

Dates: 22 - 24 May 2019

Country: Palermo, Italy



Last month, MDI's New Neighbours project completed its second training in Palermo, Italy.

The most recent workshop focused on developing local civil society organisers' media skills by training them in how to effectively create social media campaigns and communicate their message to both the mainstream media and via social media platforms. It was organized alongside our project partners, the European Broadcasting Union, Community Media Forum Europe, COMMIT and COSPE. It was hosted by local NGO, Maghweb.

"I think people are living this issue in Sicily, in particular," said MDI Project Coordinator Giulia Dessi, who facilitated the workshop.

"The migration issue is often in the headlines or on the front pages as a topic, whether its arrivals and reception centers or political controversy about the Mayor of Palermo with Matteo Salvini." As the first point of entry for most migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea,

Italy—and particularly, Sicily—is a particularly important location for the New Neighbours project. While many CSOs and activists are present on the island, it is also home to a growing right wing movement whose political platform is largely based on drumming up hatred against refugees and migrants.

“When you have a government that is spreading hate that can rely on journalists to continue spreading their hate, you start facing some difficult questions,” said Dessi, speaking to the heightened challenges that CSOs working with migrants are facing in Italy.

“Should we call it out? Should we ignore it so that we do not follow their agenda? How can we talk about migration without believing the narrative of the hero or the victim and instead show the complexity of the topic that everyone in the room is aware of, but is difficult to convey to people who are not working in the field.”

New Neighbours will continue hosting trainings of CSO activists in Spain, Belgium and Germany over the course of the project. For more information, please follow the #newneighbours hashtag on social media and check out the website [here](#) .