

SO FIE

Support for empowerment and integration of refugee families

Guidelines for Best Practice of Inclusion based on Needs Analysis of Refugee Families

 *Italy National Report*

support-refugees.eu



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SOFIE

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I01 – Guidelines for Best Practice of Inclusion based on Needs Analysis of Refugee Families

Italy National Report

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February 2018



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1. Introduction

With the increase in the number of refugees and migrants in Europe, the European Union set as a priority their integration and inclusion in our societies. It acknowledged on one hand the challenges that third-country nationals (TCNs) face in the education system, on the labour market and in accessing decent housing, and on the other hand the positive impact that TCNs can have on the local economies when they are well integrated (European Commission, 2016). In 2016 the EU adopted the Action Plan on the Integration of Third-Country Nationals (European Commission, 2016) setting key policy priorities in the areas of pre-departure / post-arrival; education; labour market and vocational training; and access to basic services (European Commission, 2016). The Action Plan highlights that education and training, especially learning of the local language, are among the most powerful tools for integration. The combination of language learning with the acquisition of other skills and competences is a gateway to integration, employment and social inclusion. Finally, the Action Plan recognized that women face extra challenges in their integration and proposed that a special effort should be made to ensure that such programmes reach both women and men (European Commission, 2016).

This research is part of SOFIE¹, a European project funded by Erasmus+, which aims to contribute to the social inclusion of asylum seekers/refugees by provision of educational trainings targeting women and children on the one hand, and on the other hand by training trainers and volunteers in order to better prepare them for the needs of the refugee families. SOFIE is implemented by a consortium of five civil society organisations, Verein Multikulturell from Austria, CESIE from Italy, CARDET from Cyprus, Mozaik from Turkey and Folksuniversitetet from Sweden.

In order to be able to develop and deliver training material and tools targeted to the needs of refugees and volunteers, the first phase of the project consists of a research and needs analysis. This report presents the results of the national research conducted in Italy. It identified the needs and challenges that refugee families face, especially in terms of integration and training support, best practices on the integration of refugee families as well as the training needs of volunteers.

¹ support-refugees.eu



2. Methodology

The aim of this research is to identify and understand the needs and challenges of refugee families in European countries, the training needs of persons volunteering with refugees as well as best practices on the integration of refugee families. The research is the first part of the European project SOFIE and it will inform the development and delivery of training tools that will be tailor made on the specific needs of the target groups. This report presents the research results for Italy.

The methodology adopted to produce this report consists of a 5-step process with the use of different qualitative and quantitative research tools, implemented from November 2017 to February 2018:

1. Desktop research and literature review on the needs of refugee families, existing tools and best practices for empowerment and integration support to refugee families.
2. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with at least 15 refugees or asylum seekers to identify the needs and challenges of refugee families, especially in terms of integration and training support. Special attention was given to have a representative sample of asylum seekers/refugees with different nationalities and ensure the inclusion of refugee women.
3. Interviews with representatives of five organisations working with refugees/asylum, to identify the needs of refugee families from an experts' viewpoint.
4. Collection of qualitative and quantitative data on the experiences and training needs of volunteers with the use of a questionnaire. The goal of the questionnaire was twofold: i) to identify needs of refugee families, especially in terms of integration and training support. ii) to gain an understanding on the experience of volunteers, especially to identify any specific challenges they face while supporting / engaging refugees/asylum and their training needs.

CARDET, the lead partner of this research, developed detailed guidelines and research tools. The guidelines consisted of a description of each task, specific instructions on how to deliver all the research activities by all partners, as well as templates such as consent form, instructions and interview guides.

The FGDs and interviews were semi-structures with the use of a **research guide** and **open-ended questions**, in order to allow participants to expand on the issues they felt were most important. At the same time, this approach enabled the researcher to investigate in more depth on the key issues. The set of questions included two types: demographic questions and main questions. The aim of the initial questions was to make a comfortable atmosphere and help the participants to start a discussion as well as to collect demographic information on the sample. The main questions were focused on topics interesting from the perspective of the



project. The questions could be reviewed and modified by the researcher to meet the situation during the focus group / interview session.

2 FGDs were conducted in Italy, with a total of 30 participants, mainly from Africa. In fact, Guinea Conakry, Congo, Ivory Coast, Ghana and Senegal are the main countries of origin of the interviewed migrants. Moreover, it is important to clarify that from now on with the term migrants we will generally refer to recognized asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants. However, many migrants interviewed were coming from Asia, in particular from Bangladesh. These included 7 refugee women. Furthermore, five interviews were conducted with representatives of organizations and institutions related to the field of migration. All the FGDs and interviews were audio-taped to ensure the quality and validity of the data. For the FGDs an interpreter was also used when necessary. The data were transcribed and a qualitative analysis was done.

During the interviews and especially the FGDs, strict ethical considerations were followed. At the beginning of each session the researcher introduced himself, his organization and the SOFIE project to ensure participants know he is a qualified researcher and that they understand the purpose of the research. He further explained ethical considerations and their rights as participants, including that their participation is voluntary; they can answer only the questions they are comfortable with; they can leave any time if they don't feel comfortable anymore and that this will not affect in any way their asylum or refugee status. She also explained that the discussion is recorded and notes are taken strictly for the purpose of this research and will be treated with confidentiality. Participants were then asked to sign the consent form for their participation.

The volunteers' questionnaire included both structured and open-ended questions and was distributed in electronic forms. The online tool survey monkey was used for the collection of data and their analysis. In total 51 of questionnaires were filled in Italy.

As a result of the analyses, categories were developed indicating the challenges and needs of asylum seekers/refugees and volunteers, and best practices on integration were identified.

Specific national level recommendations were proposed, related to refugee integration and training needs.



3. Literature Review

a) Refugees in Italy

As a country of "young" immigration, compared to other European nations, Italy seems to be characterized by an incomplete legislation and policies for what concerns the topic.

Nowadays, policies related to the phenomenon of immigration seem to be not related to a single national political framework, but more close to a delegation to the local and regional level, instead of a national one. Despite there are guidelines established at national level, there are practices done at local and regional level; indeed, it can be said that an important role in the implementation of policies is played by local authorities, third sector organizations and religious institutions. At the beginning of 2017, the foreign population in Italy was about 5 million and 958 thousand (DAZZI, 2018).

2016 can be considered one of the most significant years for what concerns the requests of asylum seekers and international protection according to the Italian Ministry of the Interior. Indeed, as reported also by "The Fondazione ISMU – Initiatives and Studies on Multi-ethnicity", the requests of asylum seekers and international protection have exceeded all the statistics related to the 20 years before 2016, concretely the requests have been 47% higher than 2015.

During the years 2014-2016, Italy has seen more than 500.000 migrants disembark on its coasts (Fondazione ISMU, 2017). This number is higher than the data concerning the previous 17 years (Caritas e Migrantes, 2016). In addition, it is important to consider the parallel effect of those migrants that ask for asylum. From 2014 to 2016 the Italian government has seen more than 270.000 demands for asylum and the international protection in its country (Fondazione ISMU, 2017).

Nowadays, seeking asylum is the main reason of entering Italy. Indeed, as shown by one of the most important national center for statistics called ISTAT, the data on the regular admissions processed by ISTAT show how in the first 10 months of 2016 the requests of asylum / humanitarian protection exceeded those for family reasons (ISTAT, 2016).

Concerning 2017, we can analyse the data from an important Italian economic newspaper "Il Sole 24 ore" which states that:

"In 2017, asylum applications (despite the drop in landings: -34%) were 130.119, up 5% compared to 123,600 in 2016. In the breakdown by nationality, Nigerians ranked first with



25,964 instances (-5% compared to 2016). In second place the Bengalis with 12,731 applications (+ 87%). On the third the Pakistanis with 9.728 (-28%)". (Gagliardi, 2018).

In 2010, the number of asylum applications examined was less than 15 thousand while in the three-year period 2011-2013 an average of 25 thousand a year. Starting from 2014 there was significant growth: from 36 thousand in 2014 to 90 thousand requests examined in 2016, with an increase of 150% (ISTAT, 2016).

The 123,000 asylum seekers in 2016 were mostly men (85%), even though the female component increased in the last three years (they constituted 7.5% of the applicants in 2014, they were 12% in 2015 and represent 15% in 2016); there were over 11,400 minors who requested asylum in 2016 (both with parents and unaccompanied) (ISTAT, 2016).

Migranti giunti via mare e richiedenti asilo in Italia. Anni 1997-2016

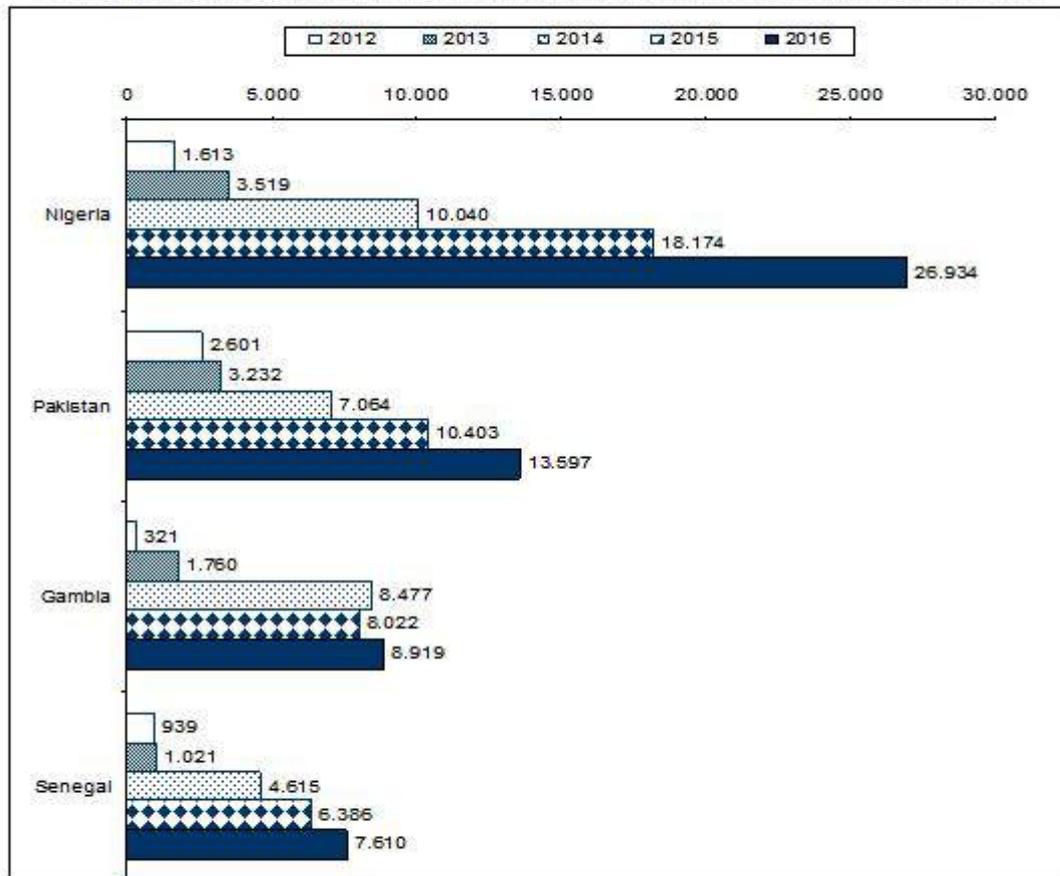
Anno	Migranti sbarcati	Richiedenti asilo	Richieste esaminate*
1997	22.343	2.595	2.209
1998	38.134	18.496	5.066
1999	49.999	37.318	11.838
2000	26.817	24.296	36.776
2001	20.143	21.575	17.610
2002	23.719	18.754	21.552
2003	14.331	15.274	13.441
2004	13.635	10.869	9.446
2005	22.939	10.704	14.052
2006	22.016	10.026	14.254
2007	20.455	13.310	21.198
2008	36.951	31.723	23.175
2009	9.573	19.090	25.113
2010	4.406	12.121	14.042
2011	62.692	37.350	25.626
2012	13.267	17.352	29.969
2013	42.925	26.620	23.634
2014	170.100	63.456	36.270
2015	153.842	83.970	71.117
2016	181.436	123.482	90.473
<i>Variazioni %</i>			
2014/2013	296,3	138,4	53,5
2015/2014	-9,6	32,3	96,1
2016/2015	17,9	47,1	27,2

* Esaminati nell'anno, indipendentemente dalla data di richiesta asilo

Fonte: Fonte: Elaborazioni ISMU su dati Ministero dell'Interno e UNHCR

In 2016, Nigeria has been the first country in terms of requests for asylum seekers, with around 27 thousand demands, a fifth of the total and still growing (+ 48% compared to 2015). The second ethnic group was Pakistan (11% of the total), then Gambia (7.2%) and Senegal (6.2%).

Main nationalities of asylum seekers in Italy. Years 2012-2016
Principali nazionalità dei richiedenti asilo in Italia. Anni 2012-2016



Fonte: Elaborazioni ISMU su dati Ministero dell'Interno

Source: ISMU on data from the Ministry of the Interior

In 2016 most of the request - 61 out of every 100 - had a negative outcome.

The available data highlight the fact that an increase of asylum and international protection applications sees the decrease of those who receive a positive recognition of some form of protection (refugee, subsidiary or humanitarian status). Indeed, during 2016 according to the Territorial Commissions, the negative outcomes concerned two thirds of the requests, namely over 55 thousand people.

The number of denials of asylum requests has increased in particular since 2015, becoming the majority of the outcomes; in previous years, however, this percentage was around 30-40%. Among the positive outcomes in the country prevails the grant of humanitarian protection (over 18 thousand in 2016, equal to one fifth of the total of positive outcomes),



while the share of those who receive refugee status is very low, 5.5% of the total in 2016 and 5% in 2015, down compared to the years 2013-2014 (Vita, 2018).

b) The rights of refugees

The asylum is one of the fundamental human rights recognized by Italian Constitution. Indeed, article 10, third paragraph of the Constitution provides that the foreigner, who is prevented in his country from the effective exercise of democratic freedoms guaranteed by the Italian Constitution, has the right to asylum in the territory of the Italian Republic, according to the conditions established by the Italian law (Camera dei Deputati, n.d.).

It is important to underline that the right to asylum does not coincide with the one of the recognition of refugee status, for which it is not sufficient that in the country of origin the fundamental freedoms are generally denied, but the foreigner must have suffered, or have a founded fear to be persecuted (Camera dei Deputati, n.d.). this is an important distinction that exists in Italy related to the right of asylum and the recognition of **refugee status**. Therefore, it means that whoever presents an asylum request is not necessarily identified as a refugee.

That is the reason of the possibility to get other 2 types of protection:

SUBSIDIARY PROTECTION is the protection that is granted to a citizen with regard to which there are founded motives to consider that if he or she returns to the Country of origin, or in the Country in which he or she habitually resided, would effectively risk serious injury, and cannot or does not want, due to this risk, to benefit from the protection of said country.

HUMANITARIAN PROTECTION police headquarters may issue a permit of stay for humanitarian reasons whenever the Territorial Commission, while not recognizing the extremes for international protection, indicate “serious reasons of humanitarian nature” regarding the person requesting asylum.

The constitutional law on the right to asylum has not been implemented, and it can be asserted that there is a lack of an organic law that establishes the conditions of exercise, even if the jurisprudence established the possibility of recognizing the right of asylum to the foreigner also in the absence of a structured discipline (Corte di Cassazione, 1997). This is very important in order to understand the weakness of relationship between the national framework regulation and regional delegation in terms of policies.

The recognition of the refugee, on the other hand, entered in the Italian system with the agreement of two noteworthy Conventions. The first one concerns the Geneva Convention of 28 July 1951, which defines refugee status, and the second one regards the Dublin



Convention of 15 June 1990, on the determination of the competent State for the examination of an asylum application lodged in one of the Member States of the European Community.

In terms of internal law, the decree-law n. 416 of 1989 (the so-called "Martelli law") regulates the modalities for the recognition of refugee status (but not the right to asylum) (Camera dei Deputati, n.d.). In Italy, the Ministry of the Interior decides whether to grant political asylum to a foreign citizen.

Once the Territorial Commissions have recognized the existence of refugee status, the foreign citizen has access to different important rights such as:

- access to work;
- right to family reunification;
- right to social assistance;
- right to health care;
- the right to request a travel document equivalent to a passport;
- right to public education;
- right to move freely within the territory of the European Union (excluding Denmark and Great Britain) without any visa, for a period not exceeding 3 months;
- right to apply for Italian citizenship after 5 years of residency in Italy;
- right to marriage;
- right to participate in the allocation of public housing;
- right to issue a driving license.

The system of support and integration for refugees in Italy

i. The concept of integration

Integration is a complex phenomenon of which it is not possible to give a univocally shared definition. Precisely because, like all complex phenomena, integration escapes the attempt to frame it in a universally accepted concept, valid for everyone in every place and at any time, and each it happens that each host country has developed a different model of integration in the host society.

In this regard, it is significant that at EU level an understanding of integration as a process rather than status has matured more and more. According to the Common Fundamental Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU (EU Council document 14615 / 04) it is



"a dynamic and bilateral process of mutual adjustment by all immigrants and all residents of the Member States" which, on the one hand, "implies respect for the fundamental values of the EU" and, on the other, the "safeguarding of the practice of different cultures and religions".

In order to favor this process, it should be noted that "access by immigrants to institutions as well as to public and private goods and services is crucial, on an equal footing with citizens and in a non-discriminatory way", and that "the frequent interaction of immigrants and nationals of the Member States is a fundamental mechanism".

In the most recent European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals (COM (2011) 455), it is confirmed that integration "is an evolutionary process, starting [...] from the base [...] according to a genuine bottom-up approach, in contact with local reality ", " through participation ".

Moreover, as the Idos centre of Studies asserts:

At the national level, the same predominant understanding of integration is seen as a process that implies participation and mutual openness. For instance, the Consolidation Act on immigration (Article 4 bis) defined integration as "that process aimed at promoting the coexistence of Italian and foreign citizens, respecting the values established by the Italian Constitution, with the mutual commitment to participate in the economic, social and cultural life of society". On the other hand, precisely on the notion of open identity, as well as on that of the meeting (which "is never in the abstract between cultures, but always between people"), the Plan for integration in security, launched by the Italian Government in June of 2010, recognizes "the key words of an 'Italian model' of integration [...] that exceeds, on the one hand, the multiculturalist approach (for which the different cultures to live together must remain juxtaposed and perfectly divided), and on the other, the assimilationist matrix (which aims at neutralizing the traditions present in a social context to the advantage of the one that houses the others) ".

ii. Problems and integration needs of refugee families

The Italian reception system could be accused that it is not very well organized. This is the main critic coming from OXFAM and that affects negatively the life of refugees/asylum seekers and their families.



8 migrants out of 10 are welcomed in "emergency" in 7 thousand extraordinary reception facilities, which often do not offer adequate services for inclusion. The request is a radical reform that guarantees rights and fair treatment, outside the emergency management of migratory flows.

Some of the main problems identified by OXFAM are:

- Asylum seekers arriving in Italy are victims of summary identification processes, an inefficient bureaucracy that randomly allocates them in one centre or another, simply on the basis of the temporary availability of places.
- The personal histories of each one are not taken into consideration
- There is a high risk of family units being separated

(Oxfam Italia, 2018)

Moreover, as stated by OXFAM, not all places to apply for asylum are the same: those who apply for asylum in Italy and are transferred to Caltanissetta (small city in Sicily), for example, get a positive decision in 64% of cases, while those who end up in Syracuse only 35%.

Inefficiencies and disparities, are also reflected in the time needed to receive a response on their asylum application. They can spend, on average, almost 8 months between the formalization of the request and the date of the hearing at the Territorial Commission for the recognition of international protection. Only in 12.7% of cases the interview takes place within 3 months. The result is that the process of integration slows down fearfully, especially if asylum seekers are substantially "abandoned" to themselves, as happens in some cases.

iii. Challenges underlying refugee's integration

There are several concerns regarding the integration and inclusion of refugees/asylum seekers.

One of the first aspects that does not help integration is the perception of the phenomenon. The people think that immigrants reach 30% of the Italian population, in reality, the numbers are around 10%. Obvious distortion of reality. A second point that can be considered is the perception of numbers of Muslims. Italians believe that there are many Muslims, 20% of immigrants, while in reality they are about 4% (Natoli, 2016).



Another challenge to the inclusion of migrants is that the migration phenomenon has become a clear political tool that has been used improperly and completely illegitimate during election times. Thus becoming an electoral campaign phenomenon that often creates clashes at an intellectual and physical level within Italian society (Natoli, 2016).

"Il Sole 24 ore" which analyzes the data of the ISMU states that among the immigrants is definitely higher the share of those who have at most a qualification equivalent to the elementary school (8.6% of foreign workers compared to 3,1% of Italians). In addition, there is a large number of unskilled jobs and almost 80% of new starts, that do not find any qualified profession. In the first place in the order: personal assistance staff (over 161 thousand start-ups), domestic workers (over 138 thousand), waiters and similar (over 128thousand) (Natoli, 2016).

Tools and initiatives for empowerment and integration of refugee families in Italy

Language courses for refugees and migrants



1. Bla, bla, bla	<p>The course includes a comic book workshop, attend a book-reading activities of professional actors and have a direct exchange with students of high schools in Rome.</p> <p>The didactics of the course also includes visits to museums, theatre and outdoor lessons.</p>	https://ec.europa.eu/epale/es/content/bla-bla-bla-litaliano-immagini-nuovo-corso-di-lingua-italiana-migranti-e-rifugiati-roma
2. Ataya App	<p>"Ataya App", the first App dedicated to foreign students with little or no previous schooling.</p> <p>The project was born within the Italian School of Cooperativa Impresa Sociale Ruah, belonging to the Cgm network, on the experience of migrant reception.</p>	http://www.vita.it/it/article/2018/02/05/lapp-che-aiuta-gli-studenti-stranieri-nasce-atayaapp/145864/
3. Italian Lessons at "Centro Astalli"	<p>The Italian school of the Centre is a first reception service in which transformation and experimentation are the rule. For example, classes welcome new students every month and volunteer teachers are increasingly interested in learning innovative teaching methods. Different levels of Italian are taught according to the needs of the students.</p>	http://centroastalli.it/servizi/scuola-di-italiano/

Intercultural dialogue and coexistence

Caritas	<p>MigrAdvisor</p> <p>The Italian Caritas, with the support of the US Embassy in Italy, has launched a smartphone application dedicated to migrants able to show useful services closer to them through geolocation, among which the Caritas listening centres diocesan, police stations, post offices, embassies or consulates.</p>	http://www.lastampa.it/2018/02/05/vaticani/insider/ita/documenti/la-caritas-lancia-migradvisor-app-con-servizi-per-migranti-su-mappa-69NgbiIS6w7KNttnolui3K/pagina.html
Cambalache	<p>Bee My Job</p> <p>Thanks to this project, entrepreneurs and companies employ migrants to contribute to honey production.</p>	http://www.lastampa.it/2018/02/16/edizioni/alessandria/migranti-a-scuola-di-



	<p>This initiative has been recognized as an exceptional example of inclusion and entrepreneurship.</p>	<p>apicoltura-cos- integrazione-pi- dolce- VeHH4mvSgNorRZJ2 WzJN4J/pagina.html</p>
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Initiatives for migrant women

<p>Fondazione Bracco</p>	<p>Prevenzione Amica delle donne migranti a Milano</p> <p>The "Prevention of Migrant Women in Milan" project, launched in March 2014, is dedicated to the protection of maternal and child health in immigrant women in Milan and sees the collaboration of the Bracco Foundation, the City of Milan and Opera San Francesco for the poor.</p> <p>An alliance between local institutions to offer long-term prospects and integration to women who live in conditions of vulnerability because of their migratory experience.</p> <p>The project addresses a crucial phase in the life of women and children: pregnancy. The tools used are targeted interviews and prevention and screening services to prevent fetal and neonatal damage and to trigger a process of risk reduction, precariousness and promotion of social inclusion.</p>	<p>http://www.fondazionebracco.com/it/progetti/5686-il-progetto-prevenzione-amica-delle-donne-migranti-premiato-agli-oscar-della-salute</p>
<p>Intrecci</p>	<p>4. Intrecci. Corsi e laboratori in italiano per donne migranti Plots. Courses and workshops in Italian for migrant women</p>	<p>http://www.meltingpot.org/+Intrecci-Corsi-e-laboratori-in-italiano-per-donne-migranti-+.html</p>

Examples of EU funded projects

<p>Ragazzi Harraga</p>	<p>The project coordinated by CIAI with CESIE partner aims to strengthen the reception system for unaccompanied migrant minors, consolidating operational models that ensure respect for the rights of children and young people in Italy. It includes several tools – such as the shared social folder – which enhances the dialogue between all the social actors involved in the inclusion paths of these boys and girls.</p> <p>The project offers training and orientation</p>	<p>http://cesie.org/media/cesie.org_description_HARRAGA.pdf</p>
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	courses, employment opportunities through work grants, housing solutions for the youngsters – just over the age of majority, the ones who are leaving the receiving communities – and the creation of a guesthouse where some of them will work.	
FETE From Expats to Experts: United Civil Society through Inclusion and Empowerment of Young Immigrants	A project aiming to provide young immigrants with skills useful in the European labor market through workshops and internship opportunities, but also to build bridges between immigrants and local communities and therefore combating stereotypes surrounding immigration	http://cesie.org/media/cesie.org_description_FETE.pdf

Examples of good practices

Casa dei Venti	A place, inside the City of Utopia, open five days a week where asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in general can find specific activities addressed to them (first orientation desk, self-help group, meetings of legal orientation, psychological support, Italian school) and participate, together with all citizens, in seminars, workshops, self-training courses and evenings of in-depth study on immigration issues and regulations	http://laboratorio53.it/apre-casa-dei-venti/
Arte Migrante	Arte Migrante was born in September 2012 on the initiative of a young anthropology student, Tommaso Carturan, and other friends on the porticoes of Bologna. The group, non-partisan and non-denominational, organized weekly evenings open to all of the students with inclusion through the art: students, migrants, homeless, workers and unemployed, young and old participate. Italy, from north to south: Bologna, Modena, Turin, Cuneo, Como, Reggio Emilia, Imola, Palermo, Modica, Padua, Settimo Torinese and Latina .	http://www.artemigrante.eu/chi-siamo

4. Support and Integration needs of Refugee Families (analysis of FGDs with Refugees / Asylum Seekers)

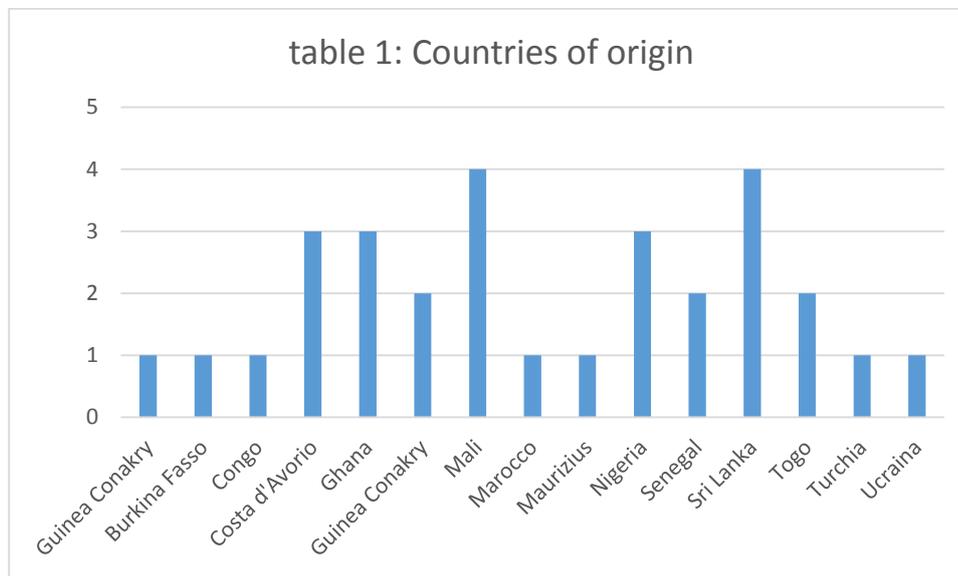
In the dates of 24.01.2018 and 25.01.2018 two focus groups were held in order to understand the needs of the needs of forced migrants, including asylum seekers, refugees and others that arrive in Italy by boats . During the focus groups different questions have been asked mainly divided in four topics:

- Daily life and needs
- Language knowledge
- Knowledge of rights, access to information and services
- Training needs

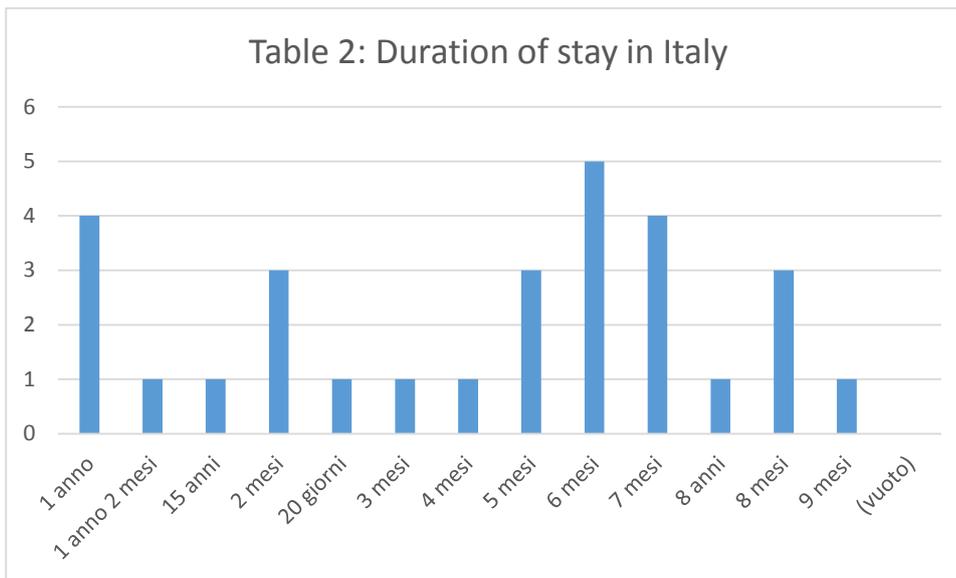
The focus group discussions have been implemented in Centro Astalli, an associated partner of SOFIE project, and around 30 migrants have been involved.

a. Participants' characteristics

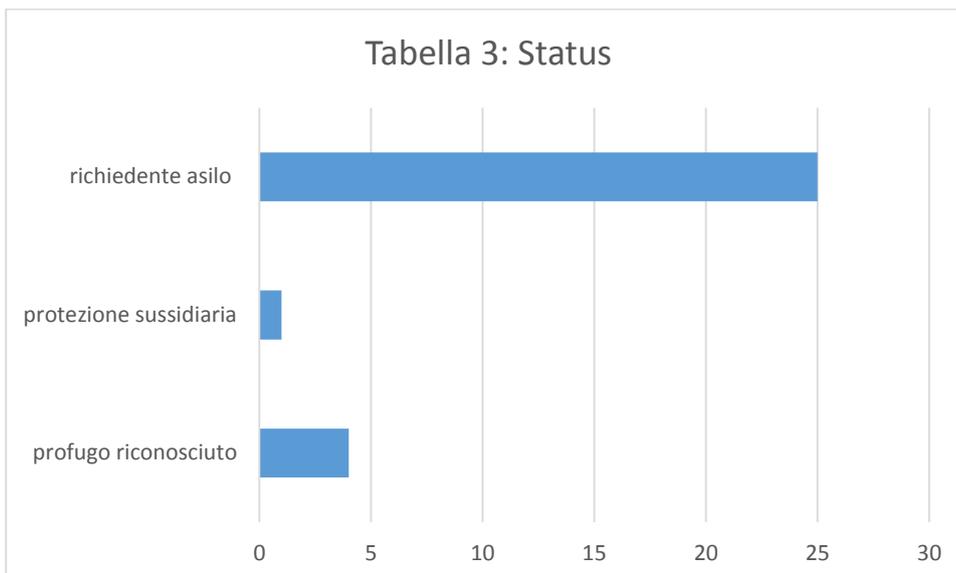
The migrants who participated in the focus groups come mainly from Africa. In fact, Guinea Conakry, Congo, Ivory Coast, Ghana and Senegal are the main countries of origin of the interviewed migrants. However, a good component of the migrants who took part in the FGDs came from Sri Lanka. The reason is that we tried to represent the enormous multi-ethnic variety present in the city of Palermo (table 1).



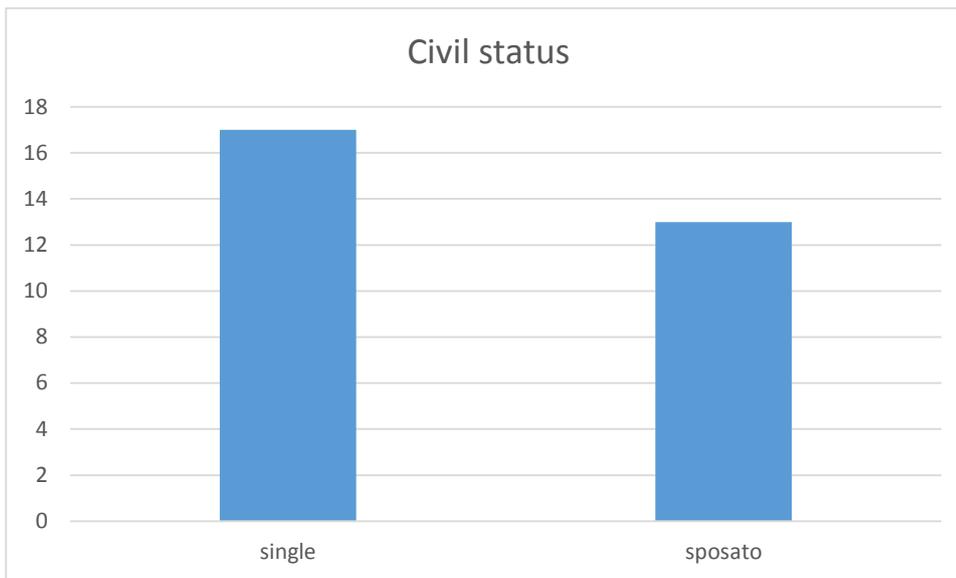
Another important feature, which concerns the information of migrants who took part in the FGDs, is that most of them have arrived in Italy less than a year ago. Therefore, all the problems and needs concern people who have recently lived in the Italian territory. To get a more complete idea of the chronological distribution of the migrants who took part in the FGDs, see Table 2.



Another feature concerning the migrants involved in FGDs concerns their status. The situation in Sicily, and consequently in Palermo, is very complex. There are different people, men and women, who disembark in the port of Palermo or who come, after their landing in Sicily and are sent to the city centre of Palermo. Most of the people interviewed were asylum seekers, 4 said they had recognized refugee status and only one of the interviewed ladies and gentlemen said he/she had subsidiary protection (Table 3).



Furthermore, civil status must be taken into consideration. 13 people said they were married, while the remaining 17 were single.



b. Challenges of refugee families in their daily life

During the discussions at the Astalli centre, the challenges and consequently the needs identified concern: work and language. It has been affirmed several times and from different voices the need and difficulty in finding a job and how important it is to know Italian to orient oneself in the labour market.

The main causes traced by the migrants themselves are:

- Lack of knowledge of the Italian language
- Lack of knowledge of the methods related to find a job
- Difficulty in having the right documents
- Racism

Racism manifests itself as one of the most painful aspects since it affects the psychological aspect of people, leading them to have a strong resentment towards the society in which they live. One of the interviewed gentlemen, who had eight years of experience as a shoemaker, said that he cannot find work because of the colour of his skin. After so many interviews where he has always been refused, he begins to feel guilty "Because I am who I am for the colour of my skin".

Furthermore, other challenges faced by refugee are related to the orientation in society regarding the services that are offered. Migrants often do not feel being supported in finding the services necessary for their needs by the institutions and, in particular, a very strong criticism of the bureaucracy and the slowness associated with obtaining important documentation has emerged.



As far as learning the Italian language is concerned, everyone says that it is very important. However, profound difficulties in language learning are reported. The difficulties encountered during the study are related to the grammar, in particular the difference between feminine and masculine, the verbs, the position of the words within the sentence. Moreover, the ladies and gentlemen interviewed speak Italian only at school; in everyday life they speak their mother tongue, French or English.

However, many of the interviewees expressed their willingness to practice Italian more with Italians to overcome the language barriers, but they mentioned they have not seen the collaboration of native citizens. It has been said that Italians often ignore their questions, for example on the street or at the supermarket (when they ask for information). The consequence is the inability to create a relationship with the local community, the result is that they feel deeply frustrated and isolated.

c. Analysis of the specific needs of families

Migrants' families find themselves having needs linked both to the single individuals that make up the family (work, education, health) and related to the family as all in general (reuniting with family members and home).

The challenges faced by migrants highlight the needs that emerge in the social context in which they live. The main need is that of work. Almost all the people interviewed during FGD affirmed the desire and the need to work, not only to maintain their family or to create one, but above all for personal and social gratification. One of the points, in fact, that emerged within the FGD is the deep need of migrants to contribute to the social and economic growth of the city. Consequently, one of the main needs emerging from this research is that of not being ghettoised both socially and economically.

d. Specific Challenges of refugee women

The challenges facing women are not very different from the ones that men are facing. However, during the discussion it is perceived that the main problems concern the care of children. Among the women interviewed are those who have one or more children and their main challenges are related to the future of children and their desire to grow them in a healthy and protected environment.

One of the main obstacles, concerns the lack of support for mothers through nursery schools accessible according to their socio-economic conditions. This turns out to be an obstacle to the process of integration and obtaining a job.

e. Specific Challenges of refugee children

With regard to this point, by parents, no specific challenges emerged that children face. The motivations may be different but one that came out of the discussion is related to the private life of parents and children, which is difficult to deal with.



However, it can be said that the problems that parents face with regard to integration, cultural and linguistic barriers can in some way be perceived by their children.

It is necessary to distinguish between children who have parents and live with them and unaccompanied minors.

Unaccompanied minors are mainly males, on average just over 16 years old they come largely from Gambia, Egypt, Guinea, Albania and Eritrea (Cottone, 2018). Moreover, as stated in the "Twenty-third Report on Migration 2017 by ISMU" at 31 August 2017 Unaccompanied foreign minors in Italy were 18.486 (ISMU, 2018). Special needs of unaccompanied minors are well noticed: the needs to have a legal tutor, a point of reference in the host territories, proper methodologies tailored to their learning needs, no interruption in their social inclusion process etc.

- f. Access to information on their rights and to public services: Identification of education/training needs for refugees

The majority of the interviewed ladies and gentlemen do not know their rights and stated that they have objective difficulties in accessing public services and orienting themselves in the Italian administrative system. One of the main problems identified is related to the fact that as soon as they arrive in Italy, nobody informs them about topics such as: national rights and public services. The only place to find information is the Post Office.

In addition, most of the focus group participants said that they would be interested in taking courses to learn Italian. This is in fact indicated as one of the main limits and obstacles in the orientation in the world of work and information of services.



5. Mapping the needs of refugee families and existing best practices (Analysis of Interviews with organizations working with refugees/asylum seeker)

a. Participants' characteristics and experience working with refugees/asylum seekers

Experts working in organizations or centres dealing with the issue of migrants and refugees/asylum seekers come from 5 important realities at national, regional and local levels.

In fact, the following organizations have been involved:

Exodos – attività sociali	Exodos translates its spiritual and intellectual research into a cultural and social service to the city, especially to disadvantaged youngsters supporting them with social activities and school accompaniment
Amnesty Italy	“We are a movement of people determined to create a more fair world, in which every person can enjoy the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights”.
Arci – Porco Rosso	A space that aspires to be an open laboratory of analysis on the conditions of Palermo, where the opinions of those who share the values on which the Arci network is founded can find citizenship, contamination and being widespread.
Centro Astalli – Palermo	Centro Astalli Palermo is a voluntary association that is part of the Jesuit Refugee Service network in Italy: the spirit that animates it is the defense of the rights, integration and inclusion of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.
CESIE (Migration Unit)	CESIE’S Migration Unit aims to centralise and connect all the activities carried out by CESIE, aimed at the target groups of asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants of all ages (children, youngsters, adults). The overall objective is to develop effective and inclusive approaches for the target groups.
Sviluppo Solidale Soc. Coop. Sociale	The social cooperative pursues the general

	<p>interest of the community in the human promotion and social integration of citizens, developing among them the mutualistic and solidarity spirit, through the management of social welfare, socio-health and educational services in favour of minors, the elderly, disabled, migrants and socially disadvantaged people.</p>
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b. Identification of the specific needs and challenges of refugee families

The needs and challenges of asylum seekers/refugees can be considered as a complex framework to which the various experts interviewed tried to give the most precise answers possible.

One of the main challenges traced and shared by all the experts concerns the Italian legislative framework. As stated, the Italian regulatory framework is very convoluted and difficult to understand. It is not only a problem linked to the different language but is linked to the concept of civil law that can often be mixed with some hinges linked to the common law structure that is present in the countries of origin of many migrants.

But the legislative condition is not the only challenge that people arriving in Italy meet. Language can be considered as one of the main obstacles to integration and orientation in society. To this must also be added an important and dramatic presence of racism that is felt by many of the representatives of organizations operating in Italy and interviewed by the SOFIE project.

Furthermore, as far as women are concerned, there is often a deleterious classification of the culture of migrants, which also concerns the role of women. Indeed, it often happens the phenomenon of “double discrimination of women”. It means that in Italy, migrants women are related for the most to unskilled and poorly paid jobs (as is already the case for Italian women). Therefore, for immigrant women two "disadvantages" are added, being a woman and being a foreigner, with the effect of amplifying the scarce opportunities for social and occupational mobility. Women with children need more protection, as they have a responsibility for their child's life and for taking care of their future. It has often been suggested that women are the ones who carry on the education of their children.

Moreover, women have peculiarities. Women who arrive alone find themselves welcomed by a less dysfunctional system but their needs are not always able to find a response. For example, Nigerian women who are often at risk of trafficking do not find an adequate response in the public reception system. It is not easy to give an answer because the dynamics are very complex due to the fact that they include family threats, children, superstitions etc. etc.



One of the needs that emerges through discussions with the leaders of organizations and centres concerns the need for migrants to know the place where they live and feel their own. The main challenge is the difficulty in changing perspective. The migrant who arrives in a new city finds himself/herself living in contexts very different from those he/she left behind. Migrants and asylum seekers do not know where to go, they do not know how to move. Even the simplest things like a bus pass could make life and personal economy easier. Women without a husband have difficulty sometimes being able to follow educational paths when they have a child.

What is therefore strongly emphasized is the importance that refugees/asylum seekers are not passive citizens but deeply active in society.

It is also emphasized that among the main needs of migrants and asylum seekers/refugees, there is the need for listening, the need for human relationships, the need for knowledge of their rights and also their duties. **The solitude in which many migrants live is one of the greatest challenges of today's societies and the need for human contact and humanity is one of the main needs.**

Furthermore, other needs that can be considered deeply important are: houses and jobs.

c. Identification of education/training needs of asylum seekers/refugees

Language can be considered one of the main educational needs. It is considered by all respondents as a primary educational need in order to orient themselves within society. As far as learning needs are concerned, it is indicated that everything concerning the skills and passions of migrants, as well as their past work experience and not only, should be encouraged by training courses or similar. For example, several of the interviewees say that sport and sports-related issues can be considered as the most suitable practices to encourage healthy integration.

Another aspect that is considered essential in the process of education and learning of migrants concerns the study of civic education.

In fact, it has been reported as important and fundamental to know the civic education proper of a country in which one lives. In such a way it is possible to understand the similarities and differences with respect to the country from which one comes. This is considered a necessary step to stimulate social inclusion.

The learning of a language also proves to be very important as it is necessary for the inclusion process. However, there are different subjects that are recognized as important in addition to learning Italian such as subjects like history, law and sociology. The knowledge of these humanistic subjects gives the possibility



to boys and girls, men and women to answer doubts and curiosities related to a culture that is often different but it always has many common bridges.

Moreover, another theme that is traced to meet the educational and learning needs of asylum seekers/refugees concerns the knowledge of current events. This point must be taken into consideration since giving the opportunity to learn current events of the country leads to being able to take a position on issues of daily order, therefore to participate.

At this last point, another issue added that emerges during the meeting with a prominent exponent of Amnesty, is the need to learn to orient ourselves in the society without prejudices.

We must teach and learn to listen how different cultures coexist within society, a delicate but fundamental operation. In fact, the beauty that exists in the knowledge of a different culture means that this creates connections and bridges towards social inclusion.

d. Identification of training needs for volunteers

The figure of the volunteer is considered by all the experts on the subject as fundamental for the inclusion of migrants. However, training on different levels is required for the volunteer figure.

It is important to have the awareness of being on a par with a competence in the management of emotions. There is a risk of excessive romanticism and assistentialism in carrying out the activity of the volunteer because the emotional burden is very large.

Intercultural awareness and intercultural proper competences, learning how to manage emotions, how to empower them without creating dependency relationships are some of the subjects which are needed to be strengthened with the volunteers.

Listening - Speaking - Context, these are the three dimensions that should be developed, which are the conditions of dialogue. If the volunteer is not able to be supported towards learning these values, the risk is that it becomes counterproductive.

The volunteer must know the languages, know English or French. The volunteer must be followed by a supervisor and we must not lose the community dynamics in the field of volunteering. Taking care of the other is fundamental and it is therefore essential to learn how to do it also among volunteers and responsible/supervisor themselves.

e. Identification of Good practices



A series of good practices and other organizations fighting for the inclusion of migrants emerged from the meeting with the heads of organizations working in the sector. First of all, it can be said that one of the good practices traced concerns the large informal network that operates in Palermo and which is made up of many precious actors. Indeed, it has to be said that the civil society has developed a great network of stakeholders, third sector organizations and public sector groups that support all categories of migrants. This network is so well structured, cohesive and cooperative that can be considered a model that should be taken into consideration by other cities. The strength of such a network is to allow to treat social injustices and challenges related to migration in a collective way and to find complex solutions capable of creating virtuous circle which will be transform in good practices.

Some of these main actors may be indicated in the realities of:

- Missione di Speranza e Carità (<https://www.pacesperanza.org/>)
- La Clinica Legale (<https://www.facebook.com/CLEDU-1663643247204597/>)
- Centro Astalli (<http://www.centroastallipalermo.it/>)
- Arci Porco Rosso (<https://www.arcipalermo.it/index.php/i-circoli/3-arci-porco-rosso>)
- Exodos – attività sociali (<https://www.facebook.com/comunitaexodos/>)
- Refugees Welcome (<http://refugees-welcome.it/>)

Other good practices regard the type of past activities that many of the managers have indicated as winners.

Most of them concern music, art and sport.

Several responsible have in fact indicated how the projects linked to these activities have given the opportunity to migrants who have been part of it to integrate into society in a natural, playful and full of synergies.

Art, sport and music are recognized as bridges that unite the different realities of society and that naturally predispose inclusion.



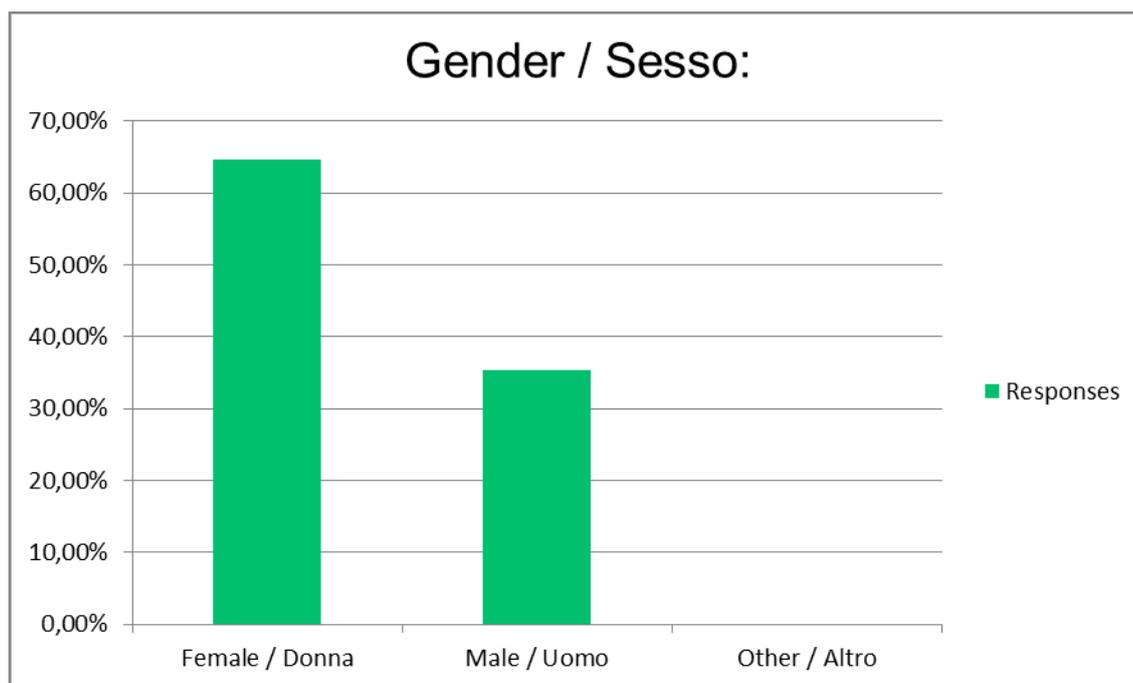
6. Mapping Volunteers' Experience (Analysis of Questionnaires with Volunteers)

Another extremely important aspect that has been analyzed during the SOFIE project research concerns the perspective of volunteers who deal with the issue of migrants.

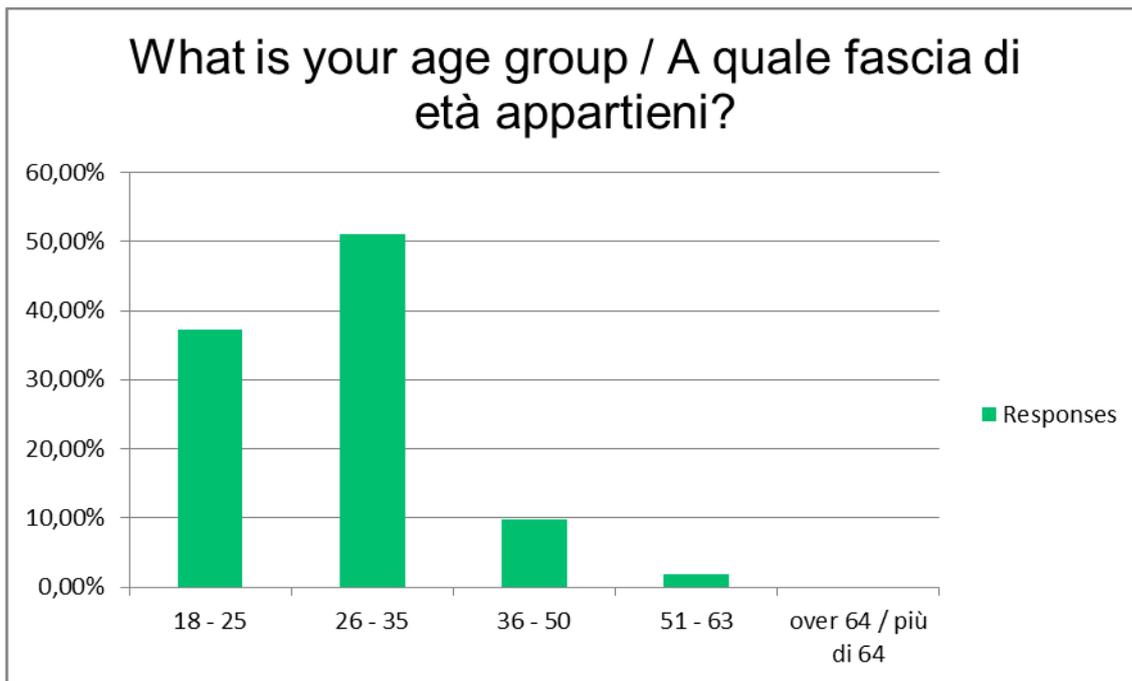
To do this, an online questionnaire was created to track the characteristics, needs and challenges that volunteers face.

This material is extremely useful because it allows to analyze also the training needs of men and women who work as volunteers within this sector.

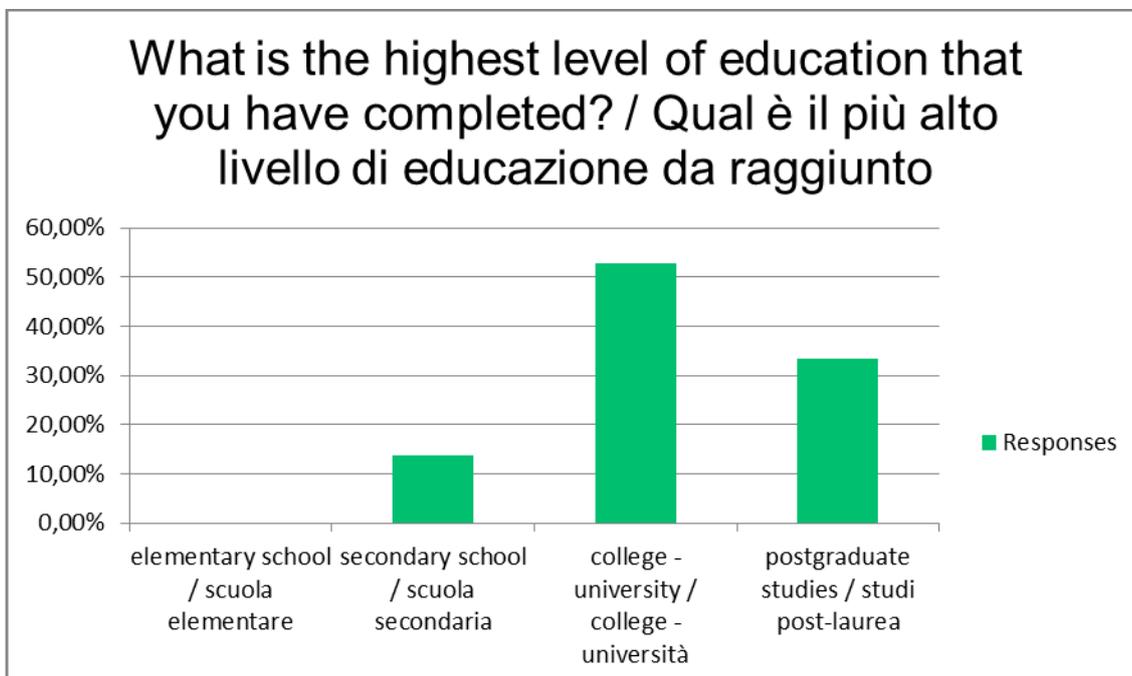
In this section will also be shown tables that summarize some of the answers received through the questionnaire. The tables will be important to have an overall and schematic idea of the information provided by the 51 volunteers who participated in the survey.



The percentage of women interviewed is higher than that of men as shown in the table and about 50% of feedback can be included in the 26-35 years old group.



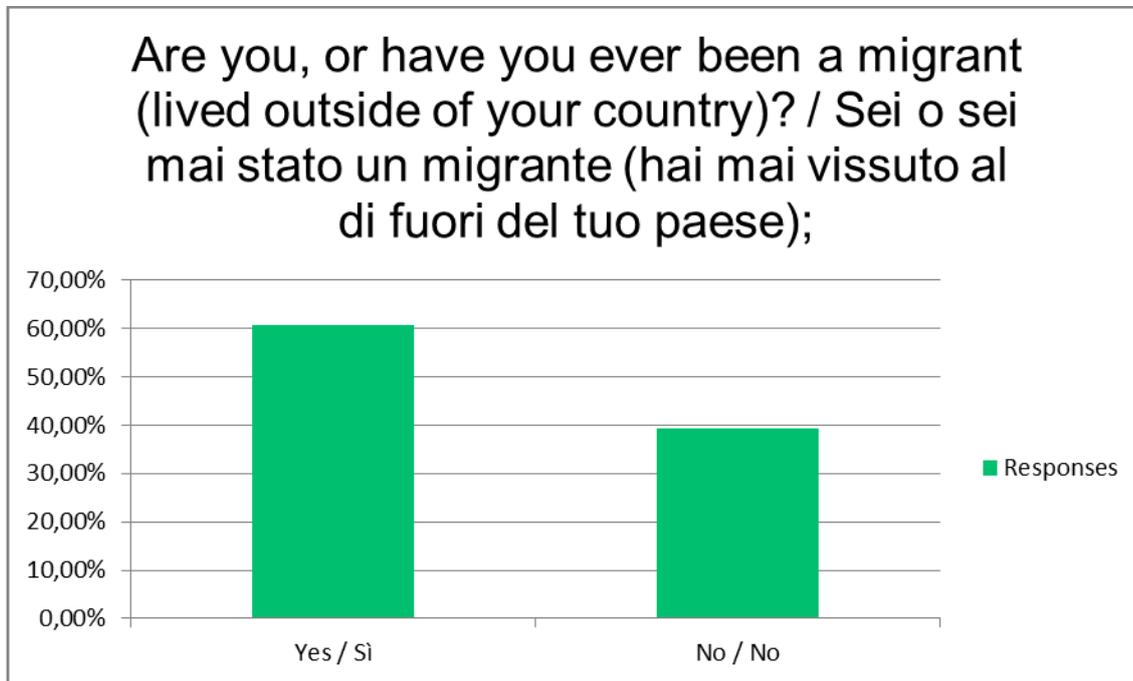
A very interesting figure concerns the levels of schooling. In fact, none of the volunteers has only the elementary school level and more than 50% have a university degree and more than 30% have a postgraduate degree.



Furthermore, 60% of those interviewed were in the past a migrant, having lived for a period of their lives in another country. This data can be considered interesting, as there is a direct knowledge of what it



means to live in a different country from the one of origin and therefore create greater empathy during the volunteering with the people who support each other.



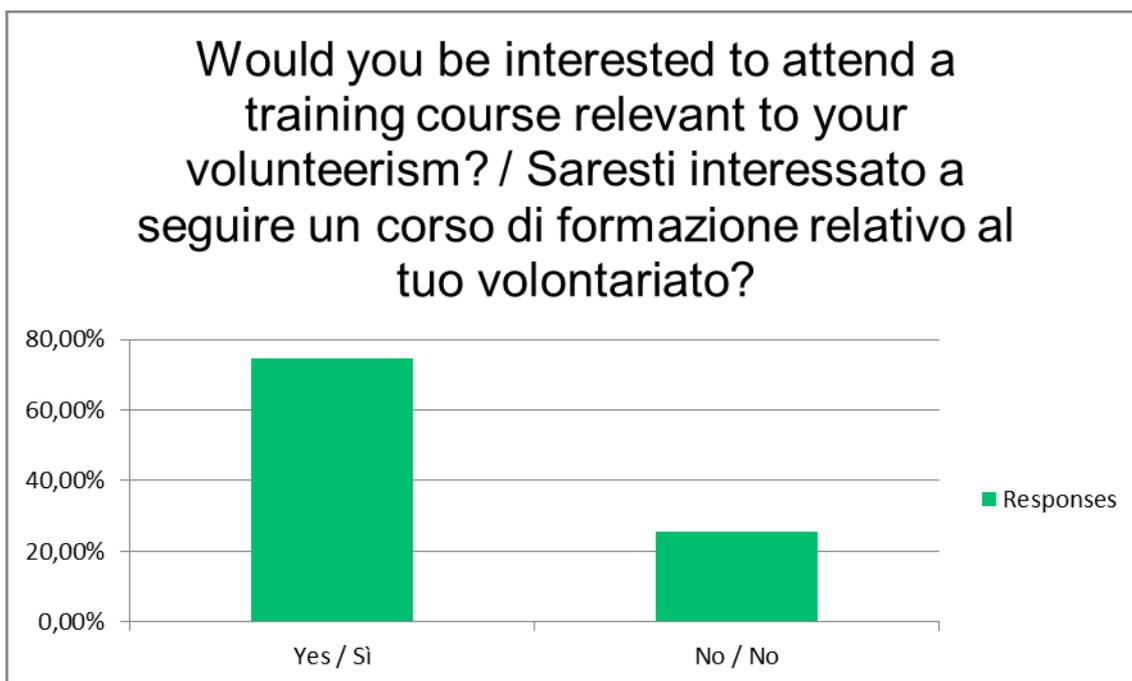
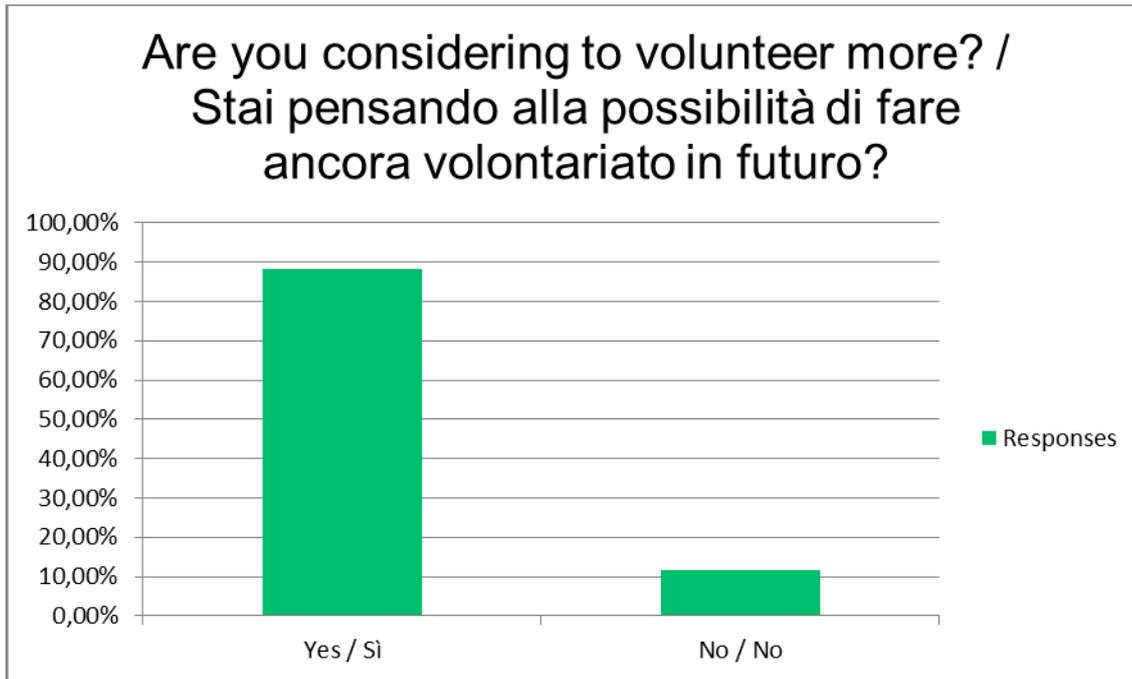
The following table shows the distribution of the answers with respect to the multiple choice question: "What kind of volunteer work with refugees do you do?"

Answer Choices	Responses	
provide trainings - classes	58,82%	30
provide healthcare services	3,92%	2
assist to find employment	19,61%	10
assist to find housing	13,73%	7
organize or participate in recreational activities with migrants/ refugees	52,94%	27
collect material (food, clothes, toys etc) for migrants/ refugees	33,33%	17
offer interpretation - translation	25,49%	13
accompany refugees in government offices and other services	13,73%	7
offer transportation	1,96%	1



Other	15,69%	8
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The responses show that about 60% of respondents provide training courses and 52% work in organizing or participating in recreational activities with refugees and almost 90% of respondents believe that they would like to increase the time devoted to volunteering. In addition, more than 70% are interested in taking courses to increase volunteer skills



One of the sections dealt with concerned what were the main difficulties in volunteering. The answers were different but concerned four main themes: language, culture, time to devote and lack of adequate tools.

Here are some sentences taken directly from the survey:

- ✓ "Mostly language barriers and gains in connection with them, gaining trust and making them feel comfortable in talking and opening with me".
- ✓ "Understanding people's culture was a big challenge".
- ✓ "Enough time dedicated to providing quality service for new migrants, lack of integrated services among social centres, duplication of work carried out, problem of" tick boxes "by doing the minimum without achieving real impact".
- ✓ "Lack of suitable tools to achieve the pre-established integration objectives".

Furthermore, the interest in doing volunteer training courses was asked and what were the most interesting areas and themes. As we have seen from the previous table, about 75% would be interested in attend a training course and the areas of interest are mainly those concerning:

- Language
- Interculturality
- Law and regulation
- Health
- Needs of migrants



7. Recommendations

The recommendations emerging from the Italian situation concern different aspects. The main ones are undoubtedly the need to change the national reception system, which leads to deep management problems but also to reception and inclusion.

1) Improve reception structure

Although important initiatives have been taken over the years by the Italian government for the reception, it must be firmly stated that the welcoming system has many problems. In the Hotspots, for example, the capacity remains insufficient and the conditions are below the standards, in particular due to overcrowding, inadequate facilities, and the organization of spaces and insufficient quality of services. This makes Hotspots unfit to accommodate people with special needs, including MSNAs. A centralized and punctual control of the reception centres must guarantee that the rights of the guests are respected.

According to Legislative Decrees 18/2014 and 142/2015 (the Italian Parliament adopted and implemented the Directives 2011/95/EU and 2013/33/EU)m newly arrived TCNs and TCN adults should spend no more than 30 days in a first reception centres, after that they should be transferred to secondary reception centres for long term hosting and be provided together with a number of services paramount for the integration and interaction of the migrants in the society. Yet, in reality both adult and children, albeit separately, spend a much longer period of time in the precarious first receiving centres, which are often located in remote areas of the countryside and with limited access to services. This prevents them from exercising their right to education: for instance, the connection to the public schools are often poorly guaranteed by the public transportation systems.

2) Strengthen integration support

Refugees/asylum seekers often find themselves living in conditions of poverty. What has emerged shows that there is a lack of response to basic needs such as housing, education and work.

But in addition to these shortcomings, there are strong problems of racism that cause psychological damage and deep relationships.

A key element in the access of migrants to the labour work, as is clear in Italy, is the possibility for migrants to access funding in the form of traineeships and experience training on the job.

3) Support the volunteers

Give the opportunity to those who work as a volunteer in the migration sector to train on three main aspects: communication, relational and linguistic. The preparation and training / supervision of volunteers is therefore fundamental in the national integrative processes.





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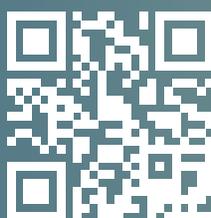
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