



VAI

**VOLUNTEERING
AMONG IMMIGRANTS**

**Italy
National Report**



This project is funded by the European Union's
Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.

July 2018

Project information

Project Acronym:	VAI
Project Title:	Volunteering Among Immigrants
Grant Agreement Number:	776149 – VAI – AMIF – 2016 – AG – INTE
European Commission:	Directorate General for Migration and Home Affairs
Project Website:	http://vai-project.eu
Authoring Partner:	University of Calabria
Document Version:	3
Date of Preparation:	27.07.2018 (updated & finalised 25.06.2019)



Document History			
Date	Version	Author	Description
15/07/2018	1	Mario Coscarello	Survey analysis
27/07/2018	2	Alessandra Corrado, Mariafrancesca D'Agostino, Elena Musolino, Mario Coscarello, Carmelo Buscema, Annamria Vitale, Giorgio Marcello.	National Report Final draft
25/06/2019	3	Alessandra Corrado et al.	Update & Final version

"The VAI project has been funded with support from the European Commission, AMIF (Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund) Union Actions Program.

This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein".



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INTRODUCTION

The European Union promotes the volunteering among immigrants, considering it as a significant factor of integration, as numerous researches carried out have also demonstrated over the last years. Volunteering among immigrants can be fundamental and strategic in different ways. From a cultural point of view, giving visibility to a positive image of migration that can bring down old stereotypes and new doubts; from the point of view of integration paths, allowing the exit of asylum seekers from invisibility and isolation, encouraging their knowledge of local customs and habits, strengthening their professional and other transversal skills, widening their network of contacts and consolidating a more marked sense of belonging. Finally, there is the idea that volunteering among immigrants can benefit the organizations involving them: because of migrants' linguistic skills and greater proximity to the problems of the immigrant population, such organizations are more able to manage pluralism successfully. Starting from these premises, this work investigates the role of volunteering and the way in which it operates with respect to the integration of migrants. In accordance with the definition provided by the International Labour Organization (2011), we consider unpaid non-compulsory work; that is, time individuals give without pay to activities performed either through an organization or directly for others outside their own household.

This report is organized in two parts. The first part is dedicated to the analysis of migrations in Italy. The historical, political and socio-economic framework of migration is reconstructed, focusing on the main aspects of discussion and intervention in recent years: the regulation of immigration and the fight against irregular entries, asylum and reception policies, the socio-economic patterns of integration. Next, an analysis of the characteristics and role of volunteering in Italy is presented, in order to evaluate its inter-institutional interactions and evolving practices of migrant integration. After drawing a quick picture aimed at reconstructing the characteristics of voluntary work and its evolution from a regulatory point of view, the elements that have distinguished volunteering in recent years are analysed, with particular attention to its engagement in enhancing migrants' social rights and political participation and to the processes of change that are taking place in the wake of refugee crisis in the EU, as what is defined as the criminalization of solidarity. A specific focus is dedicated to the volunteering of asylum seekers through the presentation of the recent legislation introduced on this specific issue at national level and the forms through which it has been applied at a local level, discussing its innovative potential but also the risks associated with it in reproducing and reinforcing structural inequalities.

The second part of the report is dedicated to the analysis of the results of a primary research about volunteering among immigrants carried out in Italy, during May-June 2018. In order to answer the main question addressed by the research project, "How can volunteering among immigrants be better used in order to increase the social participation of Third Countries' Citizens?", the relationship between volunteering and



integration was investigated through a primary research, in an attempt: 1) to understand the characteristics of voluntary activities developed among immigrants; 2) to explore how and to what extent immigrants themselves are involved in voluntary activities; 3) to assess the impact of volunteering on integration processes.

The research methodology consisted in: an online survey administered to voluntary organizations at national level; focus groups and individual interviews to volunteers and different stakeholders engaged in this field at the regional level, in Calabria (In the South of Italy).

The online survey aimed to know about: the characteristics of voluntary organizations dealing with migration; their activities addressing migration's issues; the involvement of third national countries' volunteers within these organizations or their opinion about migrants' volunteering.

Four focus group were organized in different territorial contexts of the Calabria region, involving several stakeholders: officers in local administrations, representatives of non-governmental organizations managing reception services or of civil society organizations involved in activities for migrants, representatives of trade unions or of charitable organizations, volunteers and activists. Interaction among participants permitted to catch the expression of criticism and dynamics of conflict.

Individual interviews were administered to immigrant volunteers and representatives of third national countries' organizations, representatives of non-governmental organizations managing reception services for asylum seekers and refugees, representatives of local institutions.

Focus group and interviews aimed to investigate case studies of reception projects and initiatives of volunteering that address migrants' needs, problems or benefits connected with volunteering for migrants or volunteering by migrants, to explore individual motivations of volunteers, to catch innovation aspects and impact on local communities.

PART A: MIGRATIONS AND VOLUNTEERING AT NATIONAL LEVEL

1. General framework about migrations in Italy

1.1 Historical Framework

Italy has known different dynamics of migrations since the end of Nineteenth century, in chronological order, emigration, internal migration and immigration. The country knew a strong emigration between the end of the nineteenth century and 1920s, and then again after the second world war. In this period also, internal migrations grew; they were rooted in the territorial and institutional differentiations of Italian society, with Northern Italy expressing a strong demand for labour, offset by the migrations coming from the poorest regions of the South (Pugliese, 2002). However, during the '80s-'90s, this pressure was exhausted by several factors, especially related to the increase in education levels of young people and to new opportunities for access to public assistance. Consequently, the great story of internal migration reduced; increasing quotas of migrant labour force have so responded to the demographic imbalances and the demand deriving from the restructuring processes of the production system (Ambrosini, 2005a).

Already in the '70s Italy become a country of immigration, when in several European countries immigration turned as an excessive burden for welfare systems that were suffering increasing cuts (Sciortino, 2000). The traditional countries of immigration in Northern Europe adopted the so-called "stop" policies, contributing to redirect migratory flows that, previously following the colonial trajectories, from now on begin to move towards Southern European countries.

In the 70s the first and most significant settlements of foreign migrant workers in Italy were in the coastal areas of Sicily: the first North African immigrants, for the most part Tunisian males, fit into fishing in Mazzara del Vallo and in intensive farming in Trapani (Pugliese, 2006; Zanfrini, 1993). Also, the Salento area saw the arrival of immigrants coming mainly from Morocco (Zanfrini, 1993). The first to be affected by the phenomenon of immigration were precisely those agricultural areas of Southern Italy that had been most affected by depopulation in previous decades, due to emigration both to foreign countries and to the industrialized cities of the North.

During the '80s, the Southern regions became areas of transit towards safer and more profitable working areas. First Northern cities such as Bergamo, Bolzano, Brescia, Milan, Padua, Turin and Vicenza began to host foreign workers, partly replacing the decline of internal migration in those years.

In 1981 the foreign residents regularly present on the national territory were 211,000. During the '90s not just a quantitative growth of immigrants, but also a change in their profiles was observed. The census data indicate, in fact, an increase in both the female



component and the residents aged 0-4 and 10-14, thanks to an increase of family groups and reunifications, as well as a reduction in the number of irregular immigrants.

In 2001 the foreigners regularly present in the country were over 1,335,000, but we should consider about 500,000 irregular migrants (Cesareo, 2017). At the beginning of the 2000s the 70% of foreign residents on the national territory was distributed between Lombardy, Triveneto and Emilia Romagna (Ambrosini, 2005a).

The emigration of the indigenous population to the Northern regions after a decline in the 1980s and early 1990s has resumed its steady growth, rising from 104,000 units in 1995 to 129,000 in 1998 (Svimez, 2001: 20). The other regions of the country, on the other hand, show a positive migratory balance, albeit in very different proportions compared to those seen in the '50s and '60s. The regions of the North East, which in 1971 still showed a negative balance, are in this period those that acquire more inhabitants, 267.478, while the balance of the regions of the North West, which in the '50s and '60s experienced a real boom of new residents, in 2001 was slightly lower than in the Central regions.

1.2 Political framework

Despite the progressive transformation of Italy into a country of immigration, the institutions have underestimated the structural scope of the process, leaving it to develop for a long time within a general climate of bureaucratic, legislative and administrative disorganization. In particular, emergency interventions alternated with recurrent amnesties allowing the legalization of more than 2 million immigrants. Several regularization programs were enacted since the late 1980s, with the latest in 2012. Nevertheless, these 'amnesties' did not solve the problem of undocumented migration, given the almost lack of legal channels of access to the country sanctioned over the last years.

The first immigration law introduced in Italy is the law of n. 943 of 1986, which had the main purpose of standardizing the treatment of Italian workers and migrant workers, in compliance with the ILO (International Labour Organization) Convention n. 173 of 1975 (Caponio, 2012). The law n. 30 of 1990, known as the "Martelli law", for the first time regulated the subject of political asylum, focusing on the reorganization of procedures for the recognition of the status, on the basis of the provisions of the 1951 Geneva Convention, ratified in Italy in 1954. The Law n. 30/1990 also introduced the visa requirement for persons arriving from specific areas at high risk of emigration, and introduced formal procedures for expulsion of irregular migrants too. However, the volume of arrivals did not reduce, but thousands of Albanian, Yugoslav, Somali, Kosovar refugees arrived during the '90s. The result was a series of ad hoc measures to manage this forced migration.

In 1998 a more organic law, the n. 40 known as the "Turco-Napolitano law", was introduced and successively incorporated into the legislative decree n. 286 of 25 July



1998, "Consolidation Act of the provisions concerning immigration and regulations on the condition of the foreigner". The Turco-Napolitano Law contained three fundamental objectives: 1) the management of incoming flows; 2) the fight against irregular immigration; 3) social integration of immigrants in the country (Paparusso, 2017). From the point of view of the management of the flows, the Turco-Napolitano Law is distinguished as a law which recognized the coordination of labour migration through the provision of quotas for seasonal, autonomous employment and to seek employment. It also recognized the existence of migratory chains, as well as the consequent need to channel them into a legitimate path, by allowing the entry of migrants seeking a job in Italy if sponsored by an Italian citizen, foreigners legally living in the country, regional or local authorities, trade unions or recognised voluntary associations (Livi Bacci, 2002). More severe measures for the expulsion of irregular migrants without a permission were also introduced, setting up temporary detention centres for the completion of the procedures of expulsion and repatriation (currently CPR, *Centri di Permanenza per il Rimpatrio*). From the point of view of social integration, this law was characterized by the fact of identifying Regions as those appointed to design the political guidelines on integration and the tools of governance to implement them, on the basis of a three-year National Plan. The role of the third sector (no-profit) is also considered, encouraging collaboration between local authorities, foreign associations and organizations working for them. An inadequate annual quota system provided by the national government, together with intricate procedures of deportation, resulted however in an increase of irregular migrants that in 2002 were estimated about one million.

In 2001 the new right-wing government approved the Bossi-Fini Law n. 189. The principal novelty of the Bossi-Fini Law lies in the introduction of a "residence contract", which allows a worker to enter into Italy only by finding an entrepreneur who recruits him or her within the quotas set annually by the government. The system of sponsorship of the Turco-Napolitano Law was abolished. However, most of the foreign workers who entered through the new procedure, actually resided and worked in Italy before their entrance was authorized (Barbagli, 2004). The ineffectiveness of the Bossi-Fini law again derived from the fact that the annual entry rates supplied by the government are rarely based on reliable estimates or in line with real employment demand (Barbagli et al., 2005). Moreover, extremely complicated entry procedures have further contributed to a situation of "structural disorder" that require continuous amnesties over the years, due to the economic crisis, flow decrees have been blocked. So, today, foreign workers try to entry in Italy by a tourist visa, or presenting themselves as political asylum seekers and thus making a formal request for international protection.

In Italy, the civic dimension of integration has gradually assumed centrality as a prerequisite for the stay. In particular, the "Charter of the values of citizenship and



integration" (*Carta dei valori della cittadinanza e dell'integrazione*)¹, introduced during the Prodi Government in 2006, the Security Package (*Pacchetto sicurezza*), approved by the IV Silvio Berlusconi Government in July 2009, the "Plan for integration in secure environment" (*Piano per l'integrazione nella sicurezza*) and the "Integration Agreement" (*Patto per l'Integrazione*), approved in 2011 by the same government coalition, claimed the importance of learning the Italian language, history and culture as prerequisite for a peaceful and active incorporation in the Italian society order, and to not incur expulsion as a sanction. In particular, the 'Integration Agreement' asked the newcomers to learn Italian language, the fundamental principles of the Italian Constitution and institutions, the civic life, the functioning of the health, education, social services and labour market sectors, and related fiscal obligations (Caponio, Zincone, 2011). Many non-profit organizations and institutions today organize Italian language and civic values courses with the financial support of the European Integration Fund. Traditionally, the Italian centre-left coalition approach towards migration is considered quite inclusive and multiculturalist (Melotti, 2006). It supposed to equalize as much as possible migrants to Italians as far as social rights are concerned). On the contrary, the Italian centre-right coalition considers migrants as functional to the national economy, and therefore mainly as manpower to be employed in those sectors that native workers usually refuse (Ambrosini, 2013). Furthermore, the Italian centre-right coalition perceives migrants as a threat when issues of public order, national identity and culture are debated. However, civic integration approach has succeeded in conciliating these different approaches to migration, since the knowledge of the Italian language and values has been considered crucial for the process of migrants' socio-economic integration by both government coalitions in the last years (Paparusso, 2016).

However, since 2015, with the escalating migrant crisis, the rhetoric of clandestine immigration has ignited the political debate and nourished populist and xenophobic political forces. Statistical surveys show how the issue of refugees is approached in an increasingly hostile and alarmed way by Italian public opinion: in 60% of cases refugees' issue is associated to that of insecurity and international terrorism (Pew Research Center, 2016). The weight of traditional Catholic and leftist cultures collapsed, and in order to recover the political power lost in recent years it has converged on positions similar to those of the most radical right, which blame migrants for the current crisis, stigmatizing their presence and representing them as a threat and a problem for public order (Palidda, 2009; D'Agostino 2017a).

In this framework migration policies have developed on a strong securitization basis. In particular, on the external front, the Italian government followed to the strategies

¹ The charter and the first 44 articles of the Italian constitution are available online in many of the native languages of Italy's immigrant residents. See: www.interno.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/14/0919_charter_of_values_of_citizenship_and_integration.pdf



indicated by the European Agenda on Immigration² of 2015, with forms of transnational governance subcontracting the management of its external borders to third countries, even in the absence of adequate democratic guarantees. In this way the constitutional right to asylum is violated (Rastello, 2010), and the role of development cooperation is reduced to a tool for controlling mobility (Corrado, Giunta, 2016) as it clearly emerges from a new agreement with Libya signed in February 2017 (a previous one was stipulated in 2008)³. On the internal front, on the other hand, integration issues continue to be neglected. The current law on citizenship, approved unanimously in 1992, requires those who have not «Italian» or «European» blood with very high requirements for naturalization. In particular, ten years of uninterrupted residence are required; ministerial officials have complete discretion on the timing of the application for naturalization and on the criteria for evaluating them. Several reform proposals have been put forward over the years, but systematically the Parliament has rejected them.

This lack of preparation and awareness about migration processes, on the one hand, has slowed down the development of a comprehensive and consistent policy framework, and on the other, has forced the local level to interpret independently its role. Moreover, even the processes of decentralization and strengthening of local authorities set up by the late 90s have reinforced these trends, turned in the elaboration of different visions and local patterns of social inclusion. The literature documents how very different positions coexist at a decentralized level: more advanced approaches for inclusion together with emergency models that assume tasks very limited, mainly burden non-governmental organizations with integration issues (Stuppini, 2013).

1.2.1 The Evolution of the Italian Asylum System

In recent decades, many migrants who reach Italy through the Mediterranean have applied for asylum, since their journey is often the result of a dense intertwining of factors of a different nature, that challenge the traditional polarization between economic and political migration (Castles, Miller, 2003; D'Agostino, 2009). This complexity is well known among scholars, but does not find recognition within the present international asylum system, which on the contrary tends to follow an ever-restrictive evolution, leading to a steady increase in irregular immigration in relation to the current "European refugee crisis" (Zetter, 2015).

In Italy, further critical issues are due to the emergency nature of provisions which have characterized its approach to asylum. We can describe three fundamental stages in the evolution of the Italian asylum system (Corrado, D'Agostino, 2018). The first one, at the

² https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/communication_on_the_european_agenda_on_migration_en.pdf

³ This perspective follows the Migration Compact proposed by the Italian government in 2016 - titled "Contribution to an EU strategy for external action on migration" - which provides a series of measures for financing African countries in order to reduce departures across the Mediterranean. See: http://www.governo.it/sites/governo.it/files/immigrazione_0.pdf



beginning of the 1990s, is a phase characterized by the profusion of first assistance centres to meet the basic needs of refugees. After the abolition of the geographic limitation to the Geneva Convention of 1951, it was the Puglia law n. 563 of 1995 that regulated these centres. At the political level forced migration were the object of by stereotypes and criminalization that justified a massive recourse to exceptional measures of border controls, derogating basic human rights (Dal Lago, 1999).

In 2002, the introduction of the Bossi-Fini Law, openly conceived to tackle irregular immigration and to counter “bogus refugees” (Marchetti 2006, 186-190), launched a second phase. Asylum seekers were retained in special first reception centres run by the government, called CARA (Centri Accoglienza Richiedenti Asilo), in order to define their legal status, and were not given the right to work during their application process. The increasing militarization of these centres led to a widespread climate of hostility and distrust towards asylum seekers (Sciurba, 2009). Living conditions in CARA are often degrading and the retention times long, since the law does not specify any time limit to complete the procedures of identification of asylum seekers. Generally, it takes almost a year for those considered refugees or deserving international protection to be relocated to the second level reception accommodation provided under the ordinary System for the Protection of Asylum Seekers and Refugees (*Sistema di Protezione per Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati* or SPRAR). SPRAR is a network (founded by the Minister of Interior) of local authorities that, voluntarily and in collaboration with NGOs, run small projects where assistance and different integration services are provided in order to help asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection to regain their autonomy. In recent years, this kind of decentralized hospitality has responded more effectively to the needs of refugees with positives impacts on local contexts, especially improving their public services and new work opportunities (Marchetti, 2016). But SPRAR too presents contradictions and some limits that impact negatively on the life trajectories and migration projects of recipients. These are based on a number of factors: above all, the scarcity of ministerial resources and delays in disbursement, as well as the limited duration of the projects that provide almost one year of assistance. Moreover, SPRAR represents a residual protection system compared to the emergency model of refugee management, which was implemented and spread throughout the country following the outbreak of Arab Spring. New obligations in terms of fostering and reporting of projects limit the basic promotional objectives.

In 2011, in fact, a third phase of asylum opened, following the extraordinary program North Africa Emergency (*Emergenza Nord Africa* or ENA), which entrusted the management of refugees fleeing from Tunisia and Libya to Civil Protection (Paleologo, 2012; D'Agostino, 2015). Numerous extraordinary reception centres were created, no longer controlled by local governments, as SPRAR requires, but mostly run by business enterprises without any experience in dealing with refugees' problematics and often only responding to their basic needs. Even after ENA's closure, following a period of growth in flows between 2014 and 2015, this typology of centres continued to spread



throughout the country, until when they were fully institutionalized by Legislative Decree n. 142 in 2015.

The Legislative Decree 142/2015 articulates the reception system in three distinguished phases: the phase of first aid and assistance takes place in First Aid and Reception Centres (CPSA); first reception phase has to be implemented in collective centres for asylum seekers (CARA) and accommodation centres (CDA); second reception should be implemented in the SPRAR. In case of unavailability of places in the first or second accommodation centres, Prefectures are allowed to open specific temporary reception centres (called CAS, *Centri di Accoglienza Straordinaria*), which should merely serve a temporary function, limited to the time strictly necessary for the transfer of applicants. However, CAS's function has become prevalent and permanent. In January 2017, out of a total of 175,550 migrants present in the various reception facilities spread throughout the country, there were 136,978 presences in CAS, 362 in the hot spots, 14,338 in the first reception centres and only 23,822 presences into the Sprar. As the number of CAS grow, many reports and inquiries have raised strong criticism (Cittadinanzattiva et al., 2016). In CAS, often living conditions are very difficult due to overcrowding, lack of hygienic and safety standards, poor staffing; the engagement of local authorities and civil society organizations is limited, and often a lack of transparency affects the management organizations. Thousands of refugees fall into dramatic situations of legal and social invisibility, that often lead to recruitment in economic circuits characterized by particularly difficult working conditions, mainly in agriculture (Corrado, D'Agostino 2018; Dines, Rigo 2015; MEDU 2015, 2018). A "business of reception" rhetoric has been used by many mayors and communities to prevent the arrival to persons recognized as deserving of international protection (Lunaria, 2017).

The National Plan for the distribution of asylum seekers and refugees, in accordance with the Understanding between the Government, the Regions and local authorities, adopted in 2014, promoted a single reception system, more sustainable and fairer, adopting a criterion of refugees' distribution that considers the demographic dimension of the municipalities. Also, to encourage the participation of the Municipalities in the Sprar, special economic incentives and a specific "safeguard clause" that makes exempt from the activation of "additional forms of reception" those Municipalities participating in the Sprar network or willing to join it, were set up. However, in March 2018 Sprar projects are located especially in the Southern regions. For several years, in fact, three regions of the South (Sicily, Calabria and Apulia) have been among the first five Regions with the largest number of people hosted. In particular, Sicily is the first region, with over 4,839 seats; it holds the record for the reception of the most vulnerable - minors and people with serious health problems or mental illness. Lombardy, on the other hand, is the most welcoming region in the North (data from the Central Service of the Ministry of the Interior).

In the South small municipalities of peripheral and internal areas adhere to the Sprar, as having been affected by serious depopulation phenomena, they have a large availability



of empty accommodation and promote reception with the aim of recovering transfers from the central government and saving essential public services. So, they try to transform the presence of refugees into an opportunity for their rebirth and local development. In Calabria, first in Badolato and then, above all in Riace, pioneering models of reception were tested since the late 1990s. The innovative scope of these widespread reception projects focused on the repopulation of the most marginal areas had also a recognition r by the Regional Law n. 18 of 12 June 2009 "Reception of asylum seekers, refugees and social, economic and cultural development of local communities". However, strong critical issues concern socio-economic insertion; there is a high turnover the beneficiaries, which inhibits the formation of a sufficiently stable and organized social and productive fabric (D'Agostino, 2017b).

A report on good reception practices by the Ministry of the Interior (2017) highlights the effort made mainly in the Center and in the North of Italy to bring the CAS within a co-planning framework involving the local communities, in order to promote virtuous mechanisms of civic development and participation. Many CAS operate within a promotional governance framework that is creating organizational models with the objectives and services typical of the SPRAR. In some cases, the revenues obtained from reception are invested to implement innovative forms of solidarity economy; for example, social enterprises engaged in refugees' reception of together with their host have developed projects to enhance local agri-food resources within ethical supply chains - i.e. cooperative K-Pax in Breno-Valcamonica valley; Pacefuturo onlus in Biella Province (Membretti et al., 2017; Semprebon, 2017). However, the efforts promoted by the central government to ensure socio-economic integration of forced migrants are still at an early stage (Campomori, Feraco 2018); some structural difficulties reduce the large-scale transformative potential of host experiences (Stuppini, 2013). In some cases, great administrative discretion hinders the renewal of residence permits and so undermine the recognition of the right of residence for applicants and holders of international protection (Gargiuolo 2015). The wait for the examination of asylum applications, which usually ends with a very high share of denials (58% in 2017 only), remains excessive⁴.

The law n. 46 of 2017 (named "Minniti-Orlando") "for the acceleration of proceedings regarding international protection, as well as for the fight against illegal immigration", resulted in a clear compression of the right to defence of asylum seekers, eliminating the second degree of judgment. At the same time, it reconfigures the role of reception operators as public officials to all legal effects. The law resulted in strong reactions and protests from different organizations and within the judiciary, which denounce its unconstitutionality. The exclusion from the institutional reception system or the exit from it, in the absence of real conditions of autonomy and integration, together with the impossibility of leaving Italy because of the closure of the northern borders, force thousands of people to live in precarious housing conditions, in sort of scattered ghettos

⁴ http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/allegati/dati_asilo_2017_.pdf

or in large tents and temporary garrisons, set up by the Ministry of the Interior, in urban as well rural areas of the country (MSF, 2018).

1.3 Social and economic framework

On January 2017, foreigners in Italy were 5,046,994 and represent 8.3% of the resident population (ISTAT)⁵. In 2016, people in entrance from abroad were 262,929, with 200 different nationalities represented. EU citizens were 30.5% (1.537.223, of which 1,168,552 Romanians, who have their largest settlement in Italy), while 1.1 million come from non-EU countries. Africans and Asians were just over 1 million. Only 13 countries had more than 100,000 residents: Romania, Albania, Morocco, China, Ukraine, Philippines, India, Moldova, Bangladesh, Egypt, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Senegal.

In addition to the temporary entrances, the largest number of visas was issued for family reasons (49.013), study (44.114), subordinate work (17.611), religious reasons (4.066), adoption (1.640) and elective residence (1,274) and, in total, 131,559 national visas were issued, authorizing them to stay longer than 3 months. Most among the newcomers are young people (aged between 25 and 44 years). There is also an important component of forced migrants fleeing the serious political, environmental and humanitarian crises that spread throughout the world, as evidenced by the high number of nationalities also represented among them. During 2017, Italy had 130,119 new asylum seekers, with 5 main origins (Nigeria, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Gambia and Senegal) and 73,193 new arrivals by landings, which became 16,651 in June 2018, with a decrease of 77,39% compared to the previous year⁶. Stabilization processes has been attested by the increase in holders of a long-term EU permit (63.0% of all non-EU residents), as well as by the number of new births from foreign parents (69.379, one seventh of all those born in the year), family reunification (50,000 visas required) and the overall incidence of minors (20.6% among foreign residents and 21.9% among non-EU residents). Important is also the further increase of foreigners who have acquired Italian citizenship, more by naturalization than following marriages with Italian citizens: 17,692 in 2015 (IDOS, 2017).

On the economic side, in particular, there are 2,401,000 employed persons with foreign citizenship, accounting for 10.5% of the total. They are concentrated for two thirds in services (66.4%), then in industry (27.5%) and only for a residual part in the agricultural sector (6.1%). But data do not fully capture the significant weight that migrants have taken in the informal economy, due to the fact that the determination of entry volumes has never been based on reliable estimates of the annual need for foreign labour. Even in 2016, the programmed quotas are in fact extremely low for new non-EU workers:

⁵ This number rises to 6 million (around 10% of the total population), when considering non-resident regular and irregular migrants (IRPPS 2016).

⁶

http://www.libertaciviliimmigrazione.dlci.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/allegati/cruscotto_statistico_giornaliero_26-06-2018.pdf



13,000 for seasonal workers and 17,850 for all other sectors, to a large extent (14,250) reserved for citizens already present in Italy and interested in converting own residence permit (for example, from study to work). In this way, however, the matching between job demand and supply continues to take place in a decentralized way, with little or no role for formal agencies, giving rise to different territorial employment models and forms of work ethnicization by the role of intermediation and reception of community networks.

At the beginning of 2000s, international immigration was a consolidated phenomenon and a certain model of settlement was produced as rooted in the "economic and social geography of the country" (Ambrosini, 2005a: 65), that is with a territorial concentration of immigrants in certain territorial areas and in connection with specific local economic systems, influenced by economic transformations and the structuring of community networks. Ambrosini (2005a) identified 4 territorial models or systems of employment for immigrant labour. The first is that of widespread production systems, typical of small business areas and industrial districts, in the territorial areas grown in the 80s and 90s, from eastern Lombardy to Friuli, until reaching Tuscany and the Marches and licking the Abruzzo. Here the immigrants - in a regular condition both for stay and for labour- are mainly employed as industrial workers, but are also in service sector and in the domestic-care sector. There is also room for access to self-employment and micro-entrepreneurship (trade, cleaning, construction). The second model is the metropolitan one, recognizable in large and medium-sized cities. Here the immigrant work is largely dominated by the (low) tertiary and building sectors, in less qualified and unstable activities of urban economies (family workers and home care workers). Here too, opportunities have been given to move to self-employment, often in strenuous activities, not very remunerative and deserted by the indigenous population. The third model is that of the unstable, precarious and largely irregular activities of the southern economic contexts, linked to agriculture, but also to assistance, cleaning, the tourism-hotel industry, building. The Mezzogiorno is an area of first settlement and transit to other destinations. Migrants are predominantly male, often irregular, and very low is the level of an indicator of settlement, such as the presence and education of minors. An intermediate model of temporary work, mainly regular, can be found in some central-northern areas where the employment of immigrants follows seasonal trends, in agriculture or in the hotel or tourism industry (i.e. Trentino-Alto Adige). Even here, however, processes of stabilization and diversification of employment opportunities (i.e. construction, industry, service sector), and self-employment have been observed.

Economic crisis has given a new dynamic to migrations, reversing some trajectories and reinforcing new ones. A first sign indicating a change in trend is the decrease in immigration, which is accompanied by a significant increase in emigration. In the last ten years, immigration has decreased by 43%, from 527.000 in 2007 to 301.000 in 2016. Emigrations, however, have more than tripled from 51.000 to 157.000. The net migration balance with foreign countries increased to 143.000 units in 2016 (+ 8%), after



registering the lowest value in 2015; the positive migratory trend limits the demographic decline due to the negative natural balance (-142.00) (Istat 2017). The migration rate dropped from 7.5 per thousand in 2007 to 2.3 per thousand in 2014 (Istat, 2016a). The economic crisis has hit immigrant workers hard. In 2015, around 456,000 foreign nationals were looking for jobs. Since 2008, the unemployment rate has almost doubled, rising to 16.2% in 2015 (Istat, 2016b). Immigrant workers then saw a sharp reduction in average per capita income.

The transformations within the labour market have led to strong differentiations based on gender and belonging to certain ethnic groups. The male components and with a concentration in the manufacturing and construction sectors show particularly high unemployment rates. On the other hand, ethnic groups with a higher incidence of the female working population and a higher concentration in the sectors of personal services and domestic work are distinguished by higher than average employment rates (Anastasia, Gambuzza, Rasera, 2013; Fondazione Leone Moressa, 2015; Directorate General for Immigration and Integration Policies, 2015; Balduzzi, 2016).

As an alternative to a new migration towards new destinations or to the countries of origin, the strategy adopted for many was to move to other localities, within the national context, often in small municipalities and in rural areas, reversing the itineraries of the past and traveling along the peninsula from North or South, experiencing circular mobility dynamics or commuting (between different areas or regions, between city and countryside). The employment models were therefore partly modified by the dynamics triggered by the crisis or by the restructuring of production systems (Caruso and Corrado, 2015). Several studies have highlighted the structural role of foreign labour in agriculture (Colloca, Corrado 2013; Corrado et al., 2016). It is the 36% of the total workforce.

Together with new EU citizens coming from Eastern countries (Romania and Bulgaria), several studies pointed out the presence of refugees and asylum seekers, especially from Sub-Saharan Africa in the Southern regions agriculture (Rigo, Dines 2015). These workers often suffer precarious housing, social and work conditions, and even serious forms of exploitation - to contrast them a new severe law was introduced (n. 199 of 2016) (MSF 2016; MEDU, 2018).

Even if there are some good local inclusion practices, a model of "differential inclusion" seems prevailing: migrants participate in the labour markets but they are often excluded from social benefits or welfare (Mezzadra, 2016). This condition of structural subordination emerges also from the statistical data, with over two thirds of immigrants carrying out unqualified professions (and just 6.7% of qualified professions), even though they are often over-educated with respect to the performed tasks (37.4% against 22.2% of Italians); their remuneration (on average 999 euros net monthly) remains 27.2% lower than that of Italians, and the seniority of service reduces this gap slightly (IDOS 2017).



2. Volunteering and Migrations

2.1 Regulation, organization and characteristics of volunteering

In the Italian context, scholars identify in volunteering a fundamental element of reproduction of the conditions and vital resources for democracy, such as trust and political participation (Almond, Verba 1963; Sciolla, 2003; Moro, 2013). Since the mid-80s, the establishment of second and third level voluntary organizations, or Vos, (federations and inter-organizational organizations of connection and coordination, e.g. consortia) and the increase in interest by the institutions (Biorcio and Vitale, 2016) disclose a new trend. In those years, the reforms of welfare systems aimed at limiting expenditure and the processes of regionalization and political-administrative decentralization opened wide new opportunities for VOs, to ensure social services, while social demand grew as more heterogeneous. Within this framework the centrality of the voluntary work has grown within the main welfare agencies, profoundly transforming but sometimes distorting their action (Saraceno 2013; Ascoli, Pavolini, 2017).

VOs are one of the expressions of organized solidarity. That is a "chosen" solidarity (Ambrosini, 2005b), which differs from primary, face to face, solidarity, proper to community networks, and also from the institutionalized solidarity of welfare, and an "extended" solidarity, directed towards the outside, to those who are not part of the group, and therefore different from mutual solidarity, experienced among those who live in the same need or condition. VOs born from the second half of the '70s, in a season of transition from a technical and categorical approach of social welfare policies to another based on the protection of social rights of citizenship (Ferrera, 2012). The organized voluntary work has contributed decisively to overcome an assistive and particularistic conception of social work, distinguishing itself for two fundamental characteristics: gratuity and political dimension (Ranci, 2017).

Between the XIX and XX centuries, when welfare state was limited, the first VOs, which appeared mainly fell under the control of the ecclesial hierarchies and mutual associations. After Second World War, welfare state increased and large social movements advanced, important transformations were observed. VOs addressing their action to poverty eradication started to go beyond the previous logic of "charity" (Tavazza, 2001).

The law n. 266 of 1991⁷ recognized the social value of voluntary activity as an expression of participation, solidarity and pluralism in the pursuit of purposes of a social nature (art.1) and fixed the establishment of a general register of the VOs in the Regions and the autonomous Provinces (Art. 6). Law 266/91 represents the fundamental text

⁷ A reference to volunteering can be found in Article 118 of the Constitution that regulates the relationship between the third sector and public institutions, introducing the principle of subsidiarity, which commits the institutions to favor the autonomous initiative of citizens, also in an associated form, for carrying out activities of general interest.

governing volunteering in Italy; it doesn't provide an ad hoc legal form for VOs, but admits all organizations with non-profit purpose and democratic structure.

Subsequently, the Framework Law for the implementation of the integrated system of social interventions and services n. 328/2000 foresees a joint and more participatory action of VOs with public services: VOs are among the subjects to be included in the planning and implementation of the interventions, as well as in the management and offer of social services. Local authorities, together with other public and private actors at local level, have considerable powers in terms of policy formulation. In the Zone Social Plans, approved by Regional body, they have an instrument to plan and implement local social policies, including integration measures. The framework law n. 328/00 had a strong institutional and cultural impact on social policies (Sicora, 2016). It promoted a transition from the old welfare state, based on the pre-eminence of the state, to the welfare mix, which instead involves non-profit organizations not only in the provision of services, but also in the processes of planning and definition of social policies (Pavolini, 2003). Their provisions did not have a uniform and appropriate application at national level due to: 1) different levels of economic development between North and South Italy, which led to the consolidation of two welfare systems characterized by enormous differences in terms of collectability of social rights (Trigilia 1995; Fantozzi 2001; Fantozzi, Marra 2017); 2) poor organizational skills and limited planning skills of public administrations; 3) lack of will of the same institutions involved to open up to the involvement of the third sector or their excessive influence on the life of the organizations (Ferrera, 2012) - so much so to speak of "piloted design" by the institutions, as these latter often direct the action of volunteering towards measures that go beyond a realistic evaluation of social problems, bending them to more speculative purposes, instrumental to the construction of client networks (Moro, 2014).

The law n. 106 of 2016 containing "Delegation to the Government for the reform of the Third Sector, of the Social Enterprise and for the discipline of the Universal Civil Service" has introduced significant changes, criticised in some aspects for the effects on the "identity of volunteering": it institutionalizes the status of single volunteer, it removes indiscriminately the fiscal benefits for no profit organizations, but penalizing the smaller ones; it changes the role of CSVs (*Centri Servizi per il Volontariato*, that is Service Centres for Volunteering), now opened up to profit organizations too; and it centralizes strategic functions of consultation and control in the hands of second level organizations, considered not really representative.

VOs are very heterogeneous, with respect to the motivational, organizational and financial dimensions, to the areas of intervention, to the relationship with the public administration. Very solid and structured organizations, able to mobilize many resources, that manage complex interventions, coexist with other very fragile and founded on the commitment of volunteers, and can only rely on contributions from members and engaged in the management of small services. Moreover, even in their connection to the local level VOs are different (Marcello, 2005).



Over the years, there has been a growth of the VOs. If in the early '80s there were about 7,200 VOs, in the first half of the '90s they were 13,000, 18-26.000 in the early 2000s, up to about 45,000 in the current decade. The 2015 CSVnet survey pointed out the strong concentration of volunteering in the field of social services or health care, where as early as 2011, 36% of the total number of voluntary work hours accumulated. Half of the organizations intervene prevalently or exclusively in one of these two areas. Then, 31.7% social assistance; 24.7% health; 15.3% culture, sport and recreation; 8.4% civil protection; 7.7% environment, 4.2% protection of rights; 2.5% international cooperation and solidarity, 2.3% education and research (CSVnet, 2015).

In Italy, the volunteers who carry out activities within the associations are 4.14 million (7.9% of Italians). A heterogeneous world in which seven profiles have been distinguished: the faithful of assistance (29.6% of organized volunteers, 1,228 thousand people), educators of religious inspiration (25% of organized volunteers, 1,036 thousand people), pioneers (13.6% of organized volunteers, 561 thousand people), cultural investors (10.3% of organized volunteers, 427 thousand people), lay sport volunteers (8.9% of organized volunteers, 368 thousand people), blood donors (8% of organized volunteers, 333 thousand people) and the workaholics of the representation (4.6% of organized volunteers, 190 thousand people). Economic variables are not the decisive one to increase the chances of a person volunteering, but rather socio-cultural resources: educational qualifications, digital skills, cultural participation. Therefore, the more the number of graduates and the number of people who are receptive to culture increases, the higher the rate of volunteering and the number of citizens who help others and invest in the common good. Furthermore, doing voluntary work increases the chances of being very satisfied with life in subjects who are very different from the point of view of income, education level, place of residence, religious affiliation or personal provisions such as individual propensity for optimism. This applies regardless of the organizational context, even for those who commit themselves individually. Volunteering and participating in associations finally have a socializing effect on political participation, especially for the most disadvantaged social classes, and generally strengthens social relations. Those who volunteer are more inclined to trust others: gratuitousness stimulates forms of horizontal collaboration between individuals. The rate of interpersonal trust of volunteers (35.8%) stands out for those who do not volunteer (20.6%). The volunteers show more confidence also in the institutions: the average confidence index was calculated at the score of 4.7 compared to 4.4 of the non-volunteers (Guidi, Fonovic, Cappadozzi 2016).

The relationship between VOs and public institutions has been characterized by fragmented negotiations at a local level, often inherent to individual categories of needs, and a "mutual adaptation", with public administrations delegating their functions, and no-profit organizations depending almost entirely on public funding (Ranci, 1999; 2006). The organizations' approach to poverty and social exclusion are essentially dated. Furthermore, the weakening of gratuity is reflected in the growing weight of paid



operators and volunteers who receive a flat-rate reimbursement. This data, together with other information regarding sources of financing, relations with public administrations, the internal complexization of many organizations, indicates a clear shift of VOs to the social enterprise form (Licursi and Marcelo, 2017a). Many VOs pursue the purpose of providing support and services to their members or identify in them the main recipients of the association activity, elements so far considered typical of mutualism. Finally, a weakness of the political dimension of the VOs is interpreted in the limited action for social change, (Nervo, 1999) and in their difficulty to develop horizontal collaborative networks (Licursi, Marcello 2013).

The volunteers involved in the drafting of the “Catalog on the needs of the South of Italy seen from below” highlight in particular three problems: 1) the lack of adequate recognition of the role of volunteering by the institutions; 2) the crisis of generational change, deriving from the absence of a more organic system of ideal incentives able to generate a sense of belonging and affect the level of satisfaction of the individuals involved; 3) the absence of a network between the VOs, due to a certain self-referentiality, isolation, divisions. In short, often VOs no longer operate to achieve shared objectives aimed at social change, but work to self-replicate themselves (Marcello 2011, p.48).

3.2 Volunteering and solidarity action for migrants

In Italy, since the '80s, the local level has become particularly important for pro-migrant associations (Caponio, 2006). Faced with the rapid growth of immigrants and because of the late awareness of national institutions, very diverse non-state actors mobilized to protect the rights of migrants by facilitating their access to existing services, dealing with irregular immigrants excluded from official welfare system and generally playing an active role in their process of recognition and integration. Both the Martelli Law of 1990 and the Consolidation Act on Immigration of 1998 (with the amendments of 2002) entrust the State with responsibility for the policies of control and regulation of flows, while Regions have the task of implementing policies for social integration through specific laws and three-year plans, with the involvement of local authorities and associations.

Organizations are traditionally divided into four fundamental types, according to their activities and organization: charitable associations, characterized by direct help to persons in difficulty, offered on a voluntary basis; associations for claims, which operate mainly on the front of political and cultural initiative, i.e. against abuse or discrimination, often related to the left parties and trade unions, with an active role mainly in legislative innovation; entrepreneurial associations, providing more complex services to immigrants, often assuming the characteristics of the social enterprise, but still continuing to undertake various initiatives to raise awareness and political battles; finally, the associations promoted by the immigrants themselves. The association promoted by immigrants remains weak, given the preference accorded by the political



system to pro-migrant associations and because of the scarce economic resources they have. However, organizations that move from different ideological matrices and paths feel the need to professionalise and develop different activities to overcome the limits of state action and at the same time react to the hardening of local policies towards immigrants (Ambrosini, 2014; Zamponi, 2017).

Today, a series of services benefit from a wide range of volunteers: legal assistance, Italian teaching, school support for minors, social, housing and work support, provision of meals, medical care and other essential services in the field of cultural and linguistic mediation.

Often, public authorities decide to delegate some roles to social and voluntary associations. They do this to acquire scientific and technical information that is otherwise too expensive to obtain; to know the needs of groups and test new social policies before extending them, to outsource care services and interventions in a phase of fiscal crisis that has significantly reduced welfare resources. The governance of immigration is explicitly influenced by the vitality of civil society, which therefore participates in creating it, designing it and above all in removing the most stringent forms of exclusion, guaranteeing access to existing services and building other non-contemplated services, to make them accessible to unauthorized immigrants. However, these different forms of participation are critical, due to: a) their weak organization and endowment of resources; b) their limited decision-making power, as they are predominantly involved only in the implementation phase of policies; c) the particularly binding legislative context, because of the close link between residence permit and work position, as introduced by the Bossi-Fini law; d) the general phase of "political crisis", in which the bureaucratic system tends to act "autonomously" profoundly transforming the objectives and effects of policies with respect to those sought in the ideation phase (Candia and Carchedi, 2012; Caponio, Campomori, 2014).

These problems have become more visible within a framework that, in recent years, has seen a significant progression of pro-migrant association participation in various advisory bodies and public tenders (Spinelli, 2016). However, the "monopoly" role assigned to some organizations has left little room for the participation of migrants (Mantovan 2007, 103; Cappiali, 2017). Particularly problematic is the growing participation of voluntary and pro-migrant associations in the emergency governance of refugees' reception, especially in long-term encampment projects, focused on the satisfaction of the only essential needs of refugees, from which serious situations of frustration and dependency on aid arise (Caruso, 2016). So, in many cases the involvement of VOs has been blamed (Lasciateci centrare, 2017).

Civil society organizations have been able to organize forms of mobilization from below too, rediscovering the gratuity and self-management as preconditions to achieve horizontal and sustainable solidarity (Cannavò, 2018). They are committed to addressing issues that often concern transversely indigenous people as well as migrants. It is the



case of several experiences of "informal reception" and "political struggle" involving anti-racist social movements, voluntary and no-profit organizations, local communities and even individual citizens.

An example is the intervention of volunteers around the **Baobab experience** in Rome, which arose informally from a group of citizens, volunteers, provided help and assistance to about 35,000 migrants, passing through Italy to Northern Europe during the summer of 2015, with the support of the associations for health and legal issues. It then formed an association, hit by repeated evictions by the police but constantly reorganized.

Particularly significant are the experiments about housing, representing a quite problematic issue in Italy, that often opposes migrates and indigenous groups of citizens (Cesareo, Bichi 2010). Instead, some experiences of housing occupation see the joint participation of citizens and migrants within a heterogeneous multitude of associations and new urban movements (Tomasello, 2015; Grazioli, 2017). These experiences assume an important function of socialization, cement solidarity and a general sense of belonging to the community (Avallone, 2016; D'Agostino, 2017b; Galdini, 2017).

The **humanitarian corridors** supported by the Community of Sant'Egidio, the Federation of Evangelical Churches and the Waldensian Table represent a pilot project. It was supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs just for the opening of legal access channels to the country for Syrians in Lebanese camps. But it is characterized by the fact of promoting free reception, without any charges for the State, thanks to the support of many communities, families and individuals⁸.

It is also interesting the experimentation of the **Housing First**, a program that implies the immediate access of the homeless to a safe and permanent housing, without having to follow a preparatory process (Pleace, 2012). The projects, relying on the recognition of the right to housing as a fundamental right, regardless of nationality or the irregular situation of many homeless foreigners, were supported only by the forces and resources of no profit organizations (Licursi, Marcello 2017b, pp. 195-211). Over time, the initial 'emergency' response focused on temporary shelter gave way to expanding housing from a long-term integration perspective, by matching refugees with individual hosts and providing better orientation to available support services.

The 'home exchange' idea also informed the projects: **Refugee in my House** by Caritas Italian, **Foster Families** by Progetto Integrazione Accoglienza Migranti-PIAM Asti, and **Refugees in Family** by Centro Immigrazione Asilo e Cooperazione-CIAC Parma. Ciac is also the promoter of **Tandem**, a project of co-housing that brings together young Italian university students and refugees in the SPRAR where they share an apartment without paying rent but by doing social activities and volunteering in the apartment block and in the district where it is located. Tandem does not exclusively target forced migrants,

⁸ In Italy, since February 2016, almost 800 Syrian refugees have arrived thanks to this project. For more details see: <http://www.santegidio.org/pageID/1165/langID/it/itemID/756/SCHEDA-Hello-sono-i-corridoi-umanitari.html>

instead it tackles similar needs and challenges faced by different vulnerable groups. This has mitigated potential conflicts with the host community and has improved the quality of life for the community as a whole.

Refugees Welcome Italy is a non-profit social association (NPO), part of the international network Refugees Welcome, born in Berlin and now spread across Europe. The Italian branch is active since July 2015, thanks to the work of voluntary and self-financed group of people (co-founders) who coordinate the offer of families to host families and the demand of refugees. They are from diverse background and highly qualified professionals active in social innovation, migration and inclusion policies, public policies, communication, business. They work in partnership regional networks, relevant government institutions and associations already working in the field throughout Italy.

Other services provided by volunteer action are: Italian language courses, as those promoted by CPIA – Centri Provinciali per l’Istruzione degli Adulti, progetto Petrarca – Corsi di Italiano L2, Asinitas, etc.); health services and counselling, as in the case of Naga Onlus, Opera San Francesco in Milan, Oikos Association, etc. (Ambrosini, 2014); legal assistance, for which an example is the Associazione Studi Giuridici sull’Immigrazione (ASGI); sport activities, for which we can mention the Association Balon Mundial and the Project Sport and Integration or the project Migrants’ Inclusion Model through Sport for All (MIMoSA) by UISP Sport per Tutti, aiming to build models of inclusion of migrants and refugees through sport for all activities (SPIN 2012; UISP 2012). In 2014, 715 institutions and associations working for the social integration of foreigners were identified (EWSI 2016). These experiences signal the opening of a broad and innovative space of action, of paths of solidarity, responsibility, political awareness, and agency (Ambrosini 2016; Erminio, 2017; Ambrosini, 2018).

However, in Italy as in Europe, the criminalization of solidarity and voluntary work is growing in order to contrast migration. Regulatory and police acts try to counteract the practices of a heterogeneous movements - that includes Catholic groups, individual citizens, NoBorder militants and guides alpine Guides sans Frontieres at the northern border (Ventimiglia, Como and Udine) - or search and rescue operations of NGO vessels in the Mediterranean. Activists have faced banishment from their home town for providing food and showers. Volunteers working with NGOs are under investigation and threat of prosecution for their sea rescue missions. In the summer of 2017, Minister Minniti forced SAR NGOs to sign a code of conduct forfeiting the neutrality and independence at the heart of their ventures, which requires SAR NGOs to allow police to board rescue boats and makes them answerable to the Libyan coastguard as well as the Italian coastguard (Institute of Race Relations, 2017). In Summer 2018, Minister Salvini closed Italian ports to NGO vessels transporting refugees and contrasted their search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean.



3.3 Migrants' social participation and volunteering

The legal basis of the representative bodies of immigrants' associations is found in the "Council of Europe Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Local Public Life" of 1992, ratified in the Italian legal system by law n. 203 of 1994, with the exclusion of chapter C, relative to the right to vote. Chapter A contains the guarantee of the most classic civil rights, such as freedom of expression, assembly and association, while Chapter B requires that the signatory states encourage and facilitate "the establishment of certain advisory bodies or the implementation of other appropriate provisions at the institutional level for the purpose of adequate representation of foreign residents in local communities that have a significant number of foreign residents in their territory" (Art. 5, l. b). This last provision, at the local level, has given rise to different experiments according to two main models: the Consulta (or Council) which is a collegial body, and the added councillor. Both these models have, however, found themselves rather fragile, as well as other participatory forms regulated by law to guarantee a form of political participation for immigrants (to compensate the absence of the right to vote). It is the case of the National Council for the problems of non-EU workers and their families, as foreseen by the law 943/86, and the National Coordination Body for Integration Policies. Another ordinary instrument of migration governance at the local level is represented by the Territorial Immigration Councils (CTI) (established by the Prime Ministerial decree of 18 December 1999). The composition of these different advisory bodies should have reflected the presence of the various stakeholders, but over the years this idea has proved to be very problematic, especially with regard to the presence of associations formed by migrants. In fact, studies reveal the frequent use of co-optation mechanisms that do not consider the effective representativeness of organizations called to designate their referents, and also point out the numerically irrelevant presence of immigrants within them. So, these organisms have turned in purely formal comparison venues.

However, the associations promoted autonomously by immigrants can have a greater significance, on the representative and operational front, placing themselves as an important factor of integration. The different mappings promoted by the institutions in these years suggest the existence of a heterogeneous world of organizations that carry out a wide variety of cultural, educational and social interventions aimed at promoting the cultural identity of origin, to promote access to services, school, health, administrative practices and, in general, protection and promotion interventions offered on a local basis. In 2015, 2,114,100,0 associations were mapped, from 1,181 of them it was possible to obtain information. Looking at their statutory aims, as many as 8 out of 10 (79.3%) work to promote the integration of migrants and about three quarters (73.9%) to promote and favour the cultures of origin of the latter, just under half (44.6%) deal with intercultural mediation, followed by training (34.5%) and the legal assistance and protection of migrants (30.6%). The last great statutory purpose detected with a



certain frequency is the contrast to the discriminations connected to the migrant condition.

In Italy, the development of migrants' associations took place along three fundamental phases. The first saw above all ethnic-type associations in which migrants gather and care primarily to support new arrivals for their immediate needs. Here parental-friendly bonds prevail, limited to members of the same community to which they belong. In the second phase, immigrants are more aware of the need for participation and tend to conceive their associations as a means of representation, which happens again on a mainly "ethnic" basis. Finally, the third phase focuses more on "interethnic" associations, that involve different national groups and/or Italians too. This transformation stems from the need that immigrants feel of a greater cohesion and protection in front of the many difficulties they encounter to carry on their activities with a certain continuity, stability and effectiveness. Along this line, women associationism is emerging and we also see a massive membership in labour unions for labour disputes (928.620 members of the CGIL, CISL and UIL trade unions, with an incidence of 7.9% of the total, including pensioners) and in patronage institutes for assistance in social security practices (immigrants accounted for one fifth of the 14 million practices carried out in 2016 by the Acli, Inca-Cgil, Inas-Cisl and Ital-Uil patrons of the Patronage Center).

Some structures are established on rather informal grounds: these are self-proclaimed "forums", "assemblies" or "networks", often marked by a rather static leadership, even membership, both being mirrored in the person of leading community members. Moreover, religious affiliation can have a certain weight in aggregation processes of migrants in Italy (Campani, Lapov 2016).

Immigrants' association was favoured by various regulatory measures, and also by the institution of the Register of associations and of bodies operating in favour of immigrants in 1999 - at the General Directorate of Immigration and Integration Policies of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (according to art. 42 of the Consolidated Law on Immigration)⁹. Registration is a requirement for access to public funding from the European Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals. Italian regions have in turn set up specific registers aimed at identifying the organizations for the implementation of interventions in favour of immigrants, as well as for the designation of representatives for local consultant bodies. By the analysis of the Ministerial Register and of those established at regional level, however, it is clear how migrant associations constitute a residual quota, often due to the extremely selective restrictions imposed, and to further difficulties related to the scarcity of financial resources, lack of information and adequate planning skills. Almost all (91.7%) of the associations participating in the last survey promoted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (903, equal to 42.7% of the total 2.114 mapped) still relies - exclusively or

⁹ database of all associations in Italy at: <http://www.lavoro.gov.it/temiepriorita/immigrazione/focus-on/registro-associazioni-ed-enti/Pagine/default.aspx>



complementary to other channels – on self-financing forms; just 41.1% are able to access public funds and only a little more than a sixth (17.4%) have private subsidies. These results are different at a regional level, but a considerable disadvantage of immigrant associations with respect to the autochthonous organizations is noticed.

Also, in the case of migrants' associations, general remarks about participation are valid (Moini, 2012): participation is affected by constraints and opportunities present in the contexts of action. The opportunity structure weighs decisively on the possibility of migrants to affirm their public visibility and their political legitimacy.

Associative practices remain a crucial element in the processes of "citizenship" through which migrants constitute themselves as subjects breaking and disarticulating the control devices that place them in a position of substantial legal, economic and social subordination (Ambrosini, 2014). However, the role of these practices can be complicated if defined with respect to concrete experiences and national groups established in specific geographical areas.

Amidst various forms of community organization, associations have constituted a useful resource providing solidarity and mutual support networks among migrants. For example the activities pursued by Sub-Saharan associations in Italy are aimed at promoting: inner cohesion and solidarity; cooperation with the surrounding social context; relations between the countries of origin and Sub-Saharan communities abroad (in Italy); communication, information and exchange activities; sociocultural activities; intercultural exchange; linguistic and cultural mediation; struggle for rights and equality; struggle for peace; struggle against exploitation and human trafficking; struggle against racism (Campani, Lapov 2016). Since 2014, the General Direction of immigration and policies of integration has promoted a dialogue with youth associations with a migration background with, with the initiative "Filo diretto con le seconde generazioni". The initiative connected more than 30 associations of new generations which elaborated a Manifesto with different sections: school, work, culture, participation and focusing on different issues in perspective of co-development. In 2017 the network constituted the CoNNGI, "Coordinamento Nazionale Nuove Generazioni Italiane", an association for social promotion that participate in the National Observatory for the integration of foreign students and interculture (Ministry of Education, University and Research) and to the Migration and Development Board of the National Council for Development Cooperation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation). Migrants' associations are also involved in the development of bilateral relationships, for the promotion of language-civic education, circular migration and the development of social economy in the country of origin. It is the case of Philippines, Moldavian and Albanian associations¹⁰.

10 Summit Nazionale delle Diaspore, il sistema Italia con le diaspore e nuove generazioni per la cooperazione allo sviluppo, Raccolta di informazioni in occasione del Summit nazionale delle diaspore per la cooperazione italiana, Novembre 2017.



OIM promotes initiative to foster the role of migrants' associations and diasporas in Italy by skills valorisation and the promotion of codevelopment projects with the countries of origin (see the initiative Associazioni Migranti per il Co-Sviluppo – Corso A.MI.CO, since 2011). In 2003 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, together with OIM, launched the MIDA (Migrations for Development in Africa) in Italy: it is a capacity-building programme, which helps to mobilize competencies acquired by African nationals abroad for the benefit of Africa's development. It supported initiatives of diasporas from Ethiopia, Ghana and Senegal (Ceschi, 2012).

A few established initiatives target immigrant volunteers themselves not only to orient them and activate their skills – as with leisure and mentoring activities – but also to improve public opinion and policies on integration. The health sector regularly carries out public campaigns about giving blood. For ten years, the Voluntary Association for Blood Donations in Italy (AVIS) has been conducting targeted campaigns raising immigrants' participation in blood donation thereby increasing the public's appreciation of immigrants' contribution and opportunities for intercultural dialogue. These experiences have been used to form the Observatory for the Blood Donation Culture, which has signed cooperation protocols with other medical organisations in immigrants' countries of origin¹¹.

Immigrant participation in trade unions, voluntary organisations, consultative bodies at the local and regional level and immigrant associations ensures their access to what are called 'intermediate political rights'. However, researches stated as civic and political participation remains mostly the realm of Italian citizens and naturalised immigrants (Kosic, Triandafyllidou, 2005).

3.3.1 Asylum seekers' volunteering

In December 2014, a circular of the Minister of the Interior suggested to the municipal administrations to use the beneficiaries and applicants for protection, that are guested in SPRAR, CAS and CARA, in community work and voluntary activities. But it was the Decree Law of 17 February 2017, n. 13, converted into Law n. 46 on 13 of April 2017, to establish voluntary initiatives involving asylum seekers in welcome projects, in work of social utility, in favour of local communities. The objective is to help overcome the inactivity condition of the beneficiaries in the centres and facilitate their integration. The Prefects are encouraged to promote the dissemination of good practices and joint strategies with municipalities and third sector organizations, also through the stipulation of specific memorandums of understanding to be financed with European resources for the immigration and asylum sector. The accession of the migrant to these programs must be "free, voluntary and unpaid" and involves the commitment to make one or more benefits, individually or in groups, for the pursuit of the social, civil and cultural aims of the organization or association to which it adheres.

¹¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/intpract/observatory-for-the-blood-donation-culture>

The basic idea of the law is that involving asylum seekers in "useful" activities can represent for them an opportunity for aggregation and comparison with the local population, which also prevents the risk of developing passive attitudes of welfare and lack of confidence in the system by refugees. At the same time, the goal is to intervene on the host social fabric, developing a greater reception attitude in a framework that remains critical overall, for the many tensions and manifestations of social intolerance that spread across the country.

In Italy, up to May 2018, 135 memorandums of understanding for voluntary activities were signed, stipulated by 53 different Prefectures, especially in the Center and in the North of Italy. This type of initiative, involving both institutional subjects and third sector and private social organizations (from trade unions to training centres, from the managing bodies of hospitality structures to cultural, sports, environmental, artistic, recreational, religious and cultural and volunteering associations) can be divided into three areas: a) socially useful work and group volunteering; b) volunteering in the context of regional initiatives and events. c) volunteering in associations of different types.

Some activities promote the mutual cooperation between natives and migrants in activities of social utility, generally aimed at protecting the environment or the most disadvantaged social groups. But, in most cases, the voluntary service of asylum seekers is addressed to small maintenance and cleaning works, building renovation, different activities in public events (Ministero dell'Interno, 2017; SPRAR et al., 2015). These activities can on the one hand guarantee a saving on public spending for local institutions; on the other hand, they make it easier to involve asylum seekers without high linguistic skills and a reduced autonomy.

However, the effectiveness of asylum seekers' involvement in voluntary activities for local administrations is questioned, pointed out the free work as a form of exploitation and an answer to the needs of the political and productive system (Pasqualetto, 2017). Moreover, these activities would vehicle an idea of refugees with a negative impact on the collective imagination regarding the issue of the right to asylum, applying to the principle of economic legitimization of immigration (Finotelli, 2009), and inevitably reducing attention to the social and cultural integration aspects.

For young beneficiaries, it is also possible to apply for the Universal Civil Service or National Civil Service (Law n. 64/2001, and L.D. 106/2016), which allows to get in touch with both different areas of the territory and work opportunities. Born as an alternative to military service, it is a period of voluntary activity to share an experience of active citizenship, social solidarity and to participate in the preservation and protection of the territory. A monthly check for the service provided is paid to the UCS volunteers. For the youngest beneficiaries this can be a good solution as it allows to start an inclusive path in a voluntary way, combining the formative aspect and the not negligible economic aspect. It is possible to become promoters of a UCS project and therefore host



volunteers in the SPRARs, so to make the reception activity better known and to raise awareness among young people about the reception and inclusion of the refugees, precisely as a function of territorial animation work. A UCS project was promoted by the SPRAR of Narni for education and animation activities of minors (SPRAR et al., 2015).



PART 2: NATIONAL AND LOCAL RESEARCH

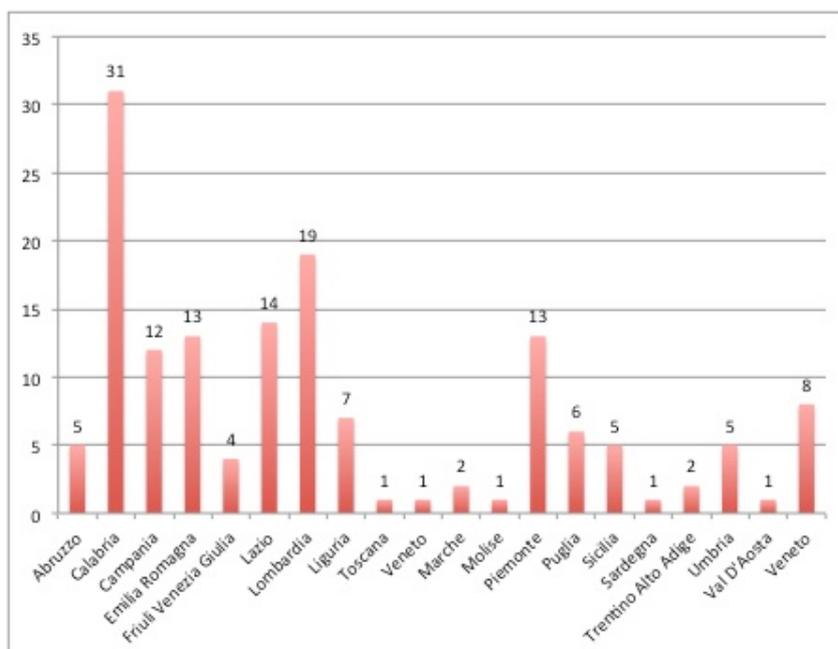
3. National online survey

3.1 Description of the sample

The online questionnaire was organized into three main sections: the first was designed to elicit general information regarding the organizations' background, the second section, which was optional, aimed to provide information concerning immigrant volunteering within the organization (if present), and the last section investigated the features and outcomes of volunteering for the benefit of immigrants and contained compulsory answers. Although 3182 organizations have been identified on a national level, only 2129 were successfully contacted¹². The response rate was encouraging, in fact 145 organizations throughout Italy completed the questionnaire (over a period of two months, May-June 2018). All quantitative data were coded and registered in the SPSS system.

Organizations based in all the 20 Italian regions completed the questionnaire, with 47.3% based in Northern Italy, 40.4 % in the South and on the Islands and 12.3% in Central Italy (graph 1).

Graph 1. Organizations' geographical position



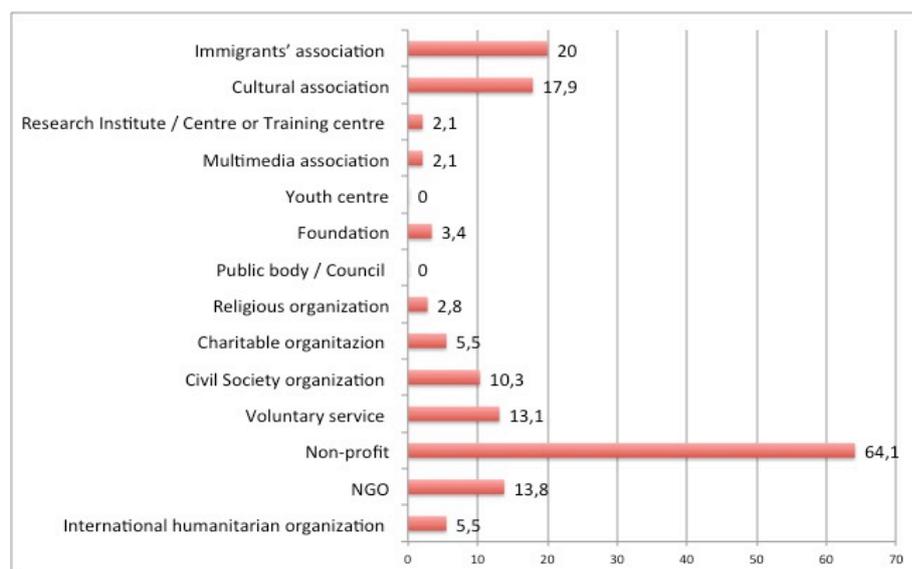
¹² There is not a list of volunteering organizations that deal with migrants and refugees' integration (which is the population of interest) that could be considered accessible, updated, reliable and complete, therefore this study adopted the nonprobability sampling.

Most of the respondents (94.5%) belong to formally registered organizations. The highest group of organizations (33.6%) was founded from 2000 to 2009, about 22.2% in the 1980s, and the same percentage, more or less (20.1%) in the last decade. However, some of the organizations that have responded to the questionnaire were founded back in the 70s (4.2%).

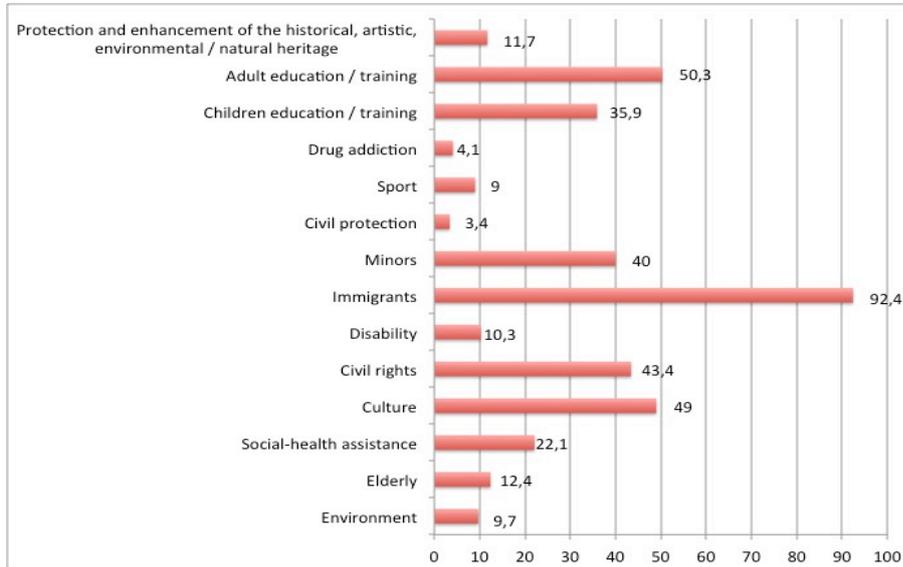
As for Type/form of organization (graph 2), respondents mostly are Non-profit (64.1%), followed by Immigrants' association (20%), which include about 25 different nationalities, and cultural associations (17.9%).

As for intervention, these organizations operate mostly locally (71%) and regionally (59.3%), then nationally (44.5%) and internationally (35.9%). For the main sectors of intervention of the organization, 92.4% work in the immigration sector, 50.3% in Adult education and training, 49% in Culture, and 43.4% in Civil Rights (graph 3).

Graph 2. Type / form of organisation



Graph 3 - Main sectors of intervention of the organization



It is worth noticing that the number of migrants present in the various organizations, both those who work as volunteers and those who are regularly employed, is higher in smaller organizations, in particular for those with maximum 15 employees (39.4%) or volunteers (42.2%). The same data regard the presence of women both employed (32.6%) and volunteers (40.7%). However, it is important to underline the fact that there is a relevant number of organizations that do not work with immigrants or second-generation immigrants neither as hired staff (22.1%) nor as volunteers (29.7%). Another piece of information revealed by the survey that is worth highlighting is the non-presence of women both as hired staff (31.7%) and as volunteer (33.1%). The medium-large organizations (more than 100 employees) include a low presence of migrants (of second generation). The following tables illustrate the staff members (Table 1) and volunteers (Table 2) who work for the organizations that have responded the questionnaire.

Table 1 - Number of people (staff) in the organization (%)

Staff				
	Total number (%)	Number of women (%)	Number of immigrants or second-generation immigrants (%)	Number of women (%)
None	13.1	14.5	22.1	31.7
from 1 to 5	4.9	19.4	24.1	24.2
from 6 to 15	22.2	16.8	15.3	8.4
from 16 to 30	10.4	13.1	6.3	5.6
from 31 to 50	11.8	15.9	11.1	13.9
from 51 to 100	16.1	12.5	5.6	2.1
from 101 to 150	9	0.7	0.7	0
from 151 to 300	4.9	4.9	2.8	2.8
More than 300	4.2	0	2.8	0.7

Table 2 - Number of people (volunteers) in the organization (%)

Volunteers				
	Total number (%)	Number of women (%)	Number of immigrants or second-generation immigrants (%)	Number of women (%)
None	13.8	14.5	29.7	33.1
from 1 to 5	13.9	26.1	26.2	30.3
from 6 to 15	28.9	22.8	16	10.4
from 16 to 30	13.2	14.7	4.9	2.1
from 31 to 50	9.7	8.3	1.4	3.5
from 51 to 100	7.7	5.6	0.7	2.1
from 101 to 150	3.5	0.7	2.1	0
from 151 to 300	2.1	1.4	2.1	1.4
More than 300	2.1	0	2.8	2.1

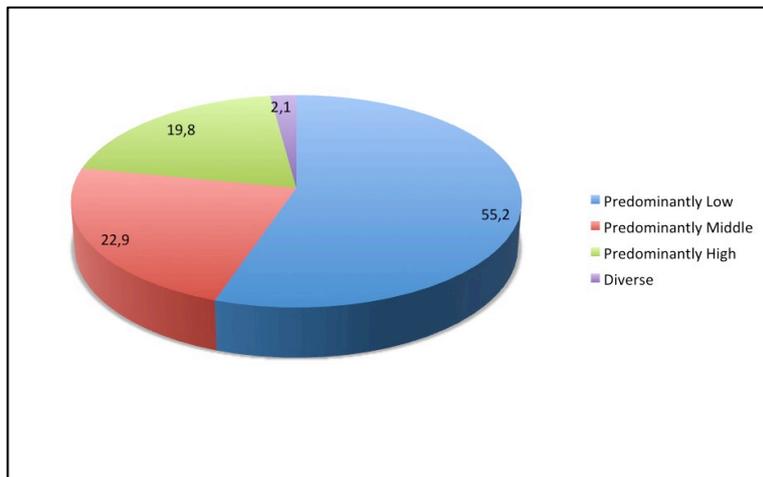
As for age, the Italian volunteers were mostly between 26 and 40 years old (55.9%) and between 41 and 65 years old (55.9%). As for immigrant volunteers, of 1st and 2nd generation, 38.6% of the volunteers are between 26 and 40 years old, 27.6% are up to 25 years old and 26.2% are between 41 and 65 years old.

3.2 Migrant volunteers in the organization

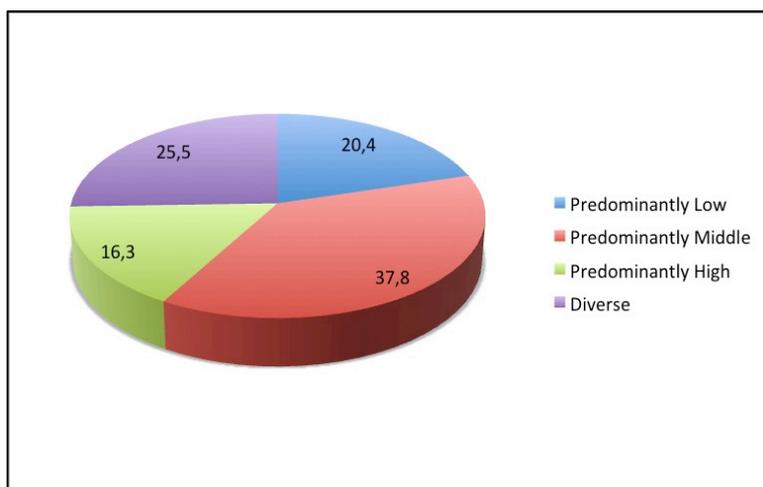
Interestingly enough, the second section of the questionnaire, which was destined to organizations that included immigrants as volunteers, and therefore was optional, was completed by 67% of the sample. The first part of this section focuses on the organizations' opinions on the volunteering activities of the immigrants (opportunities, benefits, problems). Generally, the voluntary work for immigrants is considered a valuable and effective tool for implementing social inclusion and promoting the ideals of the welcome/reception culture and of solidarity.

The group of the immigrant volunteers is heterogeneous as there are 25 different nationalities. The predominant nationality is Moroccan, followed by Nigerian, Malian and Senegalese. As for the socio-economic status of the immigrants, the survey took into consideration both the economic level and the educational background of the immigrant volunteers. For the majority of the immigrants, the economic level is mainly low (55.2%) while the educational level is predominantly middle (37,8%) (Graphs 4 and 5).

Graph 4 - Economic level of immigrant volunteers

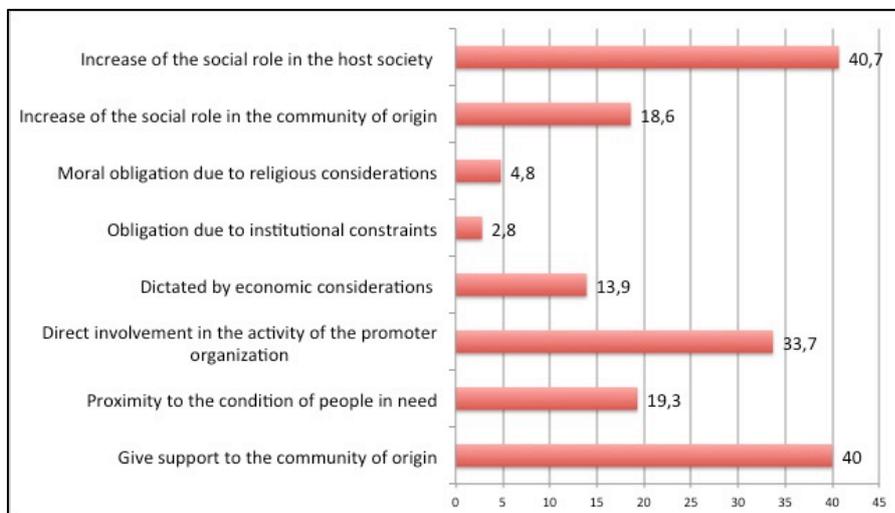


Graph 5 - Educational level of immigrant volunteers

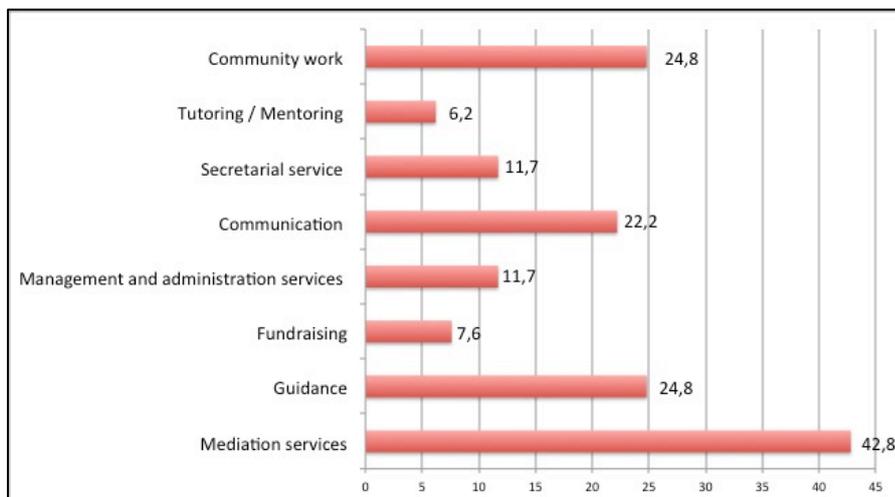


Worth noticing are the main reasons why the immigrants have decided to carry out voluntary work within these organizations. Exactly 40.7% answered that they wanted to improve their social role in the host society; 40% explained that they are doing it because they hope to provide support to their community of origin; 37.7% wanted to be directly involved in the activity of the promoter organization (graph 6). The role played by immigrant volunteers is fundamental for various activities. Graph 7 illustrates the different roles. There is a predominance of migrants who provide mediation services, that is 42.8%, while 24.8% is involved in community work, and in Guidance too (graph 7).

Graph 6 - Motivations of the immigrant volunteers working in the organization



Graph 7 - Role played by immigrant volunteers



The respondents were also asked to explain how the immigrants applied to be volunteers; 37.2% claimed that it was thanks to word of mouth, while 36.6% were recruited by direct contact, 12.4% were recruited by formal state or local authority agreements and only 5.6% through CV submission.

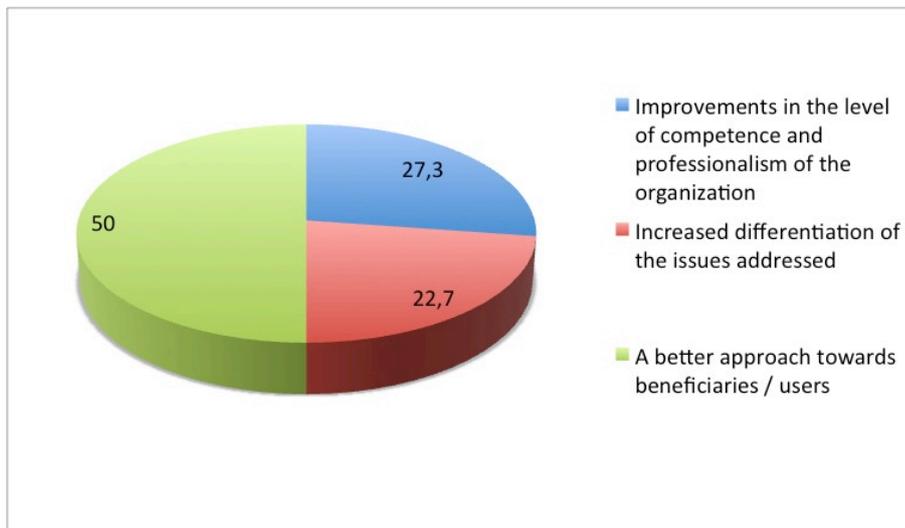
To fully understand the benefits that immigrants might gain from voluntary work, a series of items have been developed, accompanied by a scale from 1 to 5 (in which 1 is the minimum and 5 the maximum).¹³ The answers show that migrants have definitely

¹³ To facilitate the interpretation of the data, every time the question required to answer using the Lickert scale, the highest answers (4 and 5) and the lowest (1 and 2) were grouped.

benefitted in the following areas: Cultural exchange and social connections (86.2%); Language skills (72.3%), Sense of belonging/interest towards events that occur in the host society (69.6%). Other features are Acquisition of professional skill (52.2%); Valorization of professional skills (43.8%) and Contacts for future employment (38.7%), and are considered as important as but less than the previous ones.

Graph 8 illustrates the benefits that the promoter organizations gain from the voluntary work of migrants. Interestingly, but not surprising, half of the respondents claim that there is a better approach towards users, 27.3% affirm that the level of competence and professionalism of the involved organizations have enhanced and 22.7% noticed that there is an increased differentiation of the issues addressed.

Graph 8 - The benefits of migrants' volunteering on the promoter organization



In order to understand the factors that hinder the voluntary participation of migrants, three aspects have been outlined: structural obstacles related to the local social context, subjective obstacles of volunteers and operational obstacles. As for the first aspect (structural obstacles related to the local social context), the respondents highlighted that the most relevant one is the excessively restrictive migration policies (65.6%), while the hostility/mistrust of institutions (41.2%) and hostility in the surrounding society (40.6%) are those that influence the least. As for subjective obstacles of volunteers, the organizations answered that the most crucial are work schedule (50%) and family life (41%), while low motivation (45.3%) and cultural differences (45.9%) are not as relevant. Interestingly enough, language barriers do not seem to cause any problem. As for the third aspect, operational obstacles, the deficiency of resources (56.8%) is the main reason why migrants do not participate in voluntary activities, while the weak internal organization (59.6%) and little involvement in the decision-making level within the organization (69.2%), are not considered as relevant.

Consequently, among the factors that may facilitate the removal of the aforementioned obstacles, it is interesting to note that even if Information and awareness-raising actions

addressed to all citizens (83.4 %) are considered the most effective ones, training is considered extremely important for the removal of the obstacles of migrants' participation, more precisely training of migrant volunteers was chosen by 79.2% and training of national operators by 74%. Besides, 73.9% of the respondents believe that legislative reforms to promote individual access to citizenship rights (civil/social/political rights) could help the process of migrants' voluntary participation as well as involving the migrants in the decision-making process (71.8%). Moreover, the organizations indicate economic subsidies for voluntary work (69.1%) and strengthening the regulatory role of local government (municipalities/regions, etc.) (66.7%) as important too. Instead only 46.3% indicate the opportunity to Make the voluntary work of asylum seekers compulsory until the definition of their legal status. In fact, this is a quite controversial issue in Italy. If one of the respondents stated:

«volunteering should be a compulsory activity for asylum seekers because of their “state of passivity”».

Some respondents have completely different opinions; one respondent in particular claims:

«It is wrong to talk about economic aid for voluntary or mandatory activities. They are oxymorons. - if there is obligation or compensation, we must talk about work! We are a republic founded on work. We can talk about internships, civil service. A mandatory civil service for asylum seekers waiting to find work could be a very interesting idea if done well, with adequate resources for the institution that receives for training / tutoring etc.».

The data collected through the survey confirms that there are various local groups that carry out voluntary activities with migrants. Working with migrants is a valuable resource; according to various respondents it provides: *opportunities, benefits, added value, cultural exchanges, cultural richness, and human benefits*. Another respondent stated:

«civic participation of migrants is an important step for integration: it is an opportunity and a resource for themselves and for the citizenship it welcomes».

Moreover, volunteering is considered as

«an excellent tool for social inclusion and dissemination of a culture of hospitality and solidarity».

Interestingly, in the open-ended questions some respondents mentioned the case in which some refugees hosted in reception services have become their collaborators over time, after being volunteers. Other respondents affirmed:

«For migrants, [volunteering] it is a way to integrate and to be known and be a cultural ambassador of their country of origin».



«[Volunteering is] an opportunity for easy integration, a possibility of socialization with the natives».

It is worth noticing that for someone voluntary activities «promote cohesion within the organization», and migrants' volunteering can represent an opportunity for the organization, as exemplified in the following answers:

«Voluntary collaborations with migrants constitute an added value for the institution, staff and other volunteers; their presence enhances linguistic and cultural exchange and constitutes an element of social innovation».

«It is certainly an advantage to have people in contact who facilitate contacts and facilitate the empathy that helps the accompanying process».

3.3 Volunteering for migrants

The organizations were asked to give information on the type of activities for migrants and how often these activities were carried out. The activities that are mostly carried out by the organizations, specifically at least every 2 weeks or at least once a month, are: literacy and language courses and handling of documents (accompanying services), in both cases 58.6% of the organizations chose these two activities, which are definitely activities that are extremely important for migrants' integration; 51.7% of the respondents provide information on the protection of rights of and campaigns on the promotion of rights, while 48.3% carry out activities that provide assistance and protection of vulnerable groups (minors, people at risk of trafficking, refugees and asylum seekers). Less than half of the respondents, but yet a very high percentage, provide legal and fiscal support (47.6%), assistance and orientation to self-employment and or subordinate employment (44.8%), and organize intercultural workshops, awareness-raising, entertainment and intercultural mediation (42.8%).

The organizations indicate as activities that are carried out rarely (about once a year) or are not carried out at all: Political and trade union activity (77.9%), Activities related to religious practice (72.4%), Management of family home for immigrant minors and/or of nursery (69.7%), Mother tongue courses (69.7%), Editorial activities and editorial collaboration with local press, radio and television, magazine and newspapers (65.5%), Sport (64.1%), Assistance for housing insertion (62.8%), Management of Reception facilities (53.8%), Training (short or non-recognized courses) (50.3%), Health care and health protection (48.3%) and Education and school support, support for the integration of minors (44.1%).

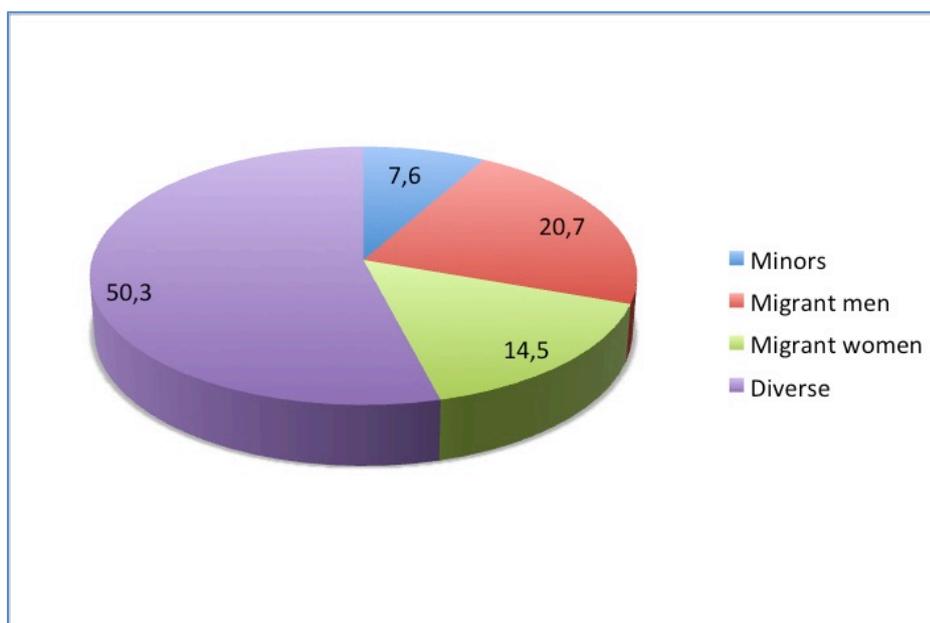
The organizations generally collaborate with other entities to carry out their actions (89%). In particular, more than half collaborate with local authorities or bodies (71%) and NGO/non-profit organizations (60.7%), immigrants' associations (56,6%) and local civil society organizations (51.1%), but some of the organizations also work together with religious organizations (40,7%) and with EU/international organizations (39.3%).



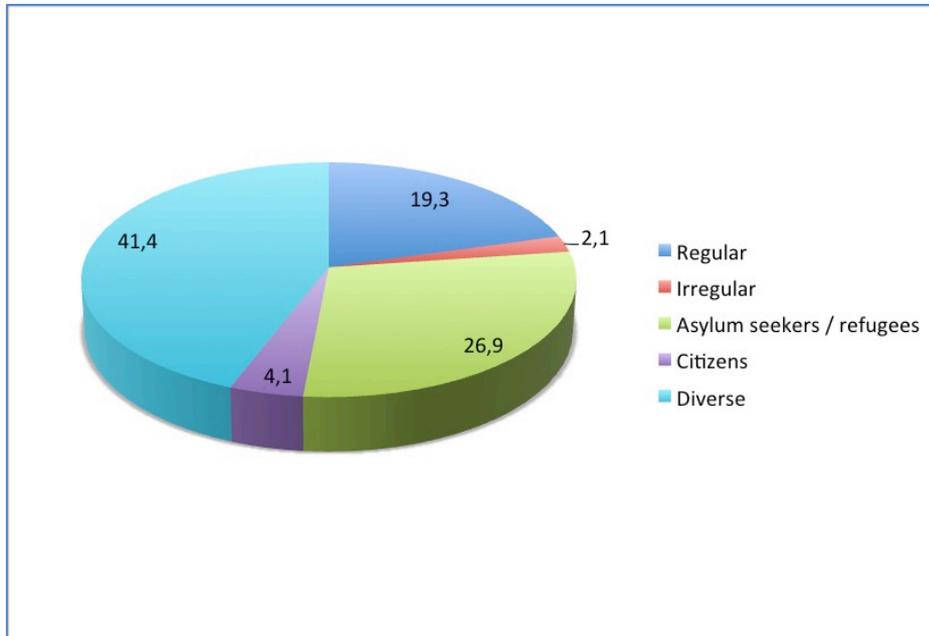
The profiles of the migrants who benefit from the organizations' voluntary activities are diversified (50.3%), in the sense that the organizations provide activities for men, women and minors. However, for some organizations there is a predominance of only men (20.7%), followed by women (14.5%) and just few mainly work with minors (7.6%) (see graph 9).

As for their legal status, recipients of voluntary activities are diversified (41.4%), but for some organizations they are mainly asylum seekers and refugees (26.9%), or regulars (19.3%) (graph 10).

Graph 9 - Predominant profile of the immigrant recipients of the voluntary activities



Graph 10 - Recurrent status of the immigrant recipients of voluntary activities



For the organizations evaluating the impact of the voluntary actions for the migrants, less isolation and increased social interrelationships awareness (69.4%), the knowledge of the local language (59.2%), a greater autonomy and self-activation relations (55.1%), are considered the main benefits arising for the migrant (69.4%).

Over 50% claimed that access to social services and opportunities in the local context and sense of belonging are considered important consequent benefits for migrants. Less considered but equally important are the acquisition of new professional skills (45.6%), valorization of previous professional skills (36.1%) and health condition (34%). Interestingly enough, the level of economic well-being (53.8%), housing condition (48,3%) and occupation level (45.6%) are considered aspects with low impact.

About the impact that voluntary actions for the benefit of migrants have on the local context of intervention, over 50% highlight a greater openness to migrants by both institutions (55.8%) and the receiving society (55.1%), and also an improvement of social and community services (40.1%). However, 41.5% underline how these actions have a limited impact on the reduction of reception costs recovery, so on expenses in general.

About the factors that limit the effectiveness of voluntary action for/with immigrants, in line with the other answers of the questionnaire, as a general tendency, 66.6% of the organizations indicate the scarcity of available economic resources as the most important ones, but public bodies' deresponsibility and lack of concern (54.4%) and institutional constraints, prohibitions and restrictions (51%) are quite relevant too. Discontinuity (49.7%) of the activities and the weak organization of social services (46.9%) are factors which are not considered less important. It is also worth noticing that some organizations think that the voluntary actions are not always effective because of

the hostility of public opinion (39.4%) and also because of low professional competences (31.9%).

According to a respondent, «there are no more volunteers as a result of work problems, job search, or the reimbursement of expenses, while for others, important factors are spaces, difficult or scarce economic resources».

One of the organizations believe that voluntary activities carried out by asylum seekers is important for their social insertion but, also, «to improve the collective imagination about them». However, in the case of their involvement in community work, the importance to collaborate with institutions avoiding their «ghetization or isolation» is highlighted as well as supporting «the participation of both local and migrant volunteers for achieving a common goal».

Among the comments inserted by the respondents, one aspect that has been highlighted is the importance of «getting visibility from mass media for initiatives carried out by foreign civil society in Italy at local, regional, national and international levels». The data collected in the survey also underlines the urgency of «creating and organizing information/training courses for managers of migrant associations as well as encouraging second-generation young people to take part in indigenous voluntary work or community associations».

In order to improve these voluntary actions for and with migrants, it is essential to think of «joint programs among foreigner associations, Italian associations with umbrellas (sponsorships and financial and technical contributions) and national and international institutions». It would be helpful «to implement training courses for Euro-designers and similar figures in the field of foreign associations».

However, it would be a good idea «to create twinning programs between associations of foreign immigrants in Italy and Italian migrants abroad, carrying out projects in Italy and in the countries of origin».

Another aspect that can be understood from the respondents' comments is the importance «to make economic contributions directly managed by immigrant organizations», and the need «to involve immigrant associations more heavily in the preparation of migration policies; in fact, according to a respondent, «volunteer migrants need to gain more autonomy and protagonism».

The results show that solidarity is considered a good thing, but «not everybody is able to do this as volunteers. It is necessary to train trainers to provide them with skills as volunteers».



4. Qualitative research at local level

4.1 Focus groups analysis

The focus group method allows to explore people's knowledge and experiences and to examine not only what people think, but how they think and why they think that way (Kitzinger, 1995). We set up four focus groups in different territorial areas the Calabrian region (In the South of Italy), where the presence of migrants has different characteristics and dynamics. We invited to participate various stakeholders, differently involved in relation to volunteering and migration issues: people from local administrations; migrants involved into different organizations; activists and volunteers with different background; migrant reception operators; cultural mediators; etc.

We designed an outline to conduct the focus group to get information from the participants and discussion among them, about the role of volunteering in the process of immigrants' integration, asking about: their involvement in volunteering and migrations, or the involvement of migrants in volunteer activities, opportunities and benefits, problems and constraints related to voluntary activities with/for migrants, the impact of migrants' volunteering in the community life, opinions on policies and institutional proposals.

Table 3 - Overview: Research Sample Focus Group Interviews

No.	Personal Code	Number of participants	Setting and participants	Characteristics of the participants
1	COR_RO	13	Corigliano (Cosenza province). 11 Italians, 1 Moroccan and 1 Russian	Volunteer of Italian Red Cross; manager of <i>Fondazione Migrantes</i> ; legal operator; teacher; volunteers of <i>Hospital Association</i> ; operators of <i>CIDIS</i> ; cultural mediators; CAS operator; Institutional official and activist
2	CO_ZA	7	Cosenza City. 6 Italians and 1 Brazilian	Institutional official; coordinator of service centre for volunteering; volunteers from the Association for Active Aging; political collective militant; volunteers from an association for migrants.
3	SA_DO	13	S. Ferdinando (Reggio Calabria province). 10 Italians and 3 Africans	Institutional official; volunteers from an association for migrants; political collective militants; trade unionists; volunteer of Caritas.
4	LA_ME	4	Lamezia Terme (Catanzaro province). 3 Italians and 1 Brazilian	2 SPRAR operators; the coordinator of a social cooperative; the local coordinator of the ANOLF - Associazione Nazionale Oltre le Frontiere (National Association Beyond the borders)



The table 4.1 shows the people involved in the four different focus groups and their specific membership. During all focus group meetings, people determined a fluid and participated reasoning, offering the opportunity to highlight attitudes, priorities, languages, and framework of understanding; it was important to distinguish individual opinions from the group consensus. Instead, interaction among participants permitted to catch the expression of criticism and dynamics of conflict in relation to different dimensions of volunteering and migration issues, and related into participants' role or membership. For every focus group, the different elements discussed are synthesized and analysed thereafter.

4.1.1 Focus group outlines

- Focus group 1

One focus group was organized in Corigliano, a city along the coastline on the Ionian Sea, where there were several landings of boats transporting migrants. Several refugees' reception projects have been set up in different towns of the area. In the surrounding Sibari Plain many migrant labourers, from Romania, Sub-Saharan or North Africa countries, work seasonally in the specialized agricultural production. Sometimes they live very precarious living and working conditions. The composition of the focus was particularly diversified, as among the participants there were: the coordinator of the Consultative Committee of the Ombudsman for Childhood and Adolescence of Region Calabria, and activist of the network *Lasciateci centrare*, an operator of a CAS involved in a partnership agreement with a municipal administration for voluntary activities by the beneficiaries of the reception service, a legal operator, some volunteers of the pastoral community, two foreign cultural mediators, a teacher promoting social inclusion projects in the schools, a volunteer of the Italian Red Cross and some volunteers operating in health structures.

The debate opened up discussing about the "gratuitousness" of the volunteer work and on its effectiveness. The discussion is polarized on two positions: some people told their negative experiences in terms of continuity, instead others narrated positive experiences, animated by a sense of closeness and solidarity. On one hand, there are those who complain of personal strong exhaustion and about neglect on the part of the institutions; on the other hand, some feel very satisfied with their voluntary initiatives and tell how they feel useful in a particular situation – for example, for voluntary activities during the landings of boats transporting migrants – what makes them feel good. It results that opinions are dissimilar in relation to different situation and moments of the reception path: on the emergency level volunteering seems to be very effective; on the level of the second and third reception, voluntary activities for integration seem to be less effective if they do not receive an economic and structured support.

The participants have different backgrounds: some of them had a history as volunteers in the Catholic community, others had experienced as legal practitioners, there were



people who had done voluntary practices in the field of different forms of disadvantage etc.; their motivations are different, but all of them showed a common feeling to involve themselves in social justice projects. Someone outlined the concept of “pure volunteering”, i.e. a free effort in small activities to support disadvantaged people; others told to offer help to some patients in hospitals (without having particular knowledge and skills, for example with respect to migration issues); certain others instead emphasized the need to have specific knowledge to intervene incisively and invoked the need of a network for the benefit of the integration activities.

Some people told positive experiences born spontaneously, in which local community and migrants were involved. In any case, the involvement of migrant and local people in common projects, is evaluated positively as expression of integration paths. However, there was much debate over the voluntary activities by the beneficiaries of a reception project following the agreement among a CAS (Centro di Accoglienza Straordinaria. Translation: “Extraordinary Reception Centre”), a municipality and the prefecture. The CAS operator told about initial strong confrontations with activists about the issue. But finally, it seems that acceptable compromises were found. Activists expressed a number of criticisms and reservations, especially about the use of ‘free work’ of migrants for community work activities. They suggested the opportunity of different specific projects of volunteering or initiatives according to the interests and skills, the cultural and professional background, the biographical profiles of migrants to involve. The collaborator of the Calabria Region observed:

«We must also work with a view to restoring dignity through volunteering. I cannot think to use a graduate in mathematical sciences, who comes from Bangladesh, to do humble jobs, instead of asking him to give afternoon courses in mathematics or to teach English in the library; there are people who speak many languages, they could open a tourism desk in the local Proloco office¹⁴. We are suggesting to give the right purpose and the possibility that one [migrant] can also find himself after his travel. And then there is the question of acceptance. Someone say: on the one hand volunteering is useful, so migrants are accepted; on the other hand, many emphasize: if you do more voluntary work in public administrations, you have more chances that the Territorial Commission can approve your request of asylum. Put in this way, volunteering has nothing to do with it. It is used as an instrument on the one hand to be accepted, on the other to hope that there is an assistant-prefect benevolent for the mere fact of going to clean the Bisignano or Corigliano [towns in the surrounding area, hosting reception projects] roads and take care of them. So, since we are in the initial stages on these things [of the voluntary activities by migrants] we must intensively reason.».

¹⁴ *Proloco* (from the Latin, literally “in favour of the place”) are local associations, born with the purpose of promotion and development of the territory.



Through their stories, people explored possible trajectories of integration supported by the volunteering and active participation of migrants. They told about positive experiences, in which there were also impacts on local communities in terms of recognition and therefore of virtuous paths of integration. According to many operators volunteering creates spaces for relationship with the local community, it can favour the trajectories of integration if it is articulated at a regional level.

In addition, the CAS operator underlined the positive effects of refugees' reception and integration projects on local community. She noticed:

«Integration must be considered twofold, needs must be intersected. We live in a poor context where we need to give jobs and I do not think it's right that hospitality is done on a voluntary way. The operators are all hired, according to the profession they perform. 12/14 people work into the CAS, with different professional figures. And this is the most beautiful thing because we give hospitality but we also give job opportunities, because the true integration, in my opinion, comes from this: human dignity comes from paid work»

Then, the operator emphasizes how the activities of the reception centre create job opportunities and therefore benefits to the local community.

Finally, one of the cultural mediators concluded with simple and very strong words:

«We need to enter people's minds to understand what they want from their life, what does that guy want when he comes to this country?».

That means: each intervention must be planned and programmed starting from the beneficiaries' needs and expectations.

Moving from participants' experiences into the field of volunteering, the problem of discontinuity strongly emerged; it was connected to the lack of a good organization. In terms of strategies, everyone agrees that greater networking of experiences is needed; networking would improve the effectiveness of the many projects dealing with migrants' integration, developed and carried out by the CAS, SPRAR and other associations throughout the local or regional territory. Finally, many criticisms emerged about the language and perspective of current politicians, according to the participants they trigger racial hatred.

- Focus group 2

We set up the second focus in a place of strong symbolic value: the Hospital(ity) School. The structure, built in April 2018, is located in front of the tent camp of San Ferdinando, in the province of Reggio Calabria. The tent camp was organized by the Ministry of Interior, on the basis of specific coordination initiatives arranged by the local prefecture, in order to host foreign farmworkers employed seasonally in the intensive agricultural production of the Plain di Gioia Tauro. The implementation was agreed in the



Operational Protocol signed on February 19 of 2017 among the prefecture, the Calabria Region, the Province of Reggio Calabria, the Italian Red Cross, the municipalities of San Ferdinando and Rosarno, the Diocesan Caritas of Oppido Mamertina and the non-governmental organizations Emergency and MEDU (Medici per i Diritti Umani). The objective of the prefecture was the gradual overcoming and dismantling of the old tent city in San Ferdinando, pending the adoption of integration initiatives of migrant workers. However, the structure can accommodate just 550 workers. The area is delimited and entry is allowed to regular immigrants via a recognition device. Close to the official tent camp, there is an informal camp hosting around 1500 African farm workers, and hundreds squat abandoned building in the surrounding areas. These people suffer very precarious living and working conditions, especially during the cold months of the oranges harvesting season, in the absence of minimum services, and with open-air latrines. Many of the migrants have temporary residence permits for humanitarian reasons or international protection, or are applicants who has been denied asylum, or were dismissed and have their visa expiring. In this context, many NGOs and individual volunteers operate to support African laborers.

The Hospital(ity) School was built by a crowdfunding campaign of the “Mamadou” collective and assembled by refugee volunteers in Bolzano; the collective was operating for several years in the main southern migrant’s camps, to offer literacy courses in Italian, but at the same times information about labour and social rights. The Hospital(ity) School has the function of health clinic, school and first legal point, with the support of several volunteers.

The focus group involved a voluntary giving Italian courses, some activists of a political association supporting migrants, trade unionists (Italians and foreigners) of the USB (Unione Sindacale di Base; Translation: Basic Trade Union), a council member of the municipality of San Ferdinando, a volunteer from Caritas and, finally, two representatives of a social cooperative involving foreign workers too in ethical agricultural production.

All the participants described the activities they perform as volunteers for the integration of migrants. The experiences are differentiated on the basis of the cultural background and the development in the form of first help and assistance on the one hand, and socio-economic integration promotion on the other hand. This depends on both the intervention phase and the context in which people operate.

Everyone expressed motivations strongly rooted in values such as social justice and human rights, despite of the different personal paths: someone declared to be politically engaged, with a radical vision and conflicting positions against the system; some others declined their social commitment in ethical agricultural projects associated to cultural and social initiatives; someone recalled the church and Christian values as reference for his voluntary action. Finally, all of them concretely commit themselves in volunteering to change the present situation.



There are not many migrants directly involved in voluntary activities. Only in the case of USB there are some guys from Sub-Saharan countries who are fighting for the defence of their labour and social rights at local level. In general, the participants underlined the importance of people's commitment to activity supporting migrants, in a context such as the local one. All participants declared the emergency situation in the area. The context prevents the realization of projects that can truly lead to the inclusion of migrants, the interventions are fragmented and ineffective. According to someone, volunteering can be an opportunity for the communities and certainly at this moment, where many do not know the activism and the commitment to help those in difficulty, people stresses the importance of finding the way through which all associations can collaborate together on the specific topic of migration. It is important to connect with the space of migrants, to know the places where they live and their communities. The knowledge about migrants and their specific problems is identified as the key for integration.

All the participants highlighted the emergency conditions in which they operate and the strong efforts they require. They emphasized their commitment to engage in activities to support migrants, but evaluated that volunteering alone is not enough, without a structural intervention. Some operators observed that volunteering sometimes becomes a weapon to maintain the status quo. One of the trade union' representative claimed:

«Voluntary associations are essential for emergencies. The risk is that over time volunteering becomes a sort of shock-absorber that operates to maintain the status quo. I have a lot of respect for those who work and spend time and energies [in volunteering], I have little respect for those who also exploit volunteering trying not to solve the problem because then it means protracting it and maintaining the status quo.»

The council member highlighted the importance of cooperation and of volunteering at local level, and the willpower as local administration to overcome the serious situation, to solve the housing question in the long term, but not hurting the local population, promoting the valorization of migrants' skills and work integration, and cultural exchange too.

There was much debate over the question of the right to housing. In many criticized the tent camp solution to face housing problems. Some participants told about the census of abandoned or not utilised buildings in the area of the plain of Gioia Tauro promoted by an informal committee, that so appraised the existence of many housing opportunities. One of the trade unionists said:

«Many migrants have been living here for many years, they speak perfectly Italian, they are in the city, they know very well the dialect, they come from territories where maybe they have degrees. They are workers, many have regular employment contracts. living in emergency situations, living in a ghetto: is absolutely not acceptable.»



One of the Africans engaged in the trade union continued saying:

«We also deal with housing question, we are trying to make people understand that the question of right to housing is not just by of Italian people, but also of migrants. But if there are free houses they can use them all, that is, the poor do not have skin colour, we cannot make a war among the poors. It would be essential to get out of these schemes; the volunteer can do it: he can drop taboos. We must create the connection between "us" and "them", otherwise in thirty years we will be here talking about the same things. It is just to organize meetings: to go to parishes, to public squares and to connect people. it's clear that an appointment is not enough, but if you build virtuous paths surely the fears fall. Fears fall and one can build a society that is perhaps a little more dignified, a better society. This is my hope.»

Everyone agrees to observe how important the involvement of migrants in specific activities can be. The question of mediation is at the core of the discussion.

The role of the volunteers as managers of the tent camp was instead criticized. Some migrants complained about some problems caused by the organization of the camp. The volunteers responsible for the camp management were described, by migrants, as executors of government lines, without the sense of solidarity and closeness referred to volunteering. Some of those present supported the testimony of the migrants, others tended to resize it. Anyway, people stated the importance of a constructive dialogue to overcome the difficulties and of small projects too – as the Hospital(ity) school is - in order to promote solidarity.

- Focus group 3

The location of the third focus group was the *Cittadella del Volontariato* (Volunteering City) in Cosenza, a place of recent reconstruction, available to volunteer organizations. Cosenza is a city where experiences in the no profit sector have a long course. With different cultural backgrounds, many people engage in voluntary activities. The focus group involved an institutional representative of the City Council; a coordinator of the service centre for volunteering; volunteers from the Association for Active Aging; an activist of a political collective engaged in local mobilization for the right to housing and supporting occupations of houses by migrants too; volunteers from an association for migrants and, finally, a volunteer and cultural mediator from Brazil.

Several participants emphasized the importance of the activities of no profit organizations for migrants' integration. The issue of needs is discussed and representative of organizations told about their intervention focusing on specific problems. Volunteering, in all its forms, is interpreted as an answer to a problem. Where the problem is related to the absence of an overall political vision by institutions considering individual needs, no profit organizations work to fill the policy vacuum. According to the participants, the gaps concern the absence of a policy to protect the



right to housing, the right to health, the protection of minors, assistance to the elderly, concrete responses to social vulnerabilities.

Some of the participants had a history of volunteering related to the Catholic community, others had experienced as militant in political spaces, certain others had experience as volunteers addressing different forms of social disadvantage. In the light of their different backgrounds, participants expressed different motivations and perspectives, that result in different approaches. For example, those who declared their participation in political movements expressed more radical positions; others have defined their commitment closely linked to the desire to change the present, for a more equitable and harmonious future, having a less conflictual and more practical position.

In some organizations there are active migrants who contribute to the initiatives – i.e. in the case of political collectives and in one of the organizations supporting foreigners. One activist told about the involvement of several migrants in projects that have developed effective integration trajectories. According to him and other participants, foreign people involved in organizations are more connected to the urban social fabric, as their involvement in different projects or activities – cultural, assistance, support or celebration - produces more relationships and therefore more opportunities for integration.

Social relationships are definitely considered as the key for the participation of migrants. Social relationships open up new path of integration. As stated by a participant from Brazil, in Cosenza for over ten years, who told how collaborations in different associations helped her to create a network into the city. She said:

«I started studying Italian at MOCI and Stella Cometa [local NGOs]. For me they are meeting places: they are places where I cried quietly, knowing that someone would hug me with true feeling.»

She also told her experience as a volunteer underlining the stereotype she suffered. People had troubles imagining that she was a volunteer, seeing her immediately offered their help to her:

«Being voluntary is fun: every time I tried to get closer, I remember asking me "do you need something?". As if I were the only one who needed it. There is this idea that the migrant "He always needs something", it is a dominant idea. They asked me: "do we make a food bank?". In my opinion this is a rather frozen image, everyone thinks that the migrant is hungry. There are many other ways to collaborate; during my journey I managed to prove it. I always had to repeat "No, I do not need a food bank, I'm here because I work with children and if you need my help, I'm there".»

Another experience reported returned a positive image of the activism of migrants, it is the case of PrendoCasa: "I take home" is the possible translation for the Italian name of

the political collective working in the city for the right to housing and representing collectively the needs of both locals and migrants. A member of the collective told:

«I like to emphasize on the awareness process that the migrant has within our paths and that he is acquiring more and more over the years. The migrant it is not the subject of our decisions, he does not suffer our decisions, all the decisions, not only management and organizational one, but also the policy of the Prendocasa committee, are taken in an assembly way. »

In this case too there was more discussion on volunteering by migrants; criticisms raised against the representative of the local administration because of the proposals for voluntary activities addressed by the city councillor to migrants, as gardening works in the green areas of the city. Many people consider these as degrading works and not as real tools for integration.

According to the participants in order to develop policies for integration it is necessary to move from a good analysis of the starting conditions, that is from the individual experiences and skills. Volunteering responds to some needs and from these needs programming should be developed. As a volunteer of trade union stated:

«[...]volunteering makes sense if it has as its goal something to be achieved that is the transformation of the current reality into which we operate.»

According to participants, to improve migrants' conditions is necessary to build an equal environment, for citizens as well as for beneficiaries, as the Brazilian suggested.

All the participants shared the idea that, in order to improve the policies for integration and the effectiveness of voluntary, it would be necessary to deal with the skills (formal and informal) of the migrants. Politics should focus more on the valorization and improvement of personal skills. Then, the centrality of a collective commitment was underlined. That is, men and women of any nationality can contribute to voluntary action that foster integration through an active and bottom-up participation. Many argued that for a long time the question of migrant people had been seen merely as a problem of public order, but volunteering can help to change this vision: foreigners arriving or deciding to stay want to feel part of the community, want to feel like active members. So, they are interested in building true paths of equal social inclusion. Anyway, participants also underlined how work precariousness is an obstacle to participation and to use the own time in free activities.

- Focus group 4

The focus group was set up in the ANOLF (Associazione Nazionale Oltre i Confini - National Association Beyond the Boundaries) headquarters in Lamezia Terme (in the province of Catanzaro). The participants were: 2 SPRAR operators; the coordinator of a social cooperative; and a coordinator of ANOLF from Brazil.



According to the participants, volunteering is useful if it has a future vision and not a charitable approach. In this way, volunteering becomes an instrument, it is like a bridge to activate mechanisms of connection with the outside world, outside of the reception and integration context. However, the participants' approaches divided between a charitable vocation and a political inspiration, according to their own social and cultural background.

Migrants are present in almost all the participants' organizations; they are involved as mediators and at the same operate as volunteers in some initiatives. In the case of ANOLF, that is promoted by the CISL trade union as a non-profit and not collateral to any training or political movement, migrants are pure volunteers; by statute, each territorial headquarter of ANOLF must be chaired by a person of foreign origin, so all participants in the activities are voluntary and free.

The participants pointed out some main issues. The first is work: the centrality of employment is affirmed as a condition sine qua non for the engagement in voluntary activities. Secondly, the group claims that as operators and volunteers they feel the instrumental use of the question of migration in the political debate; they think that an emergency approach does not help to develop practices of social inclusion; finally, they suggest that European policies should be geared to all the weakest sections of the population, without drawing a distinction based on citizenship.

The lack of work opportunities is considered as an obstacle to volunteering with migrants

«It is not easy to understand that volunteering can facilitate integration, because those arriving from situations of extreme discomfort often interprets everything [i.e. volunteering] as an exploitation! [...] All their needs are survival needs outside the centre, then they must survive; so, they are a lot oriented, perhaps exclusively oriented, to profitable activities but it is understandable, it is normal.» (Sprar coordinator)

«Because priority is given [by migrants] to the perspective of earning money early, to a certain gain. I mean, the desire to invest time before being able to obtain something can be understood but it is limited.» (Sprar Operator)

«They [the migrants] have a great responsibility and therefore they rightly need to make money. it's a matter of necessity, they need, it's not that they do not want to volunteer.» (ANOLF coordinator)

During discussion, participants also stressed the question of the involvement of migrants within the local community; some argued that volunteering helped in the processes of inclusion:

«In Carlopoli [the town where a SPRAR project operates], we were able to propose a volunteer activity to a beneficiary hosted in the reception centre,



because a disabled person in the village needed help to get out of bed in the morning and go to bed in the evening. The guy agreed to do this voluntary activity, he did it for a month or two and this has opened the doors of the world to him, because it happened that everyone knew that guy! [...] So much so that he managed to stay there, because then through this man [to whom he offered his help], he met another one who offered him a job opportunity. Through this voluntary activity a real possibility has emerged for him to stay in that village. Because then, one person gave him a bicycle, another offered him a free house, etc. In short the community has opened up. Because they knew him.» (Sprar Operator)

Moving from this tale, the participants debated about the kind of volunteering activities in which migrants can be involved and on the concrete possibilities to create social networks that can support integration.

Anyway, some problems hinder the success of reception projects, especially for their integration perspectives. One of these is the time. It was emphasized how time is the enemy of integration. The reception system projects have a very limited duration, but they need longer times. Because relationships are built over time.

4.1.2 Final remarks

Different kinds of roles into the field of volunteering for and with migrants design distinctive perspectives on integration' paths.

From focus groups analysis there are two distinct common visions of the migration scenario and of the voluntary practices: a charitable approach and a militant or more politicized approach.

The two different perspectives influence the practices and therefore the results of the projects aimed at integration. The charitable approach can be effective in an emergency phase, but it is unsuccessful when trying to offer a second and third reception. On the other hand, a more politicized intervention has opened up new paths for developing integration opportunities.

The diversity of approaches is also affirmed in relation to the different contexts and to the specific problems and conditions highlighted: the emergency context concerning landings of boats transporting migrants; the dynamics of labour exploitation; the housing discomfort; the reception system and the confrontation with local communities.

Volunteering with migrants opens up many new relationships, but it must be reasoned: it is important to consider the specific skills and needs or expectations of the subjects involved.

Moreover, through the testimonies of the stakeholders involved, the following issues emerges in relation to volunteering: the need to work connecting in a network; the need to consider and strengthen individual skills and personal background; the lack of a



systemic organization among the services for volunteering and the fragmented nature of voluntary interventions; in some the uncritical connection of voluntary activities to institutions.

The voluntary work of migrants seems to be feasible where they are able to enhance individual skills and attitudes, activating opportunities of exchange with the local community.

The issue of job insecurity is often evoked and considered as a problem and an obstacle to voluntary commitment, both for migrants and for local actors.

Finally, institutions must be careful not to degrade migrants. They are criticized by organizations, which stimulate a different vision of the voluntary work of migrants aimed at a fairer valorization of skills and collaboration with local communities.



4.2 Integration across volunteering by interviews

Interviews were conducted with various stakeholder involved in volunteering with and for migrants or operating in relation to migration issues in different areas of Calabria Region. We report the results focusing on the main issues emerged through a comparative analysis. We collected 20 (see Tab. 4.2.1). Interviews investigated the activities and the composition of the organizations the actors belong to or the characteristic of informal voluntary action and participation, subjective motivations, opinions about the impact of voluntary activities on local communities, on migrations and voluntary policies.

Table 4 - Overview: Research Sample Individual Interviews

No.	Personal Code	Gender	Background/ Characteristics	Field of engagement in volunteering
1	AB_HE	M	Moroccan, lives in Italy since 1995.	Volunteer in Islamic Centre of the city and trade unionist.
2	AP_NA	M	Italian.	Institutional official.
3	AS_NC	M	Italian.	Italian Red Cross volunteer.
4	FLG_ROI	M	Italian.	Institutional official.
5	GM_IA	M	Italian.	SPRAR coordinator.
6	ID_BI	M	Senegalese, lives in Italy since 2007.	Teacher and volunteer/president of an association of migrants and cultural mediator.
7	LV_AA	F	Italian.	SPRAR operator and volunteer
8	MG_AA	F	Italian.	Board Member of social cooperative
9	MDC_AEE	M	Italian.	Volunteer collaborating with an organization
10	MB_EU	F	Filipina, lives in Italy since 1992.	Member of a migrants' association.

11	PF_IA	M	Italian.	Responsible of a pastoral organization
12	RB_OR	F	Italian.	Pensioner, volunteer.
13	RZ_OU	M	Italian.	SPRAR Coordinator.
14	GC_IA	F	Italian.	SPRAR operator.
15	KE_HL	M	Sudanese, lives in Italy since 1990.	Cultural mediator and volunteer in various associations.
16	GM_IA	M	Italian	Assistant professor
17	SM_IU	M	Italian	Student, Activist
18	GM_IA	M	Italian	delegate of the president of the region to immigration and reception
19	LM_UA	M	Italian	Volunteer collaborating with an organization
20	HU_HU	M	Togolese, lives in Italy from 2008	volunteer and cultural mediator

OTHER BRIEF TESTIMONIES

No.	Personal Code	Gender	Background/ Characteristics	Field of engagement in volunteering
21	IV_NO	F; F; M	United States Citizens involved for a few months in an international volunteering project in southern Italy.	Young volunteer students involved in the activity of a SPRAR
22	AT_NR	M	Italian.	Institutional official.
23	AB_LA	F	Italian.	SPRAR operator.
24	CF_AO	F	Italian	SPRAR operator.



25	AB_U	M	Senegalese, lives in Italy from 1 year and 6 months.	SPRAR Volunteer.
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4.2.1 Volunteering activities and organisation

Interviews are addressed to operators or coordinators working into second reception projects (SPRAR) mostly managed by no profit organizations in partnership with local administrations. They receive compensation for their activities. However, sometimes they carry out and promote voluntary activities (without a remuneration) and participate into activities of social promotion. The projects described mostly concern asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors, men aged between 16 and 25 years. Voluntary activities concern the first and second reception of migrants, often in a context of emergency. The activities focus on: legal support, health issues, social integration (i.e. Italian courses), help for home and work insertion.

Other voluntary organizations develop activities not specifically for refugees, but in general for foreign people in difficulty. This is the case, for example, of the Red Cross in Cosenza that, in addition to assistance during the landings, operates other services to support vulnerable people.

There is a constellation of active groups promoting initiatives for and with migrants: informal groups, associations or intercultural centres. The initiatives support basic needs: housing, work, bureaucratic practices, circulation of information, material aid. Instead, some social centres carry out initiatives to encourage integration processes through cultural events or mobilize for the access to housing.

The interviews addressed to the migrants fairly return homogeneous stories. Presently or in the past they have worked as cultural mediators in several reception projects, in prefectures, in unions and in the schools, often with a remuneration, with the task of following the inclusion of foreigners in the local social context. But they participate also in local social organizations and community associations. Initiatives also concern the protection and promotion of the culture of origin through festival, celebrations of political and religious recurrences, and foreign language courses to protect their mother language, but dealing with human rights and migration issue too. On the territory of Cosenza, for example, ASECO (Associazione Senegalesi di Cosenza) is an association of migrants from Senegal that organizes several initiatives for the promotion of the national culture, often with the support of local institutions. Furthermore, Islamic centres, scattered throughout the territory, ensure the organization of religious paces and activities, accompanying the “spiritual journey” of the various Muslim communities.

4.2.2 Subjective motives and experiences

People involved in voluntary activities have a history of social commitment; they have experience in different environments of solidarity, some in church groups, others in political and union circles. Almost all say they are motivated by a sense of community,



solidarity and civil liability. Many of them declare to suffer waves of frustration, related to the sense of impotence that they experience in front of the complexity of migration issues. In addition, they are inevitably overwhelmed by strong empathy towards the beneficiaries of their actions and, moreover, they tend to alternate extremely proactive moments with others characterized by immobility – feeling overwhelmed by the magnitude of problems that often leads people away from activities. However, the same emotional fragility described by everyone becomes an element of strength: they tell of how, through the humanity of some experiences, they learn to relativize the difficulties of daily life and build an armour that allows them to be more incisive in their work. Finally, everyone describes themselves as happy people: they are happy in their daily lives thanks also to the commitment they make in favour of others. Their commitment as volunteers helps them overcome adversity, they have learned to celebrate the small results and gather the energy to move forward.

« A volunteer is a person who responds to something he feels inside, a vocation. He feels the need to help others, without thinking of compensation or recognition. He feels it since he was a child, he listens to the spirit that teaches him to be in solidarity and to help others.» KE_HL

Migrant people who have experience in the field of volunteering explain that they have decided to commit themselves only after having succeeded in getting a job and a home. Being emancipated from the worries of daily life allowed them to reserve time to be spent in free activities. One interviewed said: «overcome the difficulties you can recover serenity, only at that moment the same serenity can be restored.» (KE_HL). When they managed to solve the precariousness of their existence, the foreigners interviewed decided to approach those migrants who have experienced the same problems, because their experience has taught them how important it is to help people and build social networks.

Analysing the experiences told in the interviews, the aptitudes and different approaches of volunteers could be described through the following typology of volunteering:

Charity volunteering: in this type we recognize all those people who decide to engage in emergency conditions and who are committed to a spirit of solidarity and help. In this case people do not exercise a structured critical thinking of the present, but are directly involved in helping to deal with contingent problems. The use of a specific vocabulary recalls a specific sphere of emotionality and the spirit of sacrifice, often of a Charity vocation (i.e. volunteers often use words like help, sacrifice, charity, poverty, marginality, degradation). In fact, many of these volunteers are part of organizations linked to the Catholic Church. However, the charitable and helpful approach seems to be questioned. There are those who distance themselves and declare that they want to subvert the paradigm by proposing a new reading of the existing one:

«These projects respond to the need, for a desire, to work not as a service, but as animators of a community that is attentive to these presences, to the



communities of migrants. On the one hand the so-called sedentary, those who have been here for years now as foreign - foreign is a word that I never use; the second project is more linked to an idea of response to this latest coming world of asylum seekers and protection. The other initiative is what we call Conviviality of differences, a historical expression of Don Tonino Bello, of the school of Molfetta, a man who had a passion for the weakest; we are doing initiatives in the parishes where for example we asked a Syrian family to tell their experiences before and after the war, with images, stories, tastes - they cooked. Very simple things that help people get out of this representation of fear of invasion. In the logic of building relationships. The big work we are doing is to concentrate on the encounter and the knowledge that then cause the relationship and the proximity to arise.» PF_IA

Sometime they define this kind of volunteering as pure. The definition is related to people who absolutely free decide to offer their own time for the benefit of the community. So, they are not part of any funded project, they have lifetimes parallel to the issues they are dealing with as volunteers; often it does not have a strongly politicized cultural background, it adjusts its offer of time in relation to already started projects. Many of them are retired men and women, or solidly occupied and wealthy people.

«Being a volunteer means spending oneself on others, physically. There may be: active and passive volunteering. The active one is a volunteer who spends his time for others. Really time is spent, because you subtract it from your life, your family. Then there is the passive volunteer who only gives an economic contribution, but which allows the association to work, to have the tools and the means; you wash your conscience with your contribution but do not decide to spend your time on others. [...] Spending this time makes me happy. This is the engine of volunteering.» AS_NC

Service volunteering. This definition is used to recall all those people who engage in activities within the migrant reception system. Here we find all the operators of CAS, SPRAR, local institutions and cultural mediators. Many of them start to engage as volunteers and turn into professional operators and receive salary. The drive seems to be, in a first phase, similar to the charity approach, but then turns in a long-term vision, it questions the possibilities of the future.

«The idea of creating a SPRAR and working on it came from a deep sense of frustration that I saw around me. Of course, people talk about it a lot and I too have seen a lot of these experiences, but when you live it from the inside, you feel a strong motivation to act and change things right in our territory. You want to offer an alternative with this type of reception.» LV_AA

Militant or politicized volunteering. It identifies a strictly political dimension, of criticism of the existent and of analysis of the causes of the structural order. The commitment



becomes militant and the practices are less institutional; at the base of the participation on the theme of migration, there is a political drive. The purpose of the initiatives - in the words of the interviewees - is to establish a fairer and more equal society. In this sphere there are several social struggles that concern human and social rights. These volunteers promote political and cultural laboratories of social inclusion, different for the promotion of integration.

«I think I have the desire to get involved, and try to bring others together, building something. I have always followed all the political dynamics with great passion and this leads you to approach certain issues at this time.»
MDC_AEE

4.2.3 Impact of voluntary activities

As previously mentioned, many of the testimonies collected tell about the reception system for asylum seekers. Some of the activities of the SPRARs seem to be positively characterized with respect to the impact on the local territories. For example, some operators of a SPRAR told us about some voluntary activities that they decided to promote together with migrants. These were so-called "ecological days" in which locals and foreigners, young men and women, cleaned the city together. In this way, according to the SPRAR operators, there has been a great enthusiasm and a subsequent positive curiosity from the local community:

«we have to invent strategies so that people do not talk about an indistinct mixture of migrants, as if they were unique entities. Try to make them known in their characters, their inclinations, their attitudes. This is why we think that some activities can be useful for this purpose. [...] Volunteering must open up to migrant, must not become an instrument of coercion or symbol of the will of someone else, because sometimes I have this impression. Then it becomes a form of veiled exploitation. On the other hand, if it is a shared choice, it allows to be known for what it is, beyond the single activity (which can be repainting the railing, cleaning the streets of the centre or rebuilding the village of UNICEF as it has been done recently). Let them show themselves. Beyond the work they are called to do, it becomes a form of communication. So, they feel they are useful, not in a form of gratitude, the activity makes a place a home away from home. The action must be finalized for this purpose. Our activities are always proposed and never imposed. And we have to work together.» AB_LA

The operator emphasized the importance of the motivations, to be promoted together with the activities. She underlined the need to create new scenarios in which to explain migration. According to her, the organization of meetings can help to improve the inclusion trajectories of foreign minors in the host communities.



About migrants' associations, many interviewees explained how the various events and festival can be useful for integration purposes. From their point of view, it is very important to promote opportunities in which to exchange experiences; through the knowledge and exchange of narratives, new relationships can be created that open up new possibilities for collaboration and social cooperation. It is the case of the association of Senegalese migrants in Cosenza, ASECO: its members often organize events of cultural promotion. In those occasions, according to its president, opportunities for knowledge and cultural exchange are created to help create new bridges to promote the African culture and give the possibility to help other structures – from ASECO come cultural mediators and interpreters as volunteers that help many structures of reception. This exchange has often created the conditions for initiating new paid jobs.

In general, the comparative analysis of the different experiences highlights the importance of forms of collaboration and networking. Meetings, working together, creating moments of exchange definitely strengthen integration paths.

- Agreements among Municipalities, CAS and Prefectures: Mendicino and Bisignano

Those of Mendicino and Bisignano are examples of agreements among prefectures, CAS and municipalities in order to promote voluntary activities involving the beneficiaries in the reception centre. Some differences in the approach and impact at local level can be outlined between the two cases. In both cases, street cleaning and gardening activities were promoted, but with a different vision, according to the two mayors. Both projects are intended to promote integration, but following two different paths: the local administration decided to promote activities with the intention of involving the local community and then asked local ecological operators to work together with the migrants hosted in the CAS; the mayor evoked the sense of “mutual aid” for the wellbeing of the community. According to the mayor, the locals reacted very well, participate enthusiastically and seem to be slowly removing the negative feelings about migrants. The project continues to find the support of both parties involved – migrants and local people. Instead, the second administration promoted the initiative with a different emphasis; the message launched to the local community contained the concept of gratitude. That is, the volunteer activity is to demonstrate the gratitude of the migrants to the local community for reception. Moreover, a direct involvement of the local community was lacking. Consequently, no collaboration was created in the perspective of promoting integration. The project ran aground and no migrant has ever joined it. In both cases there was no planning from below, none of the promoters questioned about the abilities and attitudes of participants. It was assumed that the only possible activities for migrants were the maintenance and cleaning of the city. However, if during the planning, the direct involvement of the participants is missing, it is difficult to understand why they should engage in a free activity.



In conclusion, as previously mentioned, three main issues emerged from interviews: the involvement of local community; participatory planning; free work.

- The Hospital(ity) School

Hospital(ity) School is a project promoted by Collettivo Mamadou. The Collective takes shape following an investigation begun in February 2016 concerning the labour exploitation and living conditions of African agricultural labourers in southern Italy. It promotes projects to support the struggle undertaken by migrant labourers for their social and labour redemption. It organizes structured courses of first literacy within the main ghettos of southern Italy to create emancipation and defence of their rights and their dignity. The collective has launched a crowdfunding campaign, collecting € 6,195.00 to finance the construction of an eco-sustainable wooden structure, located in front of the tent city of San Ferdinando. The structure was built in collaboration with a group of asylum seekers volunteers, it has three functions: it is a medical point managed by a series of volunteer doctors; it is a school with courses organized by SOS Rosarno, the Collettivo Mamadou and other volunteers; and, finally, it is a legal point run by lawyers and trade unions operating in the Piana di Gioia Tauro.

Hospital(ity) School is a multidimensional example of voluntary work: the project involved migrants in its realization, it carries out a series of services where different local actors converge and commit themselves and are characterized as a small engine of social aggregation.

- The case of Camini SPRAR project

The experience of Camini is considered as a best practice. It is an 800 inhabitants village in the Locri area, which through a SPRAR project hosting 80 people from Syria and Africa has experienced a good impact on the local community. The SPRAR, coordinate by the cooperative Eurocoop has attempted to strengthen the actions to support the work integration of refugees, including through training internships, as well as providing access to public health care of refugees. The social integration promoted in Camini allowed the refugees to work and produce, they take care of the houses abandoned by the inhabitants, repopulate the classrooms of the schools and the streets of a country that was disappearing.

In Camini foreign volunteers arrive through "Project Abroad". It is an international organization that works to guarantee volunteer experiences and internships abroad. Headquartered in England with offices and projects in over 50 countries around the world. In 2017 Project Abroad and Eurocoop " signed a partnership agreement. Students, recent graduates, young professionals meet in Camini, arriving from different places in Europe, Africa and America, for a humanitarian and study experience collaborating in the reception and integration system for refugees and asylum seekers. To date, Camini is the only Italian place to volunteer through Projects Abroad. Volunteers, refugees and the local population find themselves interacting in various



activities of social engagement and in general useful for the purposes of integration: baby parking, work in gardens and gardens, accommodation of abandoned houses that are intended for host families, English courses for adults and children, football school, creative workshops for the realization of handicraft works with salt paste, wool, and recycled materials. But also, meetings on health and prevention, organized by qualified volunteers in the medical sector.

Three volunteers, one from Ireland and two from United States of America, arrived in the Calabrian village to stay three months; while working in the baby parking, they told to be very satisfied and enthusiastic about the experience. They selected Camini' SPRAR project among different destinations, because they were interested to know more about refugees' question. They are aware of taking away with them the meaning of those who live in the refugee status and the importance of cultural exchange for understanding the issue of migration. They recognized international volunteering as a useful tool for the re-appropriation of a concrete vision of reality and strong personal growth.

- The experience of "Fiera inMensa"

In the city of Cosenza there is a historic local fair dedicated to S. Giuseppe, that takes place every year in the second half of March. Since the end of the nineties, the presence of migrant street vendors, of different nationalities, has grown. They live for several days in very difficult conditions, with the need of a place where to sleep they and basic services, as food and toilets. Fiera InMensa (a play on words that stays for an immense canteen service) founded in 2001 on the initiative of some associations of the city, the Catholic Action, the Community of St. Egidio and the Kasbah, is a reception service offering to foreign vendors hot meals in the evening and health care. Over time other associations, also involving migrants, joined the initiative offering solidarity and hospitality. Fiera InMensa has become – according to the description of the promoters – a village of solidarity involving about 1,000 volunteers from the city of Cosenza and the hinterland for about 7 days: people who serve in the canteen, a shuttle service, a dormitory area, reception and entertainment, and offer an internet service; families cooking at home; doctors who provide medical assistance; volunteers from the committee associations that organize the logistics and cultural events. In 2018 a widespread hospitality service involved local families that welcomed some foreigners in their homes.

- The Case of PrendoCasa (Cosenza)¹⁵

Occupation of houses have been organized in Cosenza by the PrendoCasa Committee since 2010. These experiences involving together people of different nationalities have

¹⁵ Cf. M. D'Agostino, 2018, Resistenze meticce nello spazio urbano. L'esperienza dei rifugiati nel comitato 'Prenodocasa' di Cosenza, in: de Salvo P., Pochini A. (ed.), La città in trasformazione. Flussi, ritmi urbani e politiche, Aracne, Roma.

had a great impact on the housing policies of the local administration. They have managed to break the mechanisms of exclusion and intolerance. They have resulted in innovative experiments of intercultural living, able to offer a roof to many Italians and foreigners with a regular residence permit. The social and mutual help among inspires the activities of people involved in the occupations.

"Prendocasa" works for responding to the housing problems by the denunciation of building speculation and the occupation of buildings left empty or underused by the institutions. The activists of "Prendocasa" manage an Help Desk to which people of all nationalities can apply to ask for support. In addressing housing problems, activists request an exchange of views with public institutions, to which in particular are suggested housing formulas designed to redirect traditional tools to combat the home emergency towards more innovative and sustainable models.

The migrants who participate in the "Prendocasa" committee say how this initiative has only responded to the urgency of sheltering under a roof.

The motivations that have led applicants and international protection holders active in the "Prendocasa" committee to participate to this conflictual project are different. The occupations and other experiences that have been added are, in fact, constantly crossed by applicants and beneficiaries of international protection who complain of previous bad-reception situations and who, on the one hand, claim the right to housing and, on the other, fight for the recognition of their rights and for the dignity and respect of the host country.

From the continuous comparison that the residents / occupants make in relation to the formal reception channels from which they voluntarily exit or when their projects expire, important elements emerge, which actually lead to a glimpse into the take-over system invented by the "Prendocasa" committee. This system is able to respond to multiple needs: the need for housing, the need for a family, to free their time from work to dedicate it to themselves and their children, the need for legal and psychological protection, of orientation to the services of the territory, of a better city. In fact, the people united by this experience are prompted not only to self-activate but also to interact with each other and with the surrounding environment, using primarily the Italian language. This is because the rooms are assigned at random, regardless of nationality, and so different cultures come into contact living new experiences, mixing their habits and beliefs.

Furthermore, the generative action of Prendocasa experience has triggered a significant exchange with local institutions, influencing policy making and planning.

After several occupations of houses in the city, new regulatory scenarios have emerged recognizing the strategies and the guidelines suggested by them. It has been decided to provide a legal framework for housing practices.. If in the Cosenza experience, social action and public policies are still proceeding in parallel, as evidenced by some threats



of eviction, sometimes they meet and contaminate each other so much that they have already brought out new models of legality and participatory planning based on requisition, self-recovery and self-management of old disused buildings, intended for Italians and foreigners.

4.2.4 General opinions and policies' evaluation

The general opinion on migration policies and regulatory measures in the field of solidarity work can be greatly influenced by today hostile political debate. The interviewed people, differently involved in the reception system for migrants, feel the need of a counter-narration to the dominant representation of migration. They recognize a reality falsified by the media on the issue of migration, many of them report recurring expressions in newspapers and television and social networks, that testify to the aggressiveness of words; they who work in migrant reception services try to tell a reality different from that told by the press.

Almost all the interviewees are critical regarding the agreements between Municipalities / prefectures / CAS promoting voluntary work by refugees and asylum seekers, as one of them clearly states:

«We should create professional integration paths that look at people's skills [...] a path that must be non-charitable, but which leads to a different vision of a future, compared to 'I keep you locked in a reception centre and I ask you to clean the banks of the river!» MDC_AEE

The sense of this affirmation criticizes the idea of volunteering imposed as a form of compulsory reciprocity. Instead, he hopes for different paths in which a meeting can take place between the parties where mutuality is felt and not imposed.

4.2.5 Final remarks

Some elements can be outlined:

- volunteering promoted by migrants is obstructed by material difficulties. The precariousness of existence limits participation in volunteer projects;
- being part of a volunteer project helps to build new relationships that are also useful in the construction of new bridges that open the possibility of access to work;
- the promotion of direct involvement of refugees in voluntary activities can have a sense but it requires extreme attention. The proposed activities should respond to individual aptitudes and interests and be characterized in such a way as to motivate participation.

Finally, it seems important to consider the individual skills and cultural backgrounds of the beneficiaries to involve in voluntary activities. In this way, it will be possible to define balanced paths that respond to both concrete local needs and individual expectations.





CONCLUSIONS

The social commitment of migrants and for them is considered a very lively space for social mobilization (Ambrosini and Van Der Leun, 2015). However, some mechanisms have at the same time undermined its effectiveness, depoliticizing Italian associations on the one hand and undermining the role of migrants' associations which confront with difficulty with institutions on the other hand (Mantovan, 2013).

In the last years, and especially since migration crisis has broke out, institutions and organizations have experimented forms of solidarity, responsibility and political awareness, more open to, or even promoting migrants' participation. Forms of innovation have a received a valuable contribution by voluntary action too. In some fragile and marginal areas, for example, alternative and sometimes mixed models of solidarity action which include actions carried out on a voluntary basis, valorise local informal resources to build new places for exchange and encounter, as well as new life and work opportunities have been noticed (Membretti et al. 2017). But even in urban areas, innovative experiences of "informal reception" and "struggle" involve social movements, anti-racists, voluntary and no profit, local communities and even individual citizens facing the challenge of integration (D'Agostino 2017b; Galdini 2017; Marchetti et al 2018; Cannavò 2018). These variety of practices and experiences can express a strong potential for innovation but difficult structural problems remain on a background made of policies of citizenship poor in opportunities and of governance models making particularly difficult to involve immigrants' associations. Even in the most recent experiences that implement the new law on the voluntary service of asylum seekers, topical approaches continue to prevail and rarely give rise to real progress in the socialization and professionalization of beneficiaries. The participation of migrants in volunteering, if adequately supported and valued, could instead revitalize its traditional attitude towards innovation and empowerment (Biorcio and Vitale 2016) and positively impact on local communities. The challenge is to imagine and promote forms of volunteering more structured, reconsidering its political capacity in terms of advocacy and participation to the political governance.

From the primary research carried out, interesting elements come out, that seem to confirm some features of the framework traced out by the literature analysis about volunteering among migrations in Italy. In total, 145 organizations throughout Italy completed the on-line questionnaire (in May-June 2018). Most of the respondents belong to formally registered organizations, mainly non-profit or immigrants' associations (representing about 25 different nationalities), and cultural associations. As for intervention, these organizations operate mostly locally and regionally, but a relevant



number also nationally and internationally. The main sectors of intervention are, after the immigration sector, adult education and training, culture, and civil rights.

The number of migrants present in the various organizations, both those who work as volunteers and those who are regularly employed, is higher in smaller organizations (with less than 15 employees). The Italian volunteers are across different ages, from 26 to 65 years old. As for immigrant volunteers, mostly are between 26 and 40 years old. Organizations that include immigrants as volunteers are 67% of the sample. Generally, the voluntary work for immigrants is considered a valuable and effective tool for implementing social inclusion and promoting the ideals of the welcome culture and of solidarity. The group of the immigrant volunteers is heterogeneous as there are 25 different nationalities (the predominant are Moroccan, Nigerian, Malian and Senegalese). Their economic level is mainly low while the educational level is predominantly middle. It results that immigrants have decided to carry out voluntary work within these organizations mainly to improve their social role in the host society or because they hope to provide support to their community of origin. The role played by immigrant volunteers is fundamental for various activities, especially in mediation services, but also in community work, and in guidance too. Migrants have definitely benefitted from volunteering, for cultural exchange and social connections, and to improve language skills, but also to feel a sense of belonging and to involve in the host society. Whist the promoter organizations gain from the voluntary work of migrants a better approach towards users.

Among the factors that hinder the voluntary participation of migrants, the respondents highlighted that the most relevant ones are: the excessively restrictive migration policies, work schedule and family life as subjective obstacles, the deficiency of resources as the operational obstacles. Among the factors that may facilitate the removal of these obstacles, Information and awareness-raising actions addressed to all citizens are considered the most effective ones, but training of both migrant volunteers and national operators is considered extremely important too. The respondents believe that legislative reforms to promote individual access to citizenship rights as well as involving the migrants in the decision-making process could help the process of migrants' participation in volunteering. Instead, the opportunity to make the voluntary work of asylum seekers compulsory until the definition of their legal status is a quite controversial issue in Italy.

The activities that are mostly carried out by the organizations are literacy and language courses and handling of documents (accompanying services), but also information on the protection of rights of and campaigns on the promotion of rights, and assistance and protection of vulnerable groups. The voluntary actions for the benefit of migrants



contribute to reduce isolation, to increase social interrelationships awareness, to a greater autonomy and self-activation relations . But they have an impact on the local context too, in terms of a greater openness to migrants by both institutions and the receiving society, and also of an improvement of social and community services. About the factors that limit the effectiveness of voluntary action for/with immigrants, the organizations indicate the scarcity of available economic resources as the most important ones, but also public bodies' deresponsibility and institutional constraints, prohibitions and restrictions.

The research carried out at regional level, in Calabria, by focus groups and individual interviews addressed at different stakeholders, permitted to know more about the perspectives on migration issues, the role of volunteering, specific problems and opportunities that it poses and the impact on local communities. According to the data collected, two different approaches affect the voluntary practices: a charitable approach and a more politicized approach. These approaches can differently influence the results of the projects aimed at integration. The charitable approach can be effective in an emergency phase, but it is limited in a second and third reception phase. On the other hand, a more politicized intervention has opened up new paths for developing integration opportunities.

The diversity of approaches is especially highlighted in relation to different contexts and so to specific problems and conditions: the emergency context concerning landings of boats transporting migrants; dynamics of labour exploitation; housing discomfort; the reception system and the confrontation with local communities.

Volunteering with migrants opens up many new relationships and consequently work opportunities too; but projects and activities must be reasoned, considering the specific skills and needs or expectations of the subjects involved. The voluntary work of migrants seems to be feasible where they are able to enhance individual skills and attitudes, activating opportunities of exchange with the local community. Institutions must be careful not to degrade migrants. They are often criticized by organizations, which stimulate a different vision of the voluntary work of migrants aimed at a fairer valorization of skills and collaboration with local communities. The promotion of direct involvement of refugees in voluntary activities can have a sense but it requires extreme attention. The voluntary activities should respond to individual aptitudes and interests and be characterized in such a way as to motivate participation.

Moreover, through the testimonies of the stakeholders involved, the following issues emerges in relation to volunteering: the need to work and carry out voluntary activities connecting in a network; the need to consider and strengthen individual skills and personal backgrounds; the lack of a systemic organization among the services for



volunteering and the fragmented nature of voluntary interventions; the limited resources, in some cases the uncritical connection or cooperation of voluntary organizations with institutions (i.e. for the management of a tent camp hosting foreign farmworkers).

The issue of job precariousness is often evoked and considered as a problem and an obstacle to voluntary commitment, both for migrants and for local actors. Volunteering by migrants is obstructed by the precariousness of living and working conditions. However, sometimes migrants also in difficult conditions involve in collective mobilization for housing and labour rights with trade unions and local people.

Finally, innovative initiatives and projects supported by volunteers have been noticed. They concern reception projects in remote villages suffering depopulation processes, temporary reception services for foreign workers, literacy courses and social animation addressing precarious farmworkers in rural or marginalized areas.

In many cases, in Calabria as well as in other local contexts analyzed by researches, voluntary work and activities are fundamental to ensure basic services and assistance to migrants, also irregular. However, the furniture of service that are alternative to the public ones is controversial. According to the critics, solidarity and humanitarian activities are functional to the system, solving the contradictions of official policies and avoiding violations of human rights too grave, or disempowering migrants in the search of direct initiatives and political solutions by themselves. But it is important to observe that the organizations of civil society and volunteering can also affect the migration governance, the production and application of policies, especially at local level, the integration processes; above all, by deploying different actions, even not integrated among them, they ensure a safety net for migrants, especially for those irregular or in very precarious or difficult conditions (see Ambrosini 2014). So, it is important to understand how effective is and how can be improved or properly strengthen the action of volunteering for migrants and local communities' integration.



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