



## Report of Activities

2007 — 2017

*Ten Years of Commitment...A Decade of Service*

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BeFree fights against the closure of Casale Rosa and SOS Donna, now set to reopen in September 2017.

# A Letter from our President



June 2017

BeFree Social Cooperative against human trafficking, discrimination and violence against women has been conducting frontline work for ten years, often in locations and situations in which the abuse, violence, ill treatment and violation of human rights is severe. In years of fieldwork, we have heard thousands of stories from victims who endured violence in fear, shame, silence and solitude. They were surrounded by friends, family, and neighbors who could see the abuse, but failed to recognize

it, who could understand, but feigned ignorance, who could intervene, but who did not come forward. Because we understand violence against women in all its aspects, nuances and consequences and because we know that society must take responsibility and action, we strive to counter the culture of discrimination and inequality that fuels gender violence. As I write this letter, the killings of women by their partners continue unabated, with one woman killed every three days. This violence is classless and ageless. It knows no geographic boundaries. It happens in wealthy neighborhoods and crowded peripheries, in cities and villages, in the prosperous North, in the well-off Center of the country, and the struggling South, along heavily trafficked highways and quiet streets, in public places and at home. Despite decades of struggle by the women's movement and its allies and laws that purport to protect and respect women, Italy remains a country in which women are portrayed and treated in a demeaning, hypersexualized manner. The progressive expulsion of women from the Italian labor market did not raise public indignation and protest, nor did it spur remedial action, and the economic crisis has increased the feminization of poverty. In this country, change is hard to achieve and each gain is readily challenged, when not altogether undermined. Yet we are not discouraged. We keep our focus and meet the challenges skillfully. The work we do is what we know, what we love, and what we will continue to do with commitment and passion.

Oria Gargano

# Introduction

**On February 27, 2007**, BeFree Social Cooperative was launched to counter violence against women, gender-based discrimination, inequality and trafficking in human beings. To this end, BeFree provides services, advocacy, training, education, and outreach activities.

BeFree's objectives include the promotion and protection of women's human rights and the empowerment of both victims/survivors and protection actors. The cooperative aims at ensuring that gender rights are mainstreamed in policies, measures, and actions. BeFree works to change social perceptions of gender roles and dynamics in order to promote a culture of respect for diversity.

By providing a wide spectrum of services, BeFree quickly rose to prominence. The high profile of the cooperative may be attributed to its inherent soundness and the social value of its projects and initiatives, which are managed by a staff with long-standing and recognized experience in countering violence and discrimination.

BeFree is structured as a permanent "workshop" to develop and implement methodologies from research and fieldwork that support victims in a nonjudgmental way. It operates with the conviction that victims' cases represent living evidence of societal malfunctions which need to be addressed by the society as a whole. BeFree holds that the interests of the victims are central to the respect, protection, and promotion of their human rights.

BeFree is funded predominantly by government institutions through the adjudication of competitive grants but also by international organizations such as the United Nations, private foundations, and individual donors. It is regarded by such institutions and the media as an indispensable interlocutor and consulted as a source of outstanding expertise. BeFree's permanent staff is supported by a roster of consultants, including auditors and quality control specialists, who participate on an ongoing basis.



# Themes

# THB

## Trafficking in Human Beings

Violence against Women (VaW) is one of the main areas identified in the Beijing Platform for Action (1995). Despite laws and services addressing VaW in Italy, there is no uniform and comprehensive strategy to effectively prevent violence and protect victims. According to the Ministry of the Interior, from March 2014 to 2015, there were at least 102 victims of femicide (arising from domestic violence). Meanwhile, a study conducted by the Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union found that 34% of women aged 15 and over in Italy are victims of physical or sexual violence perpetrated by men. In Italy, there is no system for collecting reliable and comprehensive qualitative and quantitative data on VaW, nor is there a plan of action to address this issue (as of April 2017). Therefore, male violence and gender discrimination remain the main obstacles to the achievement of women's human rights and equality.

Despite being one of the primary recipients of migrants in Europe, Italy lacks a national, centralized migration database, making it virtually impossible to attain a thorough idea of the different patterns of migration, refugee flows, and trafficked persons. BeFree is particularly concerned with the highly gendered issue of human trafficking. In Europe, from 2013-2014, 15,846 persons were identified as victims of human trafficking. Seventy-six percent of them are women and 67 percent were victims of forced prostitution. It has become increasingly frequent for the government to conflate refugees, asylum-seekers, and THB victims under the same expedient category of "irregular migrants." Due to this generalization, prolonged administrative detention is frequently the only answer the government is able or willing to provide to THB victims. Moreover, in the Centers for Identification and Expulsion (CIE), where undocumented migrants are sent, there are many female victims of violence and ill-treatment whose access to protective services is lamentably hampered. They are often repatriated regardless of indicators concerning their THB status and the violence perpetrated against them.

# VaW

## Violence Against Women



# Mission

Countering  
human  
trafficking and  
the culture  
of violence  
against  
women in a  
holistic and  
participative  
manner

BeFree Social Cooperative seeks to:

Empower victims to claim their rights; Improve mechanisms of protection and integration of, and assistance to victims; Study, conceptualize, and implement innovative best practices, recommendations, and guidelines for governmental and non-governmental actors; Create, develop, and manage services, training, and outreach activities to counter the culture of violence, discrimination, and denial of difference; Develop models of intervention and training grounded in field work, research, and the active involvement of victims of violence and discrimination; Create networks involving government institutions, the judiciary, law enforcement, civil society, and the media to foster change at the local, national, and international levels; Protect the psychological wellbeing of BeFree operators who are constantly exposed to narratives of violence and discrimination in their daily work with severely traumatized individuals.

# Legal Assistance and Litigation

BeFree's legal assistance is based on the premise that women are active participants in all phases of their coming out of violence. They are empowered to claim their rights and capable of reorganizing their lives on the basis of self-determination. BeFree's lawyers are trained in, provide counsel for, and litigate cases pertaining to civil, criminal, labor and immigration law. They work as a team in order to build an effective protection net tailored to clients' needs. The team studies, identifies and strives to correct gaps in legislation to better deliver justice to victims of violence and human trafficking.

## Counsel

The team manages two innovative services: "**L'avvocata in tasca**" ("The Pocket Lawyer", a walk-in legal desk) and the "**Sportello ARGA**" help desk. Once a week, a BeFree lawyer is available to offer legal counsel, establishing relationships with the assisted women to break the climate of isolation that often surrounds the experience of violence, to prevent abuses and their recurrence, as well as to help women seeking justice and redress. Like the walk-in legal desk, the "ARGA"

*BeFree's staff is comprised of experts on gender-based violence and human trafficking, social workers, lawyers, psychologists, ethno-anthropologists, and cultural mediators fluent in Albanian, Chinese, Nigerian English, Portuguese, Romanian, Spanish, and Slavonic languages.*

## SERVICES

anti-stalking and anti-mobbing help desk assists women in cases of stalking as well as sexual and work-related harassment. Legal counsel is free for women who cannot afford to pay.

## Pursuing Compensation

BeFree successfully litigates cases on behalf of victims of VaW and trafficking in human beings. In one ground-breaking instance, BeFree's lawyers were instrumental in winning compensation for victims of THB concomitantly with criminal proceedings against perpetrators. This ensured that their seized assets benefited the victims rather than the State. This spared the victims expensive, lengthy and potentially re-traumatizing civil action to obtain compensation. Thanks to the support of the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, BeFree's lawyers are also able to assist victims of THB whose cases did not proceed through courts.

# Facilities

## ***Shelter for Victims of Trafficking (2016-present)***

The shelter offers assistance to victims of trafficking and women asylum-seekers. It is managed as part of the Regional Anti-trafficking Network and financed by the Department for Equal Opportunities.

## ***Shelter and Anti-violence Center, Campobasso (2016-present)***

In response to regional laws calling for greater measures preventing gender violence, BeFree created a shelter and anti-violence center in Campobasso in Molise, a region of central Italy, and surrounding areas, working with local and regional governments.

## ***Anti-violence Centers in the Comune di Napoli (2016-present)***

BeFree operates two centers for preventing and countering sexual and gender-based violence in the Naples area. These centers stem from a plan of the Municipality of Naples, providing for five such facilities.

## ***“La Casa delle Donne Nella Marsica” (The House of Women in Marsica) (2015-present)***

BeFree opened an anti-violence residential center in the Comune di Santa Marie (Abruzzi Region in Central Italy) and trained aspiring anti-violence operators, health workers, and members of the law enforcement agencies. The project is financed by the Tavola Valdese, in partnership with the Chiesa Evangelica Metodista di Villa San Sebastiano

(Evangelical Methodist Church of Villa St. Sebastian).

## ***Donatella Colasanti and Maria Rosaria Lopez Anti-violence Center of the Comune di Roma (local government of the Municipality of Rome) (2015-present)***

This anti-violence center supports and provides hospitality to women victims of violence and their children.

## ***Anti-Trafficking Support Center (2009-present)***

This drop-in center supports women detained in the Centro di identificazione ed espulsione (Center for Identification and Expulsion, CIE) of Ponte Galeria in Rome. In the course of its work in the CIE, Be Free has enabled hundreds of women to gain access and participate in programs of social protection. This is supported by the Department of Equal Opportunities and by Città Metropolitana di Roma (previously Provincia di Roma-Assessorato per i Servizi Sociali e la Famiglia), and local government actors. The experience in Ponte Galeria is documented in two books: *Storie di Ponte e di Frontiere* (Stories of a Bridge and Frontiers) in 2010 and *Inter/rotte: Storie di Tratta, Percorsi di Resistenze* (Interrupted/Inter-routes: Stories of human trafficking, paths of resilience) in 2016. Both books, were very well received by the public, the media, and government authorities. *Inter/rotte! Storie di Tratta, Percorsi di Resistenze* was extensively used in the 2017 report of the Group of Experts in human trafficking of the Council of Europe.

## **SoSDonna**

**(2010-2016; summer 2017)**

This drop-in center, funded by the Comune di Roma, supports female victims of violence, human rights abuses, and human trafficking and encourages them to discuss their cases either on their own initiative or with the intervention of social services and law enforcement operators. The center is equipped to host women and their children for a few days.

## **Sportello Donna 24/7 (2009-present)**

This drop-in center is located in the Emergency Department of the San Camillo–Forlanini Hospital, the largest hospital in Rome. It provides support to victims of gender-based violence and human trafficking. BeFree’s six-month training for medical staff and other health providers also includes indicators of human trafficking. Around 3,000 women have been assisted by this service. This has been made possible with the financing from the San Camillo-Forlanini Hospital, Department for Equal Opportunities, the Valdese Church, and WeWorld Onlus.



(L-R) Oria Gargano meets with Celeste Costantino, MP of the 17th legislature, and Laura Boldrini, President of Chamber of Deputies, at Sportello Donna in San Camillo-Forlanini Hospital.



Marta Mearini (second from left) at work at Spazio Donna.

## **Additional Services**

### **Spazio Donna San Basilio (2016-present)**

BeFree implements a project for community building and women’s empowerment in the disadvantaged neighborhood of San Basilio in Rome on behalf of WeWorld Onlus. Spazio Donna also offers education and parenting workshops, as well as a variety of learning activities for women and their children.

### **“Scialuppa” (Lifeboat) (2015; 2017)**

In 2015, BeFree managed this training course and support for women who were victims of violence or in difficult situations, in partnership with Casa Internazionale delle Donne, Il Cortile, and Cora. In 2017, Lifeboat will offer training and counseling to its clients. This project is financed through the Valdese Church.

### **Anti-violence Service for Municipalities II and IV (2015)**

BeFree managed these services as part of the “Municipal Anti-violence Plan,” funded by the Lazio Region, in two neighborhoods of Rome.

***Assisting Victims of Human Trafficking:  
The Legal Path  
(2016-present)***

This project involves a research study and support for women victims of human trafficking and violence during migration. It is supported by the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery.

***Futuro Diverso (A Different Future)  
(2016-present)***

Futuro Diverso provides professional training courses for victims of trafficking, in partnership with Il Faro - Fondazione Virginia Agnelli (The Lighthouse – Virginia Agnelli Foundation). It is financed by the Region of Lazio.

***Cambiamo Gioco (We are Changing the Game)  
(2016-present)***

This project, designed for eight to twelve-year-old girls, focuses on processes of female self-identification and on solidarity, self-confidence, and assertiveness-building. Cambiamo Gioco is run in partnership with the BetSheCan Foundation and financed by Mattel, Inc.

***Coniugare Sviluppo e Legalità (Combining Development and Legality)  
(2016-present)***

Aimed at education and awareness-raising, this project is designed for health workers and law enforcement officials to counter violence against women and children. It is financed by the Regione Lazio Direzione Politiche Sociali Autonomia Sicurezza e Sport (Lazio Region, Directorate for Social Policies, Independence, Safety and Sport) and by the Comune of Fiano Romano.

## AD HOC PROJECTS

***Human Trafficking and Violence:  
Measuring the Risk, Mitigating the  
Damage  
(2015-2016)***

This project, supported by the Open Society Foundations (Europe), provided research and advocacy regarding violence endured by women in their migration paths. The outcome of the project is reflected in the study "Inter/rotte: Storie di Tratta, Percorsi di Resistenze." This study has been prominently featured in the media and was extensively quoted in the January 2017 Urgent Procedure Report on Italy of the Council of Europe Group of Experts against human trafficking (GRETA).

***Rights and Responsibilities 2.0  
(2014)***

Rights and Responsibilities 2.0 is a part of the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Countries Citizens 2007-2013 (FEI) and was conducted in partnership with Istituto Luigi Sturzo e In Migrazione.

***Parlare con Lui (Talking with him)  
(2011-2014)***

These courses were designed for male perpetrators of gender violence, initiating a discussion to deconstruct the gender roles and stereotypes that underpin violent behavior. Participants included convicted sex offenders at Casa

Circondariale Regina Coeli (prison in Rome) or who were under house arrest. The project was conducted in partnership with Maschile Plurale (Masculine Plural) and the Istituto di Specializzazione in Psicoterapia (Specialized Institute in Psychotherapy, ISIPSE), and in agreement with l'Ufficio del Garante dei Diritti dei Detenuti della Regione Lazio (the Ombudsman for detainees' rights) and with L'Ufficio di Esecuzione Penale Esterna del Ministero di Grazia e Giustizia (Ministry of Justice) and financed by the Commissione delle Elette di Roma Capitale (Commission of Women Elected Officials of Rome).

***Italy, Albania, and Greece Against Trafficking of Women and Minors (2008-2010)***

This multi-national project created cultural and linguistic mediation services for female victims of trafficking in human beings and was co-financed by the European Union.

**The following projects were financed by the Department of Equal Opportunities:**

***Coming Out Dalla Violenza (Coming Out of Violence) (2011-2013)***

This service provided legal, psychological, and social support to lesbians who had experienced violence, ill-treatment and abuse in and/or outside their relationships, including those with their partners.

***Civitas3 (2008-2011)***

In partnership with the Lazio Region and with Social Cooperative Magliana 80, this project provided psychosocial support

services to men and women held at the CIE Ponte Galeria.

***Nessuno Tocchi Eva (No one Touches Eve) (2009-2010)***

This project created three regional help desks for female victims of violence in the towns of Bracciano, Cerveteri, and Ladispoli (Province of Rome) and conducted 160 hours of training programs for local healthcare and social workers.

***Corpi Consapevoli (Knowledgeable Bodies) (2007-2009)***

Aimed at preventing and countering female genital mutilation, Corpi Consapevoli was conducted in partnership with the Istituto per gli Studi sui Servizi Sociali (Institute for Studies of Social Services, I.S.T.I.S.S.S.).

BeFree has also created ad hoc programs for vulnerable persons, including:

***Accademia dell'Orologia Training***

This program placed victims of domestic violence in a professional watch-making course, in partnership with the Accademia dell'Orologia (Academy of Watchmaking) and with funding from Fondazione Roma – Third Sector.

***RISCOSSA Training (Fighting Back)***

Antonella Petricone holds a discussion at BeFree Scuola Estiva.

## EDUCATION

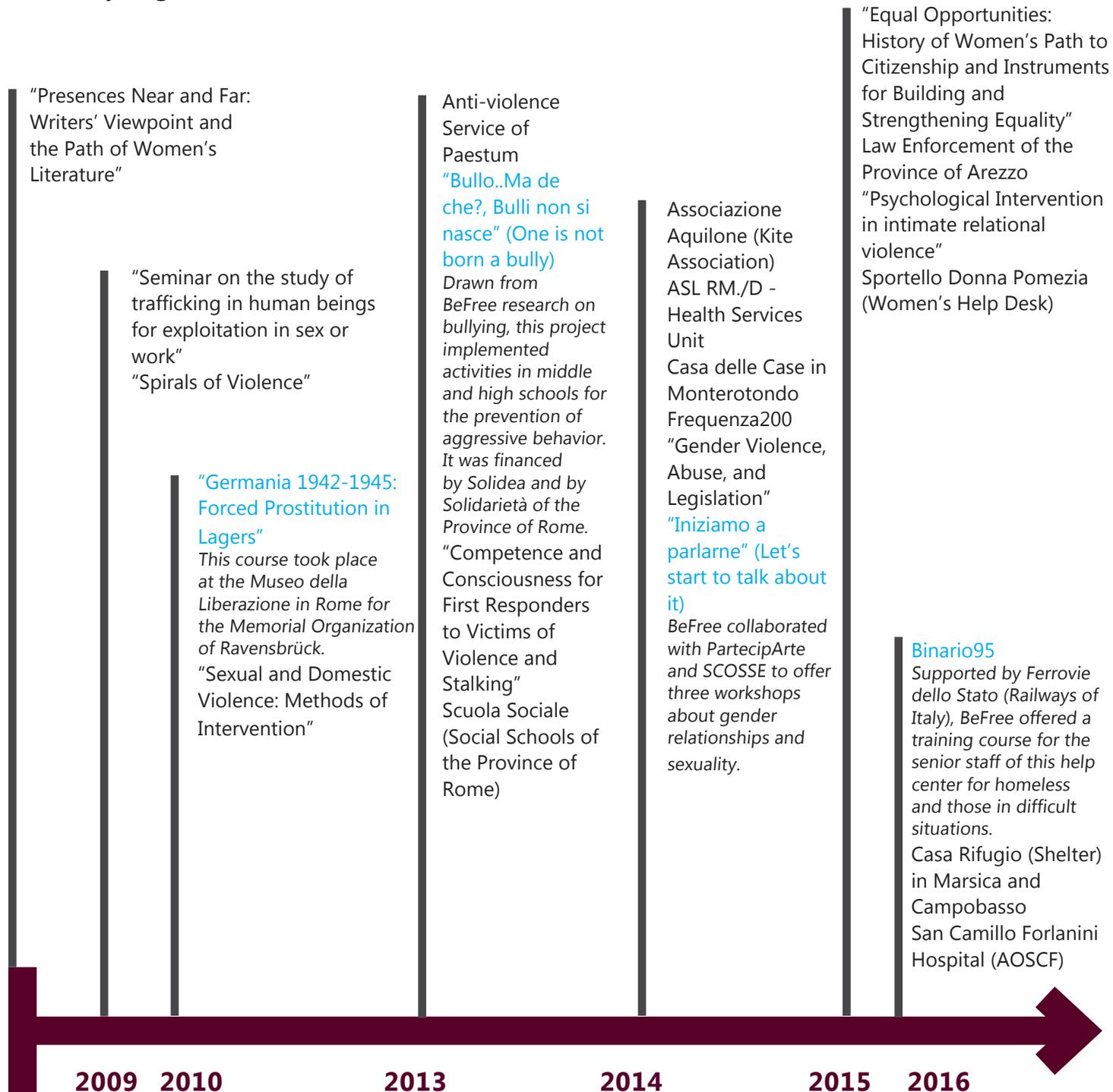
BeFree trains students engaged in both undergraduate and postgraduate studies in violence prevention, gender education, and social and healthcare in partnership with the following academic institutions:

- Roma Tre University, including its Master's Programs for Educators;
- Sapienza University, including the Gender Interuniversity Observatory;
- Scuola di specializzazione in Psicoterapia Istituto Skinner (Specialized School for Psychotherapy – Skinner Institute);
- Centro Informazione ed Educazione allo Sviluppo (CIES, Information and Education Center for Development);
- Italia Lavoro spa – Ministero del lavoro e delle Politiche sociali (Ministry of Work and Social Politics);
- AMVA –Young Graduates NEET;
- TornoSubito (Regione Lazio/PortaFuturo);
- John Cabot University (JCU);
- Loyola University Chicago Rome Center;
- CISabroad – a center for international studies and internships.

Since 2012, BeFree has implemented education classes, registered in the Capitale Lavoro, on gender violence at the Scuola del Sociale of the Province of Rome.

# Training the Professionals

BeFree routinely holds three-month training courses on the topics of gender-based violence, women’s human rights, and trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual and/or labor exploitation. The sessions include a combination of workshops and interactive activities, culminating with a final internship at one of BeFree’s anti-violence services. Since 2007, BeFree’s pedagogy has served over twenty organizations.



**2007: FOUNDING OF BEFREE SOCIAL COOPERATIVE**

## BeFree Scuola Estiva

BeFree's thematic school provides venues, channels, and training for a multifaceted, multilayered exchange of ideas and best practices.

Participants include writers, academics, outstanding professionals, journalists, sociologists, political activists, and multi-media experts, as well as artists.

Its residential school arrangement allows for the development of lasting relationships and networks among women and men of all ages and backgrounds. Venues are carefully chosen to promote both mutual learning and conviviality.

Building a  
culture of  
awareness  
and violence  
prevention

Courses include:

"Striving for Happiness: Politics of Fulfillment"  
(2017)

"Between Love and Shadows: Mothers" (2016)

"Memories of the Future" (2015)

"Questions on Power" (2014)

"Love's Seduction: An Unconventional Narrative of  
Violence Against Women" (2013)

"Works, Working, Genders, Generations" (2012)

"Tales of a Bridge and Frontiers" (2011)



*Instructors facilitate discussion at Scuola Estiva.*

# PROGRAMMING



Francesca Romana Miceli performs at the #befreefromviolence art exhibition at MACRO Pelanda Museum.

*Recognizing the complexity of its themes and the strength of collaboration with partners and fellow non-governmental organizations, BeFree's programming spans a myriad of diverse engagements, including: hosting and speaking at meetings and conferences, participating in local and national campaigns, convening with international interlocutors, and creating dynamic cultural activities.*

## Meetings and Conferences

### ***"Non si tratta!" (No more Trafficking!) (February 8, 2017)***

BeFree collaborated with Slaves No More to host a conference, sharing and evaluating programs of support, legal redress, and reintegration programs for victims of violence, with special consideration of young Nigerian women trafficked into Italy. Panelists included representatives from BeFree, Slaves No More, UNHCR, the region of Lazio, among others. Hosted at Casa Internazionale delle Donne, the event was open to the public.

### ***"Inter-rotte: percorsi di tratta, storie di resilienza" (Interrupted/Inter-routes: paths of trafficking, stories of resilience) (May 18, 2016)***

Presentation of the report made possible by a grant from Open Society Foundations (Europe).

***“Accoglienza: Detenzione ed Espulsione”  
(Support: Detention and Expulsion)  
(October 12, 2015)***

Critical analysis of the condition of victims of trafficking in human beings coming from Libya for sexual exploitation. Hosted at the Casa Internazionale delle Donne, the discussion centered around policies of exclusion and inclusion. Participants included activists, government officials, representatives from the United Nations.

***“Si Tratta di Tratta” (We are Dealing with Human Trafficking)  
(May 27, 2015)***

This event concerning street prostitution focused on social mediation for the citizenry of affected communities. Participants included representatives of the House of Deputies, Senate, Region, Città Metropolitana, Comune di Roma, Municipalities VIII and IX, and private sector.

***“Fare e disfare il genere (Judith Butler): Vulnerabilità - riconoscimento e possibilità in una prospettiva di trasformazione” (Doing and undoing gender: Vulnerability, recognition, and possibility in a perspective of transformation)  
(May 9, 2015)***

BeFree hosted Federico Zappino and Anna Simone to lead a reflection on Judith Butler's book, including discussion of the underlying mechanisms that produced gender-based violence.

***Prostitution and Trafficking: Policies and Visions  
(April 26, 2015)***

This meeting was convened by the Democratic Party.

***“Codice Violenza” (Code Violence)  
(March 3, 2015)***

Activities of Codice Violenza were presented at BeFree's Sportello Donna, located in the Emergency Room of the San Camillo Forlanini Hospital.

***Working Women in Italy: Opportunities, Challenges, and Achievements  
(September 22, 2014)***

This panel discussion was presented by JCU and Casa Internazionale delle Donne.

***Potenza (Power)  
(March 25, 2014)***

This training seminar was sponsored by the Ufficio della Consigliera di Parità regionale (Regional Office of Counsel of Parity) with the help of Enti e Realtà del Territorio.

***“Seduzioni d'amore: Per una narrazione non convenzionale della violenza contro le donne” (Love Seductions: Towards an unconventional narrative of violence against women)  
(March 17, 2014)***

Presentation of the book by Oria Gargano to the Order of Psychologists in Campania at Piazzetta Matilde Serao in Naples, in collaboration with the association Le Kassandre.

***“Perché Si Tratta di Te” (Why this is about you)  
(January 9, 2014)***

This round table discussion against trafficking of migrant persons for sexual or labor exploitation was held in “Sala Gonzaga” in Campidoglio.

***“Stupro dell'Aquila: un Banco di Prova per L'Attuazione dei Principi della Convenzione di Istanbul” (Rape in L'Aquila: A Test Case for the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention)  
(December 5, 2013)***

This meeting was organized in collaboration with the Italian branch of the European Women's Lobby of the European Parliament.

***International Day on Violence against Women  
(November 25, 2013)***

This meeting was sponsored by the Ministero degli Esteri (Foreign Ministry).

***“Per Aiutare – Davvero – La Ragazza che Sbatte nelle Porte” (How to Really Help Women Who “Walk into Doors”)  
(November 8, 2013)***

BeFree organized a meeting of governmental and nongovernmental experts, as well as those

from the private sector, to analyze and discuss good practices in fighting violence against women, hosted at Casa Internazionale delle Donne.

***“La dura realtà del Femminicidio” (The hard reality of Femicide)***  
***(April 5, 2013)***

This meeting was held in collaboration with ENEA (Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy, and Sustainable Economic Development).

***“No, Non Sono Scivolata nella Doccia” (No, I Did Not Fall in the Shower)***  
***(January 13, 2013)***

Presentation of the results from four years of activity for Sportello Donna, the help desk at the San Camillo hospital, and of the book documenting this work.

***Ministry of Foreign Affairs: “Convegno Internazionale Centralità della persona e tutela dei diritti umani nel mondo contemporaneo” (International Conference: the centrality of the person and the protection of human rights in the contemporary world)***  
***(December 12, 2012)***

***“Mediterraneo: un mare di schiave” (The Mediterranean: A Sea of Slaves)***  
***(May 10, 2012)***

A meeting held in the European Parliament building in Rome convened participants from Egypt, Italy, Jordan, and Lebanon to discuss the protection of victims of trafficking.

***“Diritto di Soggiorno per le Vittime di tratta di Esseri Umani A Scopo di Sfruttamento Sessuale/Lavorativo” (Residence Right for Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings for the purpose of Sexual or Labor Exploitation)***  
***(March 19, 2012)***

This meeting was held in the European Parliament Building in Rome.

***“Storie di Ponte e di Frontiere” (A History of Bridges and Frontiers)***  
***(November 30, 2011)***

An open forum on BeFree’s activities and investigations on human trafficking convened at Palazzo Valentini in Rome.

***“Codice Violenza” (Violence Code)***  
***(June 8, 2010)***

This conference reviewed the activities of the Sportello Donna help desk at the San Camillo-Forlanini Hospital in Rome.

***Paths of trafficking of women in Mozambique and Southern Africa for the 2010 World Cup***  
***(November 12, 2009)***

Meeting held in collaboration with Unione Italiane Sport Per tutti (Italian Union of Sports for All) and the Rete Internazionale delle Donne per la Pace (International Network of Women for Peace).

***“Corti Consapevoli Mgf e integrazione nello Stato di Diritto” (Informed Bodies and Integration into the Rule of Law)***  
***(September 25, 2009)***

Conclusive meeting of the project, supported by the Department for Rights and Equal Opportunities, held at Roma Tre.

BeFree member Francesca De Masi is interviewed at a demonstration, protesting the closure of anti-violence centers.



## Campaigns

***“Non Una di Meno” (Not One Less)***  
***(2016-present)***

BeFree actively participates in this national campaign that, in November 2016, brought to Rome 200,000 demonstrators. BeFree staff contributed to all workshops of the campaign held at national meetings to draft the women’s movement own comprehensive plan on violence against women. The campaign will present this plan to policymakers and monitor its implementation.

# #befreefromviolence



BeFree served as the promoter and event organizer of the Not Us: Men Fighting Violence Against Women campaign in Rome in collaboration with the Comune di Roma.



## ***“BeFree from Violence” (Fall 2014)***

#befreefromviolence was an awareness-raising and fundraising campaign to which 28 national and international artists donated their work. It consisted of an

art exhibition and auction held by Minerva Auction House at the Museum MACRO-Pelanda in Rome and with laying of bedsheets in several venues in Rome, bearing slogans on the theme of gender violence. It was designed pro-bono by Ogilvy & Mather (BlueHive) with the support of the Comune di Roma.

## ***“Ferite, a volte uccise” (Wounded, Sometimes Killed)***

**(2013)**

This campaign on VaW was designed in collaboration with the Valdese Church.

## ***“Fatti Gli Affari Nostri” (Mind Our Business)***

**(2013)**

BeFree created this campaign for Ipercoop Tirreno (a supermarket chain), exhorting neighbors, parents, and friends of victims of violence to report abuses. The educational materials of the campaign were distributed and discussed at the supermarkets’ cashiers, in schools, trade unions’ headquarters, and among the general public.

## ***“NoiNo: Uomini Contro La Violenza Contro le Donne” (Not Us: Men Fighting Violence Against Women)***

**(2013)**

## ***“LasciateCIEntrare”***

**(2011-present)**

This campaign aimed initially at obtaining access for the media to Centers for Identification and Expulsion. Once this objective was attained, the campaign called on the government to address the increasingly deteriorating conditions of the detainees. It advocated the closure of all centers of detention for irregular migrants.



(Left) Antonella Petricone (L) and Marta Mearini (R) at an event for the campaign NoiNo.

(Below) March 8, 2017: BeFree participates in the strike on International Women’s Day.



# International Engagement

Geneva, Switzerland

[CEDAW Shadow Report \(June 12, 2017\)](#)

With a coalition of NGOs, BeFree presents the Shadow Report to the CEDAW Committee.

["Revealing the Child Faces of Modern Slavery: Expert Panel on the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery" \(December 2, 2016\)](#)

BeFree gave an expert presentation at this panel, chaired by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

[UN Human Rights Council – 23rd Session \(June 5, 2013\)](#)

Side Event: "Femicide: The Strategic Role of NGOs in Making States Responsible for the Implementation of the Due Diligence Obligation."

New York, USA

[CSW57: Commission on the Status of Women 57th Session \(March 5, 2013\)](#)

Elimination and Prevention of All Forms of Violence against Women and Girls, Panel Event Italy: Violence Against Women – Femicide.

Oxford, UK

["Lived Experiences of Women Detained inside Italian Immigration Detention Centres" \(June 1, 2017\)](#)

Francesca Esposito gave a presentation on gender, sexuality, and power hierarchies through the lens of her research into women's experiences at the CIE center in Rome.

Lisbon, Portugal

["LGBT Psychology and Related Fields – Coming out for LGBT Psychology in the Current International Scenario." \(June 20-22, 2013\)](#)

Miami, USA

[Biennial Conference of the Society for Community Research and Action \(July 2013\)](#)  
Hosted by the US Division of the American Psychological Association.

Vienna, Austria

["Not for Sale – Joining Forces Against Trafficking in Human Beings" \(February 17-18, 2014\)](#)

Hosted by Council of Europe (CoE) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

["Eliminating Violence Against Women in Europe" – Intersectional Approaches and Actions." \(November 25-26, 2013\)](#)

Hosted by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), the World Health Organization Europe and the City of Vienna.

["Development through Football – sustaining the potential of the first African World Cup" \(April 2010\)](#)

Rome, Italy

[Global Strike of Women \(March 8, 2017\)](#)

As a part of the network Iodecido and in solidarity with over forty other countries, BeFree and all of its anti-violence centers participated in the women's strike in Rome, protesting male violence against women and advocating for self-determination for women.

[Global March of Women \(January 21, 2017\)](#)  
["Trafficking from Nigeria to Italy – Where We Stand – A View Point from Social Workers" \(October 9, 2009\)](#)

This event was hosted by Save the Children, as part of the program, "Preventing and Combatting Trafficking of Minors and Young Women from Nigeria to Italy."

# BeFree:

A “permanent laboratory” of methodology and support, engaging others in gender sensitization and education

Advertising for the #befreefromviolence art exhibition hosted in the neighborhood of Testaccio in Rome.



## Cultural Activities

### **Tony Esposito and Mark Kostabi Benefit Concert (August 31, 2015)**

Italian musician Tony Esposito and Mark Kostabi, painter of international renown, collaborate for a benefit concert for BeFree.



(Above) Tony Esposito and Mark Kostabi prepare for their show.

### **#befreefromviolence Mostra (October 2, 2014)**

BeFree gathered 27 Italian and international artists to showcase their art in an exhibition to raise public awareness for the campaign against domestic violence.

### **Notte Rossa Sulla Violenza Contro Le Donne (A red night against VaW) (October 2013)**

BeFree sponsored a week of performances on the theme of violence, held at the Lo Spazio theater in Rome.

### **“Se non vuoi ascoltarmi, urlero” (If you don’t want to listen, I will scream) (February 7, 2013)**

BeFree sponsored a night of theatrical performances to promote awareness of violence against women, in collaboration with artists from the theatre COMETAOff in Rome.

### **“Crudeli sono i giorni ma superbo il genio” (Cruel are the days, but splendid the genius) (November 8-25, 2012)**

BeFree’s Oria Gargano and Maria Paola Fiorensoli produced theatre pieces, hosted at Casa Internazionale delle Donne, in partnership with the Province of Rome and the Comune of Rome.

## National

BeFree is a member of the ApS Consortium Casa Internazionale Delle Donne and is represented on its Executive Board. BeFree's services are included among the 1,522 public utilities and the cooperative is connected to national helplines. As a party to the protocol on women and their children, victims of ill-treatment, sexual violence, and persecutory acts and their children, it participates in the working group with the Criminal Tribunal of Rome to improve cooperation between the judiciary, institutions and anti-violence centers. In November 2010, BeFree was honored with the award of "Provincia Solidale." At the end of May 2013, BeFree contributed to the permanent interinstitutional table on violence against women at the Comune di Roma Capitale. BeFree is part of the National Platform "30 Years CEDAW: Work in Progress," that develops the Shadow Report on Discriminations against Women.

*Carla Quinto, legal adviser, is featured in a video broadcast for the Italian daily La Repubblica.*



## RECOGNITION

*Anna Verdelocco (R) is consulted on a national TV program on VaW.*



## International

BeFree is a member of the Italian Coordination for the European Women Lobby (EWL), and its president is the Italian expert at the European Policy Action Center on Violence Against Women (EPAC-VaW) at the EWL in Brussels. BeFree is a participant in: the platform of the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency; Interministerial Group about Trafficking in Human Beings in the Balkan Nations; Association "Libera, contro tutte le mafie" (Free, against all mafia); European Network Against Trafficking in Women (ENATW); Italian working group for the Women United Nations Rapporteurs Network (WUNRN). In the manual "Speak Truth to Power," a publication by the Robert Kennedy Foundation in Europe, BeFree is featured among Italian experts in the fight against violence against women and trafficking in human beings. On March 8, 2008, BeFree co-founded the Network of Women for Peace in Rwanda.

*BeFree's Director for International Projects, Loretta Bondi (second from left), speaks on a panel on Modern-day Slavery, chaired by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.*



The BeFree publishing house, "Sapere Solidale" (Knowledge and Solidarity), is one of the newest activities of the cooperative. Drawn from years of field experience, the publishing house issues articles, reports, manuals, and books that stimulate understanding, discussion, advocacy, and action to counter gender discrimination and gender-based violence.

## PUBLICATIONS



Press conference for the publication of *Inter/Rotte*.

*Inter/Rotte: Storie di Tratta, Percorsi di Resistenze*. (2016). Sapere Solidale.

Gargano, O. (2013). *Seduzioni d'Amore per una narrazione non convenzionale della violenza contro le donne*. Sapere Solidale.

Gargano, O. (2011). *No, Non Sono Scivolata Nella Doccia: Due anni di attività di Sportello Donna h24 nel pronto Soccorso dell'Azienda Ospedaliera San Camillo Forlanini di Roma*. Sapere Solidale.

(2010) *Storie di Ponte e Di Frontiere: percorsi della tratta delle donne nigeriane*. Sapere Solidale.

### Other Publications:

Gargano, O., Esposito, F., Verdelocco, A., & Petricone, A. (2014). Coming out from violence: An help-desk for women victims of violence by their same-sex partners. In *Coming-out for LGBT: Psychology in the current international scenario*, ed. H. Pereira & P. Costa, 32-36. International Academy of LGBT Psychology and Related Fields.

Esposito, F. (2012). "Self-help groups with women victims of intimate partner violence." *Funzione Gamma*, 29.

Gargano, O. (2012). "Women victims of violence: Taking charge and impact of the work on the professional helpers." *Funzione Gamma*, 29.

Esposito, F. & Tomai, M. (2012, October). Usar a ajuda-mútua para promover o empowerment de mulheres sobreviventes de violência nas relações íntimas. *Proceedings of the II Encontro Comunitária*.

Esposito, F. & Quinto, R. C. (2011, June). Physical and legal geographies of the trade of Nigerian women in Italy: views and stories from C.I.E.s. *Proceedings of the ECAS4 4th European Conference on African Studies. African Engagements: On Whose Terms?*

Esposito, F., Quinto, R. C., & De Masi, F. (2011, June). Contrastare le ingiustizie sociali all'interno dei Centri di Identificazione ed Espulsione (C.I.E.): un'esperienza di lavoro con le donne immigrate vittime di tratta. *Proceedings of the 8th National Conference The prevention in the school and in the community: "Quality in action"*.

Gargano, O., & Esposito, F. (2010, July). *Manual das boas práticas para o acolhimento às mulheres vítimas de Tráfico de Seres Humanos ao escopo de exploração sexual*. *Proceedings of the II Encontro Internacional de Ética, Pesquisa Social e Direitos Humanos*.

Esposito, F., Ljubisavljevic, B., Forteschi, A., & Quinto, C. R. (2009). *Violenza domestica in Italia: Analisi e prospettive*. *Olympe: Feministische Arbeitshefte zur Politik*, 29, 128-137.

*BeFree's staff is composed of a diverse group of professionals with a range of backgrounds, united in their dedication to supporting women and ending violence.*

## OUR STAFF

After graduating from the University of Rome – La Sapienza with a degree in Political Philosophy, Angela presented a dissertation for a PhD in Gender Studies on “Universalist Political Theories: A Contemporary Feminist Debate” at Roma Tre. Currently, she is an associate professor of Political Theory, a part of the anti-mafia organization daSud, and a BeFree member, where she works in the Sportello Donna. A journalist since 2008, she has published various articles and essays on feminism, including *Genealogie Materne: I nodi del conflitto* (Maternal Genealogies: the knots of conflict).

*Angela  
Ammirati*

*Lucia  
Beretta*

Since 2013, Lucia has been working with BeFree as a social worker at the CIE of Ponte Galeria, supporting girls and women who have been trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Lucia holds a Bachelor's degree in Intercultural Mediation and a Master's degree in languages, cultures and international communications. She worked in fundraising and communications before working as an assistant for the Dean of the School of Agriculture at the University of Milan. Since 2015, she has been working at the Anti-violence Center Donatella Colasanti Rosaria Lopez. In 2011, she spent almost a year as an International Community Service volunteer in Bolivia, working for a local NGO for women's rights. She participated in its advocacy for equal opportunity and gender perspectives in departmental institutions, workshops addressed to teenagers on sexual and reproductive rights, domestic violence and sexism, and broadcasting an educational radio programme on women's rights.

Loretta is the Director of International Projects for BeFree and a member of the managing board of Casa Internazionale delle Donne. After graduating from the University of Rome–La Sapienza, Loretta completed her Master's degree in International Public Policy from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, later becoming the director of cooperative security program for its Center for Transatlantic Relations. She was a senior officer with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights as the speechwriter for two High Commissioners and the head of the investigative team of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria. She has been an advocate for international nongovernmental organizations, including Human Rights Watch, the Fund for Peace and American Near East Refugee Aid and was a co-founder of the International Action Network on Small Arms. After joining the women's movement at 16, Loretta has been a journalist with *Quotidiano Donna*, *Corriere della Sera*, *l'Espresso*, and *l'Europeo*. She published a book on Mexico's foreign and human rights policies, many scholarly articles and more than 1,000 journalistic pieces and commentary.

*Loretta  
Bondi*

*Carmen R.  
Carbonaro*

Carmen is a founding member of BeFree Social Cooperative and currently works in the SOS Donna H24 service provided by the cooperative. She graduated with a degree in Clinical Psychology from the University of Roma Tre in 2004. In 2010, she received a specialized degree in psychotherapy.

Francesca directs the help desk at the CIE Ponte Galeria and collaborates with the NGO InMigrazione. After graduating in 2003 from University of Rome–La Sapienza with a degree in Sociology, Francesca completed her Master's in Politics of Mediation at the University of Roma Tre. However, Francesca has been working with women victims of violence since 1999. She was the deputy coordinator of the Anti-violence Center of the Comune di Roma and joined BeFree in 2007 as deputy director of the Sportello Donna H24. She co-wrote *Stories of a Bridge and Frontiers* and *Libeccio d'oltremare: The Winds of Revolution in North Africa Extend to the West*.

*Francesca  
De Masi*

*Emanuela  
Donato*

Emanuela is one of the founding members of BeFree Social Cooperative and has been the director of the SOS Donna H24 anti-violence service since 2010. She also serves as an expert consultant in gender violence for the ASL of Rome. After graduating in 2005 with a degree in psychology from the University of Rome–La Sapienza, Emanuela received a specialized degree in group-analysis psychotherapy from the Istituto Terapeutico Romano with the thesis "Gender Violence as a Question: A proposal for clinical psychological intervention."

Francesca is a member of the research division of BeFree, a community and health psychologist and researcher. Graduating summa cum laude from the University of Rome–La Sapienza in Dynamic and Clinical Psychology, she is currently a PhD candidate in Community Psychology at the ISPA University Institute of Lisbon with her project on migration-related detention and its human costs. After joining BeFree in 2007, she worked as psychological consultant for migrant women at the CIE Ponte Galeria in Rome and victims of intimate partner violence. Since January 2011, she has been a consultant for a self-help group of women survivors of intimate violence. In 2013, she was the Italian expert in an EIGE study on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. She has taught several courses on gender-based violence and is a participant in various national and international platforms on women's and migrants' rights.

*Francesca  
Esposito*

*Federica  
Festagallo*

Federica began working with BeFree at SOS Donna H24 in 2009 as a Chinese language mediator. Federica graduated in East Asian Studies at the University of Rome–La Sapienza. She became fluent in Chinese, living in Beijing from 2005 to 2008, and she now teaches English at the Confucius Institute in Rome.

Sabrina is a lawyer specializing in gender-based violence with experience in family law and children's rights. She is responsible for BeFree's legal counsel on civil and the rights of minors. She is an instructor in BeFree's Scuola Estiva for anti-violence workers, leading courses on gender violence cases and judiciary proceedings concerned with the family and the rights of minors. She is also one of the instructors for the training course of the San Camillo-Forlanini Hospital, the Scuola Sociale of Rome, and for the Master's program in Equal Opportunities of the Women's Studies Department at the University Roma Tre.

*Sabrina  
Fiaschetti*

*Oria  
Gargano*

Oria is one of the founding members of BeFree Social Cooperative and the current President of BeFree. After she graduated in Political Science from the University of Rome—La Sapienza, she received a specialized degree in Communications at the Università LUISS and completed a Master's degree in "Gender Studies and the Politics of Equal Opportunity" at the "Alma Mater" Bologna. Oria's work on gender violence and human trafficking spans over two decades, serving both as a director for anti-violence centers in Rome and as an educator on VaW and THB. Oria has written various books and essays on gender violence and trafficking. She is the Italian expert for the Observatory of Violence Against Women of the European Women's Lobby.

Since 2015, Marta has served as the coordinator of Spazio Donna, a center for gender empowerment for women and children in an underserved community on the periphery of Rome. Marta graduated in Social Anthropology in 2000 and earned a Master's in Intercultural Communication in 2002 from University of Rome — La Sapienza. For more than fifteen years, she has been involved in projects combatting gender-based violence and human trafficking, as a project developer, social worker, instructor, and, since 2006, as a professional counselor.

*Marta  
Mearini*

*Monica  
Monterù*

Since 2009, Monica has been working for BeFree at Sportello Donna in the emergency room of the San Camillo-Forlanini Hospital. After graduating in Clinical Psychology from University of Rome-La Sapienza, Monica was accepted into the Lazio Order of Psychologists. With a special interest in psychodiagnostics, she is a psychology-psychotherapist at the Italian Society for Bioenergetic Analysis (SIAB) and holds a license to run Bioenergy classes. Since 2005, she has worked as a gender-based violence expert, dedicated to the issues of ill-treatment and abuse in the anti-violence centers of Rome.

Antonella is a founding member of BeFree and currently works as the co-director of the BeFree service SOS Donna H24, also lecturing in BeFree's Scuola Estiva. Antonella received a degree in the Humanities and earned a PhD in History of Female Writings, with a dissertation on "The Memory of Bodies and The Faces of Violence; experiences and stories, a dialogue between Ety Hillesum and the women survivors of the Shoah," in 2008. Antonella has published articles including "Figures of Complexity: Gender and Intersectionality" with Liana Borghi and Clotilde Barbarulli (2004) and the article "The Desire We Tell" (2007) published in Legendaria. She is also a member of the staff of the Campo Donne d'Agape, the "Le Acrobate" collective.

*Antonella  
Petricone*

*Sara  
Pollice*

After attending a BeFree training course at the San Camillo Hospital in 2013, Sara became a BeFree member in 2014. Sara received Web Designer certification from the CEFI and completed a diploma as a Web Marketing Specialist at the Madri Internet Marketing Agency in 2013. She works as a volunteer at the "Città dell'Utopia," where she teaches Italian to migrants of all nationalities. Sara has also coordinated various seminars on Italian history with historian Davide Conti. Since 2015, Sara has been working with Sportello Donna in San Camillo-Forlanini.

Carla is the Director of BeFree's legal office. She received a law degree in criminal defense and specialized in gender violence. She has completed two Master's degrees in judiciary psychology and the family and minors law. She is an instructor for the training course of the San Camillo-Forlanini Hospital, for the Scuola Sociale of Rome, and for the Master's program in Equal Opportunities of the Women's Studies Department at the University Roma Tre. Carla is a legal counsellor for the anti-trafficking project for the Region of Lazio, and she contributes to the working group of the CEDAW shadow report.

*Carla  
Quinto*

*Federica  
Ruggiero*

As a BeFree member, Federica conducts research, leads training courses, and coordinates projects on immigration, development and social policy. Federica graduated with a degree in Sociology and is currently pursuing a PhD in Migration and Cultures at the University of Genoa. She has worked for the CENSIS Foundation of Rome and the National Institute of Agrarian Economy for years.

Federica is currently engaged in education, constructing paths of female empowerment with the mindset that policies informed by a feminist point of view have the potential to positively influence all aspects of society. In 2004, Federica graduated from the University in Rome-La Sapienza in Science and Communications Technology. As the president of Linearmente Onlus, she was in charge of cultural projects and education with local communities. In 2015, she came to BeFree as an anti-violence worker, allowing her to explore and better understand topics in which she has always been interested.

*Federica  
Scrollini*

*Maria  
Silvia  
Soriatto*

Maria Silvia is a teacher for the Master's program in Equal Opportunities of the Women's Studies Department of the University Roma Tre as well as the training programs at San Camillo Hospital and the Scuola Sociale of the Province of Rome. As a psychologist and psychotherapist specializing in emergency and trauma psychology, Maria Silvia has worked for nine years in programs for victims of domestic violence and trafficking. She is a founding member of BeFree and collaborates on many BeFree projects.

Anna works as BeFree's expert on children who are victims of assisted violence at the Anti-Violence Center Donatella Colosanti and Rosaria Lopez and at the Sportello Donna at the San Camillo-Forlanini Hospital. As a professional educator, Anna began working on interventions with minors in 1993 and has worked in women's shelters since 2001. She is a consultant for social interventions involving minors and parenting skills in situations of family break-ups at the Associazione Spazio Neutro and for interventions directed at VaW abusers in detention. Anna is also an instructor for training courses on gender violence both in Italy and abroad.

*Anna  
Verdelocco*

*Francesca  
Zecca*

Francesca became a BeFree member in 2017. In January of 2016, Francesca launched a specialized course on psychoanalytic psychotherapy at the SPS Office of Psychosociology. In 2014, Francesca graduated in Clinical Psychology at the University of Rome-La Sapienza. She became involved in BeFree's services in 2015, including: SOS Donna H24, the Anti-violence Center Comunale, and the shelter for victims of trafficking and exploitation by prostitution.



BeFree staff on retreat in 2013.



**#BEFREEFROMVIOLENCE**



For more information about BeFree, please contact:

**+39 06 64760799**

**[befree.segreteria@gmail.com](mailto:befree.segreteria@gmail.com)**

Or visit us online:

**<http://www.befreecooperativa.org/wordpress>**

BeFree is grateful for the many individuals, organizations, institutions, and partners that have supported and continue to support the cooperative.

BeFree would also like to thank Taylor Still for helping to put together this anniversary report.