

Rome, October 1<sup>st</sup> 2022

## Report of the project "Nigeria, full stop and new line"

September 2022: it's time for political elections in Italy. Another pretext for an electoral campaign based on the exploitation of foreign minorities not represented politically.

During the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, the issue of immigration disappeared from the magazines becoming more and more marginal; later the bombing of Ukraine diverted the focus to another bad page in history, while after the fall of the Draghi government, **immigration has once again become crucial topic** for shifting votes from one political side to the other.

It is significant that in recent years a small minority like the Nigerian one is permanently present on crime news pages of daily newspapers and national magazines. According to ISTAT data, with only 100 thousand presences, the **Nigerians represent about the fiftieth part out of five million foreigners** domiciled and living in our country.

The dramatic story of **Alika Ogorchukwu, a father in search of a safe place to live with his family** and killed for racial reasons, is emblematic: he's one of the many victims who are denied to leave in peace also because of the hate speech spread by some media.

In 2021, over 45 newspapers in our country published news in which the Nigerian nationality was associated with a crime fact and included in the title: in July they were 27, in September they reached 40.

With the increase in the attitude of intransigence towards diversity, the "Nigeria, full stop and new line" project aimed at protecting the Nigerian communities in Italy **against the growing hatred for diversity fomented by some media** that relaunch xenophobic news.

The idea originates from the making of the documentary "*Damn the Spell*" (2018) directed by *Laura Ghiandoni e Gianluca Gregori* focused on the problem of human trafficking for sexual exploitation purposes. The initiative as it was conceived is aimed at **supporting the Nigerian communities with regard to communication** and relationship with the Italian media. The project develops in two steps:

- 1) Meeting the Nigerian communities throughout the Italian territory
- 2) Promoting awareness campaign for citizens and media focused on communication aspects



## 1) Meeting some Nigerian communities throughout the country

In 2021 Connect volunteers began a **travelling journey among the Nigerian communities in Italy**. After this first stage, completed in August in the parish of Sant'Ambrogio della Massima, in *Rome*, two more stages followed, in *Naples* and *Irsina* - in the province of Matera - and in the same month in *Senigallia* and *Ancona*.

In December the tour visited the communities in *Bologna* and *Milano*. **Over 30 video testimonials were collected** during the travelling trip. Dozens of people of Nigerian origin told about their experience of integration or lack of integration, their past in Nigeria, introducing the reasons that led them to emigration.

[View the pictures of the trip](#)

### The issues

- During the interviews the common experience of **being victims of discrimination on a racist basis** was expressed by the majority of the interviewed members of the community.
- From their stories even sport appears to be a fertile ground for **divisions related to skin colour**.
- Another reason for strong integration difficulties is **related to the Italian language**, experienced as a real barrier that hinders dialogue with people from other groups. None of the people interviewed spoke fluent Italian, **a deficiency that inevitably made more difficult the dialogue**, the issues discussed during the interviews and the development of the project itself.
- During the travelling trip, we came in contact with some prominent figures of the Nigerian community who take charge of several voluntary actions in the **most dramatic situations of fragility arising within the community** and not finding support in Italian institutions.

The stories were published on the website at the link:

[www.associazionecconnect.org/nigeria-testimonianze/](http://www.associazionecconnect.org/nigeria-testimonianze/)



## 2) The awareness campaign aimed at citizens and media

On March 21st, on the occasion of the **World Day against Racial Discrimination** organized by the UN, the awareness campaign *“Nigeria, punto e a capo”* has reached its peak.

In the previous weeks, the **Connect** volunteers contacted via email and telephone:

- about 50 journalists from national newspapers
- about 70 journalists from local newspapers of the Lazio region
- about 30 journalists specialized in social issues. To which are added:
- 32 newspapers with xenophobic orientation;
- **50 online newspapers published by the Citynews group**. A profitable dialogue with Attilio Velasco, the Head of External Relations, was established in order to involve several reporters and journalists.
- In total, around **230 media outlets were contacted**.

13 online newspapers published the press release.

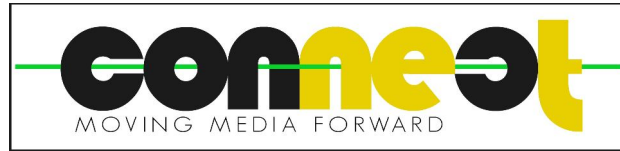
[View the publications](#)

Furthermore, the awareness campaign was shared with the leaders of the **Italian Football Federation (FGIC)**, committed to the fight against racial discrimination in stadiums.

## Conclusion of the “Nigeria, full stop and new line” project

On 29 July 2022 Alika Ogorchukwu, a 39-year-old Nigerian, was **strangled with bare hands in the daytime in the central street of Civitanova Marche**. In the few minutes in which the murderer, Filippo Ferlazzo, an uncensored worker, carried out the strangling, many people assisted to the murder and **shot videos with the mobile that soon went viral on the web**.

While the shocking videos crudely documented the killer's actions, they also show that **nobody dared to intervene to stop the murder**, but remained simply inert. Due to the context of racial background in which the murder of Alika was carried out, a feeling of general strong stir has raised at national and international level: condemnation came both from Nigerian government and various Italian political institutions.



Connect took part in the **demonstration in memory of Alika organized by the “29th July Committee”** on Saturday 6th August in Civitanova Marche. Some of the Nigerian associations already involved in the “Nigeria, full stop and new line” project took part in the procession, together with the trade unions and the National Antiracist Coordination.

During the funeral of Alika, hold on October 1<sup>st</sup> in the town of San Severino Marche, **not many newspapers underlined the importance of that celebration**, but many of them pointed out that none of the representatives of the Italian institutions was attending.