



CIVIS Alliance – Open Lab Project

Impact Assessment Report

01 – PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Title of the project	STORM - Stories of Migrants. Building Memories, Learning Peace
Project coordinator	Alessandra Vitullo - Sapienza University of Rome (alessandra.vitullo@uniroma1.it)
Universities involved	Proponent: Sapienza University of Rome. CIVIS partners: University of Bucharest; Universidad Autonoma de Madrid.
Hub theme	Society, Culture, Heritage
Duration of activities	June 2025 – June 2026
Place of activities	Rome; Bucharest

02 – PARTNERS/TARGET AUDIENCE

Number of internal and external stakeholders involved in and impacted by the project

INTERNAL (All CIVIS universities)				EXTERNAL (All CIVIS cities/regions)	
Academics	Researchers	Students	Admin personnel	Citizens	Other - please specify
13	4	200+	6	300+	Website/Instagram - 10.000+

Non-university associations and organisations that have been involved in the project.

Name	Country	Description
Archivio Memorie Migranti	Italy	Migration-memory archive, museum and education organisation.
Arci Gay Roma	Italy	NGO promoting LGBTQI+ rights and combating discrimination.
Associazione Nuova Generazione Italo-Cinese (ANGI)	Italy	Association supporting Chinese-Italian participation and integration.
Baobab Experience	Italy	NGO providing reception, housing and services for migrants.

Name	Country	Description
Be Free	Italy	Anti-violence social cooperative and NGO.
Binario 15 ODV	Italy	Volunteer organisation supporting migrants and asylum seekers.
Confronti	Italy	Interfaith and intercultural magazine and publishing organisation.
CONNGI	Italy	National network of young people with migrant backgrounds.
COSPE	Italy / international	International NGO promoting rights, inclusion and social justice.
Vito Fiorino	Italy	Civic witness and rescuer involved in the Lampedusa response.
Fondazione Pangea Onlus	Italy / international	International NGO promoting women's rights and empowerment.
IoStoria APS	Italy	Association supporting psychosocial and community well-being.
Linea d'Ombra	Italy	NGO providing humanitarian assistance along the Balkan route.
Maghweb	Italy	NGO working in communication, training and social justice.
Mediterranean Hope	Italy / Mediterranean	Refugee and migrant programme active in the Mediterranean.
Nove Caring Humans - Onlus	Italy / international	International NGO working on development, inclusion and humanitarian support.
One Bridge To	Italy / Balkan route	Grassroots organisation providing direct aid and documenting border conditions.
Radio Popolare Milano	Italy	Independent radio broadcaster and project media partner.
Rete Milano ODV	Italy	Volunteer network providing emergency support to migrants in transit.
Rete Vesuviana Solidale	Italy	Grassroots network promoting solidarity and social inclusion.
Rete nazionale per il contrasto ai fenomeni e ai discorsi d'odio	Italy	National network countering hate speech and related phenomena.
SOS Mediterranee	Italy / Europe	European maritime search-and-rescue NGO.
Sportello Intercultura Gaycenter	Italy	Service supporting LGBTQI+ migrants.
WeWorld - Ventimiglia	Italy	NGO programme supporting migrants and asylum seekers at the Ventimiglia border.
Jesuit Refugee Service	Romania	International NGO supporting refugees, asylum seekers and migrant integration.
The Romanian Council for Refugees (CNRR)	Romania	NGO supporting refugees and asylum seekers; ECRE member and Romanian coordinator of the European Legal Network on Asylum (ELENA).
International Organization for Migration (IOM), UN Migration	Romania	Intergovernmental organisation supporting migration governance, migrant protection and social inclusion.
Romanian Forum for Refugees and Migrants (ARCA)	Romania	NGO supporting refugees, migrants and social integration in Romania.

03 – PROJECT IMPACT

Social dimension

STORM strengthened social inclusion by recognising migrants and their descendants as partners in knowledge production rather than solely as research subjects. Through a participatory and ethically grounded process, contributors shared personal narratives, oral histories, everyday objects and digital traces while retaining control over what was disclosed, how it was contextualised and what remained private. The project connected three CIVIS universities with 28 external associations and organisations, involving academics, researchers, students, migrant communities, NGOs, cultural operators, media partners and international organisations. This cross-sector network enhanced mutual learning, opened new channels of cooperation and challenged marginalising narratives by presenting migration as a constitutive part of European history and society.

The participatory collection process was supported by an ethical and data-protection framework suited to personal testimonies, oral histories and potentially sensitive migration experiences. Contributors retained control over what was recorded, how their stories were framed, whether their identities were disclosed and which materials could be made public. The process applied informed consent, purpose limitation and data minimisation in line with applicable GDPR requirements. Where appropriate, materials could be anonymised or assigned differentiated access conditions, and contributors could request withdrawal or restriction in accordance with the consent arrangements.

Twenty-five students contributed directly to project implementation as core collaborators. In addition, more than 150 students from the International Global Humanities BA programme at Sapienza participated in dissemination and learning activities. The three-day programme organised in Bucharest from 1 to 3 April involved approximately 100 bachelor's and master's students from the Faculty of Geography and six PhD candidates serving on the organising committee. Overall, the project involved more than 200 students through direct collaboration, lectures, workshops and dissemination activities.

Among the 13 core student collaborators based in Italy, 10 had a migrant background or direct family migration experience, reinforcing the project's participatory and inclusive character.

Students participating in STORM activities in Italy received 12 ECTS through formally recognised curricular activities that contributed to their degree requirements. This recognition embedded civic engagement, participatory research and community-based learning within their academic pathways and provided a concrete incentive for sustained involvement.



During the first two months of dissemination, the English-language website and Instagram page generated more than 10,000 contacts, extending the project's reach to an international audience. Dissemination was further strengthened through coverage by the media partner Radio Popolare and the national newspaper La Repubblica.

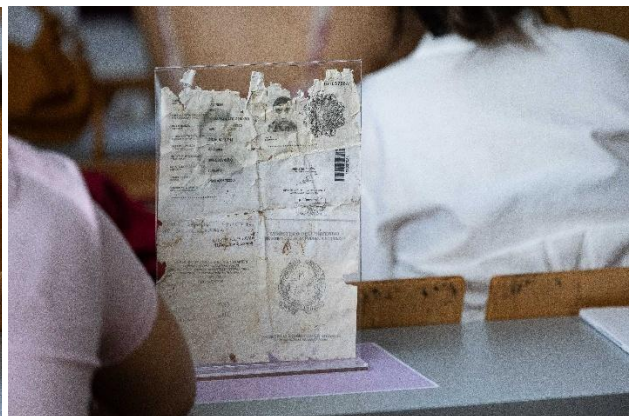
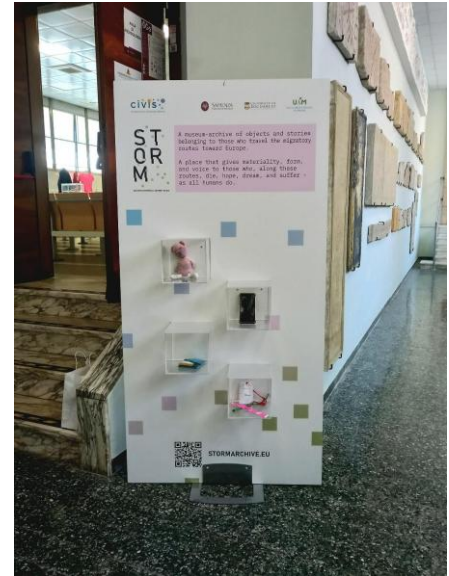
An English-language booklet was produced with project partner and publisher Confronti. Available free of charge online and also orderable through the publisher's website, it provides a durable dissemination resource that remains accessible beyond the project's events.

The final event in Rome on 26 June 2026 gathered more than 100 participants representing at least 10 ethnic and migrant communities.

Cultural dimension

The project created a digital and physical museum-archive of contemporary migration to Europe, connecting the online archive (stormarchive.eu) with a temporary installation hosted at Sapienza University of Rome until 31 October 2026.

The collection includes approximately 40 objects associated with migration routes, including phones, clothing, documents, photographs, religious items and domestic artefacts. Materials were gathered through participatory documentation and awareness-raising activities hosted in the premises and community spaces of the 28 NGOs and civil-society organisations involved in Italy and in spaces made available by the University of Bucharest. The collection process was also integrated into more than 10 lectures, workshops and project presentations at partner universities, linking object-based documentation, oral-history methods and higher-education teaching across the CIVIS network.



STORM's methodology is based on the co-production of knowledge rather than the extraction of information. The collection of stories was therefore designed as a participatory process and as a series of encounters and dialogues with people who have migration backgrounds, allowing memory to emerge as a collective construction. Before collecting testimonies and objects, the 13 student collaborators based in Italy were trained by project teaching staff in qualitative sociological research methods, interviewing and ethical documentation.

The English-language website and Instagram page present the provenance, history and attribution of objects in relation to the routes they travelled. By combining scientifically grounded information on contemporary migration with the personal histories connected to those routes, the project makes the collection accessible to both specialist and general audiences.

The English-language booklet produced with the cultural association Confronti complements the digital archive and exhibition by cataloguing the objects and the stories associated with them. Available free of charge at <https://www.stormarchive.eu/storm-booklet/>, it supports circulation among universities, schools, NGOs, cultural institutions and interested citizens and provides a reusable resource for educational and dissemination activities.

Project progress, critical issues and possible future developments were reviewed through a stakeholder round table held during the final event in Rome on 26 June 2026. The discussion involved the participating universities, partner organisations and other stakeholders and served as a collective evaluation and forward-planning exercise.



Economic dimension

The network generated concrete prospects for follow-on exhibitions, educational programmes, internships, community-curation activities and further funded collaborations. Together with partner associations, the consortium explored funding calls aimed at replicating and scaling the STORM methodology and museum model, with the longer-term objective of establishing a permanent museum space in which objects and testimonies could be displayed alongside the multimedia content already available through the online archive.

Two funding proposals had been submitted and were awaiting evaluation at the time of reporting. The project also requested support under Sapienza's Extraordinary Strategic Plan for Third Mission activities to consolidate the archive, expand public-engagement outputs and strengthen medium-term financial sustainability. No direct financial revenue or new employment has been documented to date. The principal economic value lies in leveraged partnerships, in-kind contributions, reusable digital infrastructure and the potential to attract future funding.

To the project team's knowledge, STORM is the first initiative in Italy designed to develop a permanent museum specifically dedicated to contemporary migration. Further funding would enable the collection of additional objects and testimonies and the identification and fitting-out of a permanent venue. Even without immediate additional funding, activities can continue at limited cost through the partner network, which can host temporary or travelling initiatives, while student internships can support documentation and archival work. A permanent museum, however, will require a detailed sustainability plan, governance model and cost estimate.

Added value for the beneficiaries

For migrants and their descendants, STORM provides a space to encounter personal and family histories, reconnect with fragmented roots, transmit memory across generations and exercise agency over representation. For wider European societies, it offers concrete tools for challenging exclusionary narratives and understanding migration as part of Europe's shared cultural heritage. Through preparatory training and the use of qualitative methods for interviews, oral-history documentation and critical reflection, participating students developed research, communication and ethical-documentation skills. Their engagement with communities created a reciprocal process of memory restitution: community members contributed interviews and meaningful objects while recognising the value of preserving these materials for public understanding, belonging and collective identity.

STORM contributes to the construction of a shared European cultural heritage grounded in lived experiences, memories and stories shaped by mobility. Europe is approached not as a fixed political or geographical entity, but as a space historically and continuously produced through encounters, crossings and migrations. The project's core premise is that migration is not only an emergency to be managed, but a constitutive force in European history. The resulting archive of stories, voices, objects, images and digital traces therefore functions as a space of recognition, belonging and public learning.

More than 10 events were held at the premises of participating associations and organisations. A three-day programme was also organised at the University of Bucharest and partner venues, including a visit to the IOM office in Braşov; three events were held at Sapienza University of Rome; and three meetings took place during Refugee Week in Italy.

Taken together, project activities involved more than 300 people and participants from at least 10 migrant communities, increasing public awareness, creating opportunities for direct participation and connecting academic learning with community-based knowledge.

Until 31 October 2026, a temporary installation at the Faculty of Humanities of Sapienza University provides students and visitors with access to selected objects and their stories and introduces the methodological and social framework of the project.



The booklet and the Sapienza installation extend dissemination beyond the formal end of project activities and maintain engagement with the student community and the wider public. Through the website, users across Europe can continue to access information and personal accounts relating to contemporary migration and explore an initial digital and museological presentation of objects connected to Europe's recent migration history.

Relevance to the context

The project is relevant at local, national and international levels. Locally, it connects universities and educational spaces with migrant communities and civil-society organisations. Nationally, it responds to Italy's role as a country of arrival and transit and mobilises a network of 28 organisations operating in different territories. Internationally, cooperation among Sapienza University of Rome, the University of Bucharest and Universidad Autónoma de Madrid situates migration memory within a shared European framework. Within the university, STORM operationalises the Open Lab approach by integrating research, teaching, public engagement and community collaboration around a shared societal challenge. More than 200 students participated, including 25 core collaborators and 13 core collaborators based in Italy. The project was also integrated into the Sociology of Migration course at Sapienza, taught by the project coordinator and attended annually by approximately 80 students, supporting the continued transmission of project methods and knowledge.

The project has strong potential for international replication through partnerships adapted to different national and local contexts. Its modular architecture can support a permanent exhibition, travelling exhibitions and locally co-curated formats. Replication may be guided by a shared operational framework covering community-partner mapping, ethical recruitment and informed consent, interviewing and object-collection procedures, minimum metadata and cataloguing requirements, digitisation and preservation standards, differentiated public and restricted-access levels, contextual translation and interpretation, and common indicators for participation, learning, reach and social impact. Each host institution can contribute new testimonies, objects and community narratives while preserving this common methodological core. The model therefore combines local ownership with interoperability across the CIVIS network and provides a basis for future educational programmes, travelling exhibitions and jointly funded European initiatives.

Explain how the project has fulfilled the goals and objectives of the European project CIVIS2 (Erasmus+, 2022 - 2026)

STORM fulfilled the CIVIS2 goals and, in particular, the Stream 1 objectives set out in the original project application by creating a transnational, challenge-based learning environment integrating education, research and civic engagement around migration, memory and cultural heritage. The project brought together three CIVIS universities and 28 civil-society organisations, cultural institutions, migrant associations, media partners and international organisations, strengthening links between higher-education institutions and their surrounding communities in line with the CIVIS Open Lab approach.

A core achievement was the co-creation of knowledge through participatory research involving students, academics and external stakeholders. Twenty-five students contributed directly to implementation, while more than 200 students participated in lectures, workshops and dissemination activities. At Sapienza, participating students completed formally recognised curricular activities worth 12 ECTS. Students collected oral histories, personal objects and digital traces, producing outputs that combined academic research with public engagement and strengthened civic competences through direct collaboration with migrant communities.

The project also reinforced transnational cooperation across partner institutions and civic actors. The three-day programme in Bucharest involved approximately 100 students, six PhD candidates and representatives of four major Romanian organisations working on migration and refugee inclusion. Activities in Braşov strengthened cooperation with the International Organization for Migration, the Jesuit Refugee Service, the Romanian Council for Refugees and other local organisations, creating opportunities for methodological exchange and future collaboration on memory-based approaches to migration and cultural heritage.

STORM delivered durable and transferable outputs that contribute to the long-term objectives of CIVIS2: the digital archive, the temporary museum installation at Sapienza, the English-language booklet produced with Confronti, formally recognised educational activities and an extensive stakeholder network. The project documented approximately 40 migration-related objects, integrated collection and dissemination into more than 10 lectures, workshops and presentations, reached more than 10,000 online contacts during the first two months of dissemination and involved audiences from at least 10 migrant communities. Together, these results constitute an open and replicable model for inclusive civic engagement and community-based learning across the CIVIS Alliance.



Views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither can be held responsible for them.

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