

Rebuilding the Edge

The Ferrovia dei Parchi

Project Team

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Scale

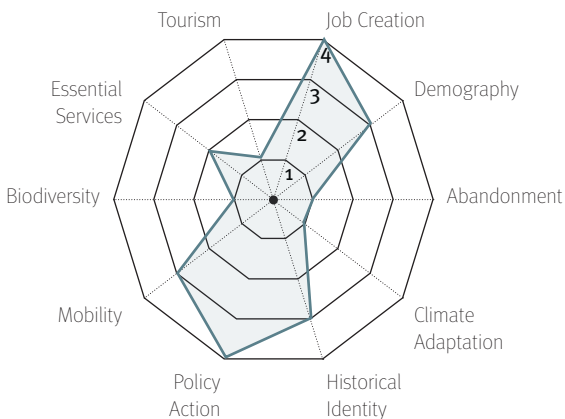
Town

Location

Castel del Giudice



Connecting People and Towns



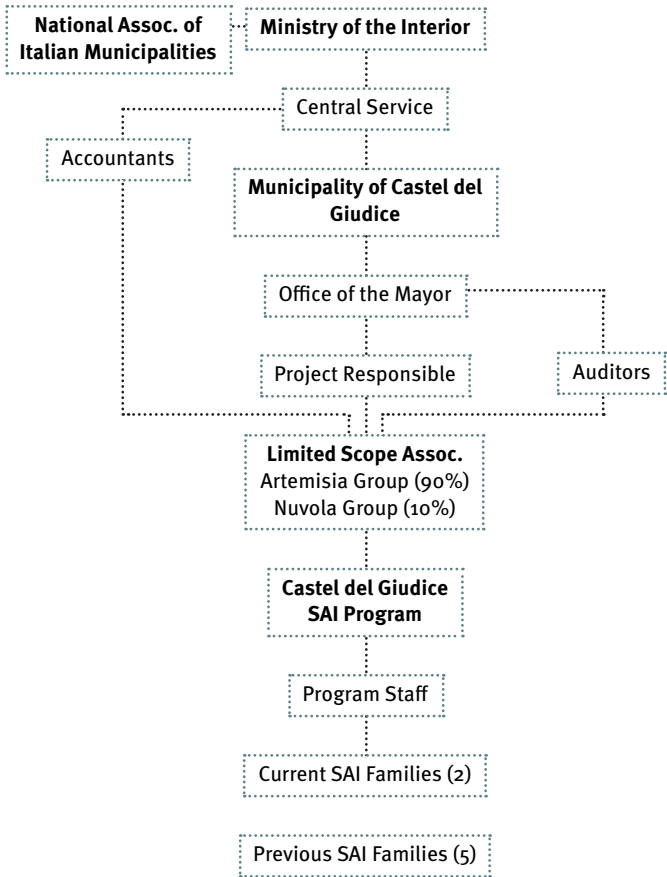
- 1 Not addressed
- 2 Somewhat addressed
- 3 Minor focus area
- 4 Major focus area

Italy has the third-largest population of migrants in Europe, with about 60,000 migrants arriving in 2021. The group examined the criticalities and potentials of the migrant crisis through a case study of the Sistema Accoglienza Integrazione (SAI) migrant integration program in Castel del Giudice (CDG), a peripheral town of 320 residents that has experienced depopulation for decades. The program provides migrant families with housing, education, language learning, and employment opportunities, up to a capacity of 15 migrants at a time given CDG's size. This has the goals of socially and economically integrating the families into the community and revitalizing the town itself.

The group's work was divided into 2 parts: 1) documentation of the migrants' stories, and 2) proposals for replicating the integration program in other towns. Interviews were conducted with SAI program staff, current and former families in the program. Migrants' journeys from their home countries to CDG were documented along with challenges they faced within the town. The output of this project was a list of elements that are necessary for migrant integration program success in order to promote the expansion of the program to other nearby towns.

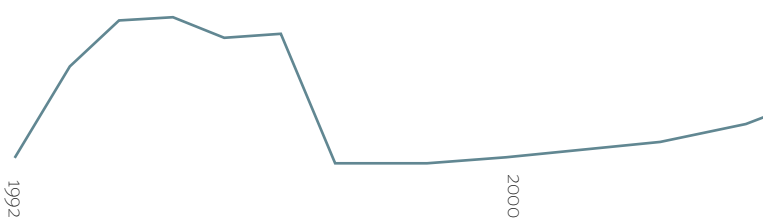
Castel del Giudice SAI Program Org. Chart

The Sistema Accoglienza Integrazione (SAI) is a program run by the Italian Ministry of the Interior to place migrants in towns. If they opt in, municipalities can choose to accept either families or individuals. The Castel del Giudice SAI program, which started in 2017, is very comprehensive and includes language learning, therapy sessions, and a cultural integrator for migrants. Based on program size, Castel del Giudice is awarded 240,000 euros annually to run the program, 40% of which goes to salaries for local residents.

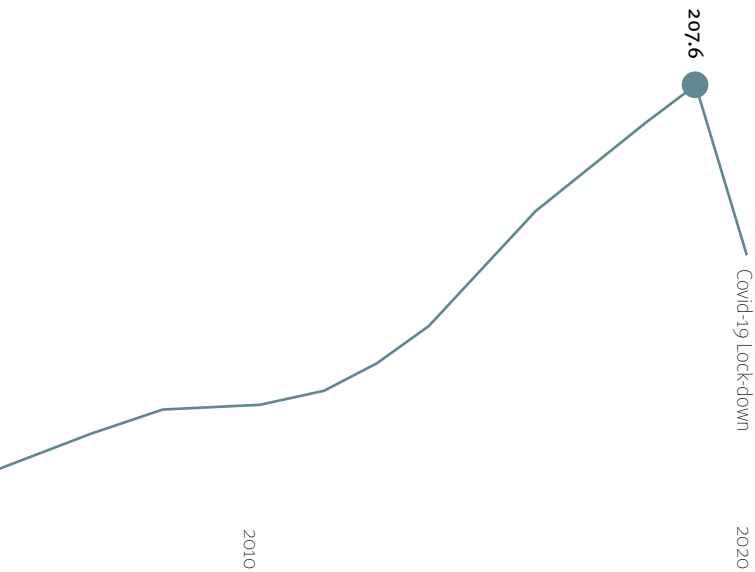


Castel del Giudice Program Staff

Role	Description
Program Coordinator	Oversees daily program activities and management
Legal Operator and Responsible	Oversees program and interfaces with government
Cultural Mediator	Bridges gap between migrant cultures
Integration Operator	Manages welcoming and support network
Psychologist	Focuses on mental wellbeing
Language Teacher	Teach Italian language
Social Assistant	Helps with social integration in town
Educator	Assists with children's tutoring and schooling beyond the classroom



Number of Refugees in Italy between 1992 and 2020 (in thousands)

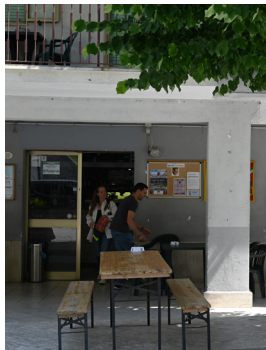


Interviewing Program Participants

Speaking with both program coordinators and program participants themselves—from Afghanistan, Nigeria, Ghana, and Venezuela—shed insight on the SAI operation and experience. The team returned a couple times for follow up clarifications.



Some previous SAI participants shared how they found a stable life in Castel del Giudice with their families, and worked nearby.





Key places that the team visited include the local bar, where all the interviews were conducted, the municipality's office and stops for key mobility services



The team was able to see one of the family's house from outside. Housing is provided by the program and must be up to specific regulations in order to house migrants.







The group witnessed how the town has many complimentary initiatives in the works including a co-working space, a green energy cooperative, and access to innovative machinery for local agricultural enterprises



Documenting Migrant Stories





Migrants in the SAI program from Castel del Giudice came from various countries across the world. From their home countries, each family followed a different journey before coming to Italy. These journeys were approximated on an interactive geo-located map by the group based on conversations with each family. The interactive map allows the viewer to see the family's journey and read each of their stories simultaneously



Language is even more vital and
necessary than food

We feel that all the people in the town
are the same as our family

[In Castel del Giudice] you don't feel
like there is racism. You feel part
of one big family.

—SAI Program Participants

Documented Family Profiles



Family Origin



Family Members



Time in Program

Venezuela

Mother
Father
Two young sons

1 year (current)

Afghanistan

Mother
Father
8-year-old daughter
4-year-old son
Two nephews

6 months (current)

Ghana

Mother
Father
Four children
(three born in Italy)

In program 4 years ago

Nigeria

Mother
Father
Three children

In program 4 years ago

Nigeria

Mother
Father
Children

In program 5 years ago



Occupation



Plans

Nurse (mother)
Radiologist (father)

In Italy for 3 years on a 5 year EU residence permit. Plan to renew permit to stay in town. Working to get their works certifications transferred to practice professions in Italy

Journalist (father)
Journalist (nephew)
Doctor (nephew)

Forced to leave country after Taliban takeover. Continuing their online newspaper from Italy. Trying to learn Italian to continue former occupations. A nephew hopes to go back to school

Electrician (father)
Currently employee at local manufacturing company

In Italy for 7 years. Plans to stay long term due to education and job opportunities, as well as the small town environment

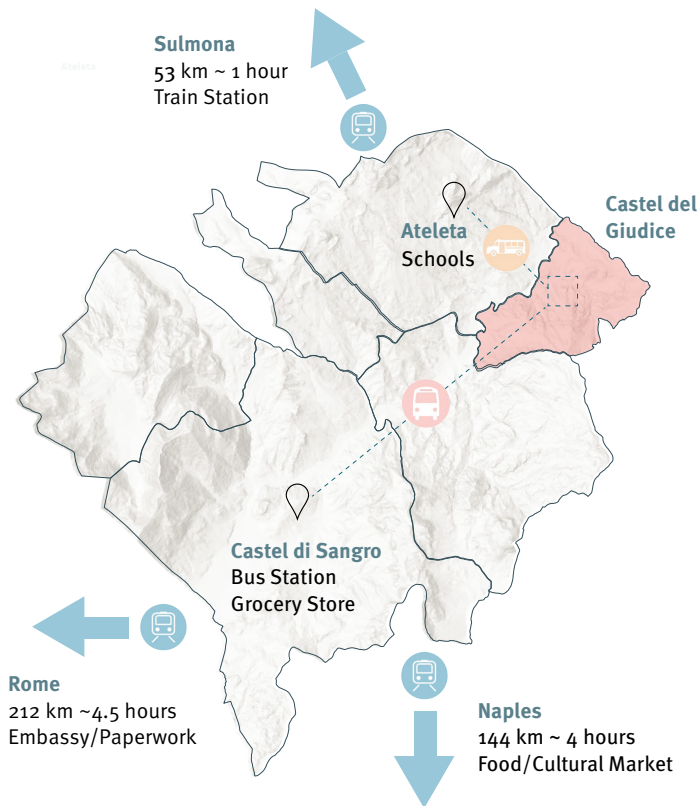
Farmer (father)
Part-time, currently employee at Melise apple farm

Plan to get Italian citizenship and eventually settle down with family in town

Driver (father)
Currently employee at manufacturing company

Will stay in Castel del Giudice with family. Have a stable occupation and housing in town

Analyzing Migrant Challenges



Regional Map

What opportunities exist to address the issue of abandonment of small towns and the migration crisis in Italy through a synergistic approach?

Transportation Challenges

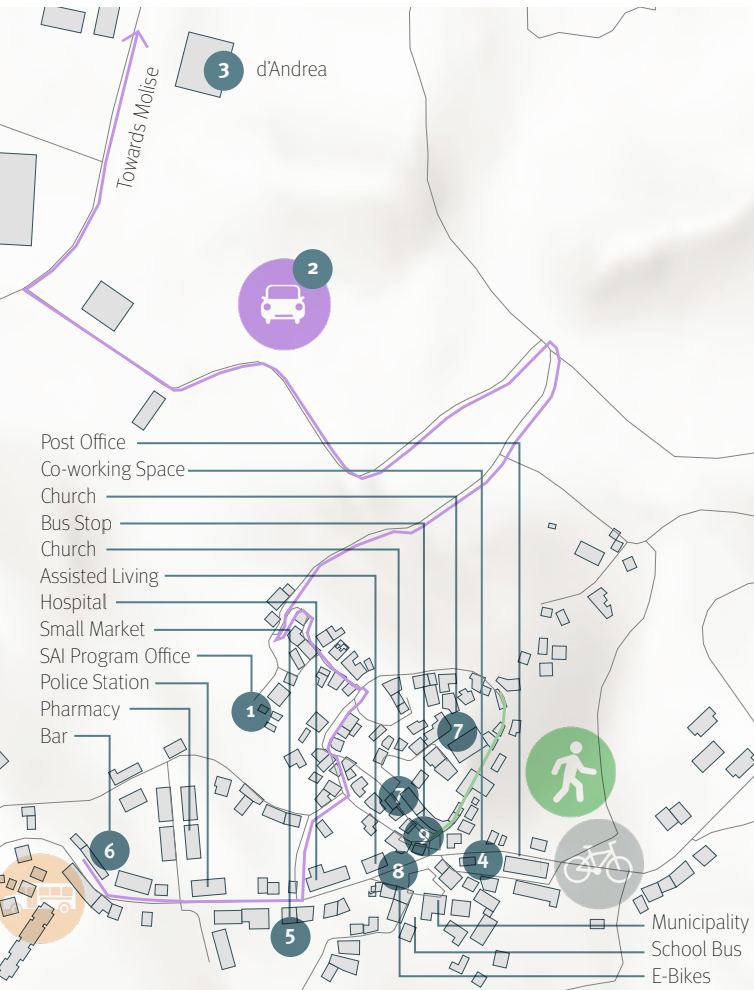
While there are several services within Castel del Giudice, the town is rather small and migrants often have to go to other towns and cities, which presents mobility challenges. Infrequent bus options make it difficult to reach services such as embassies, ethnic food stores, and schools without a car. Although in order to get a car, migrants must pass the written Italian driver's test which is challenging for non native speakers. Providing regular, reliable transportation key to create a stable life more migrants in rural Italian towns, and an important factor in their decisions whether they decide to stay or not.



Mode	Function
School Bus	Takes the 40 children in Castel del Giudice to a nearby school in Ateleta. The bus picks them up from plaza
Car	80% of residents use cars to travel within the municipality and nearby towns. Residents without cars must get rides from others
E-Bike	There is an e-bike station in the plaza. However, it is rarely used since there aren't docks at other daily commute locations and requires paying a fee
Train	Required to travel to larger cities such as Rome and Naples. The nearest train station is in Sulmona, which is about an hour away by car
Bus	Only once a day, buses travel to Castel di Sangro, Isernia, and Agnone in the morning. They return at 2 pm, which is challenging if you commute to work
Walking	The easiest way to move around the town. It can be dangerous during winter with snow and ice

Daily Activity Within Castel del Giudice





Spatializing Challenges to Daily Activity

Category	Service	Challenge
Language	1 SAI Program Office	Migrants receive Italian lessons; language barriers make it difficult to socialize
	2 Driving	Difficult for non-native speakers to pass license test
Work	3 Place of Work (d'Andrea)	Company gives employees groceries; employees visit certain stores (mostly outside town)
	4 Co-working Space	Yet to be opened professional space with monitors, and desks along with coffee
Culture	5 Grocery Store	Local stores do not always stock certain items; migrants travel to larger cities to find these items
	6 Local Bar	Acts as town social center. However, limited opportunities to meet people of other backgrounds
	7 Church	Non-Catholics don't have a place to go
Transportation	8 E-Bike Stations	E-bikes not used due to cost and maintenance; not used during winter and on interstates
	9 Bus Stop	Service to nearby towns is infrequent; migrants on getting rides from others
	10 Castel di Sangro Train Station	Regular service halted 10 years ago; only occasional railway service runs on certain winter days

Opportunity

g times a week. Language
ize with the community

More frequent Italian lessons would facilitate easier
migrant integration

to pass written Italian driver's

ery cards only redeemable at
stel del Giudice)

Exploring alternative payment methods may improve
ease of use for town residents

pace equipped with Wi-Fi,
day care services

Enhances technological accessibility, enable remote work,
and serve as a community social hub

c cultural foods. Families must
e items

ever, Migrants have few
their own culture

e of worship in the town

d lack of other docks. Difficult to
ate roads. Not enough stations

uent. Without bus, residents rely

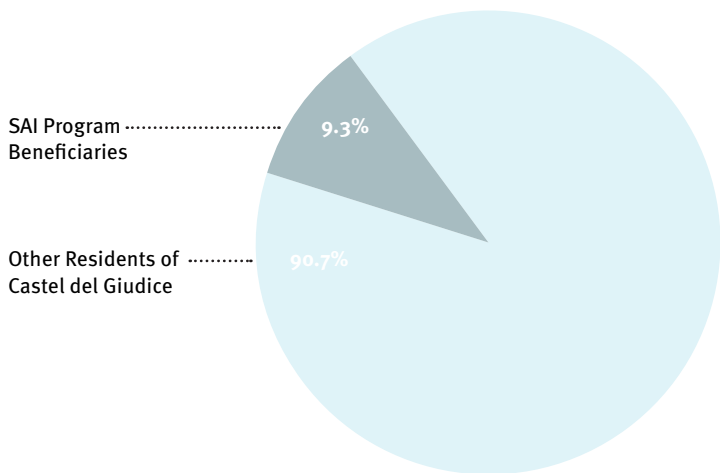
Bus service expansion would benefit residents without
cars and promote environmental sustainability

ago but remains a historical
weekends.

The proposed reopening of the station with regular routes
could simplify migrants' transportation to larger cities

Assessing Who Benefits

The arrival of SAI migrants has led to the repopulation and further diversification of the community. The community offers a safe and comfortable space to live in for the migrants and their young children during the difficult integration process. Migrants also utilize services within the town, including the bar and local shops, which means that funds used for their stipends contribute to the local economy. The SAI programs not only benefits the local communities but also play a role in the integration of migrants to the larger Italian economy and allowing them to become functional and accepted members of greater society.



Of 320 residents in Castel del Giudice, approximately 30 are migrants that benefit or have benefited from the program in the past

Benefits and Challenges for Program Across Scales



Community Businesses

Castel del Giudice

Relevant Entities

Melise
D'Andrea
R.S.A Hospital

Transit Network
Property Owners
Local Commerce
Residents

Services

Food
Medical care
Engineering

Housing
Transportation
Business

Benefits to Entity

Needed trained workers

Rent for property
New transit users
Customers

Benefits to Migrants

Stable, nearby
occupation
Income

Basic services
Amenities
Feeling of community

Challenges

Language barriers
along with required
Italian certifications
make advancement
difficult despite
previous experience.

Limited housing that
meets regulations



Neighboring Towns

Major Cities

Castel di Sangro
Ateleta
Sulmona
Isernia

Naples
Rome

Schooling
Grocery store
Transit access
Hospitals

Embassy
Ethnic food markets

Increase in visitors
Spread of new cultures

Unidentified

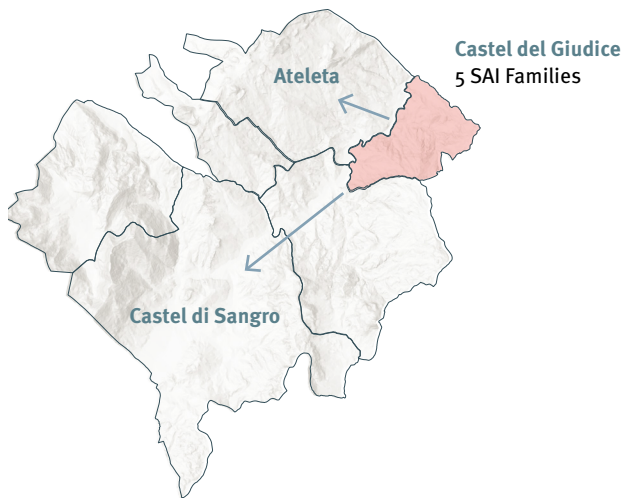
Local network of
services the town lacks

Processing of migration
documentation
Food from home
country

Bus availability to
these towns is limited
to once per day with
inconvenient hours for
workers

Difficult to reach since
it requires long train
and bus rides for those
without a car.

Outlining a Model for Replication



Starting Local

Analysis of the Castel di Giudice SAI program uncovered a set of characteristics including an already diverse group of residents, a mayor supportive of innovative projects in the small town, and buy in from local residents that made it possible. To replicate this program, starting in neighboring towns will help combat fear of unknown when it comes to starting a SAI program in a another town.

A Handbook for Mayors

Why and how to start a migrant integration program in your town

Based on insights from Castel del Giudice



Key Conditions for Program Success

Category	Element
Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Regular Italian language course with the goal of helping migrants attain B1 level proficiency required for citizenship and driver's license2. Nearby public schools for children
Economy	<ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Available jobs for migrants in local businesses or in nearby towns
Transportation	<ol style="list-style-type: none">4. Regular transit for access to nearby towns and services necessary on a regular basis5. Program provided transit in case of emergency
Physical Space	<ol style="list-style-type: none">6. Family housing that meets program standards7. Office for SAI meetings and program base
Human Capital	<ol style="list-style-type: none">8. Dedicated professionals available to fill all program staff roles9. Psychologist trained in culturally relevant care10. Diverse town population willing to accept others into community



Moving Forward



1. Formalize SAI manual for mayors based on Castel del Giudice model
2. Present manual to other mayors to understand potential benefits and challenges for their towns
3. Quantify how many migrants can be helped in each town and measure what the social and economic impact of scaling could be



Municipalities With SAI Programs Active in 2020

Source: Rapporto SIPROIMI-SAI 2020

Expanding SAI Programs Across Italy

The map of existing SAI programs in Italy suggests that migrant integration is an issue that may regions are tackling. Both Sicily and Tuscany have significant program coverage. However, this is less so in the regions of Abruzzo and Molise, where Castel del Giudice and the Ferrovia dei Parchi are located. A broader study might examine programs across Italy to understand the potential opportunities and challenges that towns faces when it comes to migrant integration.

Understanding Castel del Giudice's successes and challenges with the SAI migrant program has highlighted a comprehensive approach as to how small towns can accommodate and integrate migrants. Providing migrants with autonomy over their own lives while also allowing them to find a stable life within small towns breathes new life into these communities. Migrants contribute to the workforce, diversity, and commercial ecosystem of the town while also growing their families to create a the future generation of youth in small Italian towns.

Garnering greater support for such programs requires mayors to see the benefits of starting a migrant integration program for their own town. It also requires the right team of local residents interested in running the program, as well as assistance to them through some of the challenges that come with starting the program.

Workshop

Liminal, Associazione di Promozione Sociale

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