <b>The Agro Pontino</b>	
<b>TYPE OF CROP</b>	Field and Hothouse crops: year-round cultivation. Livestock breeding.
<b>MIGRANTS ENCOUNTERED</b>	82 individuals of which 57 agricultural labourers, mostly men aged on average 39.
<b>MEDICAL ASSISTANCE</b>	82 medical consultations given.
<b>LENGTH OF STAY*</b>	Permanent population.
<b>MAIN NATIONALITIES</b>	India (Mostly from the Punjab region).
<b>LENGTH OF STAY IN ITALY</b>	97% declared they had been in Italy two or more years, of which 67% more than five years. Almost half of the latter has been in the country over 10 years but none of them is an Italian citizen.
<b>LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY</b>	56% of interviewees has a good or basic proficiency in Italian, 32% has a slim understanding of the language and 12% does not speak it altogether.
<b>EDUCATION</b>	Most of the labourers attended primary school (33%) or secondary school (54%), 4% is illiterate.
<b>LEGAL STATUS</b>	68% of labourers holds a work & residency permit, 16% have a temporary permit, and 12% have a residency permit on a family reunion basis. Only one interviewee had immigrated irregularly.
<b>CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT</b>	86% of labourers declared they possessed a contract of employment. 65% declared that they were being invoiced for an inferior number of days than those actually worked.
<b>AVERAGE SALARY</b>	80% of interviewees is paid on average 4.5 Euros an hour. Total daily pay is in over half the cases between 32 and 36 euros.
<b>ILLEGAL RECRUITMENT</b>	7% made use of a recruiter's services. 25% elected not to answer the question.
<b>LIVING CONDITIONS</b>	88% live in rented apartments shared with relatives or other countrymen.
<b>HEALTH INTEGRATION</b>	78% of legal residents is registered with the national health service and makes use of a GP's services somewhat regularly. Difficulties were registered due to a lack of understanding of the health service and trouble communicating with medical staff.
<b>EPIDEMIOLOGICAL PROFILE</b>	Most pathologies encountered were related to musculoskeletal injuries (22%), especially muscle pain tied to work activity and arthritis, as well as circulatory system issues (17%, hypertension), and respiratory illnesses (17%, mostly airway infections).
* From this section onwards, all data pertains exclusively to migrants who declared they worked in the agricultural sector.	

# JUDICIAL ANALYSIS

## The Impact of Directive 52/2009/CE on the phenomenon of workplace exploitation among agricultural labourers

by Asgi and Ltpd

Directive 2009/52/CE (aka directive for the sanction of employers) was created with the objective of reinforcing cooperation between member states in the fight against unauthorised immigration and calls for: the introduction of a general ban on employers hiring citizens of a foreign nation without a residency permit; the introduction of a criminal charge if the hiring of irregular labourers is accompanied by exploitation, repeated instances of the same, the employment of three or more minors and if the employer is aware that the irregular labourer has been a victim of human trafficking. The directive also established basic minimal requirements in relation to sanctions (effective, proportional and dissuasive) and actions to be taken against employers who violate the generic prohibition against hiring foreign citizens without a residency permit. This European legislative tool has been greeted by many with enthusiasm as it has been deemed innovative in terms of contrasting the workplace exploitation of migrants. However, after more careful analysis, the ambivalent nature of the directive emerges, trying as it does on the one hand to meet the required international obligations (among which the UN international agreement on economic, social and cultural rights<sup>12</sup>) – explicitly recognising several special rights to migrant labourers, such as the right to payments previously not received and social security – and on the other acting aggressively in a different direction by attempting to contrast irregular migration, spurred by a workforce requirement that does not respect the administrative requirements for entry and permanent abode in the territory of member states.

Legislative Decree 109, dated 2012 (the so-called “Rosarno Law”), which was a direct consequence of the Directive in Italy, included the legislative requirements of

the same within the existing norms relating to immigration – Legislative Decree 286/1998 and subsequent modifications (Testo Unico Immigrazione - Immigration Law) – which already made it a crime to employ foreign citizens whose stay was irregular<sup>13</sup>. The main innovations introduced by D.lgs 109/12 concern the introduction of aggravating circumstances if three or more workers are hired, if the workers are minors below the employable age, or in the case of irregular exploitative employment, the introduction of a monetary fine against the employer equal to the cost of repatriating the employee, and the establishment of a humanitarian residency permit for victims of severe exploitation who are willing to testify and cooperate in the penal proceedings.

However, there are several critical issues with the Italian adoption of the Directive, relating especially to the partial adoption of the administrative and financial sanctions and the applicability of these only wherein the crime is confirmed (and not merely on the basis of an administrative confirmation as set out in the directive). Other issues include the non-adoption of punitive measures towards subcontractors, the lack of an unambiguous and comprehensive definition of *workplace exploitation*, the lack of established support mechanisms for the migrant worker and the ineffectiveness of measures designed to make reporting crimes easier. A final issue is the non-adoption of the obligation to provide information to migrant labourers, as well as the difficulty of carrying out controls and inspections nationwide.

The directive is applicable only to workers who lack a residency permit, so the tools introduced to protect migrant labourers – such as, for example, the chance

12 According to article 7 of the UN International Agreement on Economic, Social and Cultural rights, signatory states are obliged to respect, protect and safeguard “the right of every individual to just and favourable working conditions”. In particular, these conditions would guarantee: an equitable salary and equal pay for work of equal worth; a remuneration that guarantees all labourers a decorous existence for them and their families; safety and hygiene on the workplace; rest, entertainment, a reasonable limitation on working hours, paid holidays, and remuneration for festivities.

13 Art. 22, comma 12, *Testo Unico Immigrazione*

to obtain a temporary residency permit if victims of severe exploitation – are rarely employed<sup>14</sup>. In the world of today's countryside employment, the scenario has profoundly changed in the past few years, especially as far as concerns the judiciary status of employees and their contractual position. The results of this report – which show the workers are subjected to a stratified judicial system<sup>15</sup> with a high number of agricultural labourers possessing a residency permit and contract of employment – prove that the current body of law, following as it does the twin paths of punitive repression (the crime of enslavement, illegal intermediation and workplace exploitation as laid out in articles 600 and 603 bis of the penal code<sup>16</sup>) and the protection of labourers which is in any case contingent upon being victims of a crime, is completely incapable of capturing the complexity of the productive relationships and transformations which now characterise agricultural labour, and of effectively contrasting the spread of workplace exploitation.

At the same time, the current body of law appears unable to contrast the judicial and substantial weakness – caused by a series of complex factors that cannot simply be blamed on the lack of residency permits or being victims of criminal activity – and social marginalisation, frequently addressed by local and national institutions as an emergency rather than with the fielding of adequate social and employment policies. The *Terraingiusta* report also revealed the growing stratification and difference in judicial status of the migrant labourers employed in agriculture, such as the fact that conditions of exploitation and greater vulnerability are not purely the purview of workers without a residency permit, but those hired on the assumption they would receive a residency permit and contract of employment as well, in addition to European citizens from new EU joiners such as Romania and Bulgaria. It appears, thus

that Directive 52/2009/CE has had a completely minimal impact on the agricultural sector, yet despite this a chance was missed to adopt the limited innovations incorporated within the same, such as fines and administrative sanctions to finance the reconstruction of the production chain, the introduction of joint liability for employers and recruiters, and other provisions that would facilitate the recovery of unpaid wages.

In future, it appears necessary to concentrate efforts on legislative reforms that allow the introduction of provisions specifically designed to strengthen the judicial and social position of agricultural workers, both with regards to their right to live in the country and their workplace environment, such as incentives for both European and extra-European workers to request more protective contracts and the regular payment of pension contributions. With regards to punitive measures, it would also be appropriate to limit criminal sanctions and at the same time increase the severity of the punishment for such crimes as illegal intermediation and the exploitation of the workforce including directly by the employer. In lieu of criminal sanctions for those who hire workers without a residency permit, it would be preferable to increase fines and administrative sanctions and make it possible to apply these to the majority of employers that make up the production chain.

Moreover, it appears necessary to invest in local institutions, involving employers and businesses in the production chain, and to undertake serious obligations in terms of policies relating to immigration and migrant reception to overcome housing emergencies and social isolation.

14 From the data provided by the Home Office regarding the number of residency permits on the basis of article 22 comma 12 of the Immigration Law granted by Italian police stations following the introduction of D.lgs. 109/12, it appears more than evident that as a tool it is simply ineffective. The Home Office, in fact, reports only 8 residency permits granted in 2013. Specifically, those in receipt of a residency permit according to article 22, comma 12 of D.lgs. 186/98 were an Albanian citizen, a Chinese citizen, an Egyptian citizen, four Moroccan citizens and a Pakistani citizen. It should be noted how only two of the above were employed in central and southern Italy (Latina and Salerno). The data relating to the first semester of 2014 follows a similar pattern: only two residency permits were granted to irregular workers who were victims of severe exploitation (a Bangladeshi citizen, working in Venice, and a Ghanaian working in Caserta).

15 Note with regards to this the "Rosarno Residency Permits" granted by the Territorial Commissions for the recognition of international protection based in Crotone, Caserta, Reggio Calabria and Rome between 2011 and 2012 on the basis of "vulnerability caused by past trauma and the severe privations suffered at Rosarno in the past few years".

16 Note how article 603 bis punishes illegal intermediation but not direct hiring by the employer.



# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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On August 25<sup>th</sup>, 1989, Jerry Massio, a South African refugee, was murdered in an abandoned farmstead where he lived with other labourers in the vicinity of Villa Literno. He was the victim, first of all, of severe discrimination; he had travelled to Campania to work as a tomato picker, a job which also employed thousands of other migrants in inhuman conditions. It was thus that the Italian public first discovered just how severe the hardships endured by recent immigrants were, and their lack of basic human rights. A quarter of a century later, this report, the product of eleven months' work in five sensitive locations in central and southern Italy, cannot but confirm how severe and topical the problem of workplace exploitation of migrant agricultural workers remains. For all intents and purposes, no substantial change has taken place, despite the fact that the issue of immigrant labourers' living and working conditions, having already become a national issue in the nineties, has become more and more of a concern in the past fifteen years. It is undoubtedly a complex problem, which touches upon a number of different issues both past and present. An "unfair land", then, that has its roots in unresolved issues within the centre-south region. To this end, it seems appropriate to point out three levels of analysis, all connected – at least in part- by a cause and effect relationship, related in the first instance to socio-economic and cultural issues, secondly to the backward nature of the agricultural sector and, finally, to the reception and working conditions of immigrant labourers.

The socio-economic and cultural issues at the heart of the problem are not merely the most deeply rooted and those that will require the most effort and time to change, but also make up the soil from which the other issues spring, and without changing these hoping to transform the entire outlook is an unrealistic proposition. These problems also involve a lack of economic development, the inefficient nature of public administration and the issue of corruption, the divide between citizens and public affairs, the endemic nature of crime, and the dark spread of organised crime and its culture throughout society.

To this grim picture we must add the serious lack of modernisation of the agricultural sector which we encountered in several areas. What we witnessed was an agricultural model that in some cases still follows the MO of half a century ago, making the entire economic system fragile and incapable of measuring up to global competition, more and more dominated by multinationals and large scale distribution. A system which, in order to survive, has no alternative save to unload its inefficiencies onto the weak link in the chain: the labourers – especially immigrant workers – and independent producers.

The inadequate reception and working conditions of migrant labourers often represent the logical result of the two aforementioned issues. These conditions lead to workplace exploitation and severe violations of the basic human rights of people who, by the sweat of their brow, sustain entire portions of Italy's agriculture.

The sum of these problems was noted in the majority of the locations visited, albeit with variations in severity. Certainly agriculture in the Sele Plain, with its excellent products and burgeoning economy, cannot be compared to the citrus farming of the Gioia Tauro Plain, which has been in a dire situation for years now due in part to severe productive and organisational backwardness. It is, however, evident in both cases that exploitation is taking place, albeit with its own region-specific peculiarities.

Moving on to specific aspects of the investigation, within the territories that see a large seasonal influx of workers such as the Gioia Tauro Plain, Vulture Alto Bradano and the Capitanata, the living and hygiene conditions appear to be extremely poor with no appreciative improvement over the past years. Slums and abandoned farmsteads are still today a grim feature of the humanitarian crisis which has invested this landscape. In Calabria especially, 79% of the migrants we assisted lived in temporary settlements lacking any basic utilities while in Basilicata no less than 98% of workers lived in similar conditions.

In all areas, the majority of the foreign workers assisted by Medu's team were in possession of a regular residency permit; for work in the major areas of permanent settlement such as Campania and Lazio, for international protection or humanitarian reasons where the workforce follows a seasonal migratory pattern such as Calabria or mixed areas such as Basilicata. The presence of foreign workers who had immigrated irregularly was remarkably lower than the figures presented by previous studies undertaken in the past<sup>17</sup>: negligible in the Agro Pontino and Vulture Alto Bradano and reduced to no more than a quarter of the migrants assisted in the Sele and Gioia Tauro plains.

The phenomenon of off-the-books employment has reared its ugly head in the Gioia Tauro plain in particular, where 83% of the migrants encountered by Medu's operators worked without a contract and where the citrus industry appears particularly fragile and fragmented, given that 80% of producers does not own more than two hectares of land. However, in the other areas where the workers with a contract of employment were in the majority – around two thirds in the Sele Plain and in Vulture Alto Bradano, and nearly 90% in the Agro pontino – we noted endemic issues with pension contributions and salaries. In other words, merely having a contract does not guarantee the migrant equitable working conditions.

Specifically, in all areas where we operated the pension contributions declared were found to be, in the majority of cases, markedly inferior to the number of days actually worked, and the labourers' salary itself, both when on and off the books, was found to be significantly lower than the minimum wage guaranteed on a nationwide basis and in provincial employment contracts. On the Gioia Tauro plain, for example, despite being entitled to a gross salary of 42 euro per day according to provincial norms, the workers claimed they were receiving on average 25 euro a day. On the Sele Plain, the average daily pay was of 32 euros, while contractually the workers should have expected 48. Underpayment is, therefore, the rule, with a reduction in salary which usually goes from 30 to 40%.

The one exception noted was piecework in the Vulture Alto Bradano area during tomato picking season: here average daily pay is between 57 and 76 euros. It should however be noted that in this area – where the picking season is extremely brief (30 to 60 days) – working conditions are particularly strenuous and follow an exploitation and self-exploitation pattern: labourers work too hard in order to try to earn the largest possible amount.

Illegal recruitment, an historic plague upon the fields of Southern Italy, was found to be endemic in all locations where we operated and especially severe in the areas with a greater seasonal workforce influx such as the Gioia Tauro Plain and Vulture Alto Bradano, where two thirds and half the migrants interviewed by Medu respectively admitted they had been forced to use an illegal recruiter's services to find employment. It is particularly significant, moreover, that in Basilicata 38% of the migrants elected not to answer the specific question. After all, even in an area like the Agro Pontino where almost all the migrants interviewed had a contract of employment, a third of these declared that they had made use of an illegal recruiter (7%) or chose not to answer (25%). Moreover, in this area the phenomenon often presents itself with peculiar characteristics, involving as it does the entire employment cycle, starting from the workers' country of origin. In all areas where we operated ethnic illegal recruiters were found to be prevalent, hailing from the same country or same geographical area as the workers they recruited. Indeed, illegal recruiters continue to be a key tassel in the production chain which sees the labourers at one end and the employers on the other, with businesses finding it "convenient" to have an intermediary able to move a consistent number of workers from one field to the other in a short space of time. In some areas, the workers are forced to pay for transport to work locations, in others like Basilicata they face the deduction of a sum from their daily pay or, as in Calabria, the payment by an employer of a specific sum to the recruiter based upon the number of workers supplied during the course of a given day.

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17 Una stagione all'inferno, Médecins Sans Frontières (2007).

From a healthcare point of view, Medu's team found a young, mainly male population (93%), with an average age which varied from 30 years in the Gioia Tauro Plain to 39 years in the Agro Pontino, and who was on average in good health upon arrival in Italy. The main diseases and injuries encountered were mostly musculoskeletal issues or involved the digestive and respiratory systems and were usually caused by the harsh working conditions in the fields and the critical social, living and hygiene security conditions noted throughout the operating areas. On the other hand, no "imported" infectious diseases were found to be present. As far as concerns workplace security, gloves and workboots are usually used by the majority of workers although in Calabria around a quarter of those interviewed declared they did not use them. However, contrary to what is laid out in the relevant body of law, in around 80-90% of cases it is the workers themselves who are forced to buy themselves these items, with the exception of the Agro Pontino where in around half of cases these are provided by employers. It is also worth noting here that in the Sele Plain, among the workers who declared they had been in direct or indirect contact with chemical agents, 80% admitted they did not utilise protective masks.

From a healthcare integration point of view, a satisfactory situation was found to exist only in the Agro Pontino, where nine out of ten legally resident migrants possess a health insurance card and visit their GP with some regularity. On the other hand, both on the Gioia Tauro and the Sele Plains, around half of the migrants we assisted, despite having a regular residency permit, did not have a health insurance card. This issue appears particularly serious in the Campanian territory, where over 80% of the migrants interviewed by Medu had lived in Italy for more than two years, and over half for more than five years.

As far as concerns access to healthcare for seasonal workers we must reserve a special mention for the programme launched in Basilicata, in the Venosa Hospital in Vulture Alto Bradano, where a clinic was set up for foreigners during tomato picking season. Open to all migrants, independently of the legality of their

presence in the country, the clinic guarantees temporary access to healthcare even to those workers who already have a GP in a different part of the country. This last is an approach that has been able to overcome the problem of the constant obstacles preventing many foreign seasonal workers from accessing medical aid. On the other hand, the situation of the clinics for irregular aliens in the Gioia Tauro plain appears to be extremely critical, being as they are severely degraded and pointless to visit as they lack adequate economic and human resources.

Before such widespread exploitation, marked by underpayment, off the books labour and inadequate safeguarding of health, frequently disastrous living conditions, the attempted solutions put forth by local and national institutions over the years have been completely inadequate. In this regard as well, Medu's investigation has revealed different approaches and levels of commitment in the five areas involved. If some contexts appear to be resistant to any form of change, in others some progress is being made. During the past season, the regional governments of Puglia and Basilicata launched plans with the specific objective of improving the working and living conditions of the migrants working in agriculture. The strategies implemented by the two ad hoc Task Forces have had the singular merit of challenging the problem in all its complexity, taking into account multiple interconnected aspects: work, reception, healthcare, transport, legal aid, fighting illegal recruitment and support for ethical businesses. In heading down such a challenging and complex path, the two regional governments have also wisely involved the relevant sections of civil society, from organisation workers to unions and employers as well as, naturally, the prefectures and local institutions. If the will of political institutions to tackle the problem in its entirety represents, thus, an important innovation – the only viable strategy – the concrete implementation of such complex plans has proven to be, in many respects, not able to measure up to the ambitious objectives that they had originally envisaged.

Moving onto a more in-depth analysis of the action plans launched by the two Task Forces in the past season, the solutions implemented with regards to re-

ception – essentially organised slums – were undertaken either extremely late, such as in the case of Basilicata, or, as far as concerns Puglia, were barely attempted without any appreciable effect. As far as concerns attempts to contrast workplace exploitation, the creation of prebooking lists has proven to be a complete failure in Puglia while in Basilicata, despite the fact that from a purely numerical point of view it achieved important results, it appears not to have been able to affect the problem of illegal recruitment. Other initiatives, such as the creation of an *ethical badge* for businesses which respect workers' rights, have remained in the opening stage and are thus not evaluable. In Puglia, financial incentives had been planned for – between 300 and 500 euro – for those who had legally hired a certain number of labourers. No business requested these, proving how off-the-books employment and illegal recruitment are deeply rooted in the region and are, maybe, more advantageous than the subsidies. What appears to be missing, in Puglia especially but in Basilicata as well, was an adequate and realistic plan of action, both in terms of timelines and of organisation, to tackle the colossal challenge facing the institutions. The intention, for example, of dismantling the Rignano Ghetto in the month of July, with the season already under way, without having set up any alternative living quarters, demonstrates this state of being, and, as may be imagined, did not reach any practical outcome.

If, then, in some regions like Puglia and Basilicata, local institutions have tried to tackle the problem, albeit with all the aforementioned limitations, the Gioia Tauro Plain represents what appears to be an unchangeable situation. Here, season after season, a free zone appears to have coalesced where the rights of immigrant workers are suspended, and the fragile and backward nature of the citrus industry has to fight against the prices imposed by major national and international orange juice businesses. This is the context wherein the globalised economy and the unresolved issues of Italy's south produce their most rotten fruit. Before even the establishment of adequate reception measures for seasonal workers, there appears to be a lack of a clear and coherent regional policy capable of rebooting the agricultural sector. Yet

in an area where the absence of regional and national institutions is clearly evident, Medu's team was able to note some exemplary reception programmes established by local civil society. For example, in the town of Drosi, in the heart of the Gioia Tauro Plain, a project launched in 2010 allows for the housing every season of over 100 immigrant labourers within vacant houses in the town in exchange for a nominal rent fee. In this regard it is worth stressing how housing camps – set up, in most cases, in isolated areas without transport links, with high costs and frequently inadequate services – cannot represent an answer to the housing problem of seasonal workers. By contrast, there appears to be a need for housing policies that do not transform the workers in “refugees”, favouring integration with migrants within the area through the rehabilitation of urban spaces.

As mentioned in the opening of this chapter, the problem of exploitation of migrant labourers in agriculture, especially seasonal labourers, represents an extremely complex issue that goes well beyond the socio-sanitary remit within which Medici per i Diritti Umani's mission took place. However, on the one hand the medical-humanitarian actions undertaken have by necessity required an overall analysis of the operating areas, while on the other the data and accounts collected from operating in the field permit us to formulate some considerations and proposals.

### **An Integrated Strategy Against the Exploitation System**

As far as concerns a comprehensive approach to the phenomenon, the effort made by Puglia and Basilicata's regional governments in trying to tackle all interconnected aspects of the problem – work, reception, medical aid, transport, legal aid, fighting illegal recruitment and supporting ethical businesses – is heading in the right direction and must certainly be continued and reinforced. The creation of regional Task Forces with these specific objectives can be useful not only in areas that see a large influx of seasonal workers, but also in places where the presence of agricultural labourers is largely permanent such as the Agro Pontino and the Sele Plain.

## **A Medium and Long Term Planning Programme beyond Emergencies**

It is necessary for such initiatives to not be temporary in nature but to be implemented as medium and long term programmes, as it is evident that the depth of the problems that need to be tackled – from a social, economic and cultural point of view – cannot be reasonably be solved over the course of a few seasons. To this end, it is necessary for yearly action plans to be drafted following realistic timelines and objectives, or run the risk of failing outright and, even worse, of delegitimising the whole approach, making it appear fanciful or impossible. The experiences of the past year in the Puglia region have been a textbook case of this.

## **Laws and Investment for Revamping Agriculture**

The re-launch and modernisation of productive and organisational processes within agriculture are essential preconditions to snap the chain of exploitation and to ensure dignified and sustainable working conditions, especially in particularly backward areas such as the Gioia Tauro plain. In this regard a strong showing of political will is obviously necessary to sustain a fair agricultural development through financial and legislative measures at both a regional and national level. Just within the field of citrus cultivation, several measures are already on the table, including: the increase from 12% to 20% of juice in orangeades (just introduced), the compulsory indication of origin upon the label, the law on traditional citrus plantations and financial incentives for re-conversions.

## **A Culture of Legality**

Beyond the doubtful effectiveness of some judicial tools in repressing workplace exploitation (the so-called *Rosarno Law* is analysed in this report in the chapter by Asgi and Ltpd), in order for these to not remain *paper measures only*, it is essential that national and regional institutions ensure effective and detailed inspections within the scope of a committed promotion of a *culture of legality*.

## **A Minimum Standard of Reception for Seasonal Workers, Starting Today**

Despite the fact that the phenomenon of workplace exploitation of immigrants in agriculture involves old and new problems of varying complexity, it is necessary to

face the question simultaneously on multiple levels, given that the most deeply rooted issues cannot be resolved in a short period. In particular, it is unacceptable that the standards of reception of seasonal workers in Calabria, Basilicata and Puglia can continue to display the disastrous living and hygiene situations documented in this report. In this regard, it is essential that the regional and national institutions take full responsibility in ensuring a minimum standard of reception.

## **Living Situations Other than Makeshift Camps**

In establishing reception structures in areas experiencing a large influx of seasonal workers it is essential to follow an adequate timeline (it is unacceptable that reception centres only open at the end of the season!), and sustainable logistical solutions in terms of access to places of employment, capable of guaranteeing acceptable freedom and living conditions for workers. Both with regards to permanent workers and seasonal labourers, rather than resorting to solutions that increase their physical and social isolation such as camps or reception villages in far-away locations, it would seem sensible to invest in projects that result in a widespread reception throughout the area and integration within the local communities, as shown by the positive example of Drosi in Calabria.

## **Guarantee Access to Healthcare within the National Health Service**

As far as regards medical assistance for seasonal workers, Medici per I Diritti Umani believes it essential to reinforce the public services destined for migrants and already present in the relevant areas, making them available, in addition to STP card-carrying migrants, to those workers with a valid residency permit but registered with the national health service elsewhere. Local health services must make their clinics capable of operating to a dignified standard and with adequate resources. In the periods of greater influx of workers it would be also extremely sensible to deploy mobile units for the purposes of first aid, monitoring and the promotion of healthy workplaces. To this end the contribution of civil society organisations may be particularly precious, their potential role being to support, but *never to replace*, the care of patients which remains the primary responsibility of the national health service.



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