

Red Global-ANSWER.
Trabajo Social Global y
Movilidad Humana

International Collaboration in Palermo: Experts Work Towards Enhancing Migrant Inclusion in Europe

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The Sicilian city of Palermo has become the hub for discussions this week as fifty researchers and



professionals from the fields of Social Work and Human Mobility converge from Granada, Madrid, Rome, Florence, Lund, and Växjö to participate in the Global-ANSWER project. This international research and collaboration network, funded by the European Union, aims to identify best practices and enhance the inclusion of migrant populations.

After two years of collaborative work and the exchange of experiences among professionals from the fifteen entities, including universities, municipalities, and non-profit organizations, participating in the project, the II Coordination Meeting took place this week at the midpoint of the initiative. The intensive week-long program allowed for a comprehensive assessment of the initiative and the establishment of a roadmap for the next two years.

Palermo's Mayor, Roberto Lagalla, concluded the week by emphasizing the city's intercultural profile and that of the entire region of Sicily as an example of an "intercultural and welcoming territory for migrant populations." He underscored the importance of a transversal and international project like Global-ANSWER in addressing the "complex" challenge faced by all of Europe, especially in the current historical transition. Lagalla advocated for collaboration, generosity, and solidarity among countries, including from a political perspective. He emphasized the need for initiatives capable of translating the efforts of researchers and social workers into practical measures for improving immigrant reception, public services, and ultimately, their inclusion and integration as European citizens with full rights.

From this perspective, the project's principal investigator, Belén Morata, highlighted that the ultimate goal is to "identify best practices" locally to guide Europe in improving social policies for the comprehensive and effective care and integration of migrant populations, with the utmost respect for human rights.

During the opening of the meeting, University of Palermo Rector Massimo Midiri strongly defended the connection between universities and the local community, emphasizing the current situation in Italy and Europe regarding the management of human mobility and the opportunities this phenomenon brings.

The activities of the II Global-ANSWER Meeting began with an exploration of the intersection between Art and Migrations, featuring presentations of creations in painting, sculpture, poetry, and music by Fernando Jiménez, María Álvarez, Norma Montesino, and Roberto Buscetta. The meeting also included the presentation of major achievements thus far, such as the unveiling of a "Guide on conceptual and methodological issues in social work research in the field of human mobility" by María Teresa Gijón and Gaetano Gucciardo.

The meeting confirmed the successful achievement of the objectives outlined in the project titled "Global social work and human mobility: comparative studies on local governance and best practices in social work in the Euro-Mediterranean region (2022-2025)." The project, with a funding of 1.5 million euros under the EU Horizon 2020 program, has already produced significant results from the first three case studies initiated. Morata emphasized the importance of these results, while outlining the design of three additional studies to be completed in the next two years.

To achieve this goal, project manager Paula Rodríguez highlighted the completion of over 120 research stays by participating researchers and professionals collaborating across Spain, Italy, and Sweden. She also previewed the work activities focusing on 2024 and the milestones that will shape the second stage of development until 2025.

The Palermo meeting, coordinated this time by researcher Roberta T. Di Rosa of UNIPA, took place exactly one year after the balance day held in Madrid in January 2023 under the coordination of the Pontifical University of Comillas, another central institution in Global-ANSWER.

In addition to the participating universities (Granada, Comillas, Florence, Palermo, Lund, and Linnaeus), specialists from the field of social work from local public administrations (Granada and Palermo municipalities) and third-sector entities (Red Acoge, Oxfam-Italy, FNAS Rome, and Agape Sto. Tomás) are also actively involved.