



Jamila, a USAID 'Contagion of Hope' project beneficiary tells her story to a project volunteer. Photo credit Caritas Lodi.

Groceries of Hope

'CONTAGION OF HOPE' PROJECT HUMAN INTEREST STORY

THE CRISIS

"Una spesa donata è una spesa di speranza." Translated literally, this means "a grocery gifted is a grocery of hope." Even small gestures can give people the hope they need to continue when things are difficult.

Jamila, the mother of two daughters, arrived in Italy in 2006. Things were going okay for the family, but in 2013 problems began for Jamila.

"During a holiday in Morocco, my ex-husband stole my passport to force me to stay there with my children," Jamila said. "I tried to return to Italy and ask for a divorce, but they did not grant a visa to my children, who I wanted to return with me to Italy. I cannot live apart from my children."

In 2018, after obtaining a divorce and custody of her daughters, Jamila returned to Italy. Today Jamila lives in Caritas housing in Lodi near a shelter for asylum seekers where she carries out cleaning services. She also works three hours a day for a woman from Lodi, helping her with the housework. However, Jamila does not make enough to cover her rent and shopping for herself and the girls, especially since her ex-husband is not paying his alimony. As a result of COVID-19, Jamila lost part of her income and turned to the Caritas Solidarity Collection Center for support.

"I feel alive thanks to these people [Caritas Lodi] who have given me back my courage."

—JAMILA, PROJECT BENEFICIARY

FINDING HOPE

Thanks to the United States Agency for International Development funded project 'Contagion of Hope', through Caritas Lodigiana's weekly food shopping, Jamila found valuable support in a difficult moment in her life. "I didn't even imagine that there could be people organized together to offer help of this kind, and help for me!" Jamila said. "Caritas Lodi explained that I too qualified to receive food groceries, for free. I could not believe it. I feel alive thanks to these people who have given me back my courage."

Jamila is resuming her job search with the knowledge that, through the 'Contagion of Hope' project, she and her children will be able to have a daily meal. In the shelter for asylum seekers where she works, she has become a point of reference for female guests who have just arrived in Italy, testifying with her presence that, with determination, hope and courage, nostalgia for the future can be replaced with a hope for the future.