

# Be.Long: case study on alternative hospitality for students and workers



# Fondazione Destination Florence

For over 25 years, **Destination Florence Convention & Visitors Bureau** has been the official promotion agency for the City of Florence, with the mission of attracting major events, congresses, international weddings and quality tourism.

In **2024**, we celebrate our new start as a **Foundation**, moving towards the future with reinforced goals and energy for our mission. Boasting as Founding Members the City of Florence and the Metropolitan City of Florence, Fondazione Destination Florence is a model that represents the territory comprehensively, aiming to leverage collaboration between institutions and the network of local entrepreneurs and private operators.

### SCENARIO

Florence is one of the most popular study abroad capitals in the world with more than **45 foreign universities** and **18 schools of Italian language and culture**.

**Encouraging a more sustainable form of tourism is possible:** the project's goal is to intercept and to engage tourists on medium or long-term stays, with the potential of them becoming new residents.

# 3.288.150 - 3.653.500

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Average stay: 90-100 days

Arrival: 36,535

**Source:** Centro Studi Turistici Firenze; Marco De La Pierre e Marco Bracci, Study Abroad in Italy. Fra economia della conoscenza, turismo e soft power (2021)

# 37% of global workers

## STARTUPPER & DIGITAL NOMADS

Global workers willing to relocate to another destination to work remotely

**Source:** estratto del Workshop SMARTWORKING & LONGSTAY  
#TuscanyTogether di Toscana Promozione Turistica

**DECEMBER 2020**

**APRIL 2021**

**TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

**USER RESEARCH**

**PLATFORM DESIGN**

**LAUNCH**



Be.Long is Florence's project for its **temporary citizens**, designed by **Fondazione Destination Florence** in partnership with the **City of Florence**. International or off-site students, startupper and those who arrive in the city for a medium or long period and want to feel part of its **community**: with Be.Long they will find the first dedicated information area!

DESTINATION  
**FLORENCE**  
CONVENTION  
& VISITORS  
BUREAU



# Alternative housing for temporary citizens

Be.Long has been created to welcome temporary citizens, that is, all those who reside in the city for a period of at least one month, but not for an indefinite time.

The aim is to facilitate and enrich their experience with direct and clear information for their stay, and to encourage their integration into the socio-cultural context of the city with dedicated content and activities.

At the same time, this ensures that the city authorities can know and manage beforehand the significant incoming tourist flows.

Be.Long has consolidated and established itself as a system and destination project in the past few years, with strengthened partnerships in the area and increasingly structured digital communication to the target audience.

# The Technical Committee

**Fondazione Destination Florence**, together with the municipality, established a technical committee that took part in building the project:

- 1 Università degli Studi di Firenze
- 2 Polimoda, New York University, Lorenzo de Medici
- 3 European University
- 4 Confcommercio // F.I.M.A.A.
- 5 Confesercenti // Agenzie Immobiliari
- 6 Comitato toscano di lingua italiana
- 7 Nana Bianca
- 8 Murate Idea Park
- 9 A.S.I.L.S.
- 10 My Guest Friend e Property Managers Italia



# Institutional Supporter

The Consulate General of the  
United States of America in Florence  
supports Be.Long!

## SUPPORTERS



CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Lungarno A. Vespucci, 38  
50123 Florence, Italy

April 28, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

Nestled in the heart of Tuscany, with its rich cultural history, world-famous cuisine, and fashion-forward outlook, it is no surprise that Florence is regularly ranked as a top tourist destination and remains one of the most attractive cities for U.S. study abroad programs. In fact, Florence hosts one of the largest concentrations of American study abroad programs, with over 50 U.S. schools hosting thousands of American students each year.

American students also play an important role in the strengthening of U.S.-Italy ties both during their stay and beyond. While in Florence, American students are citizen Ambassadors representing the United States; when they return home, they become Ambassadors of the U.S.-Italy partnership, encouraging others to follow in their footsteps. Cultural exchange is a cornerstone of the U.S.-Italy bilateral relationship. The thriving academic and cultural exchange between our countries has enhanced transatlantic ties for centuries. Today, even in the face of the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, the virtuous cycle continues.

The U.S. Consulate General in Florence welcomes the city of Florence's efforts to make it easier for students and tourists to enjoy the city's many cultural offerings. Be.Long by Destination Florence is a dynamic and innovative initiative of the city of Florence's tourism promotion agency, Destination Florence Convention & Visitors Bureau. Working in concert with Florence's premiere institutions, Be.Long is a unique platform which provides students with the information they need to become fully-integrated and active members of the Florentine community and enjoy the city to its fullest. The U.S. Consulate General in Florence supports initiatives like Be.Long that enhance U.S.-Italy cultural and educational exchange.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ragini Gupta". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Ragini Gupta  
Consul General



1

Providing **information & services** to Belongers, Schools and Universities

2

Intercepting the **arrival** of students and stimulating cultural **integration** with locals

3

Promoting Florence as the **City of Knowledge** and **Innovation**

Belongers gain access to benefits reserved for students, startupper and coworkers

### **BENEFITS**

Info on how to work in Florence, like the bureaucratic info and steps to open a VAT number and work as a freelancer; the co-working and networking spaces in the city; etc.

### **WORK**

### **HOUSING**

Several housing options with guaranteed quality standards and regulated contracts

### **STUDY**

Mapping of local schools and universities, plus information for a more sustainable and conscious student life in Florence

### **LIVE**

Info on how to start and live at fullest the experience in Florence, like the bureaucratic steps before and during the stay for EU and non-EU citizens; National Health Service; Community Service activities; etc.

## APARTMENTS

Be.Long collaborates with HousingAnywhere, an international platform for housing rentals. Through HousingAnywhere you can securely book your new apartment in Florence, offered by private and professional landlords.

## STUDENT RESIDENCES

- The Social Hub
- Camplus
- CX Florence Student Place
- Beyoo
- Evergreen Florence Residence

## CO-HOUSING

The project aims to create a virtuous and inclusive circuit where students - as well as workers - and residents can share resources, experiences and mutual support.

# Co-Housing models

CO-LIVING AND CO-RESIDENCE

RESPONSE TO THE CITY HOUSING CRISIS

SOCIAL INTERACTION AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE

HOME ASSISTANCE

MORE AFFORDABLE RENTS FOR STUDENTS

SOCIAL INCLUSION MODEL

INTEGRATION INTO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

An experience in a foreign city often means fun, freedom, entertainment. But it can be so much more. More and more young people are asking how they can help the community that is welcoming them.

With Be.Long they can find out how to give back to the city.



## VOLUNTEERING





## INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

# Networking Hub

A network boasting several opportunities for students

As a facilitator in the area, Destination Florence Foundation offers universities and schools seeking internship opportunities for their students a connection service through Be.long channels.



# Social Networks



**@belong.florence**

1.087 followers



**@belong.florence**

2.297 followers

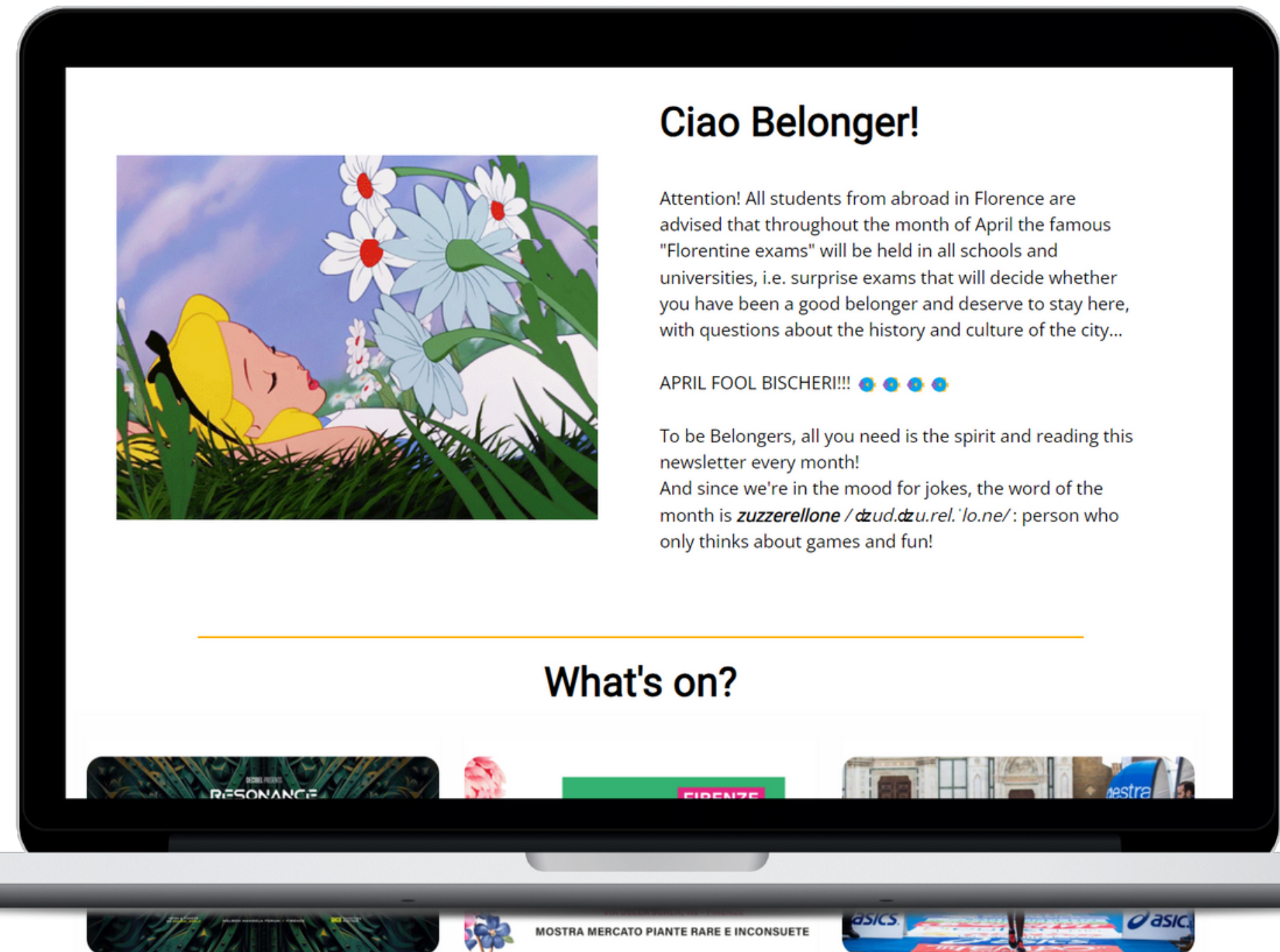
150k organic views per post



# Monthly newsletters


- Monthly Intro
- Main events
- New benefits
- Opportunities

Florence  
is where  
you belong 



## Ciao Belonger!

Attention! All students from abroad in Florence are advised that throughout the month of April the famous "Florentine exams" will be held in all schools and universities, i.e. surprise exams that will decide whether you have been a good believer and deserve to stay here, with questions about the history and culture of the city...

APRIL FOOL BISCHERI!!!! 

To be Belongers, all you need is the spirit and reading this newsletter every month!

And since we're in the mood for jokes, the word of the month is **zuzzerellone** / *dzud.dz u.rel.'lo.ne/*: person who only thinks about games and fun!

## What's on?

### RESONANCE FESTIVAL / MANDELA FORUM

Warning: this is not a joke! There is still time to give your all to the electronic rhythm of the dizzying lineup of the Resonance Festival: **second and final**

### RARE FLOWER SHOW / GIARDINO CORSINI

The exhibition of the **rarest, strangest and most unusual plants** in the world! Particular carnivorous plants, a real citrus fruit museum and free activities in the

### HALF MARATHON / CITY CENTER

**21,097 km** in an urban context unique in the world, with a flat route that winds through the historic center until reaching the suggestive atmospheres of the streets



# International Trade Shows

Nasfa 2024, New Orleans



**1.594**

International  
students using  
web site services

**100**

Apartments online

**4**

Specialized real  
estate agencies

**5**

Student  
residences

**34**

Universities and  
schools involved  
in the project

**150**

Start-ups in the  
metropolitan area

**52**

Partners and  
supporters  
involved in the  
project

# A project that was missing

Be.Long aims to act as an aggregator of this information, relieving project partner institutions and companies from this kind of activity that are not part of their core business.



**THANK YOU!**

