

# Factsheet of Good Practice

Study Visit in Italy for European Shapers, in Milano and Bologna.



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## **SHAPE**

SHaring Actions for Participation  
and Empowerment of migrant  
communities and Las

# “Study Visit in Italy for European Shapers, in Milano and Bologna”

Educational trip for European activists with the aim of developing skills, knowledge and reflections, as well as exchanges of good practices to bring back to their own territories.

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## Background information

<b>Title</b>	Study Visit in Italy for European Shapers, in Milano and Bologna
<b>Geographic area</b>	Italy
<b>City</b>	Milano, Bologna
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## Summary

The Study Visit in Italy was aimed exclusively at participants in the Academies of the countries involved in the project to give them the opportunity to become European Shapers, finding suggestions and comparisons from the examples of Milan and Bologna.

In both cases, the group had the possibility to discuss the **spaces for activism** of citizens with a migratory background, existing **good practices** and mechanisms that make real participation in local decision-making processes possible, through institutional visits, moments of meeting with political figures and other local organizations and spaces for debate.

## Goals

The general objective of the study visit was to broaden the reflections and debate on the theme of **activism**, but at the same time explore **Italian good practices** in terms of integration of migrant citizens.

In particular, the Study Visit sought to raise awareness of the services and opportunities proposed by both Municipalities, recognizing their strengths and difficulties, but above all their replicability in other contexts, through institutional visits and meetings with the delegates.

At the same time, the theme of associations and civil society initiatives was explored, which experiences and realities can involve citizens with a migratory background, guaranteeing the protagonism of the new generations.

Lastly, exchanges were created between the participants themselves, reporting each person's experiences but above all the prospects for growth and improvement, also starting from the experience of the Shape project, with respect to their own way of being an activist.

## How does it work?

The Italian Study Visit included activities for three days.

The first two days were mainly dedicated to **institutional visits** because they were on weekdays and therefore useful for finding the offices open.

The first day was therefore a visit to the Municipality of Milan, we got to know the spaces of the City Council and visited three different buildings in which we met the Councilors and Councillors. With each of them we looked for a space for discussion in which to share good practices and difficulties and analysis of the integration system of migrant communities.

On the second day we moved towards Bologna: in parallel with the visit to Milan, we saw the municipal spaces, the Council Chamber and the Councilors who introduced us to the forms of integration in Bologna. We also met one of the members of the "Diversity Team" created by the municipality of Bologna, for which some citizens ran and were elected, representing the minority population. We learned about the reality and activities of the Zonarelli Intercultural Centre, as an example of a municipal space made available to entities active in the social and intercultural sphere, as well as visited the Urban Innovation Foundation, to read the city in relation to social changes.

On the third day, back in Milan, we explored the **theme of living and the spaces of the city**. We started from the Via Padova area, where we met a researcher who introduced us to the theme

and debate that characterizes the area, as well as a member of the Living in Via Padova Committee, who reported his experience of activism and the motivations which pushed civil society in the area to mobilize. The day continued accompanied by ACRA who created a special [Migrantour](#) to get to know new spaces in the city, hardly touristy, but of high historical and cultural value, also able to tell how foreign communities were able to be part of the changes of the city.

## Results

The Study Visit made it possible to achieve various objectives.

First, it put the participating Shapers in a position to **understand the hidden dynamics** of well-known cities such as Milan and Bologna with respect to the systems of integration of citizens with a migratory background, even in contradiction with the image portrayed by the media. Furthermore, it allowed a clear comparison between the functioning of two Municipalities of the same nation, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each.

In addition to institutional activities, the study visit maintained the focus on the **theme of activism**, therefore on the **spaces of activation and participation** that each of us can carry forward. It was particularly useful to have the opportunity to get to know various local organizations to create an exchange of suggestions from which to create new initiatives in the respective territories.

For example, in Bologna we saw the Zonarelli Intercultural Center, an example of public space capable of hosting the initiatives of many intercultural organizations and the Urban Innovation Foundation, capable of describing the city starting from its transformations.

In Milan we met ACRA which carries out the Migrantours, as an innovative way of making the city known, but also Giacomo Pozzi, researcher, who collaborates with the "Living in Via Padova" Committee, an organization created to protect spaces and inhabitants of an area considered marginal which is becoming the object of strong gentrification processes.

## Evaluation

The fact of including both cities was for us a coherent choice with respect to the path followed and particularly interesting for the participants who, attracted by the tourist "fame" of Milan and Bologna, had the opportunity to delve deeper into their dynamics. However, the limited time available made the visits very close and quick, with the focus on a single city or with more time available it is certainly easier to delve more fully.

## Who benefits?

The initiative was aimed mainly at **Italian Shapers and those from other countries** involved in the project. The group was mainly made up of activists, some already particularly active in the relevant organizations, others mostly volunteers or interested, of different ages and educational backgrounds.

At the same time, the project also benefited the **members of the institutions** involved and the civil society organizations who were able to discuss their own initiatives and the initiatives carried out in other European states.

## Source of funding and resources used

The SHAPE Academies for citizens were funded by the European Union's AMIF (Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund) dedicated to the SHAPE Project.

## Replicability

The activity was similarly proposed in Germany and Portugal, within the Shape project. In this sense it is to be considered widely replicable, it can take into consideration different focuses and develop on a single theme or on a single city.

At the same time, it is important to take into consideration the **level of accessibility** of a city and its means of transport in order to make the proposed activities accessible to a varied audience.

## Insights gained

The study visits have proven to be a good practice because, in their design, a choice was made to balance the time dedicated to reflections on civic engagement with that spent exploring the cities and relationships among participants. The decision to alternate activities allowed each proposal to have the time to settle and be processed by each individual, enabling them to grasp its meaning.