

Alliance
AUTORITÉS LOCALES
SOCIÉTÉ CIVILE POUR UNE
AUTRE GOUVERNANCE DES
Migrations

**PANORAMAS OF ALLIANCES BETWEEN
LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY :**
PAYS VIGANAIS

The Migration Alliance is a project founded and run by :



For an unconditional welcome and universal citizenship

Towards a common base of territories

The Alliance Migrations¹ aims at a local and global change to get out of the dramatic impasse in which the current policies of non-reception lock us. To do so, it works on a French, European and international scale to encourage and promote concrete alternatives led by local authorities in conjunction with civil society in terms of dignified reception, citizenship and respect for fundamental rights.

By relying on inspiring territories, the Alliance Migrations wishes to weave a red thread around 4 main objectives:

- The promotion of alternative policies carried out by the territories
- The multiplication of good practices and cooperation between territories
- The anchoring of the Alliance's project in the field: proof by action!
- In the long term, the support of a common plea for another governance of migrations

This project was initiated in 5 pilot cities in 2020 (Lisbon, Barcelona, Palermo, Grenoble and Montreuil), and was continued in 2021 in 3 other territories: Berlin, Liege and the Pays Viganais. For each of these territories, volunteers took part in the actions carried out by local actors and carried out an analysis over 5 months.

The work of the volunteers of the Alliance Migrations provides us with an overview of the issues surrounding migration in each of these territories and examples of "good practices" carried out by local authorities in conjunction with civil society. These examples, which are not exhaustive, allow us to highlight points of attention, recommendations and prospects for joint projects to strengthen practices in favor of reception and citizenship at the local level and to build on these concrete alternatives to bring about a change of course in migration policies. This is how the common base of the territories for a welcome was co-constructed, through three pillars, from the 8 territories:

- **The guarantee of a local citizenship that allows each inhabitant to participate in the political life of their city**
- **The promotion of interculturality as a vector of inclusion and social cohesion**
- **The guarantee of unconditional access to rights.**

This document is addressed to local authorities and elected officials, associations, researchers and all those concerned in order to encourage and highlight concrete alternatives carried out by local authorities, in support of civil society, in terms of dignified reception, citizenship and respect of fundamental rights.

¹ The "Alliance Migrations", an alliance between local authorities and civil society for a different kind of governance of migration, is a dynamic supported by the National Association of Welcoming Cities and Territories (ANVITA) and the Organization for Universal Citizenship (O.C.U., made up of Emmaus International, CCFD-Terre Solidaire, the Utopia Movement and the Latin American network Espacio Sin Fronteras)

PAYS VIGANAIS

This panorama was realized and written by Elise Birchler, who was on a voluntary mission within the framework of the Alliance Migrations, from October 2021 to March 2022. The mission was supervised by the collective « Amis du collectif Pays Viganais terre d'Accueil » (APAVIA)

JULY 2022

Glossary

ANVITA :	National Association of Welcoming Cities and Territories
ASE :	Child welfare
Collectif APAVIA :	« Amis du collectif Pays Viganais terre d'Accueil »
CADA :	Reception Centers for Asylum Seekers
CAO :	Reception and Orientation Center
CAOMI :	Reception and Orientation Center for Isolated Minors
FEP :	Federation of Protestant mutual aid
FLE :	French as a Foreign Language
MNA :	Isolated minors
UNESCO :	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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Introduction

The particularity of the reception in the Cevennes is directly inscribed in its own identity, that of a rural space of low mountains that we like to call Cevennes "country" alone, where "there is another France, another Europe, another World. In spite of the speeches and a permanent contemporary trial against emotions, sensibility and the humanisms that are linked to them, there are thousands of dispositions and practices that organize a sensitive city, allow democracy to exist in every neighborhood, creating a world of neighbors. Their place is underestimated in public life, even though it is central"². This reorganization of the city, whether tacit or not, created spontaneously by individuals and local associations, refusing to remain inactive in the face of the challenges of welcoming uprooted people, groups of residents of the southern Cevennes are an example. We propose here a study on the dynamics of reception, access to rights and interculturality between civil society, citizens and local authorities in the Cevennes of Gard. This research was carried out during 5 months from the sub-prefecture of Le Vigan and covers the southern part of the Cevennes, mainly belonging to the Gard, except for the city of Ganges and St-Bauzille-de-Putois. It is based on readings, listening, interviews and a field survey conducted between October 2021 and March 2022 with the support of the Collective « Pays Viganais Terre d'Accueil » whose members welcomed our volunteer as one of their own³. This document aims to give an overview, not exhaustive, of the context and practices of solidarity on the territory and thus propose some perspectives in favor of a dignified welcome.

² Brugère, Fabienne ; Le Blanc, Guillaume (2017) *La fin de l'hospitalité. Lampedusa, Lesbos, Calais... Jusqu'où irons-nous ?* Paris, Flammarion, 240 p.

³ <https://www.pvigtac.fr/presentation-du-collectif/>

I. Reception in the Cevennes, form a traditional heritage to regionalization policies

The Cevennes territory is a group of medium-sized mountains, classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and whose 131 municipalities are subject to the respect of the sustainable development charter. From North to South, the Park includes a part of Lozere and Gard, as well as a small part in Ardèche. However, its population is concentrated around the Gard part. It is around the Gard territory of the Cevennes that this study focuses on the reception of migrants between local authorities and civil society. More urbanized than the Lozere part, it reaches nearly 70% of the park's population (e.g., more than 50,000 people) on only 35% of the territory⁴. Despite its demographic growth since the 1960s, the territory is marked by a strong social fragility: 25% of its inhabitants live below the poverty line⁵. Although nearly a third of the population is over 65 years old, the Cevennes can count on a positive migratory balance to revitalize the territory's economy. "New arrivals are making the Park's population younger, or at least slowing down the aging process," reducing the rate of inactive people from 54.9% to 52.6% and the rate of active people from 39% to 39.9% in 2006⁶.

This dynamic is the result, on the one hand, of intra-national movements, but also of transnational migrations. Indeed, the Cevennes have been, and remain, a land of welcome for migrations, whether they be labor migrations since the industrial era, or for groups or individuals fleeing persecution. Camisards facing the ban on Protestantism under the Edict of Nantes, Spanish guerrilla refugees fleeing Francoism (300 lived in Le Vigan), German resistance fighters who joined the maquis, Jews hiding in the underground tunnels of the Righteous, Algerian temporary workers, Moroccan workers, etc. nes or Moroccans who saved the wine industry and mining, and since the 2010s, Syrians, Afghanis, Kosovars, Eritreans or Sudanese who, by fleeing war and/or oppressive value systems, are fighting for freedom and democracy. Thus, the Cevennes are woven together with a social environment to which a tradition of welcome and

⁴ Insee, Analyses Occitanie, « Parc national des Cévennes : une économie au service des habitants, un territoire attractif », N°97, Septembre 2020, 4p.

⁵ The poverty line is defined in relation to the national median standard of living, which was 1,015 euros in France in 2015 for a single person. Ibid.

⁶ Insee, Key figures for the Languedoc-Roussillon. economy « Le Parc des Cévennes : un territoire devenu attractif », N°3, Juin 2010.

resistance has been transmitted from generation to generation⁷. What tools and initiatives set up by civil society have been associated with the state logic of welcoming migrants in the Cevennes valleys? And how is the mobilization of citizen actors of the reception illustrated? These groups, which draw their particularity from the familiar and friendly links between volunteers and guests.

From camps to mountains: between policies of regionalization of asylum and "humanitarian corridors »

Although the Gard region is partly urbanized, the Cevennes valleys remains far from the metropolises and economic centers and are not necessarily a personal choice of destination. The recent settlement of asylum seekers in these areas is the result of two dynamics: a regionalization of governmental reception policies with the mobilization of rural areas, and the mobilization of international Christian associations for the implementation of so-called "humanitarian corridors". In addition, there is the random factor of the comings and goings of people who have been rejected, undocumented, outside the state circuits and the right of asylum, and who leave their luggage in the Cevennes either by word of mouth, or who return to those who have shown them great hospitality once they have been rejected for asylum.

Since the 1970s, in order to distribute the financial, social and symbolic "costs", successive governments have been decentralizing and distributing asylum throughout France⁸. The arrival of migrants in rural areas is therefore partly the result of government management of asylum. This process accelerated in the 2000s, and a few communes in the Cevennes region that were in favor of receiving migrants won their case, notably during the dismantling of the camps in Calais in 2015, and then in La Chapelle in Paris in 2019. Beforehand, the local group of Amnesty International Cevennes, based in Le Vigan, launched an awareness campaign among the mayors of the communes of the Cevennes, in collaboration with the local branch of Secours Catholique, making it a priority to welcome Syrian families. If all the councillors did not react immediately to the need to welcome Syrian families, the decision was quickly adopted unanimously by the

⁷ Berthomière, William et Imbert, Christophe. « Quand s'engager ancre et s'ancre « engage » : les voies plurielles de l'autochtonie au sein des réseaux d'aide aux exilés en Ariège », *L'Espace Politique*, 2019, 38p.

⁸ Berthomière, William, et al. « L'accueil des exilés dans les espaces ruraux en France : orientations nationales et déclinaisons locales d'une politique de dispersion », *Revue européenne des migrations internationales*, vol. 36-2, no. 2-3, 2020, pp. 53-82. <https://doi.org/10.4000/remi.15550>

municipal councils of Mandagout and Le Vigan. Éric Doulcier (no label) then positioned himself as naturally favorable to the reception. "There is an exodus, what do we do? From my modest position as a rural mayor, it was obvious, it seemed normal, simple, commonplace (...). We are not in the emotional, we are in a real reflection: we can act locally (...). It is not a question of sharing wealth, but of sharing what we have. The tradition of the Cevennes is to be a land of refuge. To be worthy of this history is precious »⁹. At the end of the municipal council of Le Vigan, three communal houses were made available. After the intervention of the prefect, their management is entrusted to the Clede - an association -, three of them become CAO* and then CADA*. However, the communal apartments have since been dedicated to other purposes by the town hall or need to be renovated.

At the same time, a movement is underway, with reception centers multiplying and then disappearing, as in 2016 in Lasalle (CAO for 8 young people) and Monoblet (CAOMI* for 29 Afghan minors) in the Salindrenque valley, or in Saint-Bauzille-de-Putois (CAO for 43 young Sudanese adults), Others are settling for longer periods, such as Saint-Hippolyte-du-Fort (two CADAs* for about 20 men, women and children) and Le Vigan (two CADAs for about 10 men from African and Afghan countries). Other communes, such as Mandagout, receive families who have come through "humanitarian corridors", e.g. who have been extradited from Lebanon after fleeing Syria. This process is the result of an agreement between the State and 5 Christian associations. In the case of the Cevennes, the operating association is the Federation of Protestant mutual aid (FEP). The State ensures the recognition of the refugee status, while the association in charge finances the reception on the spot. The care on the territory (housing, courses, administrative follow-up, etc.) is entrusted to the reception collective, for example "Bienvenue À Mandagout".

However, if the creation of reception centers must be done under the aegis of the prefect, taking into account criteria such as the accessibility of the place by transport network, or "the dynamization of rural areas (shops, schools, etc.)", the reality is more relative.

⁹ France 3 Occitanie, Propos recueillis par l'AFP, « Migrants : le maire du Vigan défend la tradition d'accueil des Cévennes », 14/09/2015, Updated on June 11, 2020.

The opposite of rural isolation, proximity and conviviality within a network of refuge towns

It is important to take into account the geography of rural and mountainous areas because their isolation makes them less attractive to migrants. Initially, people transferred to remote rural areas are almost always unfamiliar with their place of arrival. This practice leads to a loss of reference points and anxiety when they arrive. Far from urban centers and therefore from infrastructures for access to rights, the situation of exiled persons can seem to reflect an exclusion from society. Moreover, the lack of public transportation doubles the inaccessibility to government services, as well as the social isolation of people who are already strangers to the territory. The exiled people are thus forced to work undeclared, not having the possibility of working with an "alias" as is often the case in the city.

However, if the topography lengthens the travel time, most of the work of reception is done locally around the village. In these villages of the South Cevennes, migrants can benefit from the proximity they have with the volunteer citizens of the collectives, which allows them to be more directly accompanied compared to the cities. "The relay is immediately taken over by the residents who are already present, who provide a more informal welcome and integrate the new arrivals into the collective life. (...) The intervention of numerous militant groups during the waiting period, and particularly on weekends, contributes favorably to the new arrivals getting their bearings. »¹⁰

Beyond the refugee cities, a network of resident groups and associations is being formed. Volunteer action was initially structured around the central city, creating informal collectives, and then spread out from the different collectives to form inter-collectives. The one in the South Cevennes was formed in 2017 and is called the Cevennes-Mediterranean Intercollective, which we will look at in this study.

On the other hand, the Cevennes is a territory favored by neo-rurals, installed as a result of movements such as May 1968 or the Larzac struggle. Their alternative and protest ideologies are perpetuated and contribute to the diversification of the territory through different ways of life.

¹⁰ Berthomière, William, et al. « L'accueil des exilés dans les espaces ruraux en France : orientations nationales et déclinaisons locales d'une politique de dispersion », *Revue européenne des migrations internationales*, vol. 36-2, no. 2-3, 2020, pp.69-70.
<https://doi.org/10.4000/remi.15550>

These activists are distinguished in particular by a tradition of welcome and openness to people from outside the Cevennes¹¹.

II. From the village eco-system to inter-municipal cooperation

Citizen commitment and transversality of the reception

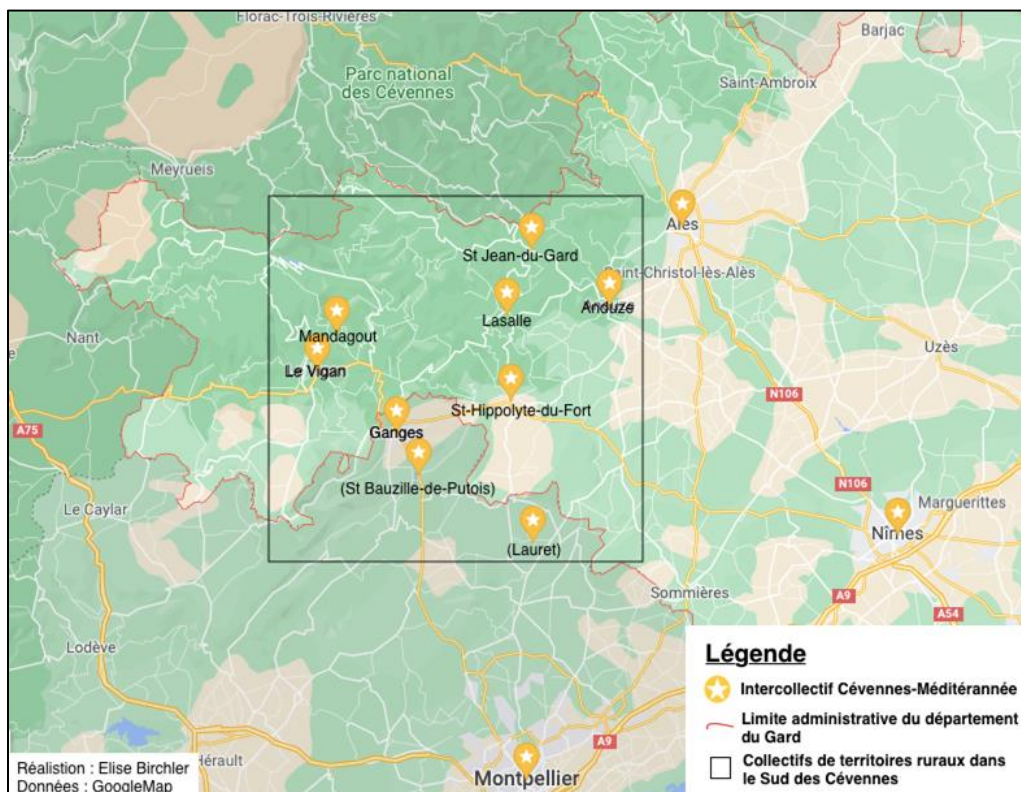
In this rural mountain region, the reception is centered on the village and its valley, then organizes itself into a network of villages to share struggles and knowledge. Thus, within ten villages, informal citizen collectives have formed since 2015 (with the exception of Lasalle, where welcome began to take shape in 2009). The people are committed to offering a dignified and inclusive welcome to migrant people in their municipalities. Faced with the common observation of the threats of deportation faced by many of the people being received, being subject to the Dublin regulation¹², several members of the collectives came together to make common demands. This is how the Cevennes-Mediterranee Intercollective was born, combining local political demands and cultural events around migration and reception. They have also joined forces with 3 collectives from neighboring cities (Montpellier, Nîmes and Alès). The Intercollective also allows the sharing of practices and solutions in case of difficulties. The sponsorship ceremonies or the use of the commodat¹³ to allow the loan of a property to the association to house people are examples of this.

¹¹ *Ibid*, pp.53-82

¹² The Dublin Regulation is a European regulation that subjects exiled persons to return to the first country, or a "third country" recognized as "safe", in which their fingerprints have been taken. This regulation hinders the freedom of movement and settlement to a country of choice, and leads to an unequal distribution of reception between states. Moreover, the list of so-called "safe" countries remains relative if one takes into consideration the personal reason for exile.

¹³ The commodat constitutes a loan of a property for free between two parties. It is a simple contract to set up, without financial consideration and can have a time limit. In the Cevennes Gardoises, private individuals lend their property to allow the accommodation of exiled people.

Map of the network of collectives in the South Cevennes, grouped under the Cevennes-Mediterranee Intercollective



Village residents and volunteers from the collectives complement the work of the parastatal associations (La Clède, La Luciole, Groupe SOS Coallia, etc.) that manage the CADA and CAO in the towns of Le Vigan, Saint-Hippolyte, Saint-Bauzille-de Putois and, previously, in Lasalle and Monoblet. Due to a lack of funds, these associations are not able to have a permanent presence in the area and rely on the support of volunteers from the local collectives.

Indeed, since the 1990s and the entry into force of the ban on work for asylum seekers throughout the examination of their application, associations have become professionalized to become "State operators" for the reception of asylum seekers (CADA, CAO, etc.). However, as Jérôme Valluy points out, these associations, in responding to the State's request to house and

control these populations, find themselves subject on the one hand to State directives and their limitations, but also to the constraints of the market (short invitations to tender, price per person received, competitive bidding, etc.). Although they retain their freedom of expression, their existence and functioning are subject to government directives and budgets, and are restricted to accompanying the asylum application. Thus, if the asylum application fails, the person finds himself outside the circuit of state support and without any resources or accommodation. The system of systematic (re)categorization by the State leads to a rupture of rights and falls directly on the associations and volunteers, who must then redouble their efforts. "Every time we have had a person to rehouse in an emergency, it is only on the shoulders of the volunteers of the collective, on their commitment. In terms of housing, we have no prospects with the structures. (...) From a global point of view we are placed in the replacement of a function that the State should have. Originally, the State was in charge of asylum seekers, then it was subcontracted to associations such as La Clède, France terre d'Asile or others. And now we find ourselves with associations that subcontract to volunteers (collectives). Basically, we're like a poultice on a wooden leg, and we're in it for the long haul," says one of the founding members of the Pays viganais terre d'accueil collective.

Indeed, the collectives act as local relays, in collaboration with parastatal associations. In Vigan, the volunteers can rely on the town hall to coordinate their actions with the Clède. They intervene primarily as a space for conviviality, sociability and support. The volunteers do their best to meet the needs of the people. Accommodation can be provided in private homes if necessary (temporary or long-term cohabitation, or loan in commodat). The economic aspect is addressed by putting people in touch with people who offer a small job or through solidarity canteens by and for the benefit of the people hosted. Each person is legally accompanied by a support worker or a group that often maintains the accompaniment beyond the obtaining or refusal of asylum. People can access food from food collections or be registered by volunteers with solidarity grocery stores or the Restos du Cœurs. They are also offered shared gardens, accompaniment to health professionals or their free intervention (for example 3 osteopaths have intervened in the CAOMI of Monoblet), drawing workshops, French as a Foreign Language (FLE) courses including original workshops combining theater and short film making under the impulse of the actress Colinda Ferraud, their registration for sports, hikes, parties, weekly cafes to meet, etc.

The Intercollective training has made it possible to share resources with people working in several communes, forming the CVN group. In less than a year, Penelope Chauvin has trained

about thirty volunteers to teach FLE in seven communes, while Colinda Ferraud, an actress and director, is leading film shoots with FLE learners for the second year, enabling them to gain confidence in their use of French¹⁴. Their interventions, as well as the accompaniment to access to rights, also extend to the Community of La Celle, an unconditional reception community where since 2013 about 25 migrant people find permanent refuge and work to make the community live by participating in agricultural, wood and construction work and in the secondhand trade. Similarly, several collective farms in the Gard or Lozere area welcome and call for the contribution of migrants passing through.

These informal practices of welcoming people help to consolidate social cohesion between the inhabitants of each valley, as a "link"¹⁵ between the different affiliations of each person, whether they are from the squat milieu, protestants, activists or from opposite political sides, confides volunteers from Lasalle, Le Vigan and Saint-Hippolyte-du-Fort: "We are in diversity, and we manage to work together"¹⁶ to "create a link between human beings."¹⁷

Since 2020, the municipality of Le Vigan has committed itself to pursuing its approach to welcoming migrants, initiated by Éric Doucier, by signing the ANVITA charter. It has entrusted the coordination to the Pays Viganais Terre d'Accueil collective, in order to work as closely as possible with civil society.

Limits and recommendations

If the birth of several collectives was fueled by the favorable position of the town hall, as under Éric Doucier in Le Vigan until 2020, today it seems that it is more the actors of civil society who are driving. Citizen volunteers call on local authorities to take several actions: to compensate for the accelerated dematerialization by maintaining a physical permanence of access to health care and social services, to make available communal housing, etc.

¹⁴ Their work, as well as that of other volunteers, can be seen on the CVN Group website, a detachment of the Intercollective. <https://groupecvn.fr/>.

¹⁵ Comments from a volunteer in Lasalle

¹⁶ Comments collected from a member of the Pays Viganais terre d'accueil collective (APAVIA)

¹⁷ Interview with Pauline, member of the ACCOSOR collective in Saint-Hippolyte du Fort.

Recognition of local citizenship and interculturality

While the commitment of volunteers in the field is one of the keys to ensuring that migrant people have lasting access to their rights in the country, it is also important to raise awareness and to reaffirm through actions the difference between "citizenship", as participation in local life, and "nationality" of papers. This is an approach that several organizations, including the National Association of Welcoming Cities and Territories (ANVITA), are taking.¹⁸ The right to the city, a concept introduced by the French government, is a key element in the fight against discrimination. The right to the city, a concept introduced by the sociologist and philosopher Henri Lefebvre, questions how our social position can be transposed to our relationship with the territory¹⁹. This is why it is necessary to explore contemporary forms of citizenship, where the individual, regardless of his or her social position and civil status, can reappropriate the spaces in which he or she lives, and feel that he or she belongs to the City that he or she composes. And to allow this living together, it is also necessary to question our perceptions of otherness in order to "move from a pluricultural society to an intercultural society" as Corinne Unsen underlines, whose interventions on the territory we will present in the second sub-part.

Local Cards: A Tool for Recognizing Local Citizenship

From sponsorship ceremonies in 2017 in the face of approaching expulsions from the territory²⁰, to the municipal map project, reflections around the recognition of migrants as local citizens are progressing in Le Vigan, under the collaboration initiated between the City and the collective « Pays viganais terre d'accueil ».

i. Sponsorship: a symbol of welcome and recognition of belonging to the territory

In 2017, several exiled people and their companions from the collectives of Le Vigan and Saint-Hippolyte du Fort were confronted with the realities of the application of the Dublin

¹⁸ ANVITA report on "Local ID Cards. Toward inclusive local citizenship," December 2021.

¹⁹ Lefebvre Henri. Le droit à la ville. In: *L'Homme et la société*, N. 6, 1967. pp. 29-35.

<https://doi.org/10.3406/homso.1967.1063>

²⁰ Under Dublin Regulation

Regulation. At a time when a group of twelve Sudanese people, divided between the two cities, are under the threat of deportation to the first country that has taken their fingerprints, the volunteers of the collectives decide to seize the possibilities that surround them and seek the help of local authorities. At the end of their respective consultations, it was the mayor of Le Vigan, Eric Doulcier, who first took the initiative of concretizing the belonging of the group of exiles to the territory of Le Vigan by officiating a sponsorship ceremony during which each one of them received a card sealing their local integration and their direct link with a person guaranteeing their administrative follow-up: a solemn event to which nearly 250 Cevennes residents came to attend, as well as the press. As Elise Martin, a geographer who has studied the reception of immigrants in the Cevennes, writes, "the republican sponsorship, which ratifies the symbolic entry of the foreigner into the community of French citizens, seals above all the acceptance into the local population of the exiles received. This act is all the more meaningful at the local level because it involves the mayor of the municipality and shows him or her to be a political leader who is in favor of reception"²¹. Enriched by the experience of the town hall of Le Vigan, the town halls of Saint-Hippolyte-du-Fort and Valleraugue followed the example and replicated the action in their towns by sponsoring four dublines and one family respectively. Of the twelve people deported in 2017, eleven were eventually able to return to France and obtain asylum, and a quarter of them returned to the Cevennes.

ii. The local card

From these events, a reflection began within the Vaucluse collective. The desire to enhance the welcome, the link between the inhabitants and the newcomers, in order to formalize their belonging to the territory, and to recognize them as actors of a local citizenship. Thus, in 2021, the Pays viganais terre d'accueil collective wished to renew an alliance with the new mayor Sylvie Arnal (without label). The objective is to systematically welcome exiled people in the town hall, explaining their rights and duties as new citizens, and to show that it is not only a collective that welcomes them but an entire city. This act would be materialized by a municipal card, allowing them free access to the structures of the city such as the media library, the digital space or the Cevennes museum.

²¹ Élise Martin, « Trouver refuge dans les Cévennes, un réseau d'accueil dessiné entre les lignes de crêtes », *e-Migrinter* [online], 20 | 2020, put online on July 23, 2020, accessed on May 20, 2021. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/e-migrinter/2316> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/e-migrinter.2316>

Interculturality: deconstructing for better action and society

Reflecting on the reactions, postures and interactions we may have with others, whether they are exiles or volunteers, should allow us to understand how our representations can constitute prejudices that must be nuanced.

i. Intercultural pedagogy: a resource for living together

This is why Corinne Unsen is involved in the territory of the South Cevennes at the request of the FLE coordinator, Pénélope Chauvin. As a trainer for specialized educators and social workers and director of a neighborhood association for 25 years, Corinne Unsen has developed a 6-day training cycle around the intercultural approach, open to all volunteers of groups or associations, social workers, migrants and the curious. According to the professional, it is a necessary step to "undo tensions, work on one's representations, even deconstruct them and thus allow people to live together". To break down prejudice, it is necessary to understand what prejudice is and what effects it has on individuals, and to decompartmentalize the different cultures by understanding them as not fixed in time, but in permanent movement. For this, the training is based on a method of transmission by active pedagogy and without judgment. The people attending the training are actors in their own learning through an original approach that consists of immersing themselves in a real-life situation, starting with a theoretical framework. The participants are invited to replay the scene while detaching themselves from the experience in order to raise questions and reactions from the group and to reflect on themselves: a playful way of deconstructing and analyzing a concrete situation and allowing the deconstruction of distorted representations. This interactive method of teaching and sensitizing arouses the interest of many. Each cycle has brought together between 30 and 50 people from the territory so far.

At the same time, a discussion group initiated by the Cevennes-Mediterranee Intercollective takes place every month, to create a space for exchange and listening between people involved in welcoming migrants. These moments of kindness allow for the discussion of relational difficulties felt, both between volunteers and migrants and within the group of volunteers, and to enjoy mutual support and solutions to problems. A former psychotherapy professional who also worked at Cimade participates and guides the discussions.

i. **"Échappée Libre": a program dedicated to the people welcomed by the collectives**

Created at the initiative of the Cevennes-Mediterranee Intercollective, the program "Échappée Libre" broadcast each month on Radio Escapade²² since September 2021, gives a voice to exiled women and men who have landed in the municipalities where the welcoming collectives accompany them. They talk about their migratory journey, their hopes, their feelings of expectation and attachment to the territory, to their friends and to the collectives. They discuss their conditions as women or men, their lives in their countries of origin, their opinions and projections about France, etc. Activists and volunteers from the collectives also speak and dialogue with them, explaining the pitfalls of the process of obtaining asylum or explaining the evolution of migration policies in France. Together, they share the joy of being welcomed and of welcoming, of creating together a sensitive and united city. The preparation of the program and the experience of the radio represent a space of conviviality and strong sharing, allowing to build social links between volunteers, migrants from different communities and collectives.

Youth: becoming an actor of one's independence

Upon their arrival in France, all minors from third countries are supposed to be placed under the protection of the child, in a departmental Child Welfare system (ASE), and thus be assured of their fundamental rights, i.e. access to education, health and civil status. However, the Human Rights Defender and many organizations working for the rights of children and/or foreigners in France, note that despite the quality of certain ASE services, many minors are discriminated against and victims of negligence. The Human Rights Defender "regularly notes, for example, that many unaccompanied minors are housed in hotels, without any real educational support. The result is a discontinuity in the support of these adolescents and a lack of access to their rights, with the minors left to their own devices, without real access to health care and sometimes even without schooling (...) The multiplication in recent years of dedicated, low-cost

²² Associative radio based in Saint-Hippolyte-du-Fort

facilities, in the name of a relative autonomy of unaccompanied minors, contributes to a form of relegation of these minors to the frontiers of child protection, which discriminates against other children at risk, feeding the idea of a right of exception that would be applicable to them"²³

In the Pays Viganais, the hamlet of Salagosse, perched at an altitude of 760 meters, is home to a children's home of a social nature: the Louis Defond Center, a true place of life, training and leisure where approximately 40 foreign minors, mainly boys, are welcomed and accompanied daily in the benevolence and perseverance of educators, teachers, social workers and all the staff. Rebuilt in the 1950's by the association "les amis de Tatihou" which is still in charge, the hamlet was initially set up to train and integrate young offenders, but since 2013, its public has changed with the migratory movements, opening its doors to young people aged 13 to 21 who have fled their country. The teaching and access to rights has been readapted by offering, among other things, sustained French courses and support to access the right to stay.

For two and a half years, the young people follow courses in French as a foreign language, general culture and civic education, then they develop their know-how thanks to three CAP courses in masonry, metalwork and painting. They pass their exams at the Frederic-Mistral vocational school in Nîmes with a 100% success rate. Thanks to the center's involvement in the economic integration process, each student manages to complete 14 weeks of internship during their training, and almost all of the young people are hired when they leave the center, according to Nicolas Gauthier, head of the boarding school. "The craftsman often wants to hire the young person without delay, but without our links with the relevant services, it would take months,"²⁴ says Stephane Sauvage, a specialized educator at the center. Indeed, the social workers accompany the young graduates through the administrative maze in order to enable their professional integration once they leave Salagossa.

Beyond the training, the Louis Defond Center provides young people with a place of fulfillment. Artists do residencies at the center to introduce or reinforce the youths' passion for all kinds of artistic expression (music, theater, etc.) and mastery of mediums such as

²³ *Human Right Defender, Synthesis* « Les mineurs non accompagnés au regard du droit. », 2022, p.13.

https://www.infomie.net/IMG/pdf/ddd_rapport-les-mineurs-non-accompagnes-au-regard-du-droit_synthese_20210124.pdf

²⁴ *Le Moniteur des travaux publics et du bâtiment*, « Garantir à la société française des jeunes correctement intégrés » par Laurent Duguet, le 04/12/2019

photography, sound technology, video, etc.²⁵ The youths thus organized their own festival in 2017 and showcased their artistic talents. The center also takes teenagers on vacations to the sea or the mountains whenever they can²⁶.

²⁵Agenda of the Pays Viganais Community of communes . <https://www.cc-paysviganais.fr/medias/2017/12/ete-2017-web.pdf>

²⁶ Midi Libre

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