

Press release

Fighting inequalities? Work first, here and there

Three protagonists of AVSI's projects in Africa, Middle East and Italy at the European Development Days 2019

Conference center Tour & Taxis | Brussels | 18 – 19 June 2019

AVSI, one of the few NGOs attending the most important European forum dedicated to international cooperation, the EDD, will present three projects at its thematic stand. Three of the protagonists of these initiatives, coming from Africa, Middle East and Italy will illustrate how the opportunity to work has concretely changed their lives.

Milan, June 12th 2019 – «The real problem is the lack of work for those who arrive as migrants, but also for natives that perceive foreigners as a threat». Precious Mbounu, 24 years old, has a clear idea. She is a refugee of Nigerian origin that, thanks to the project of professional training “Cook to restart”, is now working for the food chain Panino Giusto, in the city center of Milan.

Precious Mbounu from Italy, Coulibaly Kadidia from Ivory Coast and Samar Khalil from Lebanon will participate with AVSI to the [European Development Days](#) (EDD, 18 - 19 June 2019, Brussels), the European Commission's forum dedicated to cooperation. They will explain, starting from their personal experiences, how work brings development and reduces inequalities.

This year's edition of the EDD is focused on the theme “**Addressing inequalities: building a world which leaves no one behind**”. Each year more than 9000 people and 1200 organizations from over 140 countries participate at the EDD and this year AVSI is among the few NGOs to represent Italy with a thematic stand.

At AVSI stand ([stand n.2, EDD global village](#)) **Precious Mbounu** and Marcello Rola, HR manager of Panino Giusto, will present to visitors the project “**Cook to restart**” - realized with the food chain Panino Giusto - that gives refugees and asylum seekers the chance to enter the food service industry in Milan. The initiative has been awarded in 2018 by the organization Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Italy for the results achieved both in professional training and job placement thanks to the creation of a network with 20 of the biggest Italian food and beverage brands. Like Precious, 48 migrants had the opportunity to do an internship and more than a half were hired.

Coulibaly Kadidia, another testimony of AVSI, is one of the 5,000 artisans supported with the project “**An artisan. A future to build**” realized in Ivory Coast thanks to EU funds. **Coulibaly Kadidia** is the president of the cooperative of potters in the city of Katiola (200 km North of the capital Yamoussoukro), where pottery is an art traditionally heritage of the women of the Mangôrô ethnicity. Thanks to the project, her working conditions and those of 320 artisans of the seven associations that are part of the cooperative have improved. AVSI has involved them in training courses for the management of business activities and supported them in the startup of a saving& loans group and in the formalization of their business (overall from 2015 to 2017 the project has allowed the registration of 50,000 artisans to the Ivorian Chamber of Commerce). «The most significant result – explains **Bamba Lassiné**, project manager for AVSI Ivory Coast – was giving artisans the tools to improve their living conditions, becoming a model for other cities and contexts». At AVSI stand, Coulibaly Kadidia will involve the guests in the handcrafting of pottery, sharing with them this all-feminine art and her story.

Tuesday 18th June (3.15pm) **Samar Khalil**, project coordinator for AVSI Lebanon, will participate in the session “[Cooperatives and peace: A case study approach](#)”. During her intervention, she will present the results achieved thanks to the project “Aamal” realized in partnership with LAMA Development and Cooperation Agency, Oxfam Italy and Legacoop, to promote the startup of cooperatives and the entrance on the labour market of vulnerable people in Lebanon and Jordan, with a focus on Syrian and Palestinian refugees.

AVSI Foundation is a non-profit organization recognized as such by the United Nations and the European Union. Created in 1972, AVSI carries out over 169 development projects in 31 countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, Middle East and Asia. AVSI’s staff, composed of more than 1,500 people, works in the main sectors of cooperation, reaching 2,6 million direct beneficiaries.

For more information: AVSI avsi.org/edd19

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