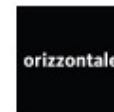




Can an architecture workshop facilitate a dialogue between people of different cultures and backgrounds and positively impact on their mental health?



Crossing Cultures: a qualitative evaluation



Collaborators



Sandra Denicke-Polcher
Deputy Head of Architecture



Outdoor Stage for Kronberg, Germany 2009-11



Mobile Room for London, 2008-09



Made in Hayes, 2012-17

Collaborators



CITY UNIVERSITY
LONDON

Dr. Corinna Haenschel

Academic and Clinical Psychologist at Department of Psychology, City, University of London

My expertise is in patient and student mental health, working and autobiographical memory and neuroscience.

Initiated this project with Sandra!

Federica Calissano

UG-Psychology Student at City, University of London



Federica has just finished the transcription of the interviews, is in the process of analysing the data and will take a lead in the writing up of the data

Collaborators



Dr. Domenico Giacco
Academic and Clinical Psychiatrist
at Warwick Medical School



Mental health promotion and mental health care in refugees and migrants

Technical guidance

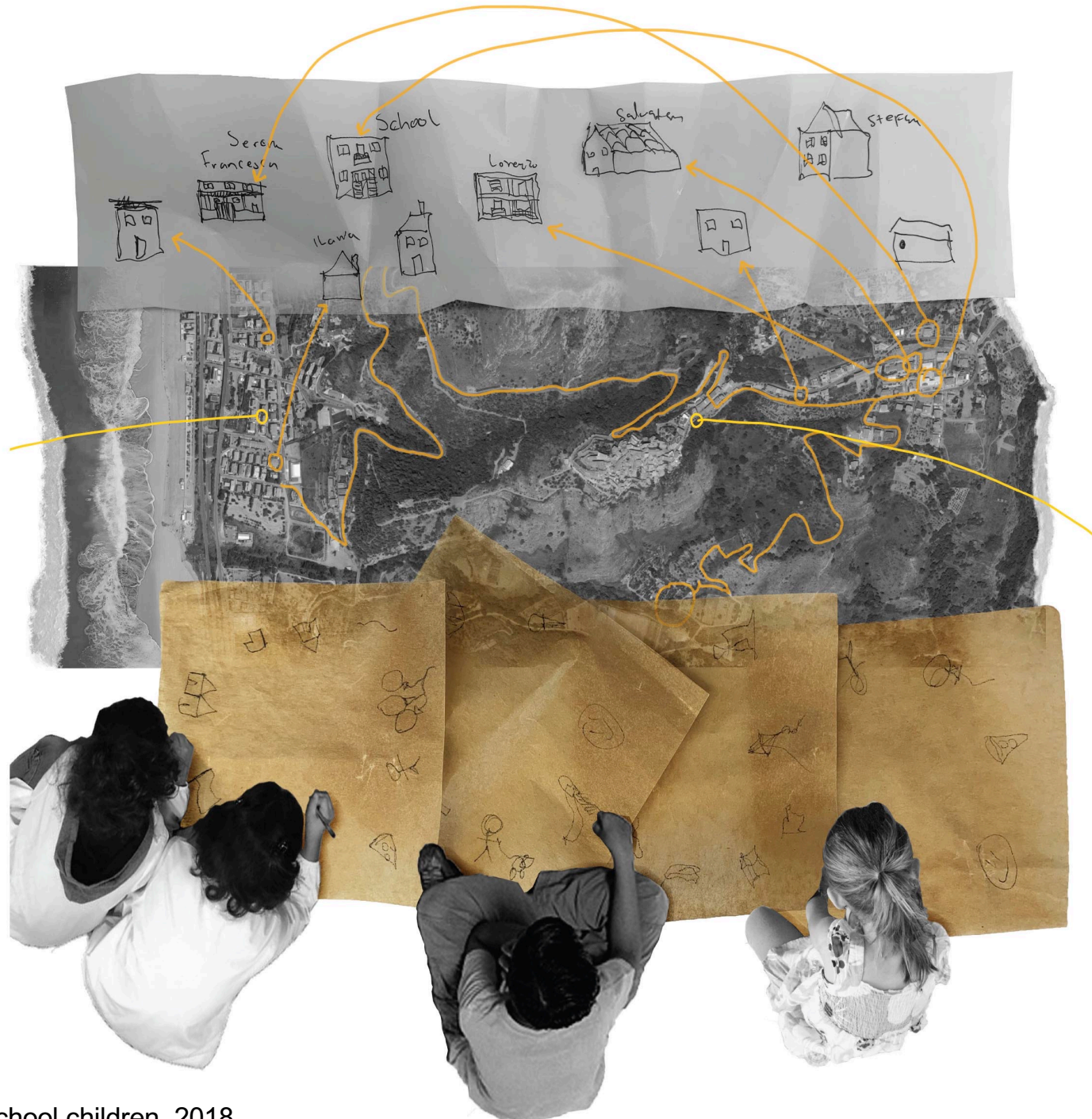


This project is funded by
the European Commission.





Summer Workshop, 2017



Workshop with local school children, 2018



A formal agreement to collaborate (MoU Signing Event in Belmonte, 2017)







Belmonte Calabro, old town



Summer events, 2017

Afganistan
Bangladesh
Ghana
Gambia
Libya
Mali
Nigeria
Pakistan
Senegal
Somalia



Afganistan
Bangladesh
Ghana
Gambia
Libya
Mali
Nigeria
Pakistan
Senegal
Somalia



Asia Australia Middle East Africa Inequality Cities Global development

This article is more than 5 months old

Battle with time: Italian towns face demise by depopulation

Small Sicilian villages reflect the shifting demographics of economic migration and declining birth rates



▲ Most of the people in Acquaviva Platani are over 60 years old. Photograph: Alessio Mamo/The Guardian

Read The Guardian without interruption on all your devices

Subscribe now

most viewed

Prince Harry and Meg step back from royal f

Live Trump says 'Iran appears to be standing down' following missile strikes - live

Too woke? Nope - Doc Who is more offensive ever

2019

Asia Australia Middle East Africa Inequality Cities Global development

'They are our salvation': the Sicilian town revived by refugees

With an ageing, fast-shrinking population, Sutera saw Italy's migrant influx as an opportunity



Read The Guardian without interruption on all your devices

Subscribe now

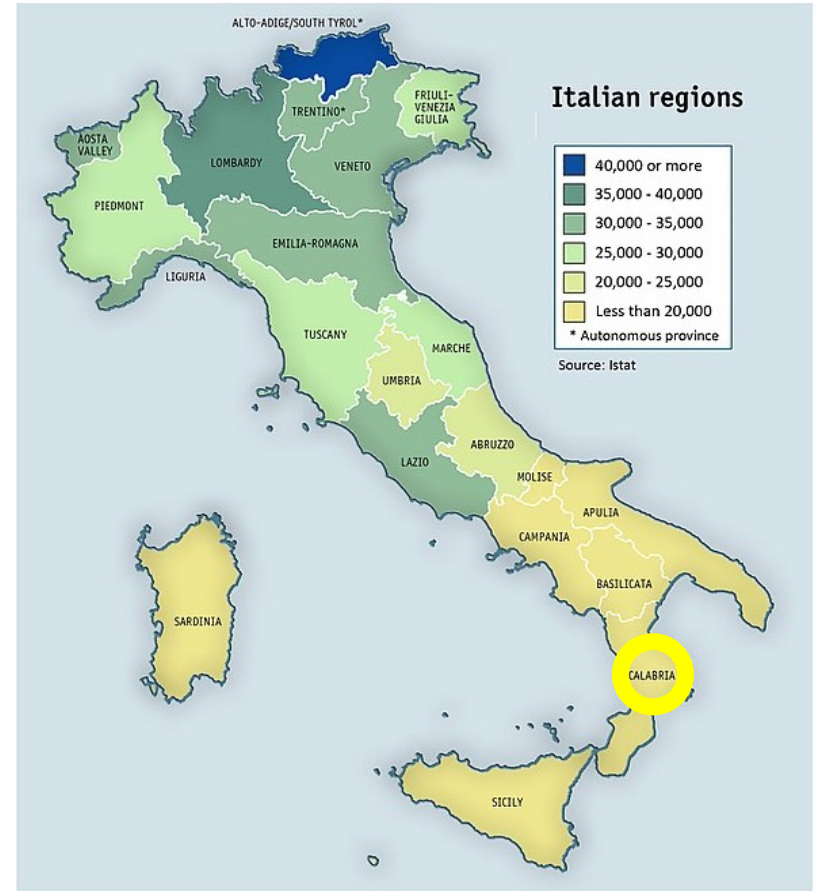
most viewed

Prince Harry and M step back from roya

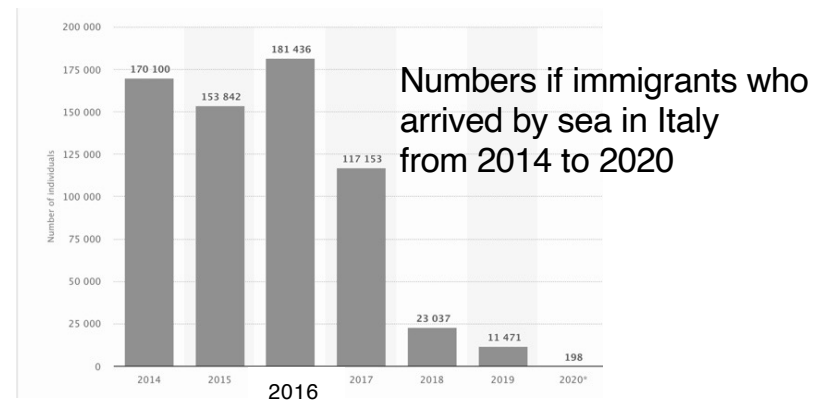
Live Trump says 'Ir appears to be stand down' following missile strikes - live

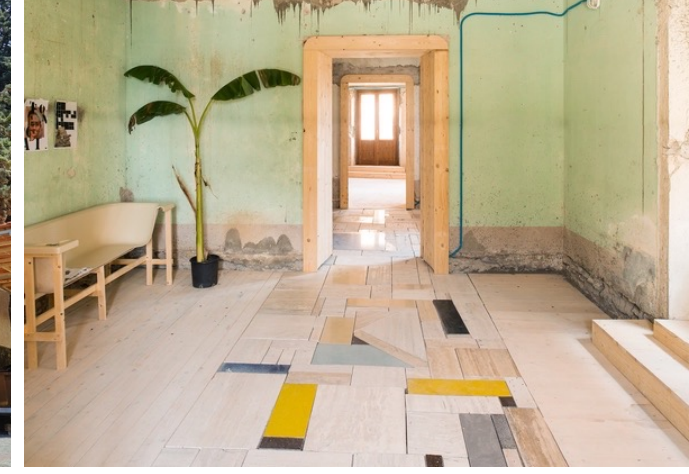
Too woke? Nope - D Who is more offens

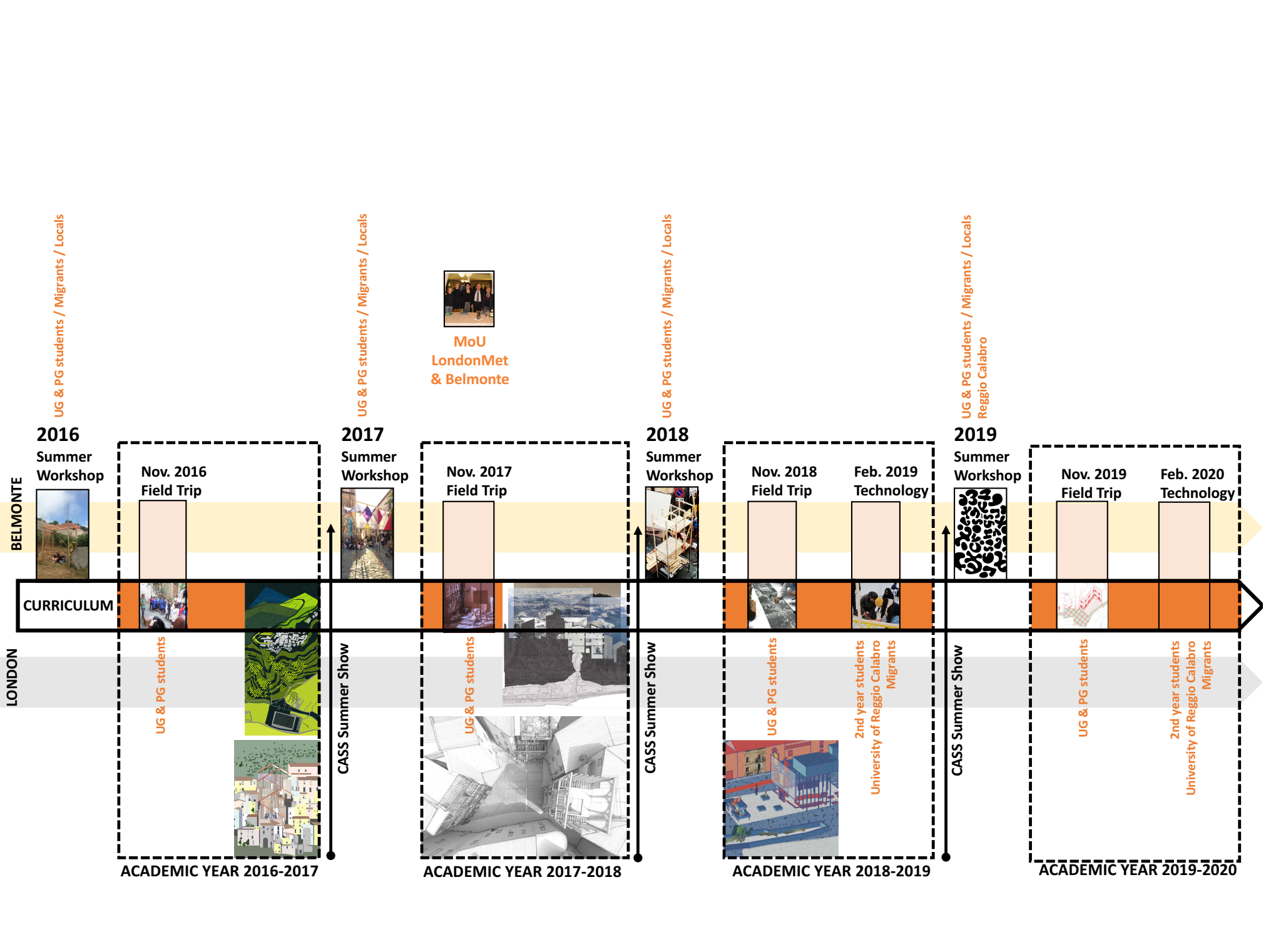
2018

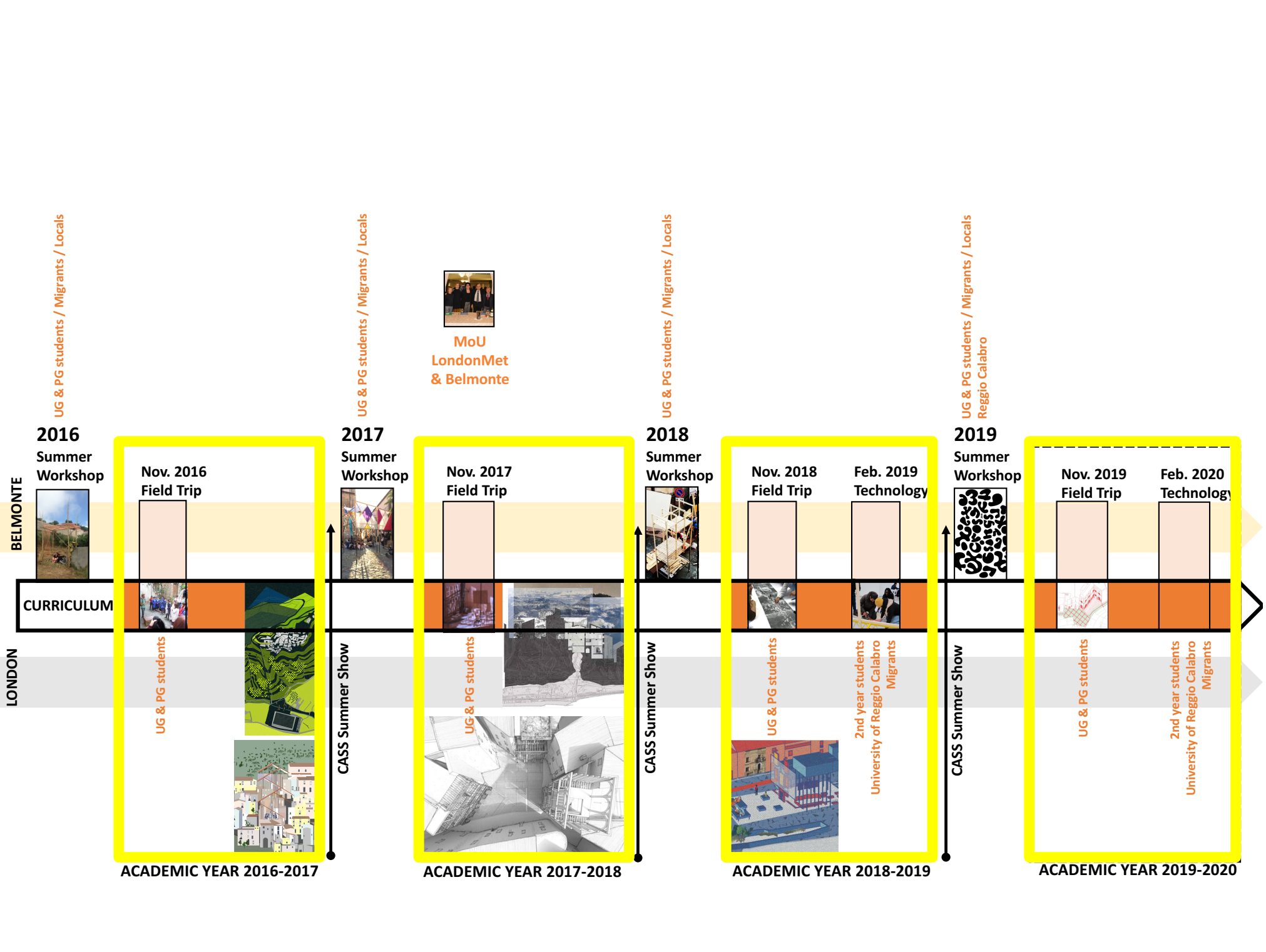


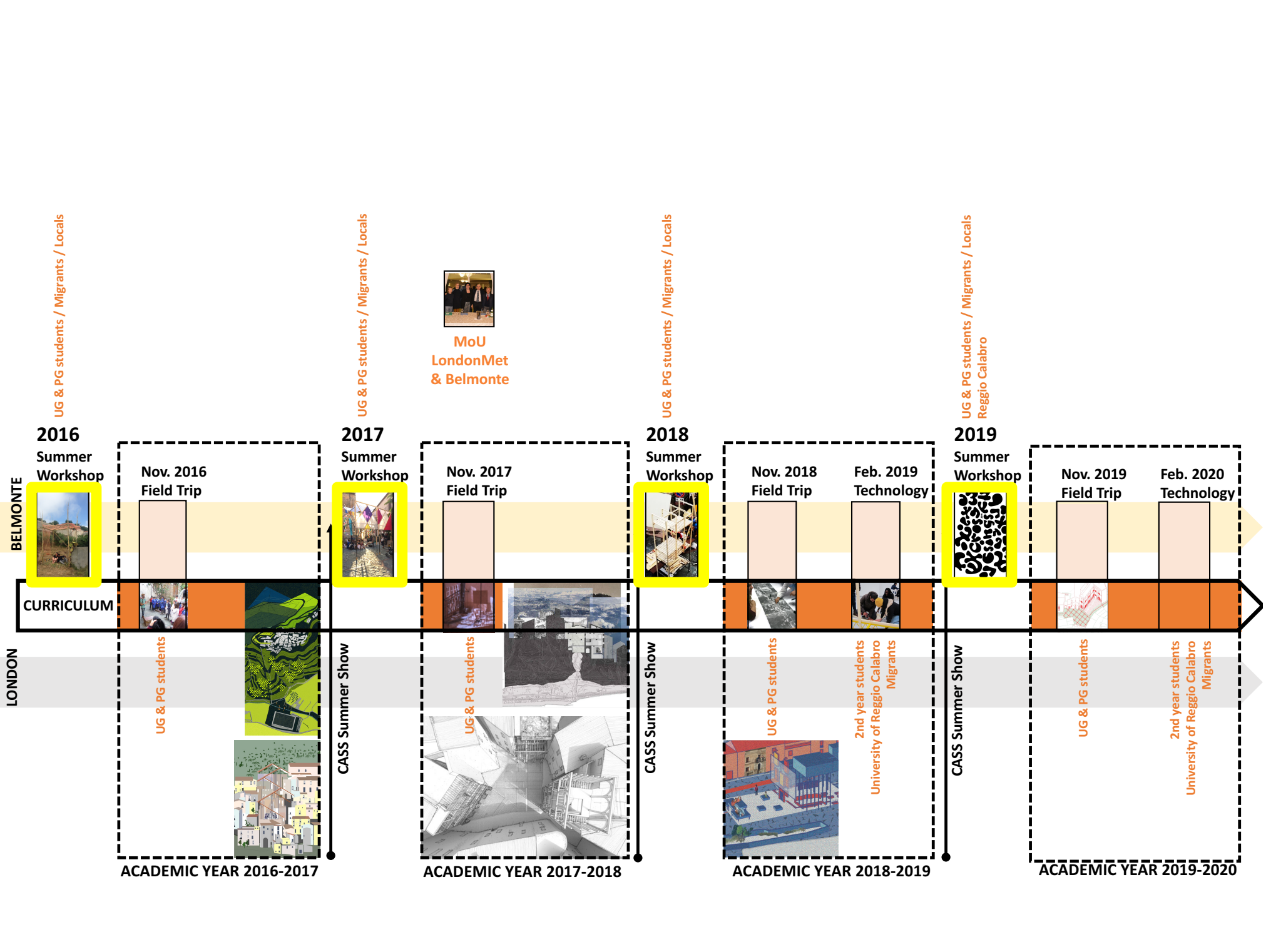
Calabria has the lowest GDP per capita behind Sicily













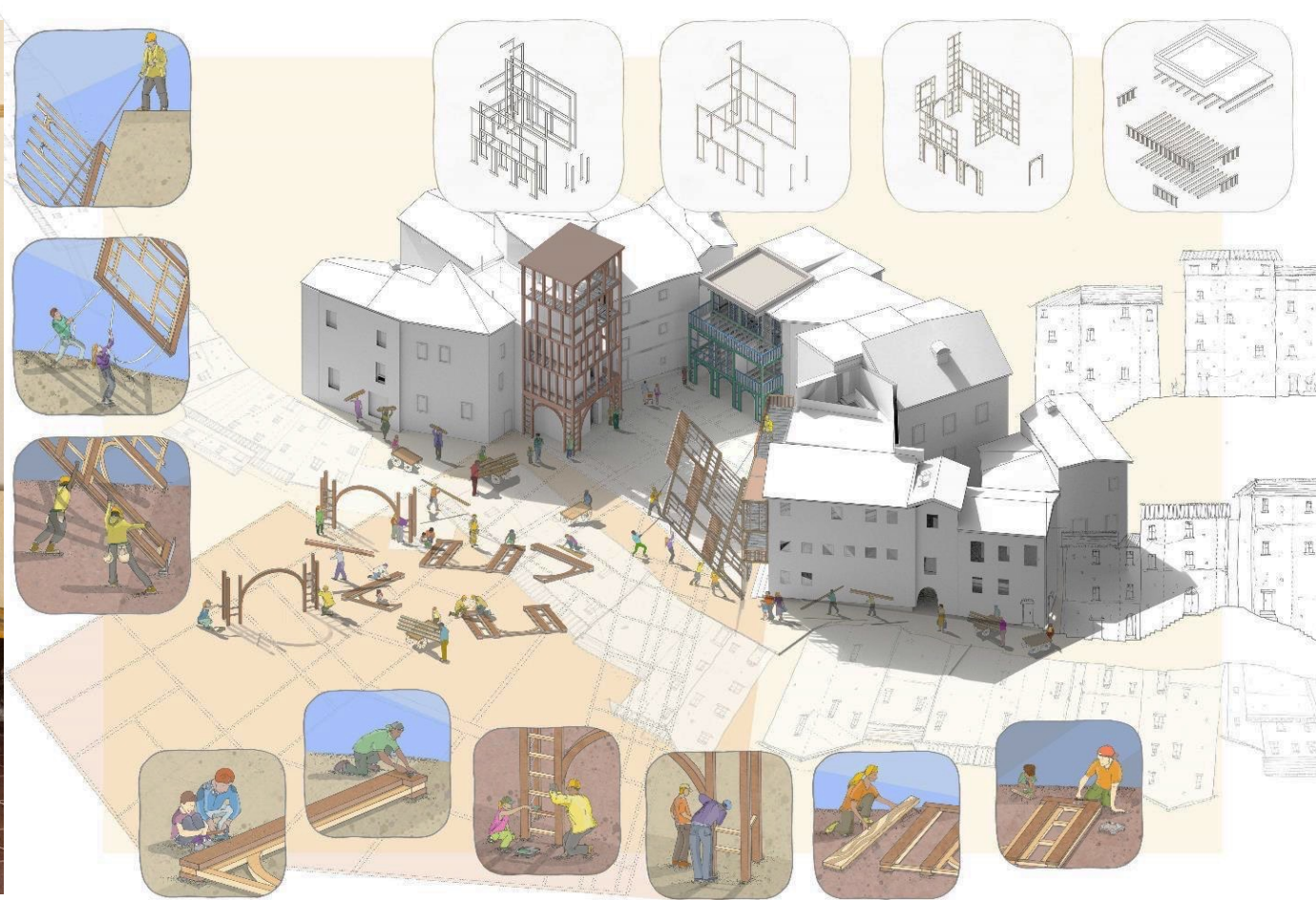
Meis Alsaegh, 2017



Summer Workshop, 2017



Summer exhibition, 2018



Maya Shankla, 2018



WORKSHOP A BELMONTE

BGR



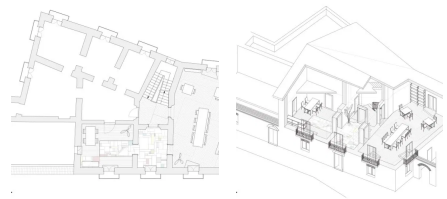
WORKSHOP A BELMONTE



WORKSHOP A BELMONTE

BGR

Making Workshop, February 2019



Casa di Belmondo
Collaboration Rooms

The *collaboration rooms* in *CASA di BELMONDO* were created in the 2019 edition of *Crossings Belmonte*, a research and education project of the cultural association *Le Seppie*, together with the Italian architect collective *orizzontale* and *The Sir John Cass School of Art, Architecture and Design (The Cass)*, and the local cultural association *Ex Convento*.



A growing network

- July 2016: 7 staff, 13 students & graduates, 10 refugees
- Nov 2016: 2 staff, 6 students, school children, 6 refugees
- July 2017: 2 staff, 7 students & graduates, 15 refugees
- Nov 2017: 2 staff, 21 students, school children, 5 refugees
- July 2018: 4 staff, 11 students & graduates, 10 refugees, 3 external participants
- Nov 2018: 2 staff, 15 students, 8 refugees
- Feb 2019: LondonMet: 3 staff, 10 students; UniRC: 3 staff, 10 students, 4 refugees
- July 2019: LondonMet: 2 Staff, 8 students & graduates, 15 refugees, 20 external students & professionals**
- Nov 2019: 2 staff, 1 PhD student, 23 students & graduates, 5 refugees



Community Dinner, Summer Workshop 2017



Community Dinner organised by the villagers 2019



Some people might be thinking that we are just ‘playing around’, but these people don’t know that this is a serious matter, and that – if you just have very little financial support and you put all the things we experienced here together – you can go on and achieve so much.

(Bright Ugiagbe, Nigerian migrant, Summer Workshop, 2017)



Starting point: Can an architecture workshop facilitate a dialogue between people of different cultures and backgrounds?

Our Study - Background

- Most research has identified refugees as “vulnerable” people who are at higher risk of physical and health problems or social marginalisation.
- However, we have observed that often they have no physical or health problems and have shown great resilience in facing very difficult environmental and personal conditions during migration.
- Many of them also have sets of skills which they usually struggle to apply in a new country.
- Western societies and countries could make use of such resilience and skills.
- There are some precedents in using Arts to foster a dialogue across cultures; but this has not been applied to Architecture.
- **From observation to evaluation:
What are the experiences and benefits of the workshop?**

Our Study - Aims

Using interviews to investigate the benefits of the workshop in more detail.

The screenshot displays the 'Research Ethics Online' interface. At the top left is the City University of London logo (EST 1894). The top right corner features the text 'Research Ethics Online'. Below this is a navigation bar with a search box labeled 'Quick search', and buttons for 'Search', 'Browse', 'Recent', and 'Add'. On the right side of the navigation bar are 'Tray 2', 'Tasks 1', the user name 'Corinna Haenschel' with a settings gear icon, and a 'Help' button.

The main content area shows a project entry titled 'Crossing cultures: a qualitative evaluation'. To the right of the title are 'Edit' and 'Download' buttons. Below the title, there are three icons: a cube labeled 'Project', a chain of three circles, and a document icon.

On the left side, there are two sections: 'Home' and 'Guides'. Under 'Guides', there is a table with the following information:

Title	Crossing cultures: a qualitative evaluation	Ethics
Researcher	Dr Corinna Haenschel	

Methods and Analysis

Methods: Topic guides for the interviews included an ice-breaker followed by questions about the perceived impact of the workshop:

- *How did participants hear about the workshop?*
- *Did they have the chance to be involved in the workshop? If yes, how?*
- *What do they think are the benefits of the workshop (for their town)?*
- *Are there downsides?*

Analysis: Transcription of interviews and content analysis (Elo & Kangas)



25 interviews with locals, refugees & students, 2019



“Your research, point of view and way of thinking about this village is very important for us, because it is different to the Italian way of seeing things. The community of Belmonte would not have been able to believe and see things, as it can now.”

(Luigi Provenzano, Vice-Mayor)



I learned to appreciate that other people have much more to contribute... The more I do this [work], the more I appreciate that people can contribute to things that, at first, I didn't recognise.

(Cass student, 2019)



[I'm here] because it gives me many experiences to meet with people I don't know ... you would not know about my culture if meeting [me] on the street, ... [here] you are not afraid of me.

(Refugee, 2019)

Preliminary Analysis: Connecting

1- “Living together” – importance of residential stay and informal contacts

- *we [...] made friends with the locals at the bar, we used to get to the bars in the evenings and play cards with the local men, which is a good way to connect with them.*

2- Working together (as equals)

- *It is a big thing for me. It is a big experience, because when I meet you, I want to know you and be close with each other. I don't want you to be afraid of me. Here we are all curious about each other. If I meet you, I can share a lot with you. It is a big experience for me.*
- *really great that there are no colour differences, and everyone is working together. And even the girls working on the constructions and guys working together, that is not very common in [country].*

3- Making home – getting to know the place

- *This concept of the refugees coming here now [...], and they are willing to create a home here and if we are providing them with the possibilities.*

4- Understanding and respecting differences

- *I think one of the differences was with the food. Some migrants do not eat pork so this should be taken into account.*

Preliminary Analysis: Benefits

1- Creating a space for connection

- *I think the project, the workshop helps to develop that relationship as we are building and renovating a house now and I think that is where is the space for people to continuously come throughout the year, then it will continue to grow as a place.*

2- Revitalising local resources

- *The workshops provide Belmonte with the opportunity to experience different activities ... In addition, the village starts to be populated and there is both a commercial and cultural exchange.*

3- Promoting attention to deprived towns

- *Belmonte needs more visibility and we need to publicise it more as it is a really beautiful place.*

4- Broadening horizons

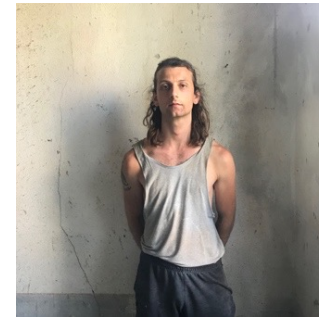
- *The workshops are really innovative. Participants provide new perspectives, different from the ones that we are used to see and live.*

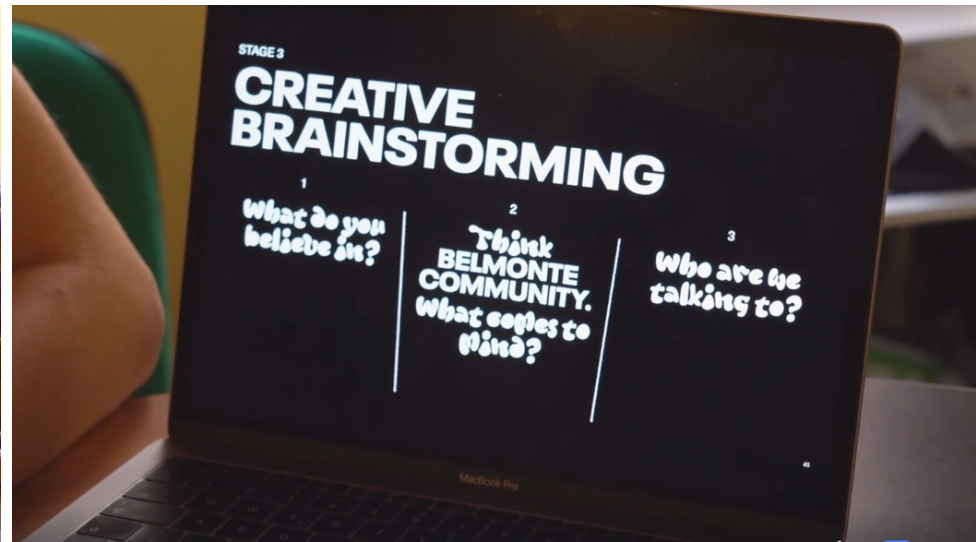
5- Re-gaining or practising skills

- *I am a tailor as profession, and I was helping downstairs with the flag.*

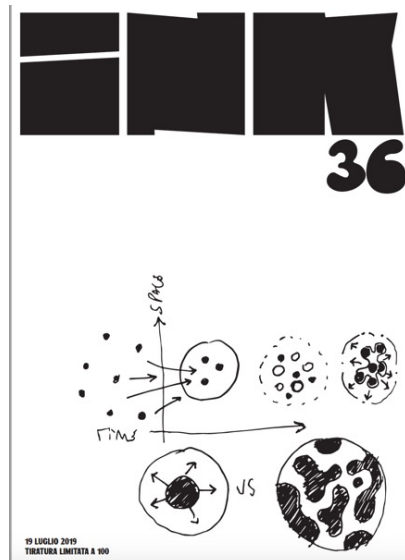
Summary: Preliminary ingredients for a successful integration?

- **Locals:**
Commercial aspects, but also positive influence to enable change
- **Students:**
Hands-on Experience, but also working in a diverse group broadens the horizon
- **Refugees:**
Connecting as equals, sense of belonging to a community and making home





The construction work was complemented by a workshop led by Matteo Blandford.



Fanzine "Ink 36"

Belmondo is an imaginary place, a new place, a place that lives on the meeting of three different communities in a specific time frame. A *Big Bang* generated by the needs of those who live there: from those looking for a home, from those who build a new one and from those who want to see it differently.

Belmondo è un luogo immaginario, un posto nuovo, un luogo che vive nell'incontro di tre diverse comunità in un determinato periodo di tempo. Un *Big Bang* generato dai bisogni di chi ci vive: da chi cerca una casa, da chi ne costruisce una nuova e da chi vuole vederla in modo diverso.



Y
E
C
R
E
S



LA FONDIARIA

FARMACIA



BELMONTE SENEGAL



As we pass through we find something that belongs to us. We feel at **HOME** with what we recognize. The foreshortening on the sea is the same as that seen by Omar from Goré island, the silence is the same as the winters spent in Africa when children were the only ones with the grandparents to stay in the village, the embroidered doilies like those on the table of their grandmother, the smell of Marisa's wine cellar, her brazier, the plastic chairs around the table football are the same. We discover a shared **SYMBOLISM** that accumulates in our differences.



SYMBOLISM



Summary and Outlook



*Home is a site of memory
and meaning...*

(Edwin Heathcote,
The meaning of Home 2014)

- The preliminary analysis have identified some important topics.
- It became apparent that these workshops foster a dialogue across cultures
- Create a social climate and a sense of community that facilitates integration and empowerment for the refugees.
- **In order to develop this model, we will need to evaluate this in a larger group.**
- **This will also allow us to include focus on for instance resilience, the building of a sense of community, and autobiographical memories in the making.**
- Next steps: Grants to evaluate on large scale, generalise findings in order to create societal impact, influence policy making



SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- Increase knowledge of the migrants/refugees' issue across the EU;
- Learn how to promote social inclusion and intercultural exchange;
- Develop new ideas to help migrants/refugees;
- Promote European values and intercultural dialogue, and tackle social exclusion;
- Understand the effects of migration;
- Challenge prevailing ideas about the 'refugee crisis' and develop different perspectives.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Establishing new ways and ideas for promoting common European values, intercultural dialogue and tackle social exclusion with a focus on non-EU refugee and asylum seeking communities.
- Acquiring new skills for training teachers, mentors, trainers in migration issues, community workers and leaders.
- Equipping participants with the necessary intercultural awareness and communication skills they need to relate with people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (with a focus on refugees).
- Acquiring on-the-job skills to be able to deal in a better way with issues affecting migrants and refugees.
- Developing a different perspective on common issues affecting most European Countries.

MOBILITIES

Year	Education and Employability	Year
October	Women and Unaccompanied Minors	October
Spain	Policies and Perceptions	November

RE-THINKING MIGRATION

from current realities to future challenges

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The aim of the project is to send staff from the participating UK organisations for a mobility abroad to attend a 1-week professional development course on the topics of forced migration, welcoming of migrants, education, employability, inclusion and mental health issues.

The aim is to help staff from the participating organisations to gain a greater understanding of issues that affect non-EU migrants and people with disadvantaged backgrounds when integrating within European cities.

We also seek to understand the effects of migration management practices on people on the move:

- How do these practices affect displaced people's trajectories in Europe?
- What are the mental health issues that many of these people face?
- What are the opportunities of employability which migrants and refugees can take advantage of?

The project includes partner organisations from Italy, Spain and Greece, who host the participants and deliver the training.

A week of stimulating, engaged discussions facilitated by practitioners and academics, workshops, collaborative activities, and field visits where participants could see, first-hand, the on-the-ground reality of migration, and to speak with refugees, asylum-seekers, and migrants – as well as those working to help them in the resettlement process.

"I think that we have been honest... This hasn't been about trying to look at migration through rose-tinted glasses, there have been as many horror stories as there have been stories about positive grassroots and individual response. But overall, the very will to make a difference and to change the negatives in the migration story – overwhelmingly is coming out in favour, so I'm left with hope."

MOBILITY 1: CALABRIA, ITALY

Education & Employability
June 2019

Topics covered include:

- Historic perspective on migration
- Border policies in Europe
- Narrative around migration
- Role of social media
- Economic migration
- Integrating refugees
- Mental health
- Practitioner & institutional solutions

In the words of one of the workshop participants, the week has been:

Inspiring
Thought-provoking
Empowering
Discouraging
All-encompassing



RI-GENERAZIONI

CONTRO LO SPOPOLAMENTO E PER LA RIQUALIFICAZIONE DEI BORGHI ANTICHI

SABATO 16 NOVEMBRE 2019

PRESENTAZIONE

RENATO CAFORIO | PRESIDENTE CENTRO DI SOLIDARIETÀ IL DELFINO
 ROSSELLA GIORDANO | ASSESSORE AL TURISMO COMUNE DI MENDICINO
 IGNAZIO GIORDANO | ASSESSORE ALLE POLITICHE SOCIALI COMUNE DI MENDICINO

PROIEZIONE VIDEO: CROSSINGS 2019 | A CURA DEL "LA RIVOLUZIONE DELLE SEPIE"

INTERVENTI

RITA ELVIRA ADAMO | CO-FONDATRICE ASS.NE CULTURALE "LE SEPIE"
 OTTAVIO AMARO | DIRETTORE GENERALE UNIVERSITÀ MEDITERRANEA DI REGGIO CALABRIA
 FRANCESCO BRUNO | SINDACO COMUNE DI BELMONTE
 SANDRA DENICKE POLCHER | AND JANE McALLISTER – LONDON METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
 GIUSEPPE GRANT | ARCHITETTO COLLETTIVO "ORIZZONTALE"
 HOSSAIN RAJIB | OSPITE CENTRO ACCOGLIENZA COMUNE DIPIGNANO
 MARINA TORNATORA | LABORATORIO LANDSCAPE IN PROGRESS DELLA UNIVERSITÀ MEDITERRANEA DI REGGIO CALABRIA

CONCLUSIONI

ANTONIO PALERMO | SINDACO DI MENDICINO
 MARIO OLIVERIO | PRESIDENTE REGIONE CALABRIA

TEATRO COMUNALE | VIA OTTAVIO GRECO - MENDICINO

BELMONDO

[Short film](#)