

《Cultural initiatives nurtures integration of second-generati》

ROME, May 10 (Xinhua) -- Cultural initiatives and exchanges have nurtured the integration of second-generation Chinese immigrants in Italy as dozens of people gathered at the Nelson Mandela public library in Rome's San Giovanni neighborhood to watch documentaries on Chinese-born young people, and discuss about their hopes, experiences, and search for identity.

The event held earlier this week was part of a cycle of five meetings on the Chinese culture organized by the Confucius Institute at La Sapienza University of Rome between March and June.

"Such initiatives are increasingly popular among Italians, and they also draw more and more people of Chinese origins, as the event shows," moderator Valentina Pedone told Xinhua.

Pedone is the Italian director of the Confucius Institute at the University of Florence, and a renowned researcher in the field of the Chinese migration in Italy.

She explained that Chinese-born youth in Italy maintains strong attachment to their ethnic roots, while looking at the same time at the country in which they were born or raised as a source of opportunities.

This process would be mirrored in the cultural production of second generation Chinese, she said. "My studies deal with the cultural production of the Chinese migration in Italy, which is growing," she added. "It is an unconventional artistic voice, for it comes from people with a different background, and its increase is good for Italy, because it definitely is an enrichment of our own culture."

Two short documentaries were shown during the event, both narrating the stories of children of Chinese immigrants in Rome. The audience appeared involved, also because the films offered an easy approach to the issue: they brought to the screen the young people's day-to-day habits, curiosities, tastes, and their relations with Chinese parents on the one hand, and their Italian schoolmates and friends on the other.

It was a simple way to deal with their developing identity, and the discussion grew intense. That cultural initiatives help the integration of second generation Chinese was something that Massimiliano Zhan, 23, fully agreed.

"Surely it helps much, and I can provide you with a concrete example," the young man, member of Rome-based association of new Chinese generations Associna, told Xinhua.

He explained that, with Associna, they were used to organize socio-linguistic exchanges and invite three different groups of guests: young people like him -- second generation Chinese; Italians interested in the Chinese language; and Chinese who are in Italy just to study the Italian language.

"Every time we have such meetings, I feel proud," Zhan said. "These groups always find a way to mingle with each

other, we create an interaction... and the three social categories, in the end, are just like one."

Zhan was born in Zhejiang province of eastern China, but has grown in Italy since he was eight. He is now a sociology student at the University Rome III. He speaks perfect Italian, with just a hint of Roman accent.

Asked about what most marks second generation Chinese in Italy, he answered: "A double presence."

"If I think of our parents, they are not able to take part in any sphere of the social life neither here in Italy, nor in China," Zhan explained.

"On the other hand, we (the children) can do both: we have the chance to exert this double presence, because we are able to break the linguistic barrier, and we can launch initiatives here in Italy, but we may also go to China, and take part in the social life there as well."

"In my opinion, this is already a path," Zhan stressed.

According to the Confucius Institute's researcher, there was one thing many second generation Chinese here were always asked about: do you feel more Chinese or more Italian? "Such question is repeatedly asked to the second generations," Pedone said. "Yet, the bottom line is they do not have to choose, they can be both," she added.