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Interviews to migrants



Angelo has been living in Strasbourg for 55 years.

Q: When did you migrate to Strasbourg?

A: I migrated to Strasbourg when I was 21.

Q: Why did you go to Strasbourg?

A: I came here because other brothers and sisters of mine were already here.

Q: Why were they there?

A: They came here in search of new economic opportunities. I came here when they told me they had found a good job for me, too.

Q: How was your first time there?

A: It was not so hard because since I had already four brothers and three sisters who lived here, it was to rejoin the most part of my own family. Only my father and two other sisters were still in Italy. It had been very difficult for the first brother who moved here all alone. For me everything was very easy, I had a house to go and my own family waiting for me here.

However when I had to start my work in a factory, it was very hard because I did not speak French, I did not understand a single word of it, and I had to learn everything very fast if I wanted to keep my job. I really felt very worried and under pressure all the time when I was at work.

Q: When did you start feeling more at your ease?

A: I felt more at ease after a month, because I knew everything about my job and I had some new friends among my colleagues working there, too. In any case I missed my old friends in Italy, I missed the food, because even if my sisters cooked Italian dishes in the Italian style, the taste was different, maybe because the ingredients were different. I also missed the climate, my little village, my old house, I really missed everything. I sometimes cried when nobody could see me.

Q: Do you still miss Italy after so many years?

A: No, I do not miss Italy any more, because I have my wife, my sons and daughter and my grandchildren here with me. My life is here.

Q: Do you feel more Italian or more French?

A: I really feel half and half.

Q: When there is a football match Italy vs France, what do you feel?

A: In that case I always want Italy to win to show my friends and my neighbours that we are the best after all.



Q: Did you suffer for any form of racism towards you or your family?

A: In the very beginning yes, and later on just occasionally. It was much worse for some friends of mine who migrated to Switzerland. They told me they were treated very badly, and their children could not live with them, they did not have the permission to keep their children with them. So for this reason they kept them in secret, they kept them at home barefoot. Their children had an awful life, because they could never go out, not even on the balcony, they could not go to school, they could not speak or cry or play because their neighbours would have reported their presence to the police. When I remember what they told me I really feel very happy and lucky.

Q: Are you happy now?

A: Yes, I am. I have a lovely house and a wonderful family. My sons and my daughter have a very good job, a very comfortable house and a beautiful family. They all live near here. I see them very often and that makes me and my wife very very happy.

A: Do you ever fancy going back to Italy?

Q: No, not any more. In the past yes, I always dreamt of going back to Italy sooner or later, just like all my other brothers and sisters. Yet only one brother and one sister, your grandmother Carmela, were able to come back, all the others remained here, because everyone married here, bought a house, had children born here who felt French not Italian and they did not want to go and live in Italy. My older brothers and sisters are already buried here. I will be buried here one day, as well. The problem is that when you leave a place, it is very difficult to go back to it again. In the past I came to spend my holidays in Italy, I also came to visit your grandmother and her family in Potenza. Now I am too old to travel, I am not well enough to travel for so many hours. I see Italy on TV, I always watch Italian TV programs when they are on, I have never missed them, and there are my memories, my lovely, beautiful memories.

Carola's interview



Francesco lives in London.

Let's start with a brief presentation of yourself. What's your name? How old are you? Where do you live?

My name is Francesco. I'm 35 years old. I'm from Basilicata but I have been living in London for almost 8 years.

Why did you migrate there?

After living in Rome for studies and, subsequently, for work experiences in the arts, there were no more proper working opportunities for me in Italy, so unwillingly I decided to leave, thanks to a friend who already lived in London. He invited me to look at the new perspectives that this city could offer me and to consider the chance to reinvent a professional life, despite the difficulties that I would have in the beginning.

What were your feelings at that time?

My first feelings were surely strong and not really positive. The sense of linguistic dismay (I couldn't speak English) and the unfamiliar places and culture certainly frightened me and made me feel inadequate, but at the same time I tried to keep up and to find some daily solutions to my adaptation, gaining confidence day after day.

How do you feel now?

I consider London my third home after Filiano (PZ) and Rome, I live well, I have perfectly fitted in with the rhythms of working life. This city has given me the chance to rediscover my talent with some unexpected declensions. Thanks to the endless inputs that it offers me, my artistic/creative job is largely recognized and decidedly satisfying here.

Would you come back and live in the place you left?

I'd come back to Italy if there were the perspectives of an equally satisfying job, in a city that could be Rome or others ready to welcome and foster my artistic and professional abilities, while Filiano would be for me just the place of affections and family. I would not see my future there.

Giulia, Luana and Matteo's interview



LIFE IN SWITZERLAND

Angela (76, retired) and **Rocco** (80, retired) lived in Switzerland for 20 years.

A= Antonio L= Lina (Angela) R= Rocco

A: *Tell me more about your story, when did you go to Switzerland? How did you manage to find a job there and why did you choose Switzerland among all the other countries?*

R: *We got married in the late fifties. At that time, Southern Italy certainly was not as it is today. We were living in awful conditions, more than anything else, we needed a job. So we went to an employment office and asked for advice. Their proposal came out clearly and effortlessly, we would have to move to Switzerland where many jobs with considerably high salaries would be awaiting. We left the year after, in 1960, and were even escorted to the Berne station by an employee of the Job Centre. Before arriving in Berne, we were asked to undergo many medical examinations on the border, for it was compulsory for immigrants. Everything was perfectly organized.*

A: *How long did you live there?*

L: *I stayed until 1978. I had recently given birth to my two wonderful children and decided to send them to school in Italy.*

R: *Well, I stayed longer, until 1983. Lina and the children would visit every now and then.*

A: *Let's delve more into the details of your lives in Switzerland, what jobs did you do exactly?*

L: *An awful lot! I worked as a cleaning lady, a cloth factory worker, then switched to restaurants and hotels, where I also cooked, oh, how lovely it was! I made so many friends from so many countries! After a while I ended up working as a full-time nanny in a Swiss villa. The owners were such wonderful people!*

R: *All I did, basically, was construction work. I worked with people from all over Europe, really, few of them were actually Swiss! I was given a temporary work permit in the beginning, and had to renew it every three months, then they allowed me to stay for a full year.*

A: *Wonderful! Can you tell me something about the Swiss system? Not to sound biased, but is it true what they say about Switzerland?*

R: *Of course, it is! Equality, efficiency, precision and punctuality are a must, if you want to live there! Nobody is above the law and all citizens, including immigrants, are treated equally and fairly. Though it can get a bit overwhelming. Having been raised in Italy, I initially perceived that system as some sort of oppressive dictatorship. I never understood how crucial it is to maintain a strict system, until I got back to Italy!*

A: *I'm so glad to hear that you eventually got into the mindset of a Swiss! Let's move to the next topic: the language. How hard was it?*



R: *Oh, very hard! Nobody spoke 'Hochdeutsch' ('standard German') in the streets. What we learned was, in fact, a Swiss variety.*

L: *The language was for me very problematic. Due to the fact that I could not speak a single word of Swiss German, I was exposed to many risks, but most of all, to the mocking of many idiotic people, especially those who lived in the German cantons. After learning about my social status, some of them would call me 'zingali' (Swiss dialect for 'Zigeuner': gypsy person). Luckily, they only represented a small obnoxious minority which happened to be made up of racist, boorish people. Anyhow, a couple of years later I started to speak more fluently and was able to tell them in response, *says Swiss swearwords for 'ugly cow', 'dirty pig', 'streetwalker'**

A: *Impressive! By the way, I am so sorry that you had to put up with the ignorance and racism of these people. Have you ever thought about staying there for your whole life?*

R: *I have! I got used to the system and I immensely appreciated the quality of life there! There was only one drawback, I would have never been able to access the highest social classes and work, let's say, as an accountant or a lawyer.*

L: *I would have never done something like that! Although I profoundly admire the country, it was just a temporary solution, besides, I wanted my children to grow up in Italy. If I had stayed there and sent my children to school in Switzerland, I am sure that I would have never been able to come back!*

A: *Right, your children drew you right back to your hometown. You said you lived there for twenty years or more. Do you ever miss Switzerland?*

R: *I have to say that when I got back, I had many difficulties trying to re-adjust to the Italian way of life. I still remember how hard driving in Italy was, after 23 years in such a strict country. The Swiss would always raise their arm, before crossing the street, whereas the people here basically throw themselves in the middle of the street. How hideous! This is what I miss about Switzerland, the precision, the political correctness, but more importantly, the respect.*

L: *I miss the extremely beautiful and quaint village where I lived. It was called Burgdorf and on the 26th of June we would celebrate the so-called 'Solätte', a traditional feast that celebrated the end of the school year. The village would be brimming with colourful decorations and all the children would parade in fancy uniforms. I also miss the 'Sankt-Nikolaus-Fest', the delicious Swiss sweets and the coziness of the houses in winter.*

A: *Wow, those things must have been extremely pleasant. I wholeheartedly thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. Listening to your story was so enriching!*

R: *Thanks to you for inciting us to delve into our past!*

Antonio's interview



Pasquale has been living in London for 41 years.

1-What's your name?

My name is Pasquale.

2- Where do you live?

I live in London, my address is: ..., London N1 0JQ

3- How long have you been living there?

I have been living in England since 1976.

4- Why did you choose England?

I came to visit London in the summer of 1976, I loved everything about England and particularly London so I decided to settle here.

5- What was the reason why you left Italy?

There wasn't a particular reason for me to leave Italy, it was probably just an adventure to begin.

6- Are you happy with your life?

I am very happy with my life here in the UK.

7- Do you miss the affections?

Love, yes certainly family love, we are very close as a family and it is only natural for me to miss my family, mother, sisters, brothers, nieces, nephews.

8- How often do you come back to Italy?

I go back to Italy fairly regularly to spend time with my family which I love.

9- What do you think about the fact that many Italians have migrated?

Yes, many Italians have migrated to various parts of the world in search of a better life and opportunities otherwise denied to them in their own land for various reasons: economic and political.

10- Are you happy to be a migrant?

Deep inside I am not really happy to be a migrant, but I made that choice, I am happy to be where I am in this great country.

Carmen and Mariapia's interview



Rocco lives in Sweden

1) What were the reasons why you left your native land?

I left my native land to have more opportunities.

2) When you made this decision, were you ready or scared?

A middle way!

3) Did anyone help you when you got there?

I had a little help from some friends.

4) What were you worried about?

My worries were the language, living alone and handling money.

5) How did you face the problem of the language?

In the beginning I found it very difficult, then, thanks to a helpful community I improved it and now I feel more confident.

6) And what about the food? Do you like Swedish cuisine?

I find the food delicious! I like it!

7) How did you learn the language?

I learnt it at school and at work.

8) How did you manage to handle difficulties?

I rolled up my sleeves and I tried to stay positive!

9) Are relationships with people different from those you used to have in Italy?

Yes, Swedish people are more reserved, but not uncaring.

10) How quickly did you get used to different habits?

I got used to different habits immediately.

11) How long have you been living in Sweden?

It's been ten years and a half, by now.

12) How do you feel? Are you happy?

I got used to living here.

13) What period of the year do you think most about your country?

I miss it at Christmastime.

14) How often do you get back to your motherland?

I return to my family once or twice a year.

15) Have you ever thought of getting back to Italy for good?

No, never.

16) Which do you consider as your "home": the place where you were born or the one where you're living?

My home is where my family live, but I have no problem to settle into a new country.

17) What do you miss the most about your country?

Definitely my family and my closer friends.

Elisabeta, immigrant from Romania

1) What were the reasons why you left your native land?

I came to Italy due to the financial situation.

2) When you made this decision, were you ready or scared?

I wasn't ready at all.

3) Did anyone help you when you got here?

I did everything alone.

4) What were you worried about?

I was worried because I didn't know the language and the people.

5) How did you face the problem of the language?

My first approach with the language was negative.

6) And what about the food? Do you like Italian cuisine?

No, especially milk. In Romania only fresh cow milk, so I am not used to drinking the long-life one.

7) How did you learn the language?

I learned Italian at work.

8) How did you manage to handle difficulties?

I managed to overcome difficulties with great patience!

9) Are relationships with people different from those you used to have in Romania?

It depends on whether people are friendly or shy.

10) How quickly did you get used to different habits?

It took me a year to get used to them.

11) How long have you been living in Italy?

I have been living here for ten and a half years.

12) How do you feel? Are you happy?

I like it here, but sometimes I am homesick.

13) What period of the year do you think most about your country?

At Christmas.

14) How often do you get back to your motherland?

I get back to my motherland every 5 or 6 months.

15) Have you ever thought of getting back to Romania for good?

Yes, I always think about it when I get angry.

16) Which do you consider as your "home": the place where you were born or the one where you're living?

My home will always be in Romania.

17) What do you miss the most about your country?

I miss especially my family.



Maria lives in Germany.

1) What were the reasons why you left your native land?

I emigrated to Germany because we -my husband and me- didn't have money, so we applied for a job there.

2) When you made this decision, were you ready or scared?

I was frightened, definitely not ready.

3) Did anyone help you when you got there?

No, I did everything by myself.

4) What were you worried about?

My concerns were first of all the language and not to know anybody.

5) How did you face the problem of the language?

The first year was hard, but then speaking German has become easier and easier and now I feel more confident.

6) And what about the food? Do you like German cuisine?

I liked the food immediately.

7) How did you learn the language?

I learned the language when I was hospitalised.

8) How did you manage to handle difficulties?

I tackled them with patience.

9) Are relationships with people different from those you used to have in Italy?

Yes, German people are more discreet, but I feel good with them!

10) How quickly did you get used to different habits?

I became familiar with different habits at once.

11) How long have you been living in Germany?

I have been living here since 1969, for so many years!

12) How do you feel? Are you happy?

I feel good.

13) What period of the year do you think most about your country?

Oh, I always think about Italy, particularly at Christmas.

14) How often do you get back to your motherland?

I get back to Italy every year.

15) Have you ever thought of getting back to Italy for good?

No, I have never thought about it.

16) Which do you consider as your "home": the place where you were born or the one where you're living?

Italy is my home.

17) What do you miss the most about your country?

In the beginning I missed my mum and many of my things.

Nataliya, immigrant from Ukraine

1) What were the reasons why you left your native land?

I moved to Italy because of the crisis in Ukraine.

2) When you made this decision, were you ready or scared?

I felt really scared.

3) Did anyone help you when you got here?

At first I received some help, but then I realised that it was better doing on my own.

4) What were you worried about?

My concern was definitely the language.

5) How did you face the problem of the language?

The beginning has been rather tragic, because I didn't know a single word, but then I began to learn five words a day: I wrote them on a piece of paper and I put the sheet under my pillow. So, I slept with those new words under my head - to remember them better!

6) And what about the food? Do you like Italian cuisine?

It was love at first sight.

7) How did you learn the language?

I learned Italian speaking it at work.

8) How did you manage to handle difficulties?

I muddled through with patience.

9) Are relationships with people different from those you used to have in Ukraine?

Italian people are funnier!

10) How quickly did you get used to different habits?

I settled into different habits at once.

11) How long have you been living in Italy?

I have been here for 18 years.

12) How do you feel? Are you happy?

I feel half Italian!

13) What period of the year do you think most about your country?

I am always in Ukraine with my thoughts.

14) How often do you get back to your motherland?

I go back to my motherland every two years.

15) Have you ever thought of getting back to Ukraine for good?

Yes, when I grow old I hope I'll go back there.

16) Which do you consider as your "home": the place where you were born or the one where you're living?

My home is in Italy.

17) What do you miss the most about your country?

I miss my memories, my friends and my family.



Maria Teresa was born in Nottingham, a city in the heart of the United Kingdom, and studied there.
Now she lives in Accettura with her family.

1) Who was the first member of your family to emigrate to England? And when?

The first member of my family was my grandad. He left in June 1952.

2) Why Nottingham?

Because it was an industrial city, and he had a cousin who had been a prisoner of war in Nottingham and that is why he decided to stay there. When the war was over his cousin was allowed to stay in Nottingham, and he found a job. Where he worked they asked him if he had anyone who was willing to work so he sent for my grandfather.

3) Why did he decide to leave Italy?

The place where he lived, Accettura, was a village and there was not much work so when his cousin informed him by letter about the work, he decided to leave Accettura and his family and went to Nottingham.

4) Do you know the first impression your grandfather had of the city?

His first impression when he arrived was that the atmosphere was much darker and the place was bigger than his little village and he was frightened in case he did not adapt to city life and of never seeing his family again.

5) Did he find any difficulties?

Yes, for a while the language was very difficult to understand. Before inviting his family to join him he had to buy a house and that meant he could not see his family for a long time.

6) Why did you come to Italy? When?

I arrived at Accettura on the 8th August 1985. It was a decision that my mother made because it had always been her dream to return to her native land and I was too young to decide.

7) Do you miss England? Would you go back to live there?

Yes, I miss England very much! And I would go back today! I miss the atmosphere, the way of life and most of all I miss my brothers.

8) Are you still in contact with your relatives in England?

Yes, because I've still got two brothers there! We text each other nearly everyday and video-chat quite often on Whatsapp.

The Accetturesi are the biggest community in Nottingham today. There were about 1,000 Accetturesi, but a lot of them moved back to Italy so now about 700 Accetturesi still live there. The first generation speak Italian but the second and third generations understand it rather than speak it. Once a year many Accetturesi come to the Italian village for "La festa del Maggio". In Nottingham they still have their own traditions and culture. They still make their own sausage and homemade wine as they did in Accettura many years ago.



Ninetta lived in Switzerland in the 1960s

Where were you born?

I was born in Marsico Nuovo, in the province of Potenza, in 1941.

Where do you live now?

I've been living in Potenza for more than 45 years.

When did you leave and where did you go?

I went to Switzerland, along with my husband, and I stayed there for several periods; the first time was in 1961 when I was only 20 years old.

Why did you leave?

I decided to leave because my husband had been called to work in a Swiss company, and also because I was looking for work and in Italy I could not find it.

Were you worried about leaving?

No, I was not worried; on the contrary, I was happy to leave but the idea of being so far from my parents and relatives made me sad.

How did you imagine Switzerland before leaving, Ninetta?

Well, I thought the country was beautiful and I also thought that we would have improved our life by staying in Switzerland, especially from an economic point of view, because we knew that in Switzerland there were more job opportunities and that wages were higher than in Italy.

How long were you in Switzerland?

As I said I was there for the first time in 1961; after that we stayed in Switzerland also in 1964 and again in 1966, always because of my husband's job....and every year for many months.

What do you remember of that period?

Switzerland was a beautiful place even though I spent most of the time working in a trouser factory. So we did not have time to visit many places.



 **How did you live there?**

The life we spent was quite nice, although the Swiss people used to consider us as strangers and avoided us most of the time. Fortunately, we managed to meet other Italian families who helped us in case of need.

 **What difficulties did you find?**


We had a lot of difficulties, the main one was certainly the language. In fact, in the early periods it was a problem even to go shopping.

 **Would you like to go back to Switzerland?**

Yes, but only for a visit and to see the places where we lived.

 **But would you do it again if you could go back to the past?**

No, I would not do it anymore because Italy is my country of birth and also the place where I have all my memories.

 **But, considered your own experience and compared it with the migrations we can see today, what do you think the reasons for migrations are?**

In my opinion, the reasons for yesterday's and today's migrations are always the same. That is to say more or less: work, wars, hunger, and poverty.

Giacomo, Giuseppe and Maria Grazia's interview



Giovanni works in the web marketing industry and has agreed to talk about his experience in England.

- 1) **Giovanni, we know that you lived in England for a long period of time. Why did you make this choice and how long were you there?**

I moved to England in 2009 and I worked there for about three years. My aim was, first of all, to grow from a professional point of view and then to improve my knowledge of the English language, which I was conscious was important.

- 2) **What kind of job did you do?**

I took a Master in digital marketing and I worked for a company, the E-commerce. I started from the customer service, as a website manager and finally I became an account manager, linked to Italian marketing.

- 3) **Why did you choose to come back to Italy?**

Once my professional growth had reached a certain level, I decided to set up a new company back in Italy with two Italian partners who were living there like me, the same company that I still manage today.

- 4) **Did you have good language competences before moving to England? Did the impact of the language shock you?**

Yes, I had the basic knowledge of the language and I think it helped me a lot to communicate, to take part in a conversation and first of all to have my job interview (a lot of Italians are not hired by companies because they don't know the language fluently). It took me about two or three months to improve my language skills; I could talk very well with the foreigners I worked with, because they used to talk slowly, but in the very beginning I had some difficulties to talk with the natives, as they talked too quickly. English people were very polite anyway and tried to speak more slowly to let me understand.

- 5) **Did you settle in well or did you have any difficulties?**

Yes, I really found a positive situation, I fitted in with my job immediately (in England there is a different concept of work) and I really enjoyed the fact that it was a multicultural environment. I was 28 years old and I was the oldest in the company: the medium age there is around 24 years old, every employee is very young. The only thing I didn't really like was the weather.



6) Did you suffer from some sort of discrimination ?

Absolutely not, I never suffered because of any sort of discrimination. In the company I worked for, in particular, they didn't care if you were yellow, black, Muslim. Maybe it depends on the context and on your speaking skills (if you couldn't say a word in English, some of them could make fun of you, but if you show to be open-minded and to be able to hold a conversation, they don't make any racial comments).

7) Do you still have contacts with the ones you met in England?

Yes, even though we don't see so much, because it's difficult for me to go to London since I'm very busy, we try to keep the relationship safe and I even invited them, including my boss, to my wedding.

8) Would you like to go back to England and live there?

If I hadn't had the intention or the possibility to set up this new company, I would have kept on living there: I was well paid and when me and my partners announced to quit the company, they even tried to make us stay and offered a higher salary. If there wasn't this new company, as I was saying, I would continue working in England because I know that there are more opportunities to find a good job and be well waged.

9) What are the differences between Italian and English people in the professional attitudes and mentality in general?

Well, Italian and English people, as you can imagine, are two opposite worlds: they are completely different. In particular for what concerns professionalism, the English have a different behaviour and a strong sense of duty. Even the man that cleans the toilets in a shopping centre can be well paid, be respected and do his job properly. Instead, in Italy we often see even people with important positions not acting well and not accomplishing their job.

10) Could you confirm or deny some stereotypes that we all have of English people?

Well, I can't deny that some of them are true (for example, the fact that they often go to pubs and drink a lot), but there are some things that are just prejudices and besides it varies from type to type. We all know that they don't really have a food tradition and many have their meals in fast food restaurants, but generally speaking the ones that have a high social status cook quite well.

Maria Letizia's interview



Margherita is a 54-year-old woman who moved from the United Kingdom to Italy when she was 23 because her mother wanted to return to her town of origin, Avigliano, after her husband's death. Now Margherita lives in Bologna, she is a happily married woman, she has 2 daughters and is a school caretaker in a primary school.

1) What problems did you have when you moved?

Well I must be honest I don't think I had any problems at all. My relatives were very helpful. The thing that I found unacceptable was the fact that my exam certificates weren't valid in Italy. So obviously I was very disappointed. The other thing that I found unacceptable is that if you want a good job, you need to be "recommended".

2) What language do you usually speak with your family?

When I was at home with my parents we spoke the dialect of Ripacandida and Aviglianese. Obviously it was a mixture of the two. Often I spoke in English as well. Now with my family I speak Italian. When my children were little I started speaking to them in English. Now and again we speak a bit of English together. It is very discontinuous as my husband doesn't know a word of English.

3) Had you already studied the language before you moved?

Well I did study a little bit of Italian when I was at senior school. It was organised by the Italian community where I lived in Watford. It was obviously at an elementary/intermediate level.

4) Why did you move to another country?

Well the reason I moved was because my mother wanted to come back to her country after my dad died. I didn't immediately come with her because I wasn't too convinced as I liked my job and my life style. But after a year that she was in Italy I had to take a decision. What pushed me was that she was ill and needed my help. It was an act of humanity.

5) What were the advantages and disadvantages of moving to another country?

When I think about the advantages when I moved to Italy, now I can say that the only advantage was the cost of living that was much cheaper, obviously due to the style of life and the zone as it is not developed sufficiently. Besides, the people were very friendly and available. The disadvantages are much more evident. In the south of Italy it was harder to find work. The public offices were very disorganised and there was a lot of corruption. Obviously things haven't improved with the recession. I must say that when I moved to Bologna it was much easier to find a job and I preferred the standard of life that was much more similar to what I was used to. In the beginning moving to Italy was like an adventure, because when you are young you aren't afraid to risk.

6) Did you feel part of the community abroad?

I must say I have always felt being part of a community, even if I have often changed places since I came to Italy. The only thing is that it is difficult sometimes to keep in touch with all the people you have met in all these years.

Mariella and Rosanna's interview



Maria, 50 years old, lived many years in London, United Kingdom. Now she lives in Bernalda, a small town near Potenza, where she teaches English in her Language school.

1) What problems did you have when you moved?

To begin with I found really difficult to get used to having such a long winter.. so I should say the weather - However, this changed my perception of the good weather.. I learnt to appreciate a sunny day! Secondly, I was quite concerned about the food which I found often quite greasy so I soon started cooking my own food. Also I thought English people were cold and distant but soon I learnt that they have different ways to show their feelings.

2) What language do you usually speak with your family?

Italian with my mum and dad - English with my nephews in Canada.

3) Had you already studied the language before you moved?

Yes, I had studied English at secondary school and university but I wasn't really able to have a conversation in English.

4) Why did you move to another country?

In the first place because I wanted to improve my English so as to give a reason to my degree in English & language literature.

5) Why did you come back?

Same old story.. you meet someone.. you fall in love and you decide to follow him wherever he takes you.

6) What were the advantages and disadvantages of moving to another country? And of coming back?

I feel I am a lucky person.. because I have benefitted a lot from my long stay in the UK - almost 8 years!! I have my own language centre here in Italy Thanks to my teaching experience in the UK I have always been able to think a bit outside the box and look at things differently.

7) Did you feel part of the community abroad?

The good thing is that .. the moment I am in the UK I feel at home!! So I guess I can consider myself part of the British community.

Mariella and Rosanna's interview



Gabriella is an English teacher. When she was in her twenties, she lived in Scotland.

1) Why did you decide to go to Scotland ?

Some years ago I decided to go and live in Scotland because I wanted to improve my English and to experience life in a different country.

2) What did you do there ?

There I studied different subjects such as English, Art History and German. Then I met lots of people from different countries and I travelled around the UK! I also tried Scottish food and Scottish dances!

3) How long were you there ?

I was there for 2 years.

4) What did you miss about Italy?

I missed my family and Italian food and weather!

5) What are you missing now about Scotland?

I'm missing the magical atmosphere that characterised those years and I'm missing some of the places I visited while I was there.

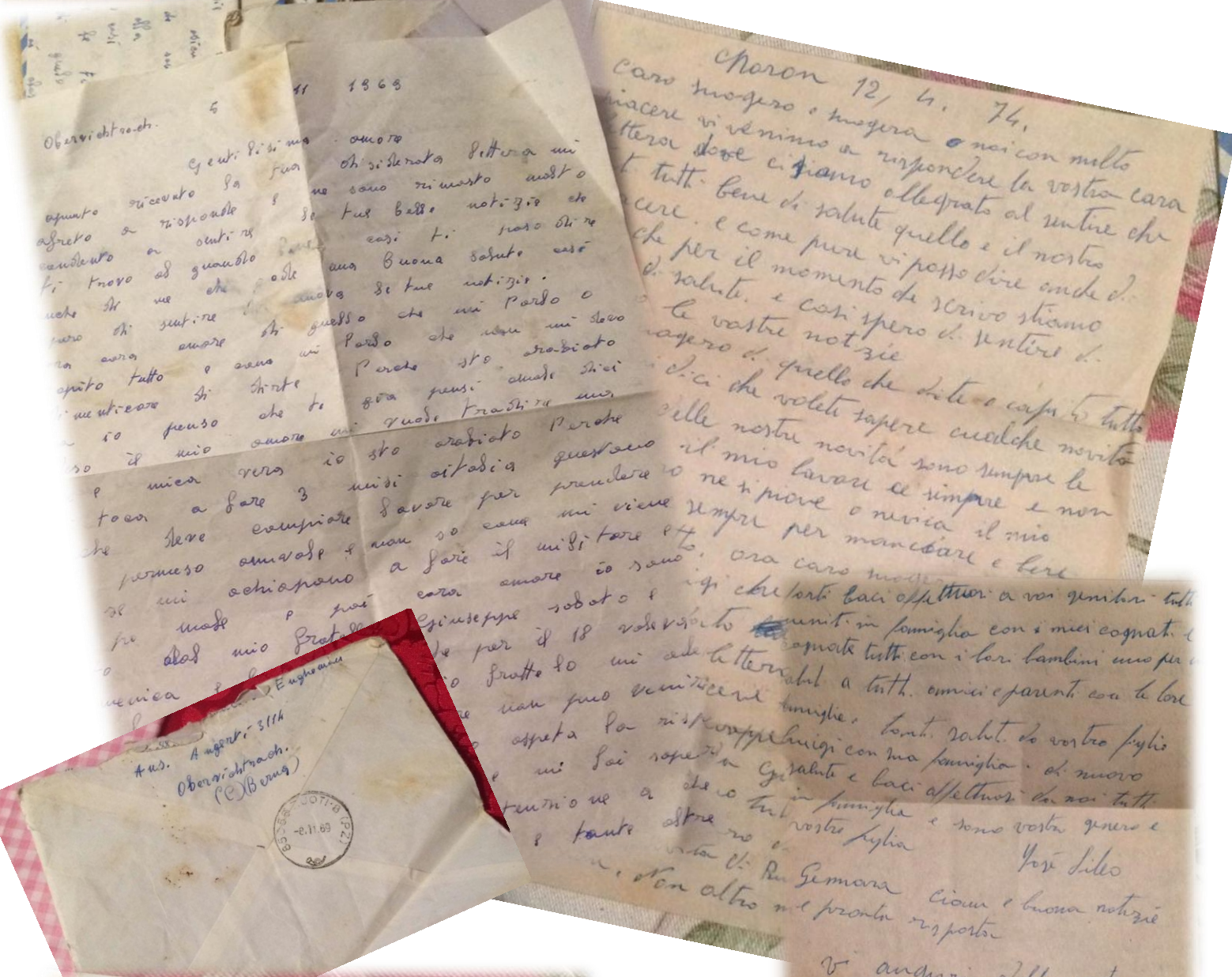
6) Please, describe if and how the migration experience has changed your life.

This experience has totally changed my life 'cause it has taught me that the World is made up of different cultures and traditions that we must accept and respect...and what is typically Italian is not always the best option to choose.

Simone's interview



“Quando uno lascia un paese, tutte le cose acquistano prima della partenza un valore straordinario di ricordo, e ci fanno pregustare la lontananza e la nostalgia.”
 (Corrado Alvaro)



Letter written by granddad Francesco to his future wife Luigina in 1969

...inquis della tomba
 ...Parona,
 ...a Dio



For the International Migrants Day, December 18th, we interviewed a man who has been a migrant for 5 years. He is 57 years old today but has asked to remain anonymous.

Where did you go and when was it?

I went and lived in Algeria for 5 years, between 1982 and 1988.

Why did you go there?

I went to Algeria for my work. I am a carpenter and a metalworker. I needed to have a resident card to continue my work. So I went to Algeria for a “professional adventure”. Over there, I built some train stations for a railway company. I think I made almost 50 stations with my business.

What were the conditions of the travel (and means of transport)?

To go to Algeria, I took the taxi to the Orly airport and then I took the plane to Constantine. I went to the town with a four-wheel drive because the road was very bumpy and damaged.

Did you have difficulties to adapt yourself in Algeria?

The language was difficult at the beginning but the hardest was the climate. Sometimes, the temperature went up to 57°C in the shade!! And that was difficult to eat with foreign people because of the language and the relationship.

What were the differences or common points between France and Algeria?

Well, regulations were almost the same but that was a few years ago, so that may have changed. The days of the week-end change too! In France, it is Saturday and Sunday, but in Algeria it's Friday! In the streets, because of the religion, women wear a headscarf; it can be strange at the beginning. Also, the roads were not the same in Algeria, they are more like paths, it's made with earth and dirt. Finally, the tradition and the lifestyle are not the same because it's a developing country.

Were the departure or arrival difficult?

The departure was the most difficult because I left my family behind... But it went well because there were many people like me who took the plane in Algeria. The arrival in France was a little strange because you feel like a change when you pass from a developing country to France.

What did you think about this experience?

That was a very good experience! I would advise anyone to do this one time in their life! I could go for it again, but I think I'm a little too old now ;)...

Marie Grimault
Anna Castellier

Interview réalisée par Eve et Laura

1) How old are you?

-I'm 60 years old.

2) Where do you come from?

- I come from Portugal, my native country.

3) How old were you when you arrived in France?

- I was 16. I arrived with my father but he returned definitively to Portugal in 1983.

4) Why did your father return to Portugal?

- He returned in Portugal because he was bored but also because he was fed up to be alone because I wanted to « start my life again » and thus study to become an electrician.

5) Do you still have family in Portugal?

- Yes, all my family is over there. On the side of my mother and of my father.

6) Do you want to return to Portugal, even if it's temporary?

- Yes, but never definitively because I have my wife and my children here, in France.

7) Did you have some difficulties to fit in ?

- Actually, I didn't have real difficulties because I started to learn French in my Portuguese school.

8) Where are you from precisely?

- I lived in Vila Real De San Antonio, my native town. It's in the south of Portugal, near Spain.

9) What were the reasons why you went to France?

- It was mainly for political reasons because there was a dictatorship. The dictatorship was directed by Antonio de Oliveira Salazar but he was replaced when he died by Marcelo Caetano.

10) What are the differences with Portugal?

-The big difference is the salary, the minimum wage in Portugal is 500€ whereas, in France the minimum wage is approximately 1100€.

11) Where did you arrive in France?

-My father had a working contract with a French company because at that time, France knew a lack of workforce and we were proposed working contracts, for foreigners (because it was less expensive). The first contract I got was in Perpignan but I didn't like it much and the second was in Châteauneuf sur Sarthe. My father came back to Portugal for holidays and I followed him, sometimes.

12) How many hours were necessary for you to travel to France?

-We made it in one day (between 24 to 30 hours to come to France). When we arrived in Tours, we took the bus and from Tour to Châteauneuf sur Sarthe, a friend's father came to pick us up with his car.



13 Upon arrival, what did you do?

- When I arrived, I worked with my father in a tannery factory, I stayed in this factory during 3 or 4 years. The working conditions were very difficult because the hour of work were not counted, there were days when we worked for 10, 11 or 12 hours in a row.

Thanks to Bento for taking part in this project ERASMUS+ and allowing us to do this interview!



UNE INTERVIEW AVEC DAVID

Bonjour David! Comment allez vous?

Bonjour! Je vais bien, merci.

Alors, d'où venez-vous?

Je viens d'Angleterre.

D'accord, et pourquoi avez-vous quitté votre pays?

J'ai quitté mon pays à cause de ma petite amie française, j'ai décidé de vivre avec elle en France! Et pour mon travail aussi.

Pouvez-vous parler de votre travail en France?

Oui, je suis assistant de professeur d'anglais au lycée Blaise Pascal à Segré pour quelques mois.

Très bien! Et depuis combien de temps êtes vous en France?

Je suis en France depuis 2010.

Quelles sont les différences entre la France et l'Angleterre?

En France nous avons beaucoup de papiers à remplir(la CAF, les impôts...). Et en France je pense que les français veulent que l'on soit comme des français, parler français etc...

Que pensez-vous quand vous dites que «les français veulent que nous soyons des français»?

En France quand nous parlons en anglais dans la rue ou au restaurant, les français nous regardent et pour eux c'est bizarre. Mais beaucoup de français vivent en Angleterre et parlent français et ce n'est pas un problème s'ils parlent français.

D'accord. Mais avez vous rencontré des personnes en France et que vous ont-elles apporté?

J'étais avec ma petite amie bien sûr et je suis très heureux parce que sa famille m'a accepté ! J'ai rencontré des musiciens français et maintenant ce sont mes amis !

C'est très bien ! Voulez vous encore voyager dans le futur ? Et où ?

Oui bien sûr je voudrais aller en Afrique du Sud je voudrais vraiment découvrir ce pays !

D'accord, merci beaucoup David !

AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID

-Hello David! How are you?

-Hello! I'm fine, thank you.

-So, where do you come from?

-I come from England.

-Alright, and why have you left your country?

-I left my country because of my French girlfriend, I decided to live with her in France! And for my job too.

-Can you talk about your job in France?

-Yes, I'm an English teacher assistant in the lycée Blaise Pascal in Segré, for some months.

-Very good! And how long have you been in France?

-I have been here since 2010.

-What are the differences between France and England?

-In France we have a lot of paperwork to fill in. And I think French people need foreigners to be like them, to speak in French etc.

-What do you mean precisely when you say « French need us to be like them»?

-In France when we speak in English in the streets or in the restaurants, French people look at us and for them it's weird. But lots of French people live in England, speak French and it's not a problem for us if they speak French.

-Have you met some French people here and what have they brought to you?

-I was with my girlfriend of course and I'm very happy because her family accepted me! I met some French musicians and now they are all my friends!

-It's very good! Do you want to travel again in the future? If yes, where?

-Yes, of course I want to go to South Africa, I really want to discover this country!

-Alright, thank you very much David

1) Can you please introduce yourself?

My name is Françoise THOMAS, I'm 87 and I live in Bel-Air in France

2) Why did you go in Africa?

I followed my husband Francis in Africa because I loved him. I didn't want to leave him because of his work

3) How long did you stay in Africa?

7 years.

4) What were the main differences between the two countries?

It took me a long time to adapt to the climate and to the food. I've been sick a lot of times.

5) What were the main difficulties?

It's basically the same things: food and climate. But my husband took less time to adapt his body to the climate than me.

6) How was the journey to go to Africa?

It was quite bad. We traveled in a crowded ship and then, on a bus. It was really hard not to feel disappointment.

7) What are the best and the worst memories you keep from your migration?

The best is maybe the objects I brought back from Africa. I brought a caiman and an elephant foot. The worst memory is the fact that I had to leave my friends I made over there.

8) Would you like to go to Africa again?

No, I don't know if my friends from there will recognize me, and without my husband now, it will only bring me sadness.

