



# PROTECTED PLACES, SAFE SPACES

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## GENERAL CONTEXT

In Rome, **INTERSOS** has been operational since 2011, with the opening of the A28 night center, which over the years has been one of the main safe shelters for UASC in Italy. This project later evolved, transforming in 2017 into the new INTERSOS24 center in Torre Spaccata. The center has developed on various project levels, featuring both **nighttime and daytime services** for the reception of minors and women in conditions of vulnerability, who have exited institutional pathways and/or are exposed to gender-based violence (GBV) and labor and/or sexual exploitation. Over the years, psychosocial activities with vulnerable populations and an **outpatient clinic** have also been developed. Since 2018, the clinic has provided primary care, socio-health orientation services, and mental health support. Since 2016, a **mobile outreach team** has been active in Rome, in partnership with UNICEF, conducting monitoring activities in the places of greatest interest for the vulnerable migrant population and providing information and orientation to socio-health services. Indeed, Rome counts about 24,000 homeless individuals and an unquantifiable number of people without regular residence permits.

In Rome, INTERSOS is also active in the neighbourhood of Ottavia. In 2019, **CENTRO OTTAVIA** was established, a hub dedicated to providing psychosocial support, orientation, and training to the migrant population. Every action carried out by INTERSOS has as its premise the principle of always **supporting the Health System and the competent Local Authorities**; for this reason, every intervention is carried out in close collaboration with these authorities, according to the principle of horizontal subsidiarity.



# PROTECTION AND HEALTH INTERVENTIONS

## METHODOLOGY

INTERSOS's intervention methodology in Rome is based on a **community-based approach** aimed at fostering individual, organizational, and social empowerment. This approach involves offering **low-threshold services** that address the needs of the local population. By adopting a **person-centered approach**, INTERSOS ensures comprehensive support to the beneficiaries.

The community-based approach entails maintaining constant engagement with the local population to understand their needs and develop solutions together.

Thus, the population is involved in recognizing issues and designing solutions. Additionally, engaging with local stakeholders is crucial to understanding the unique context of each area and tailoring INTERSOS's services accordingly. The aim is not to replace public services but to act as a **privileged observer** of the population's needs and provide valuable information to institutions to enhance policies and services.

The constant dialogue with institutions aims to improve access to and utilization of services for marginalized individuals. These are referred to as "low-threshold services," comprising both static and mobile facilities accessible voluntarily, provided without the need for documentary or administrative prerequisites. They also offer **intercultural mediation** and translation services to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers.

INTERSOS adopts a **transcultural approach**, recognizing each person's uniqueness and cultural background. Through a person-centered approach, the aim is to create an inclusive environment where the rights and dignity of every person are respected. Every individual is entitled to support and assistance, with due acknowledgment of their diversity, uniqueness, strengths, resources, and needs. Moreover, supported individuals are encouraged to actively participate, according to their age, in decision-making processes that concern them.

## NETWORK

INTERSOS is a partner of **UNICEF** and **UNHCR** (United Nations agencies). Since March 2021, INTERSOS has intensified its networking efforts with civil society organizations, **Anti-Violence Centers**, **Centers for Adult Education (CPIA)**, **Legal Services**, informal groups, and other local entities, especially in the neighborhoods of Torre Spaccata and Ottavia. The aim is to establish a network for sharing information, best practices, and intervention methods concerning the target population. Collaborations with local stakeholders facilitate the creation of an inclusive, accessible service that is ready to respond to the community's needs in synergy with existing services.

Since 2021, concerning GBV, INTERSOS has established formal collaborations with **Differenza Donna**, **Telefono Rosa**, and **BeFree**. Moreover, INTERSOS is actively involved in Rome's networks focusing on minors, health, social inclusion, education, and integration.

We are partners with **ASL RM1** and **RM2** (Local Health Authorities) for referrals, guidance, and support of the most vulnerable population. Moreover, INTERSOS constantly collaborates with the Social Services of Municipalities V-VI-VII-XIV to share practices and procedures and facilitate communication between services for the protection of the most vulnerable users.

For school activities, INTERSOS LAB and INTERSOS24 are in a collaboration with **Rete Scuola Migranti** and actively collaborate with **CPIAs**. Furthermore, INTER-SOS LAB has signed a Scientific Framework Agreement with the **University for Foreigners of Perugia**, focused on developing a training course for Italian L2 teachers.

Lastly, the Centers actively engage with:

- **socio-psychological-health services** in the municipalities of interest, primarily with counseling services, social secretariats, Mental Health and Rehabilitation Protection in developmental age (TSMREE);
- **SAI Centers** and **reception centers** within the territory;
- **Educational institutions**;
- **Universities**.



# INTERSOS24

INTERSOS24 is a multifunctional space located in the Torre Spaccata neighborhood (VII Municipality), offering the following services:

- A **SAFE SPACE** for women and girls providing:
  - **Job orientation and support** for socio-economic inclusion;
  - **Psychosocial case management**, with individual pathways for support and accompaniment;
  - **Socio-educational workshops** for empowerment and skills development;
  - **Social secretariat**, for facilitating access to services and rights;
  - A **Child Friendly Space**, with activities dedicated to children for well-being and inclusion;
- A **MOBILE TEAM**, in partnership with UNICEF, supporting staff, women, and Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC), hosted in Reception Centers (CAS) in and around Rome;
- A **PEOPLE'S OUTPATIENT CLINIC** offering individual paths for physical and mental health, health and/or socio-health case management, and group paths for health and well-being promotion;
- A **24-HOUR RECEPTION FACILITY HOSTING FAMILIES** from Ukraine with health vulnerabilities.;

INTERSOS24 is located in the Ex Enaoli park in the **eastern outskirts of Rome**, an area characterized by a high level of social disadvantage. INTERSOS reaches out to women in vulnerable conditions, survivors of gender-based violence, refugees, or asylum seekers. It is a space where women and girls can feel safe and enjoy freedom of expression.

All services are free and accessible upon spontaneous presentation and have cultural mediation. The workshops and services for women work in synergy with the Center's Child Friendly Space, which provides daytime recreational and educational activities for children. **Focal points** play a significant role in connecting INTERSOS24 services with the local community. They are responsible for: promoting services in the community, identifying vulnerabilities and specific needs within the social fabric, and providing orientation and accompaniments to territorial services.



Before the COVID-19 pandemic, INTERSOS24 provided **protection and accommodation** to around 6,000 unaccompanied children and young adults. The accommodation part was relocated in 2021 to an Emergency Shelter near Tiburtina Station before becoming operational again in October 2022 within the spaces of INTERSOS24.

The activities of INTERSOS24 are supported by: Alstom Foundation, Comune di Roma - ROMA CAPITALE, Fondazione Nazionale delle Comunicazioni - FNC, Karl Kahane Foundation, LDS Charities, Marco Momigliano, Mediafriends, The Nando & Elsa Peretti Foundation, UNICEF, and UniCredit.

## OBJECTIVES:

- Providing a comprehensive, qualified, integrated **support** to women in vulnerable conditions, survivors of or exposed to gender-based violence;
- Offering a **safe space for socialization**, training, and inclusion to vulnerable women, whether alone or with children;
- Ensuring and promoting the **right to health**, with particular emphasis on mental health, for the population in socio-economically fragile conditions, with attention to women who have survived gender-based violence and their children;
- Serving as a **privileged observatory** and **center for documentation and divulgation** of the needs of the migrant population in fragile conditions.





The Safe Space offered **16** workshops attended by **246** people.

The Safe Space supported a total of **480** people through **5** desks.

**523** women were supported through INTERSOS24 activities.

**76** children have participated in the activities of the Child Friendly Space.

**167** users reached by information sessions on the prevention of gender-based violence, social-health guidance and work guidance.

In 2024, the Primary Care Clinic supported 202 beneficiaries providing **352** services.

The Psy Space supported **39** beneficiaries through **462** clinical or rehabilitative sessions.

Casa INTERSOS hosted **5** families consisting of **19** people

# SAFE SPACE

The Safe Space at INTERSOS24 is a safe environment where women and girls from the local communities can access a range of services, information, and learning opportunities structured around the analysis of the territory’s needs and with active participation from the people who frequent it.

The aim of the Safe Space is to:

- Promote the psychosocial well-being of women and girls by encouraging the creation of social networks and opportunities for mutual support;
- Contribute to the personal and psychosocial empowerment of women and girls;
- Serve as an entry point for disclosing experiences of gender-based violence and facilitate access to specialized support services while respecting the survivor’s safety, confidentiality, and dignity.

## WORKSHOPS

At the INTERSOS24 Safe Space, daily free workshops are held specifically for individuals identifying with the female gender and LGBTQI+ identities, promoting individual empowerment within a gender framework and facilitating the disclosure of gender-based violence. These workshops are divided into professional courses, recreational activities, and mini-trainings; they aim to build professional skills, offer new job perspectives and training opportunities, and foster the creation of social networks. Activities are conducted based on principles of inclusion, non-discrimination, accountability, and organization, with participants involved in the planning and decision-making processes.

## INTERSOS24 AND KORE: VOCATIONAL COURSES AND SHELTERED INTERNSHIPS

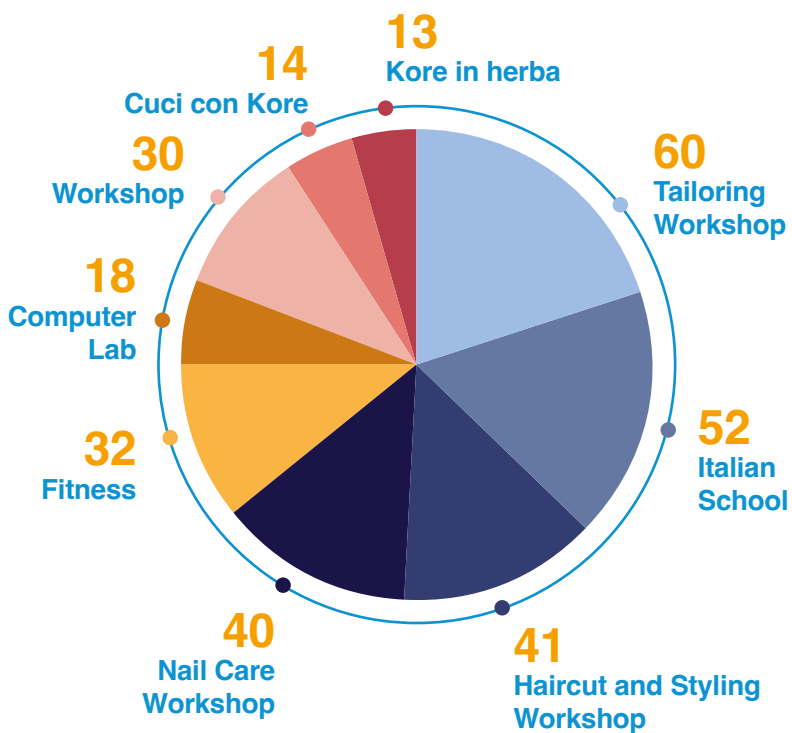
KORE is a social enterprise founded by INTERSOS to promote job placement and social support through an ethical and sustainable business model. The project is based on the principle of a “fair price” for labor and a deep respect for the Earth, integrating the protection of fundamental rights with environmental and biodiversity conservation. Every KORE product is handmade in Italy with a sustainable approach and is certified organic, enhancing a supply chain that is attentive to social and environmental impact.

This vision works in synergy with INTERSOS24, guaranteeing people in vulnerable conditions immediate support and a path toward autonomy and labor inclusion. In 2024, thanks to this collaboration, the Safe Space offered two vocational courses, “Cuci con Kore” (tailoring sphere) and “Kore in Herba” (agricultural sphere), involving 27 women. For 4 of these, the Job Desk, in close connection with KORE, facilitated the activation of 3 training internships in tailoring and 1 internship in agriculture, ensuring constant monitoring and support. This approach allows assistance to be transformed into concrete opportunities for growth, demonstrating how social enterprises can be an engine for inclusion and sustainability.

### INDICATORS

In 2024, the Safe Space offered 16 workshops, with the participation of 256 beneficiaries.

### NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN WORKSHOPS





SERVICE DESKS

he INTERSOS24 Safe Space constitutes a multidimensional protected space with low-threshold **service desks** supporting the most vulnerable population. Specifically, they target women and girls from the community who may have experienced episodes of violence and require support in co-constructing an empowerment project and/or exiting violence. The services function as a bridge between institutional services in the area and the population, often facing difficulties in accessing and benefiting from them due to linguistic, cultural, documentary-bureaucratic barriers, and the lack of cultural and gender sensitivity of the operators.

The offered service desks include:

- Social secretariat;
- Legal protection desk CREG - INTERSOS24;
- Job orientation desk;
- Rome Desk (orientation to local services);
- Case management service.

OBJECTIVES

- Providing a space of **listening** and **support**;
- Providing **information** and guidance regarding local services;
- Building a **personalized project** aimed at **empowerment** and informed use of available resources and rights to access them.

INDICATORS

In 2024, the Safe Space supported a total of **480** individuals through **5** desks.



The Job Desk has successfully supported its users in launching **18** training internships.





## ORIENTATION AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT GROUPS

The increasing popularity of INTERSOS24 services has naturally led to a growing number of users. At the same time, many women and girls have expressed a desire to process their experiences, share their journeys, and turn them into sources of strength. As a result, 2024 has marked a shift in methodology, moving toward group-based support while maintaining the crucial individual assistance provided through Case Management. This evolution was also driven by direct user feedback, gathered through action-research methods such as Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews. These tools revealed a strong need for **group psychosocial support spaces**—safe environments where participants can share experiences and discuss common challenges.

As part of this approach, three pilot groups have been introduced: “**Socio-Health Orientation Group**,” “**Gender Stories**,” and “**AMA - A Room of Our Own**.” These groups were designed to meet the specific needs of participants while strengthening the community-based dimension of support.

- **Socio-Health Orientation Groups:** These support groups were created to address recurring issues in individual Case Management pathways, transforming them into opportunities for collective learning and sharing. Structured in cycles of three sessions, they provided participants with practical information on essential topics for integration and autonomy.

Key topics included:

- The functioning of institutional and public services (Social Services, ASL, schools)
- Managing necessary documentation for legal residency in Italy, including International Protection Requests and residence permits;
- Job orientation, covering the local job market, CV building, job search tools, workers’ rights, contracts, and training opportunities offered by the Lazio Region.

### INDICATORS

Tot participants: **33** women

- **Gender Stories** is an open group workshop dedicated to reflecting on gender stereotypes across different cultures. Through discussion and interactive activities, participants challenge social representations of femininity to develop greater gender awareness and construct new narratives of women’s roles in society.
- **The AMA - A Room of Our Own group** is a peer support initiative for Italian and migrant women who have survived gender-based violence and are in the process of healing and rebuilding their lives. In a safe and protected environment, participants share experiences, process the emotional impact of violence, and counter isolation through mutual support and expert facilitation. The goal is to strengthen personal autonomy and foster the creation of long-term support networks.

These groups mark a significant step in expanding INTERSOS24’s services, addressing the growing need for peer-sharing spaces that enhance both individual and collective empowerment.



# ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

## THE CHILD FRIENDLY SPACE

INTERSOS24 hosts a **Child Friendly Space**, which aims to provide a protected place for playing and development for children from vulnerable social backgrounds. Among the various activities, a free music workshop is held as part of the “A Regola d’Arte” project promoted by Mediafriends, which aims to introduce children over 6 years old to the realm of music. Additionally, the Child Friendly Space empowers the women present at the center by allowing them to participate in workshops and access services in full autonomy.

### INDICATORS

76 children have participated in the activities of the Child Friendly Space.



In recent years, INTERSOS24 has established a dedicated outreach team focused on supporting marginalized populations.

**Project:** “Strengthening the care and support for refugee and migrant children, young people and their families in Italy”

In 2024, the mobile team focused on identifying vulnerable situations and providing psychosocial support to refugees and migrants in **Reception Centers (CAS)**, with a particular focus on women and unaccompanied and separated children (**UASC**).

INTERSOS provides **integrated and personalized support**, helping individuals manage vulnerabilities and navigate socio-health services. When necessary, the team ensures **follow-up and case management** to guarantee ongoing assistance for users.

The project is funded by **UNICEF** and carried out in collaboration with the **Prefecture of Rome**.

### OBJECTIVES

- **Empower CAS residents** by increasing their awareness of **gender-based violence (GBV)** and enhancing their knowledge of the healthcare system and the job market.
- **Strengthen CAS staff capacity** to identify and respond to cases of GBV and **protection from sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (PSEAH)**, ensuring the safety of residents.
- **Facilitate access to local services** by developing a strong referral and socio-health orientation network.





ACTIVITIES

- 1) Multilingual information sessions for CAS residents on:
  - GBV prevention
  - Socio-health orientation
  - Job orientation
- 2) **Training sessions for staff** on GBV response services and **PSEAH protection protocols**.
- 3) **Psychological and psychosocial support**, case management, and referrals to specialized services.

INDICATORS

In 2024, **19** information sessions were conducted, reaching a total of **167** CAS residents, along with **5** training sessions for **39** staff members.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE		
83,2%	2,4%	14,4%
Women	UASC	New-adults
INDICATORS		
6	128	111
CAS	Reached beneficiaries	Women
17		54
UASC		Staff members



# PEOPLE'S OUTPATIENT CLINIC

INTERSOS24's **People's Outpatient Clinic** is a low-threshold transcultural clinic providing primary care and promoting physical and mental health. Its objective is to facilitate access to the National Health Service and healthcare for all citizens. Particularly, the clinic focuses on those who have experienced extreme situations, such as **GBV, sexual exploitation, inhuman and/or degrading treatment**, and aims to identify physical or mental signs of extreme violence.

The intervention of the People's Outpatient Clinic is necessary in response to the difficulties encountered by the migrant population in accessing and making use of primary healthcare services. In particular, there is a shortage of **linguistic** and **cultural mediation** in **primary care or other dedicated services** (family counseling, clinics for temporary presence foreigners).

INTERSOS24's People's Outpatient Clinic has dedicated pathways for both physical health at the **Primary Care Clinic** and mental health at the **Psy Space**. The Clinic also supported healthcare intervention at Casa INTERSOS.

## PRIMARY CARE CLINIC

The **Primary Care Clinic** aims to provide concrete responses to healthcare needs through general and specialized medical visits, as well as health promotion programs in both individual and group settings.

In 2024, **89% of the people accessing the clinic** already had a **code of temporarily present foreigner (STP)** or were registered with the **Regional Health Service (SSR)**, granting them access to a general practitioner or a healthcare facility. However, they were unable to fully utilize these services due to **language barriers and cultural differences**. The clinic operates in collaboration with **linguistic and cultural mediators** (Farsi, Bengali, Spanish, Albanian, etc.) and a team of **volunteer doctors and healthcare professionals**, including: **1 medical ultrasound specialist, 1 gynecologist, 1 pediatrician and 1 physiotherapist**.

### INDICATORS

In 2024, the Primary Care Clinic supported 202 beneficiaries providing 352 services.





# PSY SPACE

**Psy Space** is a space dedicated to providing psychological support to survivors of gender-based violence, torture, and treatments contrary to dignity and human rights. The space also offers psychological services to patients referred by **anti-violence centers**, social workers, and the public health department. In 2024, the lack of mental health services and the few spaces dedicated to psychological support for survivors of violence led Psy Space to focus on the care of women and single-parent families who had survived gender-based violence.

## INDICATORS

In **2024**, Psy Space supported **39** beneficiaries through **462** clinical or rehabilitative sessions.



# CASA INTERSOS

The Reception Center for Immigration in Rome, named **Casa INTERSOS**, provides housing for families in precarious social and health conditions and are fleeing from **Ukraine**. The project was made possible thanks to the support of the **Municipality of Rome**.

The center is located within INTERSOS24, **operates 24/7**, and ensures the presence of a qualified multi-disciplinary team composed of social and healthcare staff, with the involvement of the People's Outpatient Clinic.

Through **social, medical, cultural, and welfare services**, Casa INTERSOS serves as a place of integrated accommodation.

## OBJECTIVES

- Promoting the **inclusion** within the territory of the welcomed family units, safeguarding their rights, and ensuring the satisfaction of basic needs;
- Designing and implementing together with the families specific pathways for their progressive **autonomy**.

## INDICATORS

The facility provides **20** beds divided into **5** rooms. In 2024, the center housed **5** families consisting of **19** people (**6** women, **5** men including one with disabilities, **8** minors including 6 with disabilities).





# CENTRO OTTAVIA

OTTAVIA CENTER is an **institution accredited by the Lazio Region for Training and Employment Services**, operating as a regional reference point to enhance the provision of services for the **social and employment inclusion** of marginalized groups, with a specific focus on the **migrant** population. The Center is located in the neighborhood of **Ottavia**, XIV Municipality, an area characterized by a diverse demographic composition, ranging from well-served areas to peripheral areas lacking essential services. The Municipality experiences high unemployment rates, social distress, and a scarcity of services, factors that contribute to an increase in educational poverty and widespread inequality.

## A PICCOLI PASSI

In 2022, INTERSOS LAB launched the still ongoing project “**A Piccoli Passi**”, funded by the social enterprise Con i Bambini and aimed at supporting the **creation of educational communities** through the co-design of a Community Educational Pact. It involves 6 partners, 2 schools, institutional actors from the XIV and XV Municipalities, third-sector actors, and other informal entities.

PROJECT RESULTS			
5	6	6	
Open assemblies with partner schools (36 participants)	Roundtable discussions with project partners (12 participants)	Training sessions on each partner's specific intervention topics (18 participants)	
35		70	
Sessions of homework help afternoons (School at Lab) (47 minors reached)		mediations activated (40 minors/families supported)	



PLAY YOUR MIND

il In the area of **mental health**, in 2024 OTTAVIA CENTER launched the “Play Your Mind” (**PLYM**) project, funded by the King Baudouin Foundation, and aimed at promoting information on mental health issues in adolescence. The project aims to provide knowledge to both **adolescents** and adult reference figures (informal such as scouts and sports coaches, and institutional such as teachers) on the main psychological disorders in adolescence, how to intervene (or not intervene), how to use the group as a support tool, and what resources are available for these issues.

PROJECT RESULTS

16 Focus group sessions (for 83 adults)	7 Focus group sessions (for 79 adolescents)
1 Music workshop (for 39 adolescents)	1 Music video ( for 39 adolescents)

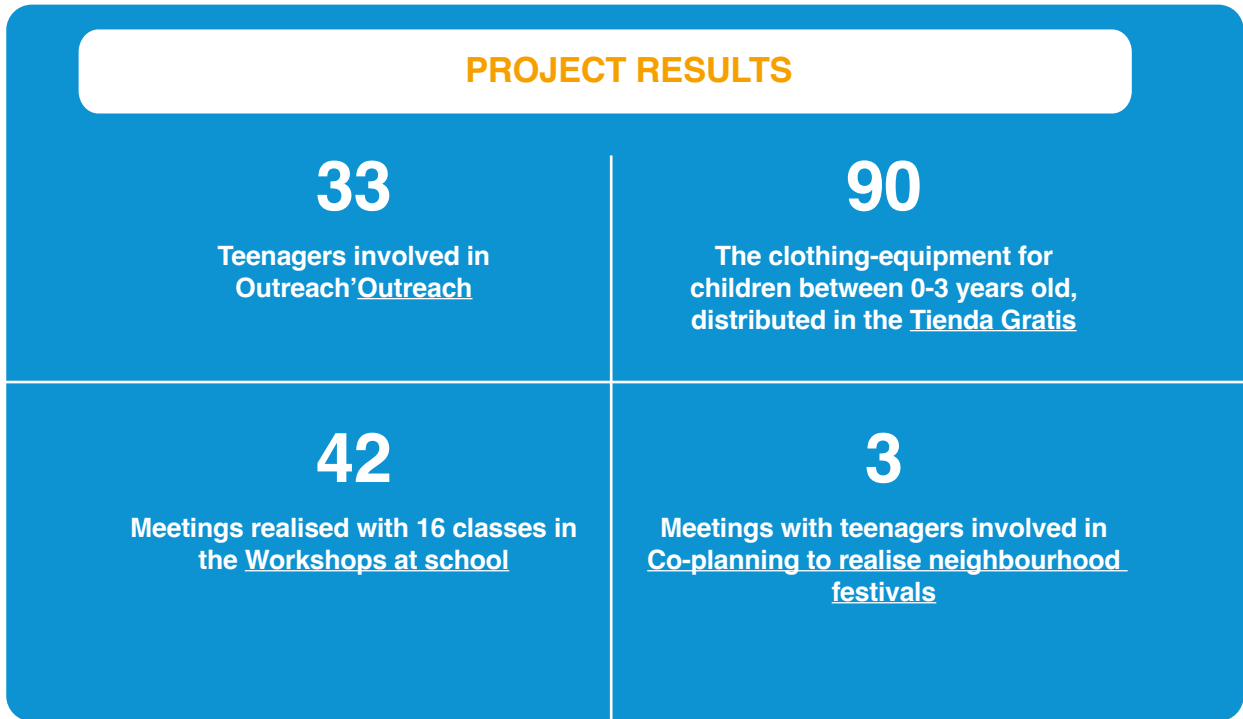
IN THESE ACTIVITIES, WE INVOLVED:

- 6 Taekwondo sports clubs
- 7 Scout sections of the CNGEI of Rome
- 1 High School of Science in Rome, with the participation of 2 classi



# T-ESSERE IL TERRITORIO

In August 2024, the T-essere il Territorio project was launched to promote **citizenship and community engagement** both inside and outside the various social contexts of the XIV Municipality. This initiative involved two major School Institutions in the area, addressing non-formal youth aggregation contexts and organizing exchange and support programs within the Ottavia office.



## ITALIAN SCHOOL FOR FOREIGNERS

Regarding the **teaching of Italian**, since 2020, INTERSOS LAB has been a **School of Italian for Foreigners**, partner of the Scuolemigranti network. Each year, it runs several classes for various language levels, assigning lessons to teachers trained in L2 didactics and in the aspect of risk/needs detection, to be referred to the case management of the Center or other local services.

Since 2021, it has served as a venue for language certification exams of the **CVCL (Center for Language Assessment and Certification) of the University for Foreigners of Perugia**, with which, in January 2022, it signed a Scientific Framework Agreement, aimed at expanding exchange and collaboration on activities and projects in the area of L2 teaching and teacher training.

Each month, around **50** students attend the courses, distributed across three level bands (A1-A2-B1).

## OUTREACH

In 2024, the staff of the **Ottavia Center** conducted 3 outreach days, upon request and in collaboration with **ASL Roma 1**, at the informal settlement located on **Via Gorlago, Casal del Marmo**. The settlement is home to approximately 100 people who are in a state of extreme socio-economic vulnerability, exposing them to numerous protection risks and limiting their access to social-health services and job opportunities. The site, which also houses families with children, has poor hygienic conditions, and coexistence between the various groups is not always easy.

Alongside INTERSOS's **mobile clinic**, outreach, and social-health guidance were provided to the residents. The aim is to support the available health and social services in the area and help residents navigate these resources. ASL RM 1's efforts are bolstered by the involvement of 1 psychologist and several outreach workers.

In 2024, ASL Roma 1 requested the Ottavia Center's assistance in organizing **6 awareness days**, offering information sessions, medical examinations, and a social assistance desk.





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