

# COMMON HOME

**MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
IN ITALY**



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## FOREWORD

*“Let us briefly pause to consider what is happening to our common home” is the warning invitation addressed to us by Pope Francis in the first chapter of *Laudato si*. The environmental theme is the heart of this encyclical and it is the starting point for drawing attention to issues that are closely related to the dimension of human mobility. On the other hand, the growing flow of migrants on a global level is the result of poor management of environmental resources that are the basis of “expulsive processes” that force millions of people to abandon their lands. “It is tragic the increase in migrants fleeing poverty exacerbated by environmental degradation, who are not recognized as refugees in international conventions and carry the weight of their abandoned life without any regulatory protection.”*

*Therefore the issue of migration, linked to development, or rather to non-development, is crucial in current social, political and economic dynamics, both nationally and internationally. What we are witnessing must question us because it challenges our future. To imagine a society without migrants means to imagine a world that does not exist. *Laudato si* reminds us that the lack of reactions to what is happening is a sign of the loss of that sense of responsibility (...) on which every civil society is based.*

*To combat the indifference that pervades transversally modern societies, it is necessary to react, stimulating politics and institutions to face these phenomena with seriousness and foresight. It is therefore no coincidence that this Report, *Common Home*, is presented at the next European elections, which are seen as an important test for the maintenance of our common home. The project of a space for the well-being and freedom of citizens now seems to waver under the blows of sovereign tensions that are widely recorded in various countries of the old continent. The Report, promoted by the European project MIND, is an opportunity to reflect on how the theme of migrants and, more generally, that of development, are helping to define a new Europe.*

*Numerous international and supranational organizations, including the European Union, recognize the importance of making migrant participants active through co-development strategies, with a role in the development of communities in the countries of origin and host countries. At the same time, the migration policies of the member countries of the European Union*

*are heavily limiting the possibilities of migrants to integrate and work legally through the use of increasingly restrictive controls, thereby creating a growing number of irregular migrants on the margins of society. The two policies, the first aiming to increase co-development strategies, and the second limiting immigration and integration, are contradictory.*

*Today, more than ever, a work of reflection and advocacy is needed to provide all stakeholders with the elements to rethink the phenomenon of mobility in concrete and proactive terms; to mitigate the climate of mistrust, to propose solutions that involve migrants in the social, political and cultural life of the destination country, and to highlight, finally, the necessary role that migrants play in the economy and culture of the countries of origin as well as those of transit and destination.*

*Despite the economic impact of migrations in the host countries being the subject of numerous studies, which often underline their positive outcomes, poorly informed public opinion feeds a climate of tension and widespread antagonism towards migrants to the point that they are seen exclusively as a burden on the economy of the countries that receive them.*

*The real challenge at European level is therefore to implement migration and development policies capable of maximizing the positive effects that these can have in the countries of arrival and in the states of origin of the migration. Human mobility today represents a great opportunity for the development not only of the EU but also of the poorest countries where migrants come from. Such an opportunity cannot be seized by building barriers around Europe, but only through awareness of the possible benefit brought by immigrants and the application of policies based on the migration / development binomial.*

*This is why Caritas supports an integral human development that places the well-being of individuals in various dimensions, including economic, social, political, cultural, ecological and spiritual, at the centre of the development processes, placing the migrant himself at the centre of the debate. Development is not reduced to simple economic growth. To be authentic development, it must be integral, which means aimed at promoting every individual and the person as a whole.*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research aims to contribute to an understanding of migration as part of a wider phenomenon of change and development, both locally and globally. In this report, we discuss data on size, characteristics and impact of migration in parallel with an analysis of public perceptions and policy-making on migration and development. The relation between those three levels is complex and problematic, since public opinion is not necessarily responsive to fact-based arguments, while policy itself does not always follow criteria of effectiveness and adherence to values. Despite the still relatively limited number of foreigners in Italy (around 10% of the population), our country has seen the highest relative growth of its migrant population amongst all European countries, with a five-fold increase over the last twenty years. The fast pace of this transformation has undoubtedly contributed to influencing public perception, moreover giving some political actors the opportunity to justify an increasingly aggressive rhetoric.

It is therefore crucial to approach migration by looking at the broader picture. Whether a so-called “economic migrant” or a refugee, welcoming a person who migrates poses a variety of challenges, including at the social, economic, ecological, political, cultural, and spiritual levels. She invites us to move our gaze beyond our borders, in order to understand on the one hand the root causes of migration and, on the other hand, how to approach migration and mobility from the perspective of global citizenship.

From such a perspective, the relation between migration and development appears in all its contradictions and ambiguities. Just as it would be incorrect to define migration as the root of all existing problems, it is equally impossible to portray it in an exclusively positive way, as a general catalyst for development. For example, the urgent need for personal assistance services by

the ageing Italian population, often met by migrants, can have negative repercussions on family stability in the countries of origin. In addition, remittances sent to the homeland are not always used in a “socially productive” way, sometimes contributing themselves to increasing in-country inequalities and/or social tensions.

The growth and stabilisation of the migrant population, particularly in conjunction with a persisting economic crisis, has triggered profound social tensions in Italy. A more and more pervasive narrative of “us versus them” is mobilised by politicians and opinion-makers to divert attention from the fact that migrants and Italians alike, in reality, face the same structural barriers, inconveniences and inefficiencies that perpetuate an unequal society. As a matter of fact, the growing precariousness, vulnerability and inequalities affect everyone.

In such a tense context – moreover affected by ongoing international conflicts that force many people to migrate, often in the direction of Italy as a country of first landing towards Europe – local politics have identified migration as the source of every problem experienced in our country. More and more restrictive entry policies have drastically reduced the entry quotas set by government decree. Paradoxically, in addition to being a country of destination, Italy is still very much a nation of emigrants. Ironically, data on Italians residing abroad show that the number of Italians who have left the country is substantially equal to the number of foreigners residing in Italy.

The current stagnant demographic trend has important consequences for the national labour market. Our analysis of employment data shows that migrants contribute mostly in those economic sectors abandoned by the Italian population, as well as in occupational segments with underemployment but among the least remunerated and protected. Labour exploitation and deteriorating working conditions may affect the migrant population as much as the most vulnerable segments of the Italian population.

Those tensions enjoy high visibility in the Italian public debate. More importantly, they effectively obscure the positive impact that migrant workers have on our welfare system and

on sustaining our pension system. Despite data and statistics pointing to the opposite, migrants are often perceived as free riders and a burden on the public purse. All caveats notwithstanding, the economic contribution of migrants through remittances represents an important development opportunity for countries of origin as well.

However, migrants are not just “workers”. They are also carriers of social and cultural vitality. The growing size of the migrant population and the countless nationalities present on our national territory are transforming Italy into a multi-ethnic society. Recognising this process means being prepared to manage the change and deal with the inevitable tensions, in particular by investing in sound integration policies. Those policies must take into account the concerns and discomfort of the most vulnerable strata of the Italian society, both at the economic and socio-cultural levels. To pursue this goal, we need universalistic (i.e. aimed at all) and “active” policies.

In terms of social and cultural changes, foreign communities in Italy can play a positive role in the development processes of countries of origin. During the 2000s, the activism of the diaspora associations attracted the attention of various development NGOs, thus bringing to the fore the concept of co-development and revitalising the sector.

The current social and political context, however, hinders the maximisation of the developmental potential of migration. The lack of political and trade union representation, the difficulties in accessing high-level or specialized education, the erosion of social solidarity – sometimes even amongst migrants themselves – deeply affect the capacity of migrants to contribute to Italian social, civil and economic life.

It is important to raise more awareness of how socio-economic processes and transformations often affect indiscriminately citizens of every country, migrants, and residents. These transformations require a governance of capable of accounting for social complexity. We should not sweep tensions and conflict under a carpet, but rather acknowledge that we can solve those issues by building an inclusive society for all.

Such a perspective is but a first step towards changing the narrative, particularly around the link between immigration and (in)security. The mantra of “migration as a resource” showed all its weakness when the economic crisis led to a social and solidarity crisis. Nowadays, the increasing polarisation of

the debate makes it increasingly difficult to bring this idea back in the public discussion. Certain politicians have even adopted xenophobic and securitarian positions and have actively contributed to weakening the reception and integration policy frameworks, even when the latter had clearly showed their added value and sustainability, including for the local residents of many Italian. A decentralised reception system, with individually tailored integration projects, had created a virtuous model of labour inclusion, moreover positively addressing important issues such as labour exploitation in sectors such as agriculture and construction.

Policy-makers should pay particular attention to all those social contexts where there social interaction is most likely to lead to constructive and generative relationships, starting from schools. Schools are the playground for the generations that will constitute our society of tomorrow. We must ask ourselves the following questions: what kind of society do we teach our students to envision? And what kind of society are we creating with our educational system? Second-generation students will be the Italian citizens of tomorrow.

The migration-security nexus has been integrated in government development cooperation policies as well, as shown by the numerous planning and programmatic initiatives aimed at addressing the “root causes of migration” This strategy, which views human mobility as a phenomenon to control and limit, is in stark contrast with the co-development approach. It does not align with the objectives of poverty eradication and inequality reduction either.

We should therefore change the way in which the connection between migration and development is defined and represented. Migration is a structural feature of the world in which we live, and a phenomenon that must be governed. However, it must also be acknowledged by Italian society in all its complexity. We need to develop a new vision of Italian society, which includes migrants as part of a societal “we” where we can collectively engage in a work of recognition of rights, responsibilities and duties. Such work represents the only possible basis for attaining global citizenship.

# THE COMMON HOME VISION AND VALUES ON MIGRATION DEVELOPMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS

In his encyclical, *Laudato Si'* – On care for our common home, Pope Francis (2015) reminded us that the Earth is “our common home”, and that we need to address economic, social, political and environmental challenges together in an integrated manner (CAFOD et al. 2018). Exclusion and poverty, warfare, global inequalities, climate change, unsustainable consumption and growth – as well as forced displacement and migration – demand our utmost attention and engagement. The encyclical quickly became a reference document for Catholic social services as well as development agencies worldwide, drawing attention both inside and outside the Catholic Church. With the national and European “Common Home” publications, Caritas draws on this message to explore the complex interconnectedness between migration and development with its faith-based ethical framework respecting human rights and dignity.

For Caritas, a human-centred, ethical and rights-based approach is fundamental to law, policy, and practice. Thus, an ethical interpretation of the relation between migration, development and the human person is essential to frame the vision and the objectives of the “Common Home publication”. Caritas’ vision, actions and views are rooted in legal and political instruments and sources, and fundamentally in Christian and Roman Catholic Church values and teaching. These values and teachings have, in common with international legal instruments and policy frameworks, an affirmation of human dignity, equality for all, and the inalienability of human rights as key moral principles to ensure the peaceful coexistence and basic well-being of all persons and peoples on the planet. International legal instruments and policy frameworks include: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and eight fundamental United Nations human rights covenants and conventions; the 1951 Refugee Convention

on the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol; and the International Labour Standards defining principles and rights for decent work. The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda are especially relevant global policy frameworks. Catholic Social Teaching (CST), the doctrine developed by the Catholic Church on matters of social and economic justice and fundamental Christian values are the foundations for Caritas’ views and action.

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis (2015: 12) has argued that “the urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development.” Moreover, the Pope has called for a collective and inclusive dialogue about “how we are shaping the future of our planet” (2015:12), questioning the current model of development and the current condition of global society where injustice is commonplace and more and more people are deprived of their fundamental human rights. This means “prioritising the weakest members of society as a way of measuring progress” (CAFOD et al. 2018: 16). Human rights can be defined as the protection of individuals and groups, guaranteed under international law, against interferences with fundamental freedoms and human dignity. Human rights are inalienable and cannot be denied or relinquished by any human being, regardless of any reason including legal or immigration status. They are universal in that they apply to everyone, everywhere. Human rights encompass civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, and are indivisible, meaning that the different sets of rights are all equally important for the full development of human beings and their well-being. Human rights’ instruments and customary international law generate three overarching obligations for states, namely: to respect, to protect, and to fulfil those rights.

## a. Migration

Migration is a major feature of today’s globalised world. In broad terms, migration is the movement of people from one place of residence to another. While the term migration covers population movement internal to a country – rural to urban or from one locality to another in a different jurisdiction – the MIND project addresses international migration. International migration is a distinct legal, political and social category, as people move from a nation-state in which they are citizens with the rights and protections citizenship normally confers, to other countries where rights and protections of nationality, of access to social protection, and of common identity often do not apply and where social and cultural paradigms may be significantly different.

While there is no international normative definition for migration, international conventions provide agreed definitions for refugees and for migrant workers and members of their families; the latter applicable to nearly all international migrants. The definition of a refugee in the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol on the Status of Refugees is: “someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion”. All EU member states have ratified both the 1951 refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol.

The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (ICRMW) states that: The term “migrant worker” refers to a person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a state of which he or she is not a national. That convention recognises frontier worker, seasonal worker, seafarer, offshore worker, itinerant worker, and other specific categories of migrant workers as covered under its provisions. The ICRMW iterates that all basic human rights cover family members present with and dependent on migrant workers. Data from the International Labour Organization (ILO) shows that nearly all international migrants, whatever their reasons for migration or admission may be, end up economically active – employed, self-employed or otherwise engaged in a remunerative activity.

Specific definitions and statistical standards to obtain reliable and comparable data on international migrants have been agreed under UN auspices and are used by most governments. For statistical purposes, an international migrant is defined as ‘a person who has resided in a country other than that of birth or citizenship for one year or more, irrespective of the causes or motivations for movement and of legal status in the country of residence.’ There are an estimated 260 million foreign-born people residing today in countries other than those in where they were born or held original citizenship from. However, this figure does not include persons visiting

a country for short periods such as tourists, nor commercial or transport workers who have not changed their place of established residence. Many other persons in temporary, short-term or seasonal employment and/or residence situations are not counted in UN and other statistics on migrants when their sojourn is less than a year and/or if they retain formal residency in their home or another country – even though they may fit the definition of a migrant worker. For an accurate analysis of the interconnectedness of migration and development, Caritas uses a broad understanding of migration, inclusive of all those who are refugees and asylum seekers, as well as migrant workers and members of their families.

## b. Development

The pledge to leave no one behind and to ensure human rights for all is a cornerstone of the Resolution by the UN General Assembly 70/1 “Transforming our world: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” that contains the Declaration and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 119 sustainable development targets, adopted on 25 September 2015. This document endorsed by all 193 UN Member States expresses their shared vision of and commitment to the following:

“[a] world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination; of respect for race, ethnicity and cultural diversity; and of equal opportunity permitting the full realization of human potential and contributing to shared prosperity. A world which invests in its children and in which every child grows up free from violence and exploitation. A world in which every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality and all legal, social and economic barriers to their empowerment have been removed. A just, equitable, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met.”

The 2030 Agenda has led to paradigm shifts in the perception of development. Development and sustainable development concern all countries on the planet; protecting the environment and tackling inequalities are considered among key development goals; peace and social justice are seen as integral components of the universal development agenda; and the need for the commitment and participation of all groups within all societies and states is emphasised in order to achieve development for all. The new worldwide consensus on development is grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all human rights treaties; therefore, if states do not make progress on the actual realization of human rights for all, the SDGs cannot be reached.

The term development encapsulates the elaboration of productive means, forces, capacities, organisation and output of goods, services, technology and knowledge to meet human

needs for sustenance and well-being. It comprises building the means for: the extraction and transformation of resources; the production of goods, services and knowledge; constructing infrastructure for production, transportation and distribution; reproducing capital as well as skills and labour; and providing for human welfare/well-being in terms of housing, nutrition, healthcare, education, social protection and culture in its broad sense (Taran 2012).

Caritas uses the concept of integral human development, which places the human person at the centre of the development process. It may be defined as an all-embracing approach that takes into consideration the well-being of the person and of all people in seven different dimensions. First, the social dimension, which focuses on quality of life in terms of nutrition, health, education, employment, social protection and social participation as well as equality of treatment and non-discrimination on any grounds. Second, the work and economic activity dimension as the means of self-sustenance and those of kin, of socio-economic engagement and of direct contribution to development for most adults in all populations. Third, the ecological dimension which refers to the respect for the goods of creation and to ensure the quality of life for future generations without ignoring this generation's cry for justice. Fourth, the political dimension, which includes issues such as: the existence of the rule of law; respect for civil, political, economic, social and cultural human rights; democracy, in particular, as a representative and, above all, a participatory tool. Fifth, the economic dimension which relates to the level of GDP and the distribution of income and wealth, the sustainability of economic growth, the structure of the economy and employment, the degree of industrialisation, the level of high-tech ICT, and the state's capacity to obtain revenue for human services and social protection, among other considerations. Sixth, the cultural dimension which addresses the identity and cultural expression of communities and peoples, as well as the capacity for intercultural dialogue and respectful engagement between cultures and identifies. Seventh, the spiritual dimension. Taken together, these dimensions underpin an integral approach to development (Caritas Europa 2010). According to Catholic Social Teaching (CST), social inequalities demand coordinated action from all people/ the whole of society and the whole of government in all countries for the sake of humanity based on two premises: 1) social questions are global, and 2) socio-economic inequalities are a danger for global peace and social cohesion. In this sense, development of our own country and that of others must be the concern of us all – the human community.

### c. Migration and development

How development is linked to migration is a centuries old legal, political and practical question. Vast forced and voluntary population movements from the 17th century onwards populated the Americas, as well as some of the emerging European nation states.

Since the end of World War II, migration and development has been the subject of intense discussions among policy-makers, academics, civil society and the public. Pope Pius XII dedicated an encyclical on “migrants, aliens and refugees of whatever kind who, whether compelled by fear of persecution or by want, are forced to leave his native land” (Exsul Familia 1952), reaffirming that migrants and refugees have a right to a life with dignity, and therefore a right to migrate.

Migration became a fundamental pillar of development across several regions under regional integration and development projects, namely the European Economic Community succeeded by the European Union. Since the 1970s, migration has been essential to development through regional free movement systems in Central, East and West Africa. From the 1920s, large population movements – some forced - in the (former) Soviet Union underpinned industrial and agricultural development across the twelve USSR republics.

Spurred by geopolitical events that have greatly affected human mobility on a global scale, the relationship between migration and development has become central to contemporary political, economic and social policy debates. The first global development framework to recognize the role of migration and its immense contribution to sustainable development worldwide was the Declaration and Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994. The overarching contemporary framework is the above-mentioned 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its Sustainable Development Goals. While explicit reference to migration and development was laid out in SDG target 10.7 on “safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility,” more than 44 SDG targets across 16 of the 17 SDGs apply to migrants, refugees, migration and/or migration-compelling situations (Taran et al. 2016). The New Urban Agenda adopted in Quito in October 2015 provides even more explicit attention to migrants, refugees and internally displaced people in its global development and governance framework for cities – where most migrants and refugees reside.

In 2016, in the wake of severe and protracted conflicts in the Middle East and South Asia and the collapse of effective protection for refugees in neighbouring countries, UN Member States adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, calling for improved global governance of migration and for the recognition of international migration as a driver



for development in both countries of origin and of destination. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), adopted at an inter-governmental conference in Marrakesh, Morocco in November 2018, and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) elaborated on those principles and proposed ways of implementing them through political dialogue and non-binding commitments. Both Compacts were adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2018.

Caritas recognises that a growing number of people are forced to leave their countries of origin not only because of conflict and persecution but also because of other existential threats. These include poverty, hunger, unemployment and lack of decent work or good governance, absence of access to education and healthcare, as well as those linked to the consequences of climate change. Forced migration for Caritas encompasses all migratory movements where an element of coercion exists. People fleeing conflict and persecution naturally have a specific claim and right to international refugee protection. Caritas also recognizes that the overwhelming proportion of migration into Europe reflects most EU member countries' objective need for 'foreign' labour and skills to maintain viable work forces capable of sustaining their own development. This demand results from rapidly evolving technologies, changes in the organisation of work, its location, and the declining number

of local people active in the work force, all of which reflects the local population's ageing and declining fertility.

In Caritas' view, the people who migrate and those who remain – whether in a country of origin or in a country of residence – have the right to find, wherever they call home, the economic, political, environmental and social conditions to live with dignity and achieve a full life. Regardless of their legal status in a country, all migrants and refugees possess inherent human dignity and human rights that must be respected, protected and implemented by all States at all times. Caritas calls for a human response of solidarity and cooperation to assume responsibility for integral human development worldwide and for the protection and participation of people who have moved from one country to another – migrants and refugees. Migration contributes to the integral human development of migrants and of their countries of residence. Such a vision implies the recognition that migration, regardless of its drivers, is an opportunity for our societies to build a more prosperous, global “Common Home”, where everyone can contribute and live with dignity.

## - CHAPTER 2 -

# INTRODUCTION: DICHOTOMIES AND CHALLENGES ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN ITALY

Until quite recently, the link between migration and development was indisputably seen as a positive one. Between the 1990s and the 2000s, partly as a response to previously pessimistic views, researchers, policy experts and government officials began to celebrate migration for its positive contributions across various levels (de Haas 2010). On the one hand, they hailed it as a potential solution to poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment in the global South, recognising the positive impact of remittances and migrant investment in the countries of origin. On the other hand, they also highlighted the key contribution of migrants to the social and economic development of countries of destination, through elements as diverse as labour market participation and job creation, welfare support, economic and social innovation, cultural pluralism and diversity. Over the last years, however, this generally optimistic view has been once again called into question.

Some researchers have suggested that the optimistic paradigm (M&D) of those years has systematically overestimated the real impacts of migration on poor countries, especially in terms of poverty or inequality reduction (Gamlen 2014; Vammen and Bronden 2012). Critics of the migration and development paradigm have seen this enthusiasm and public celebration of the development potential of migration as a strategy by wealthy nation states and international organisations to cover the failure of mainstream globalisation, and more specifically of neoliberalism, in bringing prosperity to all and in ensuring a more equitable distribution of resources (Castles, Delgado-Wise 2008; Glick Schiller 2012). They also noted that the idea of migration as a tool for development, as well as the promotion of “globalisation from below” (Portes 1997), neatly fitted the neoliberal project of outsourcing state responsibilities for addressing poverty and inequalities to migrant communities,

civil society and the market. Others have also observed that, since the early 2000s, the financial resources mobilised through the M&D agenda have been leveraged by wealthier states to force countries in the Global South to accept stronger limitations on international migration or repatriation of irregular migrants (Gamlen 2014).

Beside the more abstract ideological debate, a realistic assessment of migration indicates that its impact on global development processes has often been limited and ambiguous. Migration, especially in countries of origin, may have unintended consequences that run against the objectives of sustainable development and integral human development. Remittances, in particular, may contribute to the worsening of intra-national social inequalities rather than reducing them, or may alter consumption expenditures in a way that negatively affect local markets. Remittances and other migrant investments may also nurture long-term social and economic dependency, for example by supporting the creation of micro-enterprises proved often to be economically weak and unsustainable (de Haas 2009, 2010; Singh 2015; Lartey 2018). More in general, as argued by Datta et al. (2007: 43), “it’s inappropriate, unsustainable and unethical to build development policy on remittances, because such an approach disregards the plight of individual migrants, and lets the developed world off the hook for addressing global inequalities.” By uncritically celebrating migrant-led development not only do we risk supporting “neoliberalism with a ‘human face’, in light of growing inequalities and conflict” (Gamlen 2014: 9), but also overlooking the issue of what conditions immigrants have put up within destination contexts, where many of them are increasingly unable to participate in society on an equal-level playing field. In fact, migrants often work there under exploitative labour-market conditions and can send money home only with strenuous efforts. Moreover, it has become clear that migration has dramatic social and emotional consequences for households, both for migrants and for the family members who stay behind, and those effects cannot be simply offset by the net advantages of remittances or by the promise of some future migration via family reunification. Research in Eastern Europe, Latin America and Asia – areas

characterised by high levels of female migration – has shown the disruptive effect of migration on family cohesion. The loss in terms of care and emotional attachments resulting from migration can affect the psychological well-being of both the family members “left behind,” as well as of those who migrated, not to mention more specific issues of personal development for children and young adults (Kofman et al. 2000; Parrenas 2001, 2005; Cortes 2016).

The financial crisis of 2008-09, which has dramatically reshaped the character of the global economy and whose effects are still visible ten years later, has dramatically affected the interaction between migrants and the local population in contexts of destination. On the one hand, high-income western countries, driven by a spike in unemployment rates and poverty levels, have experienced rising social tensions and a growing anti-immigrant sentiment amongst the native population. Over the last ten years, this dynamic has had a dramatic impact on European states’ and populations’ openness to labour migration, including the one occurring from within the European Union. With respect to Italy, despite the enormous contribution migrants make to the country by helping to sustain its development and welfare – providing a workforce that fills skill needs and cheap labour for agriculture, construction, care and domestic work – the general public perception is highly negative and a critical situation is currently being faced. The long-term process of immigrant integration is, at present, affected by a set of disruptive factors. Those include, among others: the rise of a populist, anti-immigrant political front all over Europe (with Italy as one of its centres of gravity); a shrinking, saturated national labour market; a related trend of economic impoverishment affecting both the Italian and foreign populations (Caritas 2018); a frustrated public opinion that blames foreigners for the worsening of the local population’s conditions, and therefore becomes more and more hostile. These elements are dramatically affecting the degree of acceptance of foreign populations by Italian citizens. As notions of immigrants as “other” or narratives of “us versus them” gain more and more traction amongst Italian public opinion, therefore calling into question migrants’ claim to belong, we risk facing a real “cultural emergency” (Caritas-Migrantes 2018).

We live in a historical period where reality and narrative are dramatically disconnected. On one hand we witness a strong expansion of a socio-political narrative that distinguishes Italian citizens from foreign “strangers” and seeks to pit

them against each other. On the other, careful analysis of the Italian social and economic reality suggests that Italians and immigrants – as well as all the people in between these two categories, such as Italian emigrants and new Italians with a migrant background – face in fact very similar issues, barriers and constraints in their lives. For once, they have to confront the same unequal system of social and economic opportunities and are often excluded from mechanisms of welfare support. Moreover, they are similarly exploited in the workplace and are not protected by existing labour contracts. As a result, both Italians and migrants are in fact forced to migrate to find better chances. The weakness of governmental social and labour policy, and the lack of a comprehensive intervention programme addressing poverty and social vulnerability has resulted in disadvantaged population groups – working poor, unemployed, etc. of every nationality – competing amongst each other for both low and precarious salaries and limited welfare resources. Areas where people of different social and ethnic backgrounds live together, such as at the outskirts of large urban areas, tend to be amongst those most affected by poverty, social vulnerability, degradation of social relations and of the environment, as well as gender equality gaps. In a country where inequalities are constantly on the rise, and are much higher than the EU average (Caritas Italiana 2018), tackling poverty therefore requires a comprehensive and integrated approach that should shy away from any attempts of dividing the population into opposite “ethnic classes”.

In light of these considerations, it should be clear that a simplistic approach to migration and development, both in positive and negative terms, is simply indefensible. A more realistic and pragmatic approach lies in accepting migration as a major feature of our contemporary world, while at the same time considering how migration is linked to a wider set



# ITALY'S NATIONAL MIGRATORY CONTEXT

of questions, problems and opportunities that concern society as a whole. Migration, in this sense, is simply a key issue that needs to be dealt with, including a view to recreating cohesive and integrated communities of all residents (Censis 2017).

Building on these considerations, the following report provides an in-depth analysis of the current situation, policies and debates in Italy related to migration and development. The report develops knowledge, evidence and analysis to answer the following guiding question: “How, and under what conditions, can migrants contribute to integral human development, their own and in/of places and societies of origin, residence and transit?” Data and description of migrants’ contributions to development will be complemented by an analysis of the evolution of the more general socio-political Italian landscape. The publication will also identify the key factors that influence the potential of migrants and refugees to contribute to development in Italy and in their countries of origin. This report follows a critical approach that recognises the complexity of the relationship between migration and development, which is sceptical of linear cause-effect explanations. It avoids prescribing pre-packaged, ‘one-size-fits-all’ solutions.

The report draws on desk research as well as on qualitative empirical material. The desk research involved collecting relevant data from statistical databases at national, European and international level as well as from government reports,

policy statements, issue papers and existing literature on migration and integration. Moreover, twelve qualitative interviews were conducted with key informants from faith-based organisations, diaspora organisations, NGOs and the government. Findings were triangulated with multiple sources where possible.

The structure of the report is as follows. Firstly, it reviews the complex national migratory context, moving then to a development-based framing of migration and underlining the key contributions that migrants and immigration in its present form bring to the economy, society, labour market, culture and people. Secondly, it identifies key obstacles that impede migrants’ full contributions to development, as well as opportunities for facilitating and enhancing migrants’ own development, the contributions of migration to development, and shared responsibility and accountability. Finally, it presents conclusions and a set of recommendations to steer Caritas and other relevant stakeholders in their future advocacy work towards protecting the rights of migrants, promoting migrants’ inclusion in Italian society, and addressing the migration-development nexus, particularly from the perspective of migrants and their contribution to integral human development. The set of recommendations is based on the results of the research supporting this publication and the long experience of Caritas Italy in working both with migrants and refugees, as well as with the local population on a variety of issues.

The Italian national migration context is particularly complex, characterised by a variety of migratory dynamics as well as socio-political tensions. Already one of the major destinations in Europe for third-country migrants seeking employment, Italy has more recently seen a spike both in regular arrivals due to family reunification and in irregular entries of undocumented migrants and asylum seekers – the so-called ‘mixed flows’ – mainly from sub-Saharan African countries. Within Europe, Italy has witnessed the highest relative growth of its migrant population over the last twenty years. Since 1998, the stock of immigrants has risen five times, with an increase of 2,023,317 persons between 2007 and 2016 (Istat 2017). Nevertheless, during the present decade, regular inflows have shrunk, reflected in the slow increase of new foreign residents (roughly 33,000 between 2015 and 2017). The contraction of the Italian labour market and the subsequent high unemployment rate in the country have induced the government to largely reduce the quota available for regular migrant workers, which now amount to only a few thousands<sup>1</sup>. This limited cap was imposed in spite of the employers’ opposition, who defended the need for immigrant labour and instead asked the government to facilitate the process to employ asylum seekers and to re-establish legal entries for work purposes.

Since 2012, the Italian government has not launched any regularisation drive for migrants in irregular status. Prior to that date, and for at least two decades, regularisation programmes had been the main mechanism to ensure the legal integration of immigrants in Italy<sup>2</sup>. Over the last few years, the Italian migratory complex has diversified. On the one hand, the country experienced new consistent arrivals of migrants and asylum seekers from different countries of origin. On the other, migration in Italy has also stabilised and consolidated as a result of family reunification, an increase in the influx of minors and Italy-born children, as well as of naturalisation of many long-term migrant residents (Caritas-Migrantes 2018). This second trend is evident when considering the reasons for

issuing residence permits. In 2016, legal entry for employment reasons accounted only for 5,7% of the total, while family reunification was far the main reason for entry (45,1%, although 4,4% less than in 2015). The same data also show a dramatic increase of humanitarian permits: 77,927 in 2016 (34% of total inflows), an increase of 6%, 15% and 26.5% respectively compared to 2015, 2014, and 2013. According to the latest Istat<sup>3</sup> figures (2018), out of the 262.770 permits delivered in 2017, 101,000 have been issued for asylum and humanitarian protection reasons (38,5% of the total, and 54,3% of them issued to men). In parallel, over one million foreigners have acquired Italian citizenship during the period 2007-2017. Such a figure places Italy in the first place among European countries regarding growth in absolute terms of naturalisations (Istat 2018; Caritas-Migrantes 2018).

According to residency data collected by municipalities (Istat 2018), foreign citizens residing in Italy as of 1st of January 2018 amount to 5,144,440. This figure represents 8,5% of the total country population (60,463,973), and includes 52,3% of women and 47,7% of men. Official residency is generally considered one of the most reliable statistical indicators on migration; however, it can detect only those regular immigrants who have already registered as residents, thus overlooking other significant components of immigrant population. Taking into account the gap between arrivals and registrations and including an estimate of people still in the registration process, the number of regular migrants (holders of a valid residence permit) present in the country in 2017 increases the number to 5,359,000 (Idos 2017). In addition, the number of migrants without any form of legal status is estimated to be around 490,000 people (ISMU 2017). Italy has recently witnessed the arrival of a large number of migrants and asylum seekers via the Mediterranean route. This population is seen as part of so-called ‘mixed migration’ flows, those including “refugees fleeing persecution and conflict, victims of trafficking, and people seeking better lives and opportunities”

<sup>1</sup> In 2018, the “Decreto Flussi” established 30,850 work entries: 18,000 for seasonal subordinate jobs (in agriculture and touristic sector), and 12,850 for subordinate non seasonal work and autonomous jobs.

<sup>2</sup> Regularisation processes (“sanatorie”) in Italy have occurred eight times in 25 years (from 1986 to 2012), according legal status to irregular migrant population already present in the national territory.

<sup>3</sup> The Italian national institute for Statistics.

(Mixed Migration Hub 2019). Most of those who lodged an asylum application are still waiting for a response or for the result of the appeal. According to UNHCR, in Italy there were 186,600 asylum claims still pending at the end of 2017 (2018). Table 2 presents data on different categories of migrant populations, which roughly totals six million (Eurostat 2018).

	xxxxxx
<b>Foreign residents (Istat 2018a)</b>	5,144,440
<b>Holders of a permit to stay (Istat 2018c)</b>	5,359,000
<b>Non-EU residence permit holders (Istat 2018c)</b>	3,714,137
<b>Refugees and people in refugee-like situation (UNHCR 2018)</b>	167,335
<b>Migrants with no legal status (estimate) (ISMU 2018)</b>	490,000
<b>Asylum seekers lodging a claim in 2017 (Ministry of Interior 2018)</b>	126,500
<b>Total pending claims in 2017 (UNHCR 2018)</b>	186,648
<b>Total foreign population (Eurostat estimate 2018)</b>	6,053,960
<b>Number of immigrants naturalised in the last 10 years (Istat 2018c)</b>	1,081,000

**Table 2. Estimates of different categories of foreign population in Italy in 2017.**

Source: personal elaboration of various sources

The geography of migration in Italy has markedly changed over time. While African migrants were predominant in the 1980s and 1990s, migration significantly “Europeanised” during the 2000s. Although 72,5% of residence permit holders in 2017 were issued to non-EU citizens (3,714,934), the 52% of the total foreign population in

Italy is of European origin, due to the strong presence of Romanians, Albanians, Ukrainians and Moldovans. The African and Asian population amount to approximately one million each, 20% and 19,5% of the total respectively, while North and South Americans combined amount to 376,000 (7,4%).

Nationality	Total	Females	Males	% females	Share in total foreign population
<b>Romania</b>	1,190,091	684,130	505,961	57,5	23,1
<b>Albania</b>	440,465	215,362	225,103	48,9	8,6
<b>Morocco</b>	416,531	194,599	221,932	46,7	8,1
<b>China</b>	290,681	144,231	146,450	49,6	5,7
<b>Ukraine</b>	237,047	184,780	52,267	78,0	4,6
<b>Philippines</b>	167,859	95,260	72,599	56,8	3,3
<b>India</b>	151,791	62,042	89,749	40,9	3,0
<b>Bangladesh</b>	131,967	35,543	96,424	26,9	2,6
<b>Moldova</b>	131,814	87,505	44,309	66,4	2,6
<b>Egypt</b>	119,513	39,119	80,394	32,7	2,3
<b>Pakistan</b>	114,198	34,705	79,493	30,4	2,2
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	107,967	50,444	57,523	46,7	2,1
<b>Nigeria</b>	106,069	43,419	62,650	40,9	2,1
<b>Senegal</b>	105,937	27,400	78,537	25,9	2,1
<b>Peru</b>	97,379	56,667	40,712	58,2	1,9
<b>Poland</b>	95,727	70,487	25,240	73,6	1,9
<b>Tunisia</b>	93,795	35,497	58,298	37,8	1,8
<b>Ecuador</b>	80,377	45,887	34,490	57,1	1,6
<b>Macedonia</b>	65,347	31,403	33,944	48,1	1,3
<b>Bulgaria</b>	59,254	37,359	21,895	63,0	1,2
<b>Other countries</b>	890,691	479,721	410,970	53,9	17,3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,144,440</b>	<b>2,672,718</b>	<b>2,471,722</b>	<b>52,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>

**Table 3. – Foreign born citizens: First nationalities as of 1st of January 2018.**

Source: Caritas and Migrantes 2017/2018. Elaboration on ISTAT data.

The migrant population is unequally distributed across the country. More than half of it, or 57.4%, is located in the northern regions: 33.6% of the total settled in the north-west regions (Lombardia, Piemonte and Liguria), while 23.8% in the north-east regions (Veneto, Trentino Alto Adige and Friuli Venezia Giulia). The central region accounts for 25.7%, while the southern region and the islands (Sicily, Sardinia) account for only 16.9% of the total migrant population (Caritas-Migrantes 2018).

Ironically, but unsurprisingly, the resident foreign population in Italy almost perfectly matches the number of Italians

residing abroad. Based on registrations kept by Italian Consular registers (AIRE), a total of 5,114,469 Italians resided abroad as of 31st December 2017 – a number that has grown significantly over the last decade as a result of the persisting economic crisis. Since 2006, when Italians living abroad were just above 3 million, Italian emigration has grown by 60.1%. In the last 2 years this trend has intensified: while returnees are about 30,000 per year, the population abroad increased by 124,056 persons in 2016 (+15.4% with respect to 2015) and 140,527 in 2017 (Migrantes 2017; Idos 2017). Worryingly, the majority of those who emigrate are young: 39% of the new emigrants are between 18 and 34 years old, 25% between 35

and 49 years old (Istat 2017). The number of qualified Italians leaving the country has increased by almost 25,000 in 2016 (9% increase over 2015), but the sharpest increase concerned medium and low-skilled emigrant workers (56,000, +11%). The main destinations of Italians are: Europe (2,770,175, 54.1% of the total with 40.8% in EU member States and 75.3% in European countries); South America (1,596,632, and 31.2%); North and Central America (461,287, and 9%); Oceania (154,375, and 3.0%); and Africa and Asia with about 66,000 people each (1.3% respectively) (Migrantes 2017).

At present, Italy's population is shrinking. This is due to a combination of different factors: the emigration trend highlighted above, the demographic ageing and low fertility rates of the Italian population as a whole, as well as the growth slowdown of the foreign population<sup>4</sup>. The number of total residents has decreased by 97,000 units in 2016 – a drop which was only partially mitigated by 33,000 new foreign

residents. Moreover, between 2016 and 2017, for the first time, the number of permits declined by 217,000 units<sup>5</sup> (Istat 2017). Should this slowdown continue in the coming years, immigration would be unable to compensate for the negative natural dynamic of the Italian population, which is at an all-time low (Idos 2017), as well as for the consequent decline in workforce.

The situation at the moment is quite fluid. On the one hand, in 2017 Italy issued 262,770 new residence permits, a 16% increase compared to 2016 (226,934). During the same year Italy also received 126,500 new asylum applications (compared with 123,000 in 2016), which confirmed the country as the third-largest EU recipient of asylum claims. On the other hand, as a result of joint Italian-Libyan measures to block migrant departures from North Africa and the closure of Italian seaports by the Ministry of Interior, arrivals via the Mediterranean sea dramatically dropped in 2018 (Table 4).

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 31th of October
<b>Migrants</b>	42,925	170,000	153,000	181,436	119,000	22,031
<b>Minors</b>		13,026	12,360	25,846	15,731	3,330

**Table 4. Number of asylum seekers arrived by boat in Italy during the period 2013-mid-2018.**

Source: Ministry of Interior

Since its swearing-in in the spring of 2018, the current Italian coalition government, comprised of the populist 5-Star Movement and the right-wing, xenophobic League Party, has promoted a political agenda that is profoundly anti-immigration. For once, government officials have repeatedly questioned European search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean, in particular those conducted by non-governmental organisations. Moreover, they have also called into question Italy's moral and legal commitment to receiving and hosting asylum seekers arriving from the sea. The government's decision to close Italian ports to ships carrying several rescued migrants has sparked international controversy, exposing Italy to widespread criticism and to potential legal consequences.<sup>6</sup> On another level, the recently approved "Decreto Salvini" (by the name of the current Interior Minister), or Security Law (*Decreto Sicurezza*)<sup>7</sup> has practically eliminated access to

humanitarian protection, and has significantly limited the conditions for granting international refugee protection. We can therefore speculate that this new Law, if not revised, may have a long-lasting impact on the Italian migratory context, specifically by reducing the relative weight of asylum seekers. Since 2014, when migrant and refugee pressure began to increase considerably, Italy has received around 700,000 asylum seekers. In 2017, they were overwhelmingly men (88.9%), mainly coming from Nigeria (17%), Guinea (9%) and Côte d'Ivoire (8%); minors of both sexes accounted for 14.7% of the total, and the vast majority of them – more than 90% – were unaccompanied (UNHCR 2018; Save the Children 2018). It remains to be seen if the strong reduction in 2018 shown in the table above – respectively an 80% and 86% drop compared to 2017 and 2016 – will be only temporary or if it will continue over the longer term.

<sup>4</sup> The average age in Italy is 45.2 years, a reflection of a structure by age in which only 13.4% of the population is less than 15 years, 64.1% between 15 and 64 years and 22.6% is 65 and older. Fertility is in sharp decline: the average number of children per woman went down to 1.32, compared to 1.46 of 2010 (Istat 2018b).

<sup>5</sup> This decrease was due to a new procedure of identification of expired documents. In reality, the drop likely occurred over several years, but it was revealed only recently.

<sup>6</sup> See for example the case of the *Acquarius*, a vessel which carried 600 migrants on board and was left for weeks stranded in the middle of the Mediterranean before it was finally allowed to disembark in Valencia by the Spanish government.

<sup>7</sup> In November 2018, the new *Decreto Legge 113* (Law Decree No. 113) on migration and security was passed by the Italian Parliament. The Law radically modifies the rules governing the organization and funding of the Italian asylum reception system. The measures of greatest concern are the following: 1) elimination of humanitarian protection (which applies to more than 50% of accepted asylum requests); 2) replacement of existing first-reception centers (CAS – Extraordinary Reception Centers and now CAT – Temporary Reception Centres) – which are key in supporting primary integration of immigrants through medical and psychological care, Italian language and civic norms courses, sharing of knowledge and information, facilitation of interaction with the local community – with more rigid and closed structures; 3) the weakening of the decentralised SPRAR refugee reception system (managed by municipalities on a voluntary basis), which has long been a successful example of local integration; 4) introduction of additional procedural and administrative limitations concerning the timing and conditions regarding asylum requests and appeals.

## - CHAPTER 4 -

# REALITY ON THE GROUND: HOW MIGRANTS CONTRIBUTE TO DEVELOPMENT IN A COMPLEX AND PROBLEMATIC CONTEXT

### 4.1 Towards places of residence/destination/transit

#### 4.1.1 The contribution of migrants to the economy

Migration is a feature of social and economic life across many areas of the world, with up until 2015 an important impact on both host and country-of-origin societies. According to an OECD (2014) report which focussed only on economic aspects, migrants perform several roles: fill important niches both in fast-growing and declining sectors of the economy; contribute to labour market flexibility; boost the working-age population; and, contribute with their skills and determination to the human capital development and technological progress of the receiving countries. However, other facts also need consideration.

As shown in the presentation of the migratory context, migrants play an important role in Italy by offsetting the effects of negative demographic trends such as workforce ageing and decline as well as more general depopulation. This is all the more visible in the economy. According to the annual report on foreigners in the Italian labour market produced by the Italian Ministry of Labour (2018), "over the last few years, the foreign component in the labour market has become key in the Italian economy, not only because of the importance that foreign workers have had and continue to have in the performance of specific tasks, but also by virtue of the compensatory effect they have determined: [...] up until 2015,<sup>8</sup> [both] the EU and non-EU labour force have been able to offset the contraction of employment that affected the Italian component" (Italian Ministry of Labour report 2018: 2-3).

In 2017, the foreign population within the working age (15-64 years) in Italy represented 10.5% of total employment, reaching slightly less than 4 million people. In addition to 2,422,864 employed people, the total included 405,816 job seekers (-7% compared to 2016) as well as 1,149,281 inactive people (Ministry of Labour 2018). At a more detailed level, the Italian labour market of foreign workers seems to be split in two: non-EU foreigners show better performance than EU ones regarding increased employability (respectively +1.3% and 0.1%), new hires (13.7% against 1.6%) and unemployment reduction (-3.6% against -0.5%).<sup>9</sup>

A more in-depth analysis of the data reveals remarkable discrepancies and gender gaps among different communities. In fact, the female employment rate is very high for some nationalities such as Filipinos (79.3%), Chinese (72.7%), Peruvians (72.0%), Moldovans (67.9%), Ukrainians (67.3%)<sup>10</sup>, while the highest rates of unemployment occur among Ghanaians (22.1%), Moroccans (22.1%), Tunisian (21.5%), Albanians (17.5%), Ecuadorians (15.6%). As reported by the Ministry of Labour annual report, female rate of unemployment and inactivity of extra-EU immigrants is much higher than that of men, and represent a problematic feature, especially for some national groups. If the women from Tunisia, Ghana, Bangladesh, Egypt and Pakistan show an unemployment rate between 51% and 43% (the medium average is 14.9% for non-EU women), the inactivity rate is very high for women coming from Pakistan, Egypt and Bangladesh (more than 80% against the average rate of non-EU women of 43.9%). These results are likely to depend on a combination of different factors: socio-cultural orientations (religious beliefs, family relationships), job market preferences and opportunities. Moreover, given the prevalence of nationals of those same countries in small business activity, women may be actively involved in the family business without being registered as employees, and thus be invisible for the official data.

<sup>8</sup> This trend only changed from 2015 onwards when, for the first time, the rate of growth of Italian employment was greater than that of foreign employment taken as a whole.

<sup>9</sup> The latter figure may be explained by the willingness of non-EU workers to accept low income labour intensive jobs and/or less protected work contracts, rather than by a conscious choice based on actual qualifications or real capacity. The issue of skills mismatch was highlighted by a recent report produced by Fociv (2018).

<sup>10</sup> These top nationalities for female presence are strongly linked with the employment of those women as domestic workers and caregivers ("badanti").

Nevertheless, notwithstanding sectorial variations, the importance of foreign workers is evident in various economic domains. Migrant workforce is particularly concentrated in low-wage service segments such as the domestic and care sectors, the hotel and restaurant sectors, agriculture, construction, manufacturing, small-scale urban services and commerce. Foreign workers are overwhelmingly employed as employees in someone else's company, and generally concentrated in low-skilled jobs – more than 70% are hired as manual workers (Ministry of Labour 2017; 2018). According to Fondazione Moressa, workers with a foreign nationality account for 74% of the total labour force of domestic workers, 56% of total caregivers, 51.6% of street vendors. In contrast, the presence of foreign workers in leadership and managerial roles is extremely limited: managers represent only 0.4% of the total migrant workforce while executives 0.7% (compared to 1.9% and 5.8% respectively among Italians). In professional and highly-skilled jobs such as scientists, professors and teachers, technicians or other 'white-collar jobs', Italian citizens account for 99% (Fondazione Moressa 2017).

Italy is therefore characterised by a sharp professional segmentation of its labour market when it comes to Italian nationals versus foreign nationals. The data also indicates a marked waste of human capital, that of foreign citizens, who are often employed in professions for which they are either overqualified or overeducated. This mismatch is made worse – and is often linked to various degrees of labour exploitation – in the context of the peculiar Italian economic structure, where a significant portion of the economy is informal or unregulated, if not altogether linked to illicit or criminal activities.<sup>11</sup>

The phenomenon of salary degradation is particularly evident in disadvantaged areas of the country, where social tensions and immigrant bashing have grown most acute<sup>12</sup>. In these areas, the large number of migrants employed in low-skilled (and often underpaid) jobs may enter in competition with the Italian workforce into the segment of unqualified work, as reported for some agricultural areas of the South (FLAI-CGIL 2018). However, even if in the academic literature there's no general consensus on whether the migrants produce a downward pressure on average salaries or cause the worsening of contractual conditions (Milanovic 2018; Hassell 2018 ; Peri 2014), the prevailing results and most of the evidence are different. Within a general phenomenon of wage growth stagnation and worsening of working conditions in Western countries over last 2-3 decades, the presence of immigrants in the Italian job market increases (even if slightly) the native wages, while the “model of

complementarity” between native and migrant workforce is still prevalent (Cozzolino et al. 2018).

Within this model of “subordinated inclusion” in the national job market, the confinement of migrant workers in some specific sectors is already evident when considering self-employment. Nevertheless, if dependent work provides several examples of jobs no longer performed or sought after by Italians, the situation is less clear-cut in independent work and business activities (Chiesi 2011). If, in some niches of the economy, migrants replaced the local population - such as in the case of ethnic urban small trade, domestic and care work or secondary industrial processing and subcontracting – in other sectors (construction sector, cleaning companies, commercial non-ethnic activities etc.) migrant enterprises coexist and compete with local enterprises. Emerging migrant enterprises have also transformed certain economic sectors, implementing important changes in the nature of the product and in the structure of the market, such as when Chinese entrepreneurs in Prato and Carpi revitalised the declining Italian textile sector by converting the sweatshops to produce ready-to-wear fashion clothing (Barberis, Bigarelli, Dei Ottati 2011; Dei Ottati 2013). In many others, even if usually from a position of weakness within the productive relations of the supply chain, migrants' autonomous activities have played and still play an important role in keeping Italian economy afloat in spite of the economic recession or of the structural difficulties faced by specific sectors. In the case of goldsmith district of Arezzo, for instance, the presence of a niche of immigrant subcontractors who is able to provide highly competitive prices has been crucial to ensure the survival of this segment of the local economy, even if at the social cost of pricing Italian contractors out of the market (CeSPI 2018).

Contrary to the general trend, which has seen the steady decline of Italian companies over the last decade, immigrant companies have continued to grow even during the worse period of the economic crisis. At present, 9.6% of total companies and 16.5% of those with sole proprietorship belong to foreigners. The main nationalities involved are Moroccans (14.7%), Chinese (11.3%), Romanians (10.6%), Albanians (6.9%), Bangladesh (6.7%), Senegalese (4.3%), Egyptians (4.0%). Each national group tends to be present in particular sectors, which may reflect ethnic segmentation (see table 6): trade and retail is largely prevalent among Senegalese (89.2%), Moroccans (73.3%) and Bangladeshi (66.8%); construction activities are preponderant among Albanians (72%), Romanians (64.4%) and Egyptians (42%); manufacturing represents a core activity for more than one third of Chinese companies (CeSPI 2018).

Sector	Number of immigrant enterprises	Total number of enterprises	% of immigrant enterprises
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	14,666	729,996	7.4%
Manufacturing activities	28,479	236,077	12.1%
Construction	132,376	823,584	16.1%
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles	209,556	1,543,307	14%
Transportation and storage	12,365	161,993	7.6%
Activities of accommodation and catering services	46,594	444,690	10.5%
Rental, travel agencies, business support services	30,494	151,607	20.1%
Other services (services for the person)	21,086	238,534	8.8%
Real estate activities	5,802	286,281	2.0%
Professional, scientific and technical activities	4,039	64,867	6.2%
Information and communication	3,627	10,795	33.6%
Other	34,810	207	0.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>587,499</b>	<b>6,090,481</b>	<b>9.6%</b>

Table 6. Main sector of presence of immigrant companies in Italy at the end of 2017

Source: Unioncamere/Movimprese

It is however important to nuance the picture regarding the contribution of those companies to the Italian economy. Most of these migrant-led business activities are limited in their scale and capacities as well as in the skills required, and are often in a subordinated subcontracting relationship with a larger Italian firm. Such companies often reveal precarious forms of self-employment put up for survival purposes or administrative needs, and may actually mask forms of dependent work (Codagnone 2003; CeSPI 2018). Unsurprisingly, the geographical distribution of immigrant enterprises reflects the different social, institutional and productive areas of the country. All in all, a realistic assessment of migrant self-employment reveals that, depending on the specific situation, immigrant enterprises may either provide overall positive economic and human development outputs or rather the opposite. Furthermore, often the general and local socio-economic relations and the existing productive hierarchies within specific sectors induce migrant enterprises to adopt the workforce exploitation “model” of the Italian enterprises. This is particularly evident in agriculture, where we witnessed a number of cases of migrant entrepreneurs exploiting co-nationals or other migrants through forms of bonded labour in order to ensure their own survival (Carchedi, Mottura, Pugliese 2003), often utilizing the typical mechanism of “caporalato” (Omizzolo, Sodano 2015; FLAI-CGIL 2018).

Last but not least, we have to mention the remittances' inflow towards Italy. In 2017, the incoming flows were of 9,809 millions of USD compared to the 9,355 millions of USD that left the country (+3% compared to 2016). Italy once more became a net receiver of remittances, a situation that lasts since 2015, when for the first time since 1998 the incoming flows were higher than the outgoing flows (with the exception for the period 2005-2007). In 2018, the incoming flows are estimated to be around 9,770 million of USD (World Bank).

#### 4.1.2 The contribution of migrants to welfare and social security

Concerning migrants' contribution to the welfare system, a recurring question in the international and national debate on immigration in Europe asks whether migrants are a support or rather a burden for the national system of social security. The prevailing opinion is that migrants not only contribute more in taxes and social contributions than they receive in benefits, but also that migrant workers have the most positive impact on the public purse (OECD 2014). According to the data provided by INPS<sup>13</sup> (2018), the amount of GNP produced by migrants is 130 billion of euros (8.9% of total Italian GNP); 11 billion are the social security contributions

<sup>11</sup> The so-called “non-observable economy”, which includes all non-formal activities, is estimated to account for 22.9% of the national GDP, and up to 29.8% of the GDP in the South of the country (SRM 2018).

<sup>12</sup> At the same time, these peripheral areas can also see the emergence of solidarity initiatives and positive collaborations between Italian and migrant population, as shown by the positive experiences of local immigrant reception and integration in the South of the country.

<sup>13</sup> INPS is the Italian Institute for Social Security and is the main body charged with the distribution of social provisions and pensions to the subordinated workers.

and 7.2 billions of euros are the contributions of IRPEF (equal to 7.5% of total IRPEF), an income tax due to the State. In contrast, the costs incurred by the Italian welfare are between 6 and 7 billion, a number definitively lower than the amount contributed<sup>14</sup>. In a recent public debate, the Italian President of INPS, Tito Boeri, has re-affirmed the importance of migrant contribution for the sustainability of the whole pension system. He clearly condemned the restrictive policy towards migration, affirming that: “Italy needs to increase regular immigration due to the fact there are many jobs Italians no longer want to perform”<sup>15</sup>. He added that, even if Italy elevated the age of retirement, increased productivity as well as women’s activity rate, a high number of immigrant workers would still be necessary to maintain a balanced relationship between those pension holders and those who work. Notwithstanding the overall economic and financial advantages provided by migrant contribution to the Italian State, there is a widespread social and political perception that migrants exert great pressure on social services and welfare provisions. This is all the more debated at the local level, especially with respect to social housing rights and priority lists, access to kindergarten and school meals services – services that the local migrant population is formally entitled to access. In certain cases, municipalities have addressed tensions by trying to set up discriminatory mechanisms barring migrant families from accessing particular services.<sup>16</sup>

### 4.1.3 The contribution of migrants to society and culture

Italy is on its way to becoming a truly immigration society, assuming progressively the features of a multi-ethnic country. Although the rest of the Italian society may not fully realise the implications of this fact, migrants have de facto become a social and cultural component of the country. Italy has only recently grasped the idea that immigration would become a

structural and permanent phenomenon capable of radically transforming its society. Thus, for a long time, politics and mass media have continued to overlook or downplay this epochal change, persisting in treating the issue as a novelty, a peculiar situation, or as an “emergency”. Moreover, the peculiarity of the Italian “low cost immigration” model (Pastore, Ponzio, Salis 2013), which incorporates migrants in a spiral of downward integration, has contributed to the creation of a public image and a common-sense perception of migrants as economically useful, but not really a precious resource in social and cultural terms. These factors slowed down, not only in practice but also in public perception, the emergence of people of migrant background in public and visible roles (politicians, intellectuals, writers, TV characters etc.).

As a matter of fact, it is at the local level that the social and cultural exchange between migrant and local population has been the most fruitful. In small cities and towns, the migrant population has been able to promote socio-cultural events, intercultural (and sometimes inter-religious) dialogues as well as social and economic initiatives, to build relationships with local authorities and civil society, and to carve avenues of political participation through consultative forums. To an extent, the impact of migrants was also valued in urban contexts, where many neglected and run-down neighbourhoods were revitalised thanks to the presence of foreign communities’ shops, markets, products and social life. Of course, it is also at a local level that many tensions arose, both at the level of policy (as in the Lodi case described in footnote 16) as well as in daily interaction, but it is generally within such small “communities” that the migrant population may be able to integrate more effectively.

This more dynamic local arena of integration and of contribution of the migrant population to the social, economic and cultural life is particularly evident when considering diaspora trajectories and organisations. At the national level, also due to the lack of policy and public initiatives in this regard, diaspora groups have never succeeded in creating solid and persistent aggregate forms of organisation. Instead, at the local level, a galaxy of associations has soon proliferated, trying to play a central role in helping the migrant population adapt to the Italian context, in supporting its integration processes, in establishing relations with local institutions and society, and in promoting transnational interchange and co-development initiatives (Carchedi, Mottura 2010; Boccagni, Pilati 2015).

Over the last two last decades, in addition to increasing in number, migrant organisations have diversified in mission and

objectives. While some ethno-communitarian organisations are mainly concerned with social cohesion and reproducing traditional cultural identities, other organisations have adopted a more open, hybrid and cosmopolitan identity. The latter are often able to attract multi-national constituencies, members and volunteers (including Italian nationals), as well as migrant professionals, second generation migrants (people with migrant background) and students. A mapping research conducted in 2015 identified about 2,100 migrant associations in Italy, showing a significant concentration of organisations in the Lombardia region and in the cities of Rome and Milan<sup>17</sup> (Idos 2015). In a more recent in-depth research project, CeSPI and other partners investigated the number, characteristics, activities/objectives and perspectives of migrant associations in the urban agglomeration of Rome (CeSPI-Focsiv 2018). The findings of the report are ambivalent. On one hand, the study indicates that some associations were able to reinforce their organisation and competencies and get access to financing and (more rarely) collaboration agreements with local public and private partners. On the other, a majority of organisations are still struggling to consolidate their structures, membership and mission, as well as to strengthen their project development and management skills. These shortcomings seem to be due to the fact that there are no specific national and local policies supporting the professionalisation of organisations or their political inclusion in consultative bodies and civil society structures.

The full potential of migrant contribution to the socio-cultural development of local and national communities is still to be fully exploited in the public sphere. Nevertheless, there is a serious risk that even such sporadic and fragmented contributions may be lost as a result of the current political and social climate. A nationalist, populist discourse affirming the primacy of national/cultural identity over all the other possible social affiliations (such as class, gender, work and professional categories and so on) is particularly aggressive and noisy at present. Such political discourse not only produces a negative narrative about the migrant – a narrative connected with negative emotions such as fear and insecurity, where migrants are identified as the sole responsible for the ills of Italian society – but also promotes a worldview organized around the divisions between “Italians” and “strangers”, between legitimate citizen and illegitimate. Such a discourse reduces the space available to migrants for contributing both to the destination and countries of origin. Moreover, if pushed to the extreme, this nationalist discourse threatens to entirely derail the process of integration, undermine mutual co-existence, and tear apart the very idea of an open and pluralistic society.

## 4.2 Towards places of origin

### 4.2.1 The contribution of migrants to the economy

Financial and economic remittances – money and in-kind transfers made by migrants directly to families or communities in their countries of origin – are generally considered to be one of the main resources to promote development processes in the countries of origin of migrants. Experts and policy makers have highlighted their role in combatting poverty, their anti-cyclical features and the fact that, for a large number of countries in the Global South, remittances account for a larger money flow than official development aid (ODA) and foreign direct investment. Yet, the role of such financial transfers in actually triggering sustainable local and national development has recently been questioned (Kapur 2004; Sorensen 2012, Brown, Connell 2015). On the one hand, the economic crisis that has hit many high income countries led to a contraction of remittance flows towards poorer countries, while on the other, research has nuanced the extent to which migrants’ private financial flows actually contribute to creation of productive enterprises and virtuous development processes.

Nonetheless, financial remittances remain an important source of income for families and communities in the countries of origin and are amongst the clearest evidence of migrants’ persisting transnational attachments, engagement and moral obligations. According to the World Bank, remittances to low- and middle-income countries rebounded to a record level in 2017 after two consecutive years of decline. An estimate of officially recorded remittances to low- and middle-income countries reached \$466 billion in 2017, an increase of 8.5 percent over the \$429 billion in 2016. Global remittances, which include flows to high-income countries, grew 7 percent to \$613 billion in 2017, from \$573 billion in 2016 (World Bank 2018).

According to Eurostat (2018), Italy shows a similar amount of remittances in and out. As above mentioned, in 2017, flows to Italy totalled 9,809 million USD compared to 9,355 outgoing (+ 3% compared to 2016), which means that Italy has once again become a net recipient of remittances. However, the definition of “remittance” utilized by Eurostat, as well as by the World Bank, is built upon different aggregation levels: not only “personal remittances” (the transfer of household funds in cash or kind and household assets to a non-resident household, usually situated in the migrant’s home economy), but also the net income being generated through employment in other economies, and social benefits, which were acquired

<sup>14</sup> However, those who hold opinions against immigration put forward the argument of the cost of the receipt system: 4.3 billion in 2017 and estimated between 4.6 and 5 billion of Euros in 2018.

<sup>15</sup> See *Huffington Post* 2018.

<sup>16</sup> The Italian media widely reported what happened in Lodi, a small city in the Lombardy region, where the local municipal administration, headed by the League party, sought to prevent foreign residents from accessing school lunch provisions. The strong solidarity mobilization of private citizens and associations and, above all, the Milan Court ruling of December 13, 2018, which deemed the regulation discriminatory, forced the municipality to withdraw the proposal.

<sup>17</sup> The “Portale Integrazione” website, set up by the Italian Ministry of Labour, contains a section entirely dedicated to immigrant communities and immigrant organizations, including those involved in activities together with the Ministry. See: <http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/Pagine/default.aspx>; Concerning the mapping of migrant association, see: <http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/Arretematiche/Paesicomunitari-e-associazionimigranti/Pagine/mappatura-associazioni.aspx>

by the above mentioned economic activities of households in other economies (e.g. pension rights). Instead, the data of the Bank of Italy, shown in the Table 7, considers only the

first level (transfers among physical persons between different countries) and are likely to better represent the real amount of remittances strictly speaking.

Year	Amount (millions of Euro)		Remittances to China	Remittances without China	
2005	3,901,380	Delta	947,54	2,953,840	Delta
2006	4,528,130	16.1%	700,51	3,827,620	29.6%
2007	6,039,990	33.4%	1687,56	4,352,430	13.7%
2008	6,377,890	5.6%	1541,05	4,836,840	11.1%
2009	6,748,890	5.8%	1970,78	4,778,110	-1.2%
2010	6,572,920	-2.6%	1816,33	4,756,590	-0.5%
2011	7,395,040	12.5%	2537,08	4,857,960	2.1%
2012	6,833,066	-7.6%	2674,457	4,158,609	-14.4%
2013	5,546,063	-18.8%	1097,859	4,448,204	7.0%
2014	5,333,614	-3.8%	819,129	4,514,485	1.5%
2015	5,251,656	-1.5%	557,343	4,694,313	4.0%
2016	5,073,632	-3.4%	237,538	4,836,094	3.0%
2017	5,075,116	0.03%	136,487	4,938,629	2.1%

Table 7. Migrants' remittances outflow from Italy (Euro millions). Period 2005-2017.

Source Bank of Italy

In Italy, following a period of continuous growth during the early 2000s and up until 2011, remittances apparently started to decline from 2012 until now. Nevertheless, we need to look better into the data, considering the amount of total remittances from Italy without taking into account the "remittances" going to China, which should instead be truly classified as "commercial flows". If so, we observe that, from 2012 onwards, the amount of migrants' financial flows has started again to increase, as shown in the data provided by the Italian National Bank in 2018, reported by the table here below

According to some estimates, the quota of informal and non-registered transfers corresponds to 30% of the total. Based on an investigation developed in 2017 and involving a sample of 1,400 migrants in Italy<sup>19</sup>, the medium remitting frequency is 4.3 times per year (but for the 19% of the sampling it is once per month). The medium amount remitted is 448 euros, while the yearly amount sent back is on average 1,600 euros (CeSPI 2108). The main channels of transfer as identified by the study are shown below (table 8).

	Bank	Post	Money transfer	Debit cards	Personally	Relative / friend	5.1.2. Informal payment	Internet	Mobile phone	Paypal bitcoin
Privileged channel	16.6	6.4	61.9	3.3	7.0	11.4	2.2	0.5	0.4	0.5
Secondary channel	5.5	3.8	9.1	1.9	5.8	11.2	1.3	0.2	0.8	0.1

Table 8. Main and secondary channels (%) for remittances in 2017.

Source: CeSPI

<sup>19</sup> The investigation was conducted by CeSPI in 2017 as part of the programme "Financial inclusion of migrants National Observatory" and was based on a survey of about 1,400 migrants living in different areas of Italy. For more information, see: <http://www.cespi.it/en/ricerche/ti-rapporto-sullinclusione-finanziaria-dei-migranti-italia>

Since the early 2000s, development studies and policy recommendations have highlighted the importance of directing remittances to 'productive' purposes (direct investment in business activities, job creation, etc.). However, this view has neglected the role that remittances play in boosting material consumption – and therefore in producing more economic exchange, which can revitalise the local market – as well as in supporting "deferred consumption" that enables access to key socio-economic opportunities (such as education and health expenses, house equipment, new migrations or mobility of members of the family, emergencies...). These remittances-led opportunities may have a long-term impact on the integral human development of individual households.

At the Italian level, there is no comprehensive research on migrants' investments in countries of origin; however, a few qualitative studies provide us with a number of important insights on the quality and scope of this migrant activity. CeSPI's study, conducted every two years over the last decade, is the most extensive in terms of sampling and depth. The 21% of those involved in the study declared having invested in their country of origin as follows: 75% invested in real estate, 20% in productive activities and 5% in financial investments. A more detailed categorisation of remittances' use by migrants and their families, immediate consumption excepted, is shown below (table 9).

Emergencies	Home Purchase	Cars/ motor-cycles purchase	Medical expenses	Education	Productive activities	Social projects
30%	21%	4%	14%	15%	3%	13%

Table 9. Main typologies of remittances' use. 2017.

Source: CeSPI

CeSPI's findings show how remittances are used for a wide range of purposes. As already discussed above, this type of consumption may play an important role when we consider a notion of development that goes beyond direct wealth creation and GDP growth. However, it is also important to note that, in line with the international academic literature, those findings confirm that only a very small fraction of remittances is directly channelled towards "productive investments" (less than 5% of the total). While it would be nonsensical to expect every migrant and their families can or should be entrepreneurs, as much of the academic literature seems to assume, we can also identify some particular barriers that constraint this activity both in the country of origin and the country of destination. With respect to the country of origin, migrants often have to face considerable financial, institutional, social and cultural hurdles that make it harder for them to undertake income-generating activities. Those may include high financial transaction costs, complicated bureaucracy prone to corruption, as well as strong family pressure dictating appropriate use of money. Despite the creation of ad hoc institutions (ministries, departments, councils etc.) in many African and Asian countries, relations between diasporas and home country government remains difficult, and the issues of remittance channelling as well as migrant return and re-integration are yet to be addressed in a comprehensive manner (Ceschi, Coslovi 2012; Medao 2013). Regarding more structured migrant financial activities, we note that (physical and virtual) investments in migrants' countries of origin are generally small and channelled at the family level, therefore outside of more structured joint or consortium investments (Ceschi 2017; Beauchemin et al. 2013). As a matter of fact, individual migrants often start their

small-scale business without managing to connect to other migrant investors or as part of larger economic projects. Surely, lack of extensive and consolidated ties to highly skilled people or professionals, as well as to business communities negatively affects the capacity of expatriates to really have a development impact in their country of origin. Partnerships between migrant and Italian entrepreneurs, potentially an enabling development factor, is so far a rather sporadic phenomenon (CeSPI 2015). In conclusion, except from a very limited number of successful, larger-scale productive investments, diaspora contribution from Italy to their countries of origin is most visible in migrant-sponsored community-oriented projects – both social (education, health, social services) and infrastructural ones (water reservoir, irrigation systems, solar energy) – as well as in income-generating initiatives, such as social gardens, handicraft products, sustainable tourism (CeSPI-AICS 2017a, 2017b; CeSPI 2015).

#### 4.2.2 The contribution of migrants to society and culture

In the Italian case, spontaneous forms of transnationalism devoted to development initiatives at home are quite common among migrants' groups residing in Italy. These initiatives are led by and involve individuals, groups and networks, as well as more formalised associations. In the early 2000s, the activism of diaspora and migrant groups attracted the attention of various Italian stakeholders involved in international cooperation, producing a number of joint and correlated initiatives falling under the umbrella of a newly created policy sector, "migration and development".

It is above all within this domain that diaspora groups were able to gain recognition by the Italian government and to develop their own distinct identity. Rather than as an organised and consolidated expatriates' lobby attempting to influence the political and institutional landscape of their countries of origins – e.g. democracy promotion, peace-building or post-conflict resolution – diaspora groups in Italy presented themselves as an actual development actor in the sending contexts. Italy therefore witnessed an interesting and lively period of co-development initiatives, particularly at decentralised level as well as at third sector and civil society level (Ceschi, Mezzetti 2012). At the national level, co-development programmes directly financed by Italian Cooperation, and mainly managed by the Italian branch of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), have since the early 2000s supported social and entrepreneurial actions proposed by (mainly African) diaspora groups and directed to the latter's countries of origin.<sup>20</sup> NGO's, civil society organisations, bank foundations as well as local authorities and regions have jointly participated in several co-development initiatives engaging local diaspora and migrant associations<sup>21</sup>. Local institutions such as the Municipality of Milan, the Tuscany, Emilia Romagna and Friuli-Venezia Giulia regions, together with bank foundations,<sup>22</sup> were involved as donors and strategic project managers, while Italian civil society and NGOs drew on their development cooperation and social work expertise to support the capacity-building of diaspora groups. As a result, diaspora associations were able to benefit from important coaching opportunities and to learn the basics of international cooperation through their involvement in these multi-stakeholder partnerships. These partnerships coincided with the most fruitful period of the “co-development era” along the 2000s, during which a number of migrant organisations were able to significantly strengthen relations with stakeholders on both sides (including with Italian government bodies), promote their organisation goals, and strengthen their individual and collective management skills in the field of international development cooperation. Since then, however, the scope and ambition of “migration and development” has declined. At present, the development agenda has been partly replaced by migration control and migration prevention concerns (as highlighted by interviewees at AICS and the Italian Ministry of Labour). This shift can be evinced from the abundant amount of money and great political attention now

dedicated to multilateral programmes, such as the Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP) for North Africa or the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. These programs aim to improve socio-economic conditions as well as protection structures in countries of origin and transit of migrants with the ultimate goal of reducing international migration to Europe<sup>23</sup>. But it is also visible in the continuous risk of diverting funds from development purposes to migration deterrence ones, as in the case of the recent trend of Italian cooperation to tackle the “root causes” of migration, an ambiguous term under which it can fall any action addressed to keep the people at home by creating new jobs and life opportunities in parallel with the struggle against irregular migration. Also, Italy is actively participating in the militarisation of Sahel aimed at better controlling borders irregular migration, as shown by the sending of a military contingent to Niger in 2017<sup>24</sup>.

The recent government promotion of return migration through targeted Voluntary Assisted Return Programmes is equally problematic. While the economic crisis in Italy has certainly made return – but also secondary migration towards other European countries – more appealing for particular segments of the migrant population, the government's policy seems to be far more concerned with getting rid of migrants than with promoting sustainable return as an opportunity for the development of the country of origin. The proposed measures and incentives are in fact insufficient to sustain migrant reintegration following return (Balata 2012; Dedhiou 2014; Focsiv-Cespi 2014). As a result, unsurprisingly, the VAR (RVA in Italy) programme has so far had only a very limited impact, considering that the number of migrants who used it to return was only 919 in 2014, 435 in 2015, 136 in 2016, and 930 in 2017 (Ismu 2018).

Migrant associations and diaspora networks have rarely engaged on the issue of return and reintegration. Except for a few exceptions, where a limited number of migrants was returned in the context of co-development actions, in Italy there is no enabling “social environment” supporting such kinds of actions. At present, return migration remains an individual and family affair rather than a collective one, and the above-mentioned barriers prevent return migration from being a positive factor in the overall development of the migrants' countries of origin.

<sup>20</sup> Examples of such actions are: MIDA-Italia Senegal and Ghana (2004-2007), WMIDA (Migrant Women for Development in Africa (2009-2011) MIDA Somalia (2009-2010) and more recently MIDA Women Somalia II and Migraventure. The programme A.MI.CO is intended to support capacity building of migrants' associations in Italy. See: <https://italy.iom.int/>; <http://www.etimos.org/progetti/archivio-progetti/migraventure/>.

<sup>21</sup> A recent review of co-development experiences in Italy, produced in the context of the National Diaspora Summit, a process financed by Italian Cooperation Agency, can be found in CeSPI-AICS 2017a and 2017b.

<sup>22</sup> The most important co-development initiatives financed and managed by bank foundations are Fondazioni4Africa Senegal and Acric-Burkina ([www.fondazioni4africa.org/](http://www.fondazioni4africa.org/)).

<sup>23</sup> For example, the Trust Fund allocated at least 46 million Euro used to finance training and border management activities of the Libyan coast guard (Bodeux 2018). A detailed analysis of Trust Fund objectives and resources is provided by Concorde Europe (2017).

<sup>24</sup> On recent processes of border militarization in Africa see Gabrielli 2016; Gaibazzi et al. 2017; Prestianni 2018.

## - CHAPTER 5 -

# OBSTACLES THAT IMPEDE MIGRANTS' FULL CONTRIBUTIONS TO DEVELOPMENT

### 5.1 Obstacles and barriers in Italy

This section focuses on the range of obstacles and barriers that impede migrants' full contribution to the development of the country of residence. We begin by reaffirming the key role that the mainstream public discourse on migration has on the actual possibility for migrants to be considered a development actor in Italy. In recent years, social representation of migrants has dramatically worsened, and it is now extremely hard to escape the media-driven image of migrants as an indistinguishable mass of poor and miserable people reaching Italian coasts on makeshift vessels. Public views have progressively shifted, as descriptions of immigrants depicting them as hardworking and respectable workers seeking a future for their families in a dignified manner have been replaced by accounts portraying them as desperate and cunning free-riders abusing the national reception system and people's hospitality.

In the past, migration was considered a fact of life in an increasingly globalised world, and considered a necessary (although not necessarily welcome) development needed to sustain the Italian economy (less for the society). In contrast, as shown in recent surveys, present Italian public opinion shows a high level of concern about immigration. The majority of the population thinks the impact of immigration on the country (57%) has been negative, and for several reasons: the effect migrant workers are supposed to have had on overall salary and employment conditions; the widespread perception that migrants are primarily a burden for the country; the perception that migrants make Italy less safe (Ipsos 2018; CeSPI-Ixè 2018). Today, newly arrived asylum seekers – and with them also longer-term residents – are portrayed on one hand as poor and worthless “victims” fleeing violence and chaos in their home countries, while on the other they are depicted as a threat to Italy's social order, cohesion, cultural values and moral integrity. The political and media discourse has clearly played a crucial role in shaping and feeding these negative social perceptions and representations, contributing to forging a widespread anti-immigration sentiment regardless of geographic area, social class, educational level, profession,

and even political ideological affiliation (Censis 2018). The development of such an attitude is all the more worrying since it is likely to fuel, both at the institutional and societal levels, exclusion, intolerance, and discrimination towards immigrants. In such a context, the narrative of migrants as “agents of development” faces considerable challenges.

In this chapter, mindful of the complex context described above, we list and describe different types of barriers that constrain migrants' ability to contribute to development in the Italian context.

- **Persisting downward labour inclusion and segregation in the low-wage, unprotected sectors of the labour market.** The great majority of immigrants are still confined to low-wage and menial occupations. The Italian model of downward labour inclusion has hampered, or at least limited, migrants' access to better paid, more protected and more qualified jobs (e.g. managers, department head, white-collar jobs, technicians and professionals). In addition, migrant entrepreneurs often have no other option than to enter into poor niche or already saturated economic sectors – placing their business activities into a position of weakness and dependency. While there are of course successful exceptions to this rule, immigrant independent workers, as well as dependent ones, generally face several visible and invisible barriers in their path of social and economic affirmation.
- **Lack of migrant political representation and upward social mobility.** Migrant communities still lack influential leadership, while organisations representing diaspora and migrants are still not fully integrated at the Italian political level. Migrants and people of foreign background are still excluded from the political and economic establishment. They are denied access to powerful, influential, visible and prestigious positions. Until now, there have been only a handful of journalists, TV hosts, commentators, experts, intellectuals, scientists, writers and artists, administrators and politicians with a foreign background. Only recently has Italy

implemented the European directive allowing people without national citizenship to get access to public and state jobs/positions. When it comes to migrant upward social mobility and skills recognition, Italy is far behind many other Western Europe countries. To make matters worse, the population itself has yet to get used to dealing with professionals of migrant origins, as shown by the recent case of an old woman refusing to be visited by a black doctor.<sup>25</sup>

- **Persisting barriers to education and specialised training.** Migrants face a series of structural barriers and problems in accessing the educational and academic system. Recognition of diplomas, certifications and skills gained abroad remains complicated. Schools, teachers and the educational system more in general are not well equipped to manage multi-ethnic classrooms and pupils, and they struggle to deal with issues linked to multiculturalism. Foreigners only have very few opportunities when it comes to accessing high skill qualifications, specialised training courses or grants. In general, most young migrants or second generation pupils struggle to get access to high schools (Licei) that prepare students for a university track; instead, they are often “confined” to technical and training institutes. In such a context, the integrative potential of the educational system for the migrant youth population therefore remains limited.
- **Erosion of solidarity among the migrant population.** There is a growing presence of marginalised migrants and asylum seekers hosted by the disorganised and sometimes corrupted Italian reception system. This is problematic for various reasons. On the one hand, this very visible migrant population encourages the Italian population to lump old and new migrants together into a single stigmatised population. On the other, the migrant population itself is driven to buy into a discourse distinguishing between “integrated” migrants (“us”

and new comers (“them”). With all the funds and the political and media attention (negatively) given to the latter, the former – those once hailed as the “agents of development” – feel now unfairly scapegoated by Italian public opinion. This dynamic, in a context of growing vulnerability, risk fuelling divisions and conflict within the migrant population that would only be disastrous.<sup>26</sup>

- **Lack of access to political and citizenship rights.** Third-country nationals still have very limited access to political and citizenship rights. The right to vote at national level is granted only to Italian citizens, and only citizens of EU member states are entitled to vote in local elections. The extremely limited political participation of migrants impacts priorities in national politics. Political parties and politicians have no interest in gaining the support of a population that has no voting powers, and rather prefer to give in to public fears and to the social unease of the Italian lower classes. The current Citizenship law, last amended in 1992, incorporates a conception of nationality based on a “right of blood” or parentage, and therefore strongly penalises foreign residents as well as persons born in the country from third-country nationals.<sup>27</sup>
- **Emergence of a xenophobic and nationalist discourse targeting migrants.** It is still early to assess the real consequences of the anti-immigrant campaign run by political forces such as the League Party and (to a lesser extent) the 5-Star Movement. Over the last few years, the “Italians first” rhetoric preached by Italian right-wing populist parties has struck a cord in many northern municipalities, with the result that migrants are more and more often discriminated with respect to access to social housing, family benefits, maternity support, among others. Since the League Party has become part of the new Italian government, the situation seems to have escalated. Discriminatory actions barring migrants from social services and provisions are now institutionally legitimised, while Italy’s international protection commitments – as shown by the ongoing conflict with international NGOs over search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean – are routinely challenged and questioned. It is not by chance that hate speech and racist acts and behaviours towards immigrants have since multiplied, and now fill the pages of newspapers almost daily (Lunaria 2019).
- **Disruption of the Italian refugee reception system due to the new Security Law.** The recently approved

“Decreto Sicurezza” (Security Law), contrary to its stated purpose, has so far resulted in tens of thousands of people being forced to leave the reception centres – such fate applying to both holders of humanitarian protection and rejected asylum seekers in the process of appealing the decision. Such policy will dramatically affect the physical and psychological conditions of those categories of migrants, moreover increasing their social vulnerability and marginalisation. From a political perspective, the disruptions produced by the Law Decree are perversely likely to generate further demand by the general public for additional “security” measures, and therefore consolidate the grip of populist and anti-immigration parties on political power.

In conclusion, the threats and barriers outlined above adversely impact the capacity of migrants to contribute to the social, economic and cultural life of the country. While migrants themselves will play a crucial role in defining the conditions for their empowerment and self-affirmation in Italy, the success of this process will also crucially hinge on the will of Italian society to make room for people with a migratory background. This will not be an easy task, particularly in light of the structural problems the country is facing at present: a weak, segmented and stagnating job market; a welfare system in retreat and less and less sustainable; an economy weakened by years of steady decline; growing social resentment, frustration and disorientation; an enduring weakness of Italian state institutions; a highly unstable and volatile political scene with a complete lack of vision. Yet, achieving mutual co-existence will require the Italian population to engage in a real conversation with the migrant population in order to find common solutions on issues such as improvement of life conditions, social justice and cohesion, as well as re-distribution of wealth and reduction of inequalities. The following chapter addresses those challenges.

## 5.2 Obstacles and barriers towards countries of origin

This section focuses on the range of obstacles and barriers that impede migrants’ full contribution to the development of their countries of origin. Since sharp differences exist between the different origin countries, it is not possible to identify specific factors that relate to each context. However, the international literature on the subject has highlighted a number of issues across different developing and migrant-sending countries. These include (by no means

in a comprehensive fashion): weak and under-developed financial systems; lack of an enabling social and productive environment for investments; the inadequacy of physical and IT infrastructure; presence of non-democratic regimes and poor governance; environmental crises and disasters; political instability, conflicts and violence; lack of incentive-oriented policies; the high cost of remittance transfers and the limited control migrants have over the use of remittances. All these elements can dramatically affect the capacity of diasporas to impact home country development.

This section will instead focus on the elements within the Italian context that can hamper any kind of development action towards the countries of origin. This will be done by paying particular attention to the role of African nationals in the context of Italy’s peculiar geo-political position and its role in European-African relations. In that respect, we have identified three different types of obstacles.

- **At the migrant individual level,** his or her potential contribution is held back by the general difficulty in saving funds to send back to the family or to invest. The problematic relation between the high cost of life and the median wage of people – an issue that concerns evensome Italian workers – is particularly noticeable for the migrant population, whose salaries are on average 30% inferior to those received by Italians (ISMU 2017). The migrant workforce is more likely to be employed, not only in unqualified and 3D jobs (Dirty, Dangerous and Demeaning), but also to fall into precarious and irregular contracts as well as differential and discriminatory treatments (ISMU 2017). Moreover, if it is established that migrant contributions (largely not returned to them) hold an important role in sustaining the whole social security system (INPS 2018), the impossibility of redeeming their paid contributions at the time of departure, is a real obstacle for the return of migrants<sup>28</sup>. Before the Bossi-Fini Law (2002), the amount of contributions redeemed constituted essential savings to

<sup>25</sup> Many Italian newspapers gave attention to this episode. See *Avvenire* 2018.

<sup>26</sup> We already directly know of cases of longer-term migrant residents who oppose new migrations and tend to share the same anti-immigration views of particular segments of the Italian population.

<sup>27</sup> At present, a young foreigner cannot apply for Italian citizenship until after turning 18 years old of age and having met some required conditions, among which having resided continuously in Italy during his or her life.

<sup>28</sup> In Italy, the “Bossi-Fini” Immigration Law (2002), still in effect, eliminated the right to redeem social security contributions paid by migrants to INPS for their pension. Migrants therefore have to wait until retirement age before returning to their countries of origin, since leaving Italy earlier would mean surrendering those social benefits. This provision represents an important obstacle to migrants’ long-term financial planning and, at a general level, to migrant-led development initiatives in their countries of origin.



and the entrepreneurial African immigrant diaspora remain very limited.

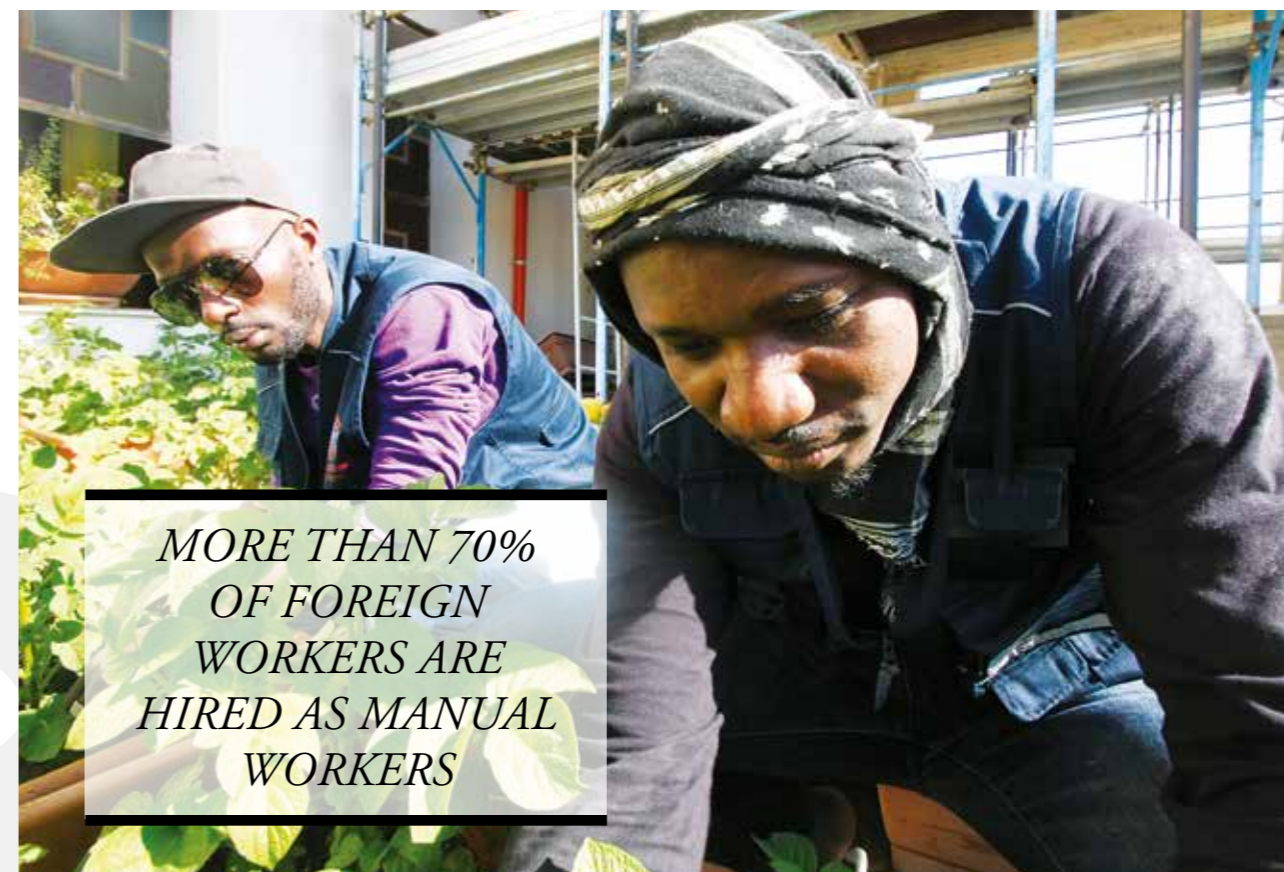
■ **At collective/associational level**, migrants face two major obstacles. Migrant organisations still lack advanced skills and competences in the realm of administration, finance, project planning and management, external relations and fundraising. The relation they built with Italian Stakeholders appears to be one of dependency in relation to coaching, mentoring and technical support. While this asymmetric relation with civil society/NGOs and institutions played an important role in legitimising diaspora co-development initiatives in the past, it now risks undermining the organisational self-development of migrant associations. A related issue is the drastic reduction in funding available to support this multi-stakeholder co-development model, including its capacity building and coaching activities.<sup>29</sup> Such trend threatens to undermine the (already limited) achievements with respect to the organisational self-development of migrant organisations.

■ **At the policy level**, a virtuous approach to “migration and development” – characterised by participatory approach of migrant communities and local stakeholders, as well as a focus on sustainable development – is threatened by a gradual shift of Italian government priorities from co-development to migration management and control. As stated by an Italian Development Cooperation Agency (AICS) representative, the positive nexus between development and migration is now more and more framed through the “root causes approach”, whose ultimate objective is to reduce migration through job creation in countries of origin and transit. While traditional international cooperation interventions are still possible under the new approach, in countries characterised by high emigration projects deterring would-be migrants are being prioritised. Migrant diaspora engagement in particular countries of origin is equally encouraged for the (more or less explicit) purpose of helping the Italian government “keep would-be migrants at home.” In practical terms, Italian financial and operational engagement on the “root causes” approach is so far limited to participation, mainly within the framework of RDPP and Trust Fund Programmes, in development projects in origin areas or in community development actions in transit countries or refugee’ camps (AICS 2017).

■ A further element to be considered is that of other policy clusters that indirectly, but visibly, introduce tensions with a fair and sustainable development path, thus inducing migration flows, and hindering efforts of

address the reintegration needs of the immigrants or to transform it into a “capital” to be invested in a productive activity. Concerning remittances, we witnessed a sizeable reduction of the cost of remittances in Italy, now representing the 5,6% of the total and very close to the 5% recommended by G20 (Cespi 2018). Nevertheless, migrants still face the issue of quality of transfers, that is, the possibility to channel savings towards reliable financial products and services in the country of origin, as well as the capacity to monitor and control the use of remittances remotely from Italy.

■ **At the business/investments level**, present and future migrant investors cannot count on a real country of origin business community at Italian level. In a similar fashion, they lack the support of Chambers of Commerce or entrepreneurial associations with a specific geographical focus, nor can they benefit from wider investment initiatives and business corridors to participate in. This is because such opportunities either do not exist or are not well-consolidated and affordable, or are rather uninterested in reaching out to migrant entrepreneurs and investors. While the Italian banking system is open to granting financial loans to migrants for investment in Italy, it generally does not do the same in case of transnational investment, depriving migrants of key financial resources that could be invested in the countries of origin. The lack of appropriate financial instruments connecting the economies of countries of origin and destination has therefore contributed to undermining the productive use of remittances. The key role of the African diaspora in fostering geopolitical and economic relations between Italy and the African continent has been repeatedly highlighted over the last few years. Nevertheless, cooperation and synergies between Italian entrepreneurs active or interested in investing in Africa



migrants (or refugees) in contributing to development of their own countries. The idea of policy coherence for sustainable development is behind the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (OECD 2016), and widely applies to issues related to migration and development. An important example of this kind of interlinkages is the one related to the fact that Italy’s huge arms production and exports have to be challenged as contributing directly to producing refugees and resulting in forced displacement in a number of countries. Italy’s exports in arms, munitions and military equipment and technology transfers have consistently ranged in value between 750 million and nearly one billion US dollars since 2010<sup>30</sup>. In 2017, exports just of military weapons by Italy were valued at 660 million US dollars in constant to 1990 dollar prices. This figure excluded transfers of other military equipment such as small arms and light weapons, trucks, small artillery, ammunition, support equipment, technology transfers, and other services. Italy has consistently been between the 7th

and 8th largest exporter of arms and munitions for several decades. Saudi Arabia, Turkey and UAE have been and remain large purchasers of made-in-Italy arms and munitions. While specific data is hard to come by, published documentation shows that Italian arms have ended up being used in considerable quantities in warfare in Middle East countries, notably Syria and Yemen, conflicts that have killed tens of thousands of people, displaced millions and left millions more on the verge of starvation. A New York Times video report in 2017 graphically documents how bombs manufactured in Sardinia –some shipped via Bari to Saudi Arabia-- ended up being dropped on – and killing -- civilians in Yemen.<sup>31</sup>

All these different obstacles are linked to the wider discussions regarding the role of migration in our contemporary society and, more in general, to the state of society as a whole in terms of rights, democracy, justice and equality for all, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, culture or legal status.

<sup>29</sup> As stated by a representative of the cooperation office of the municipality of Milan, local authorities are at present no longer able to act as donors mainly for lack of resources (but also for the weakening of a political will, and have reinvented their role as “quality controllers” and “facilitators” (interview n. 6)

<sup>30</sup> See SIPRI 2018

<sup>31</sup> New York Times 2017. See Beccegato, Pallottino (2018)

# CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

As mentioned in previous chapters, Italy is currently facing what has been termed as a “cultural emergency” (Caritas 2018), a political and social hysteria that seems to have taken hold of the whole country. The image of the ‘stranger’, which now refers to migrants and asylum seekers from non-EU countries who are now routinely stigmatised and excluded, the target of both physical and symbolic violence perpetrated and legitimised by institutions, the media and ordinary citizens. More in general, the liberal and cosmopolitan views, often associated with globalisation, are currently under attack in the Italian context, replaced by a nationalist political project advocating for “Italians first” and socio-cultural retrenchment. But are those forms of nationalism really the best antidote to the ills and issues affecting our societies? Is closure of physical and cultural borders really the best way to deal with challenges such as global insecurity, environmental degradation, erosion of social rights and labour protection, deterioration of social cohesion and community solidarity? And even more worryingly, why has there been no strong political reaction to the proliferation of such views? Why do left wing parties, public opinion, civil society, as well as migrants themselves seem to be completely incapable of countering such narrative and propose an alternative way forward?

The main challenge is, therefore, to disconnect migration from current narratives that present it as a security emergency and a dangerous threat to Italian identity, welfare and social order. At the same time, the opposite should be avoided, that is, to propose a counter-position uncritically presenting immigration and a multicultural society as advantages and net gain *per se*. Such naive pro-immigration vision - usually assumed by the more politically left-wing sectors of the public opinion - has so far not succeeded in countering the current anti-immigrant discourse, nor in establishing a dialogue with those segments

of the population that are most threatened by economic and social degradation. Such failure may be due to the fact that both discourses share in fact the same approach: they consider immigration as if it were an “external” element imposed on Italy from the outside, and which is held responsible for all societal ills for some, and for all of its progress for others. To escape such dichotomy, we therefore suggest considering migration as an important element that impacts the economic, political, social and cultural life of the entire country but which, at the same time, is now an enduring and embedded component of Italian society.

Keeping this in mind, we suggest reconsidering how we speak about migration, particularly when we do so in relation to social and economic exclusion. Since such issues affect a significant segment of the Italian population as well, it is of the outmost importance to discuss them inclusively and to ensure progressive policies are perceived as benefitting everyone in the country. It is not by chance that, during those years of economic decline, hate speech and intolerance have not only targeted migrants, but also other minority or socially vulnerable social groups, including LGBTQ individuals, women, people with disability, the unemployed, homeless, beggars, etc. Such change in the narrative on migration is all the more important since the migrant population and Italian nationals share similar sets of problems and grievances. First, both Italians and foreigners face difficulties in accessing the labour market and in fully enjoying their social rights (from the pensions to nurseries and social housing). Second, both groups struggle to cope with the rising cost of living and are at risk of falling into poverty. Third, both have seen deterioration in the life conditions as a result of labour exploitation, weakening of social policies, degradation of the school and educational system. Fourth, both are affected by

the instability and volatility of national and local political institutions. Fifth, both Italians and migrants now consider, or have considered, migration outside of Italy as the only solution to this situation.<sup>32</sup>

As a result, developing migrant capabilities needs to be linked to similar actions that seriously take into account the situation of the most vulnerable segments of the native population. The challenge of supporting migrants’ contribution to development is therefore intrinsically linked to the one of ensuring the local population can do the same. Such policy perspective would see the goal of enhancing migrants’ contribution to development as intrinsically connected to the wider socio-political project of promoting an integrated, solidary and more equal community. As a matter of fact, it would also ask of policy-makers to promote and keep those two objectives together, while at the same time paying attention to the specific issues, vulnerabilities and sensitivities that characterise each group. The development of such a comprehensive approach will require extensive efforts in the near future and cannot be the subject of the present report. However, for the purpose of this publication, we identify below a few strategic policy clusters and sketch their potential orientation in the context of the proposed approach.

## 6.1 Reception/integration policy

We have already highlighted how the new Security Law (“Decreto Sicurezza”) seriously risks disrupting the Italian refugee integration and reception system. This system, while mainly emergency-driven and not always efficient, was nevertheless a success story and a constant source of good practices. When it functioned at its best, such reception system also positively impacted the local host community in several ways. For example, it led to employment of young Italians in reception centres, therefore valorising and promoting the former’s professional competencies. Moreover, centres’ consumption contributed to boosting local economy as a result of goods (food, clothes) and service (laundry, catering, social and medical provisions etc.) provision. In addition, such infrastructure incubated new forms of solidarity, social ties and social utility initiatives promoting community cohesion at the village, town or city levels. The best way to capitalise on this still fragmented but promising phenomena would be to strengthen the good governance model of decentralised reception promoted by the SPRAR system. This should be done in order to pursue the following objectives: 1) promote autonomy and empowerment of hosted migrants via a process of interaction with the local community; 2) promote and valorise receipt processes as an occasion to enhance local social, economic and cultural development; 3) use the experience of reception centres to sustain the process of integration of young people, both foreigners and Italians, in the job market and to

enhance recognition of their qualifications; 4) fight against unemployment, social desertification and, in certain contexts, even depopulation. In brief, such an approach, making the most of the resources mobilised for the refugee reception system, would tie together human development concerns for both migrants and local actors, promoting a new model of social inclusion for various vulnerable groups.

## 6.2 Work integration policy

According to the OECD (2018a), the Italian job market, dominated by precarious contracts and characterised by a high level of unemployment and informality, is now one of the most markedly insecure among OECD countries. In this context, migrants are often employed in segregated niches and sectors of the Italian economy prone to labour exploitation, and they face considerable barriers in accessing the mid- and higher-segments of the labour market due to factors such as discrimination, skills-mismatch, or lack of skills recognition (Caritas 2018; FLAI-CGIL 2018; Campo Antico 2018; CNEL 2012).

Policy in this field should be framed in terms of integrated and universalistic objectives, but also remain flexible enough to adapt to the specific typology of workers. On the one hand, job market dynamics should be addressed through universalistic measures that protect workers and tackle vulnerability, for instance by facilitating rapid work reintegration of dismissed workers or extending unemployment benefits to all workers. In that respect, the recent creation of the National Agency For Policies on Active Work (ANPAL) and the reinforcement of national employment centres (Centri per l’Impiego), which resulted in the strengthening of connections to the Italian

<sup>32</sup> Almost 285,000 Italians have emigrated in 2017 (Idos 2018).

refugee reception system (SPRAR), are all very promising steps that nevertheless require to be supported by further investments (OECD 2018a).

On the other hand, dynamics of segregation and discrimination affecting migrant inclusion in the job market call for targeted policy interventions, with the aim of progressively creating equal conditions of access for both migrants and locals. Such an approach would entail a number of interventions: facilitate recognition of formal and informal qualifications and skills of migrant workers; provide recruitment services able to overcome gaps and barriers, as well as specialised and targeted professional training; protect the migrant workforce from formal discrimination as well as labour exploitation, moreover ensuring that illicit recruitment in agriculture (*caporalato*) as well as forms of bonded labour in domestic work and in the garment sector are criminalised and effectively punished. Moreover, regular channels of labour migration should be reopened for migrants with low qualifications, as well as for seasonal workers in agriculture, because those provisions would also contribute to a better management of the migration phenomena; in parallel, work permits should be granted to asylum seekers who hold a job, as such measure would allow a number of individuals to exit the reception system, which would in turn entail less (if not more efficient) spending of public resources (Ambrosini 2018).

### 6.3 Education policy

At present in the Italian school system there are 826,000 foreign pupils, equal to 9.4% of the total number of students, and 60% of which were born in Italy (Caritas 2018). Structural weaknesses of the Italian educational system – i.e. declining public funds, repeated and ineffective reforms, disconnection from needs and requirements of the labour

market – overlap with other issues that specifically affect foreigners, such as recognition of diplomas acquired abroad, delay in the school cycle, scarce presence in university-track high schools, and limited access to qualifying educational paths (Ongini 2018; Miur 2018). These two sets of obstacles add up to produce the exclusion of a significant component of tomorrow's adult Italian citizens, further exacerbating social tensions, “ethnic” conflicts and the marginalisation of youth. Yet, it is important to remember that most issues affect migrants and local population alike, and depend more on broader factors such as geographical location and surrounding socio-economic conditions rather than on nationality. Dropping out of school, confinement in less qualified technical and training institutes, gender differences in attendance rates and school performance are conditions shared by both migrants and disadvantaged Italian students (Ongini 2018). As a result, educational policy should first counter the long-standing decline in political attention, public investments and appreciation of education, and rather aim at improving its effectiveness, and promoting the added value of public education. Such policy should promote, once again, the inclusive, public and universalistic vocation of the education system, leading to the implementation of actions targeting vulnerable people or student groups at risk (migrants included). On one hand, such policy would contribute to fostering the social and cultural integration of the foreign student population and their families, while on the other it would provide all the vulnerable populations in need, regardless of national status, with equal opportunities.

### 6.4 Policy related to citizenship, social and political rights

Italian citizenship rules are still regulated by the 1992 Citizenship Law and *ius sanguinis* principles. That means that Italians who emigrated abroad a long time ago, regardless of whether they maintain any ties with Italy, still retain the right to hold Italian citizenship, as well as the right to vote at the political elections from abroad. In contrast, the foreign population resident in Italy has to go through a complicated and tortuous procedure in order to obtain the citizenship. Discussions to finally incorporate *ius soli* (right of the soil, or birthright citizenship) criteria in the law were recently revived towards the end of the previous legislature (late 2017), under a centre-left parliamentary majority. The proposition was based on the idea of a “tempered” *ius soli*, stipulating that citizenship would be granted to those who, in addition to fulfilling the technical requirements for eligibility, could also prove their belonging to the Italian national community through their mastery of particular Italian cultural competencies (*ius culturae*). Nevertheless, the subject proved to be too controversial even among progressive political forces, with the result that any reform plans were shelved.

We believe that an open and inclusive country should develop an inclusive model of citizenship open to all those who share the same political community and territory and who adhere to the same set of rights, duties, contributions and benefits. While no such proposal is likely to be put forward under the current populist coalition government, a more realistic and pragmatic assessment considers the situation in terms of substantial citizenship, that is, the dimension of citizenship that goes beyond formal entitlements and considers actual enjoyment of different citizenship rights. This is an important element for migrant socio-political inclusion, particularly in consideration of the fact that many migrants see no improvement in their situation after obtaining Italian citizenship, particularly with respect to discrimination. Such dynamic may also explain the trend, only apparently contradictory, of naturalised migrants using the newly acquired Italian passport to expatriate elsewhere in Europe in search of better opportunities (Ceschi 2018).

As a result, beyond reforming the Italian Citizenship Law, it is equally strategic to ensure that civic, social and political rights are actually enjoyed both by new Italians with a migratory background and by non-naturalised migrants. Once again, of course, the issue of ensuring equal formal and substantial rights applies to the entire population living in Italy. Nevertheless, particularly in the political sphere and in the granting of actual political and voting rights, a great divide exists between Italians and migrant residents. Easier access to citizenship for foreigners, which could result in the enfranchisement of as many as five million new voters, is therefore the one real step that could really revolutionize political life in Italy and undermine the popularity of anti-immigrant and nationalist movements.

### 6.5 Cooperation policy

Italian international cooperation has recently undergone a major reform (Law 125/2014). The new law aims to provide Italian

development cooperation with a new legal and organisational operational framework. At the organisational level, the new law led to the creation of new institutional bodies – i.e. the revamped Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), and the *Consiglio Italiano per la Cooperazione*, a council bringing together different public and private stakeholders, including one representative of diaspora communities<sup>33</sup> – with financial and operative tasks. Beyond institutional make-over, the reform contained two important additional elements. On the one hand, it formally recognised diaspora organisations as actors of development cooperation, and therefore their eligibility as direct recipients of public funds; on the other, it encouraged the involvement of private and for-profit actors in development cooperation. Current opportunities at policy level for facilitating and enhancing migrant-driven development mainly revolve around those two points<sup>34</sup>.

Even though particular technical issues (at the financial, organisational and individual level) still remain, AICS and DG Cooperazione (the government department for international cooperation) have since 2016 worked on including migrant organisations in the roster of OSC (Civil Society Organisations) maintained by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Following completion of mobilisation activities in the aftermath of the first National Summit of Diasporas in November 2017, a second step, including training and coaching activities with a first group of organisations to be included in the roster, is now under way (Interviews 1, 2 and 5). Rather than trying to achieve the (impossible) representation of all immigrant population/formal networks, such project strives to promote “inclusive leaderships”, that is, to support the capacity-building of a number of pioneer individuals and organisations who will be able to pave the way for the others. In that respect, the professionalisation of migrant NGOs will hopefully lead to further valorisation of transnational and trans-local interchanges, as well as of development projects and ideas proposed directly by diaspora communities. The above-mentioned “Summit of the Diasporas”, supported by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, is one of the few real opportunities where the migrants’ role in development actions, both politically and operationally, is concretely discussed. It is therefore important that civil society organisations participate actively.

The terms under which for-profit actors will be included in development cooperation are yet to be specified. The first challenge is to create a fair framework of rules, codes and opportunities, within which the collaboration between public, social private and market actors can develop profitably for everyone involved. The second is to ensure that diaspora

<sup>33</sup> The Consiglio has activated 4 working groups. The most active group is the one on “Migration and Development”, which involves many relevant public and private stakeholder and supports the activities of the Italian Summit of Diasporas.

<sup>34</sup> For a more detailed analysis, see Università di Tor Vergata-AICS 2017.

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

AT PRESENT IN THE ITALIAN SCHOOL SYSTEM THERE ARE 826,000 FOREIGN PUPILS, 60% OF WHICH ARE BORN IN ITALY



organisations are not obliged to compromise on shared values, objectives and missions in order to maintain a working relationship within this future partnership. Will they be able to maintain their connection to the grassroots, remain socially sensitive and politically engaged actors, ensure fairness and share the benefits stemming from development initiatives among community members? Here it is useful to recall the example of a partnership established between an association of Burkinabe migrants and an Italian company in the framework of a co-development project in Burkina Faso (CeSPI 2015). The migrant association, jointly with an Italian agricultural machinery company based in the same Italian locality, developed a pilot programme of rural intervention in the home country (CeSPI 2015). This and other examples are promising in the sense that they seem to prefigure a win-win scenario. Migrants benefited from additional funding, technical expertise and material means, while companies were granted access to new markets and benefitted from institutional and informal support provided by the diaspora infrastructure. The pursuit of profitable activities within the realm of this project did not prevent the partnership from also implementing co-development and socially responsible actions. Although such kinds of projects and practices are still in their infancy and will need careful evaluation at a later stage, they hold significant development potential.

<sup>35</sup> The main lines of interventions are currently four: emergency; education for global citizenship; root causes and M&D.  
<sup>36</sup> OECD 2018b.

At the same time, just as it is the case for contributions to Italy, the broader political climate is likely to influence the degree to which migrants can make contributions to sustainable development in their countries of origin. The already mentioned decline in funding for migration and development actions, as well as the increasing prioritisation of security and migration control concerns will likely affect negatively the developmental potential and capacities of migrant diaspora groups. Even if “migration & development” remains an important domain of intervention for Italian cooperation,<sup>35</sup> such policy field is currently undermined by the emergence of political concerns – e.g. security and border control; fight against irregular migration and smuggling; address root causes of migration – that inherently clash with the objectives of co-development through human mobility. On a positive note, the Italian cooperation agency (AICS) intends to positively exploit the strategic indications provided by the OECD<sup>36</sup>, that is, to better identify and select actions that really contribute to sustainable development and “put migrants at the centre” (Interview 1). To conclude, it is of crucial importance to maintain and defend a positive co-development vision within Italian development cooperation. The existing migrant potential should be encouraged, and not wasted in favour of an approach that prioritises repression.

## 7.1 Conclusions

### 7.1.1 Human mobility as an element of transformation: controversies and representations

Address migration starting from shared values

Migration is one of the major themes that characterise contemporary times. However, we know by experience that there is always a certain degree of misalignment between the changing reality and our ability to grasp social transformations. Available information and data are often perceived as ‘partial’ or biased (consider, for example, statistics on the actual figures of migrant residents in Italy<sup>37</sup>), particularly when they support a narrative fundamentally at odds with prevalent perceptions and moods amongst public opinion. The populist discourse fed by such perceptions generates political choices that prove to be effective above all, if any, at the symbolic level. However, in order to promote change and encourage a different type of social awareness, it is crucial to deeply understand those experiences and perceptions. A different political agenda is urgently needed. It should be able to address these concerns, to propose a political vision based on truth, on accurate and sensible understandings of reality, and on recognisable and universal values. For a community of believers this idea assumes and integrates a reading of human coexistence centred on the idea of relationship, and therefore on the culture of encounter. Following the logic of a ‘global’ civil community, the search for the common good must be embedded in the notion of human rights, including social and economic rights enshrined in the UN conventions, as a universal acquisition. Today human rights are the key instrument that defends the dignity

<sup>37</sup> In Italy, as repeatedly shown by research and reporting, there is a considerable gap between public perceptions regarding the extent of the migrant population, and the actual statistics.

of every inhabitant of this planet and provides them with concrete tools to ensure its respect.

To enact this vision, a process of real ‘cultural reconstruction’, carried out through research, direct action, advocacy and awareness-raising campaigning towards the general public, as well as towards private and public institutions, is needed. This vision also requires building inclusive alliances, which give voice to the most vulnerable – including migrant and diaspora communities – and it must express itself in actions on the ground that have a strong transformative potential.

### Faces of the reality: migrants contribution to economy and society

How has migration been a part of the transformation of Italian society in the last decades? Migration is not a new phenomenon for Italy, and the proportion of foreign residents in Italy nowadays is far from the peaks of other countries. However, within Europe, Italy has witnessed the highest relative growth of its migrant population over the last twenty years: the speed of this transformation has undoubtedly contributed to a public perception only partially backed by facts, but easily instrumentalised by an increasingly aggressive rhetoric.

As a matter of fact, over the last two decades, migration has made increasingly important contributions to development in Italy. While migrants and persons with foreign origin are more and more visible in the social and cultural environment in Italy, foreign born immigrants – some of Italian heritage - now comprise more than 10% of the country’s workforce, filling skills needs and gaps at all levels. Migrant workers are found in significant proportions in critical sectors of the economy, including agriculture, construction, health care, domestic work, among others. Many migrants fill jobs for which Italians are increasingly unavailable due to the country’s ageing and declining

the diaspora maintain ties with Italy, establish or expand trade and commercial activity, buy Italian products or invest in Italy. Some immigrate and bring skills back to the country of their fore-bearers. All of this contributes to the development of Italy.

### A deteriorating societal and policy environment

The Italian “migratory landscape” has changed profoundly in recent years, both with respect to the reality of the phenomenon and its public perception and its political-institutional treatment. The political attitude, the social climate and the prevailing media representation of migration and immigrants in Italy has become progressively hostile and alarmist. The advent of the current government, with a clear position opposed to migration, demonstrates a current risk running through our society, which results in spreading a negative narrative about migration and migrants of all statuses. This in turn becomes a vicious circle of widespread sentiments and policy responses leading to increasingly hostile attitudes towards migrants in general, and fearful attitudes about one’s own wellbeing and social security. This effectively leads to defensive posturing, rancorous behaviours, and the end of progressive societal transformations in a pluralist sense. Consequently, migrants are stigmatised, persecuted, and perceived as “different”, rather than valued for their many contributions to Italian society, economy, politics, culture or otherwise.

Being conscious of the contradictions that have been expressed until now, the present political and social environment in Italy needs to respond to some concrete issues of human mobility with effective and value-based public policies. The actual treatment of migrant workers in Italy is of great concern, especially in agriculture, construction and other sectors where levels of abuse and exploitation of many migrant workers has been extremely severe, resulting even in deaths. Such exploitative treatment signifies huge obstacles in recognising migrants’ contributions to development, to their expectations of minimally decent treatment and remuneration, and even to their lives and physical integrity.

Similarly, it is disturbing to observe the significant number of incidents and levels of physical attacks, intimidation, murders of migrants, torching of migrant businesses, and other even quasi-official mistreatment of migrants, such as building walls in some Italian towns around immigrant neighbourhoods. All of the aforementioned incidents pose very serious obstacles to migrants’ participation and contributions, and also to social cohesion and human rights in Italy.

Over the past decades, Italy has built up a legal framework appropriate to supporting needed immigration, protection of migrants’ rights and dignity, and decent work for migrant

workers. It ratified both of the ILO Conventions on migration for employment (Numbers 97 and 143). A previous government, with support in parliament, intended to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families, but was thwarted from doing so due to intense pressure from other EU Member States. Having ratified all fundamental and priority conventions of the ILO and most of the relevant technical conventions, Italy has labour law on the books that should, if enforced, assure decent work conditions for all migrant workers – indeed all workers - in the country. However, the levels of serious abuse, the more repressive legislation adopted in recent years, and the attitude of national authorities suggests that actual policy and practice is far from that expected by Italy’s own laws and its international treaty obligations.

The big risk of these trends in attitudes, policy, behaviour, and treatment of migrants is to discourage and prevent the only immediate solution to the declining work force and penury of skills, which in turn already threatens the viability of the Italian economy and sustainability of Italy’s own development. Nonetheless, the much more positive attitudes, policy and actions by municipal authorities across the country, as well as several regional governments offer hope and opportunity both for migrants’ inclusion and their contributions to Italy and, more broadly, to Italy’s future viability, prosperity and social cohesion.

### Migration without development or development without migration?

Establishing a positive relation between migration and development in Italy will depend on at least two main factors. First, on making the migrant population an active and creative component of a collective “we”; an ally in the fight against exclusion and social injustice that, in practice, concerns everyone. Second, on the desire of Italian residents to engage in more equitable and constructive relationships of exchange and reciprocity amongst each other as well with countries in the Global South. More specifically, with respect to the issue of migration/migrants as a factor for boosting development, where development is understood in its wider meaning of ‘integral human development’, we face a clear danger: migration without development, and development without migration.

On the one hand, migration without development is a consequence of the occupational and wage segregation

experienced by the foreign population in the labor market. Increasingly restrictive migration and citizenship policies enacted by the Italian government are completely out of touch with the contemporary global reality, where migration and mobility are an inescapable social fact that needs to be dealt with. In this context, migrants are given less and less space to fully and consciously contribute to Italian society in terms of rights, duties and responsibilities based on their individual and collective mobilization and self-realization. The re-surfacing of a populist and nationalist, if not openly racist, discourse in the public debate is paralleled by the growing economic vulnerability, marginalisation and stigmatisation of the migrant population. This leads to situations where the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups are socio-economically segregated, and experience both legal precariousness and widespread popular and institutional ostracism that hinder social integration and cultural acceptance.

Migrants are contradictorily viewed, on the one hand, as a threat to security and as an object of economic exploitation; and, on the other, as agents of international development (Sorensen 2012). This simplistic dichotomy alerts us to the fact that we need to be careful when we examine the relationship between migration and development. Claims about migrants’ contribution to development need to be nuanced, particularly if by development we mean participation in social change and expansion of societal opportunities for everyone in a progressive sense, and not only mere economic involvement, at low cost and without emancipation, in a declining and dysfunctional socio-economic system.

On the other hand, the idea of ‘development without migration’ appears to be a clear option both for internal and external policies. In Italy, migrants are more and more explicitly discriminated because they are seen as an

exogenous and threatening variable in the process of internal development. According to this view, particularly popular amongst nationalist parties and public opinion, Italian development does not need migrants, as if - in spite of what empirical evidence shows - human mobility were not an intrinsic part of the Italian reality already. The same rhetoric is present in international cooperation, and particularly in the use of development aid to control and reduce human mobility. On the one side, there is a tendency to decrease Italian investment in development cooperation; on the other, a restructuring of cooperation priorities which now also include migration management and border control. Legally speaking, border management (European Union borders, as well as internal borders to the regions from which migratory flows originate)<sup>38</sup>, should not be part of development cooperation policies, which are expected to focus on the protection of rights and on integral human development. The vision and intentions underpinning today's international cooperation is reflected in the mantra 'let's help them at home', a simplified version of the more refined 'addressing the root causes of migration'). This view assumes a number of direct causal relationships: more cooperation more development of poor countries less migration, in line with the objective of guaranteeing 'safe and ordered' migration, as prescribed in Agenda 2030.

In such a model, 'development' and international human mobility are disconnected. The result is the criminalization of every person on the move for the sole fact that they are not employing the 'correct' way of migrating, which has been decided elsewhere. The same considerations apply to migrants in destination countries, where they are accepted - or rather tolerated - only as long as they submissively fulfill their role within the global machine of value production.

Only by fully and seriously engaging with migration as both a challenge and opportunity, we can begin to rethink policies in a more inclusive manner, imagine new forms of exchange and solidarity, and ensure that all citizens in a broader sense, both local and migrant, are respected. This is the only available pathway to reconcile migration and development.

## 7.1.2 Re-establishing the ground for the common good

### Reframing the policy basis

How to reconcile facts, perceptions and a genuine upholding of human dignity? Policies, even with their sensitivity towards the different categories of people and groups, must be able to take care of each person and citizen, with his/her distinct needs and features, without excluding or discriminating against any one. There is a need for 'universalistic' approaches, because they are able to include and understand every person as an individual, citizen, and human being. At the same time, there is a need for focussed and 'affirmative' policy initiatives that activate and modulate specific actions for certain groups and social categories, in order to facilitate their full integration.

It is therefore necessary to address the 'migration issue' within a broader scenario of inclusive policies and integrative actions targeting the Italian society as a whole, with particular attention to the most excluded, marginalised and disadvantaged groups. Therefore, migrant inclusion must be addressed in the context of a more ambitious effort to transform society and revive a new socio-political pact based on the values of solidarity and cohesion among citizens, on respect of differences and social and political rights, social policies, welfare and personal promotion. In this sense, the immigrant population represents and will represent a powerful litmus test for our society.

Fighting against migrant exclusion is not about being 'good' towards the migrant population; it is not a matter of charity, assistance or 'tolerance', either. Rather, it is a matter of social justice and foresight for the Italian and European societies as a whole. Welcoming and integrating migrants as well as excluded local populations means investing in the future of the nation, providing a societal antidote against hatred and exploitation, and the essential element for a more just and cohesive society for all. Embracing such an approach will also provide us with the tools to fight against insecurity, which is the dominant feeling of our times. Insecurity is not purely physical nor is it often the outcome of intercultural encounter. It is instead a structural condition of precariousness, disorientation and uncertainty that affects individuals in our contemporary world, where rights, well-being, fairness and respect are questioned daily in the context of neo-liberal globalisation. A more secure society is one where the divides and inequalities between different components of the (local and global) society are taken up as a challenge to which we all have to offer an answer based on values and on a realistic understanding of opportunities and risks.

### The imperative for a new vision and narrative

At times of rising racist nationalism and repressive government policy, it is necessary to create new narratives and imagine new ethical-political perspectives that are capable of combining pragmatic skills and value orientations, knowledge and awareness of the complexities of our current world. Within this problematic, it is vital to find ways to reconcile the state-centric and universalistic way of thinking, the human rights, the ethics of solidarity and security, the demands of human beings and citizens.

First, it is important to elaborate a vision, a narrative and a political statement that addresses migration not as an external cataclysm, but as a transnational phenomenon of the current globalised and interconnected world of which we are inevitably a part, as individuals, citizens, consumers, Italians and Europeans. For Italian society, it means seeing migration and migrants not as an exogenous and critical issue 'per se', but as an endogenous fixture of our Italian social, political and cultural life, and as an opportunity for Italy's future.

Current tensions and conflicts between migrants and disadvantaged local population, beyond the political hype, are rooted in the decade-long economic and social crisis, which led to the widening of vulnerable groups, a gradual reduction of welfare instruments and an erosion of effective access to social rights (work, home, education, health). However, once again, it is necessary to go beyond a sterile "us" versus "them" juxtaposition, and understand the structural reasons underlying the production of exclusion and marginalisation. "Not only of migrants but also", as Sassen (2015: 9) states, "of workers, of the poor and marginal (locked up in prisons), of peoples from their lands, of species and ecosystems from the biosphere". Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* and in *Laudato Si'* clearly shows how the causes of the current social and ecological crisis are connected, the result of a system that excludes and produces "waste". Italian and "foreign" residents share not only the same life contexts and problems (De Cesare 2017), but also the structural conditions that demand a different political approach. Everyone deserves to belong to the same legal system, state territory and national social fabric (and, ultimately, to the same human family), through policies, relationships and exchanges that are as fair, dignified and enabling as possible for every member of society. A society that is not divided into separate and monolithic orders according to a single category of differences ("Italians", "immigrants"), those relating precisely to national belonging and to "cultural identity", but within a much more diverse mosaic of identities which needs to be reshaped in multiple and overlapping social affiliations.

### Inclusive, universalistic, non-discriminatory policies

To go beyond the security paradigm means transforming the social and economic systems that generate exclusion and marginalisation. Policies need to preserve their universalistic perspective, while specifically addressing the needs of all those in a situation of exclusion and difficulty; they also need to restore an 'equality of possibilities' where it is lacking (for migrants, but also for poor and vulnerable people due to different reasons). This is not to deny the need for 'active' integration and reception policies; rather, to recognise that the problem of migration and migrant reception cannot be addressed in a vacuum, regardless of the present socio-economic crisis and of the latter's effects on the rest of the population.

To ensure a more cohesive social fabric, it is necessary to integrate, to include, and to promote wellbeing for the largest share of the population. When devising concrete opportunities for inclusion, particular attention must be paid to spaces of contact where social interaction amongst migrants and locals is most evident, such as at school. Schools are one of the privileged places for defining the society we desire for the future.

Specific attention must also be given to inclusive initiatives in the context of local urban and rural planning. It is in such areas, which suffer from degradation and abandonment but also often incubate positive social change, that a strong public policy on inclusion and empowerment of the weakest and most vulnerable classes is needed. The same consideration should be paid to combating exploitation in the world of work, which affects vulnerable foreigners but also Italians in difficult situations. The solution to these problems can only be found in a 'culture of legality', namely in the application and enforcement of international human rights and labour standards implemented in national law, as well as in the rejection of policies that build bands of 'marginalized people and those without rights', easy prey for abuse and illegality.

<sup>38</sup> As analysed, among other sources available, in OpenPolis reports: <https://www.openpolis.it/cosac/cooperazione/>

and reduced manner within the objectives for sustainable development, where migrants are recognised as deserving protection as a vulnerable group in the world of work<sup>39</sup>; and as protagonists of a migratory phenomenon that must be made, above all, more ‘... orderly, safe, regular and responsible’. Together with a further reference to the need of decreasing the costs of remittances, these are the sole concerns explicitly related to human mobility within the Agenda 2030 in its most recognisably prescriptive part.

A wider and more complete consideration of migratory phenomena within the 2030 Agenda should be based on a more visible connection between different policy areas/objectives, and the principles expressed in the preamble, in particular with the “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family” as the “foundation of freedom, justice and of peace in the world”. The 2030 Agenda, however, still represents a potentially useful tool for its broad scope and ambition, especially in the context of policy coherence for sustainable development—namely, the idea that it is not possible to conceive a truly sustainable development without migration governance deeply rooted in human rights<sup>40</sup>. This concept would lead us to clearly recognise that some of the policies carried out by rich countries, directly or indirectly, cause migration: agricultural policies, commercial, industrial, financial and fiscal policies, environmental, development cooperation, arms production and trade, and so forth<sup>41</sup>.

The need to pay more attention to the motivations behind policies is even more urgent in the case of development policies which, as already mentioned, prioritise migration control rather than poverty reduction. The Agenda 2030 is an important framework but will not suffice alone. In recognising the need for a direct development cooperation action that does not betray its mandate and *raison d’être* and actually tackles the root causes of global injustice, it is necessary to refer to the frameworks of global cooperation and to the tools that allow a concerted management of phenomena of this magnitude.

In relation to the International Development Cooperation policy context in Italy, it is absolutely urgent and imperative to fully implement the national instruments required by the 125/2014 law, including the full operation of the Italian Development Cooperation Agency, avoiding the merging

Finally, it is necessary to reflect in depth on the structural causes that these phenomena of exclusion generate and reproduce. It is all the more necessary to ensure that reforms of the current system do not exacerbate the problem. A particularly worrying trend in the current context is the tendency to introduce and justify unfair and indefensible discriminatory references to migrants in the legislation, once again justified by the logic of ‘Italians first’. This case is also reflective of a cultural drift, where such forms of discrimination are normalised and become accepted standard behaviour. Bringing human rights back in is once again crucial to oppose such discriminatory tendencies.

### Migration and sustainable development: a global and national approach

The clear and inalienable connection between integral human development and human rights should provide the main framework of action on all the most important global development issues. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development affirms a series of complex commitments. However, the relation between the Agenda’s overall ambition and its actual ‘Goals for Sustainable Development’ is not always straightforward, particularly when it comes to anchoring goals in principles and rights.

This can easily be confirmed by observing how migration issues are dealt with in the Agenda 2030 itself. The opening statement recognises migrants as a vulnerable group, which may, however, make a contribution to inclusive growth and sustainable development, and migration as “... a multidimensional reality of great importance for the development of countries of origin, transit and destination, which requires coherent and comprehensive responses”. These concerns, however, are reflected only in a very weak

of security and migration deterrence priorities with the genuine international development priorities reaffirmed in the law. Already tested initiatives, such as the Summit of the Diasporas should be looked at as an example that shows vital perspectives for the future. Participation of migrant associations and civil society organisations in the ‘Summit of the Diasporas’, supported by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation, is one among numerous specific opportunities for enhancing the role of migrants in development.

Finally, it is very important to maintain the reference to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration as a tool to improve cooperation among countries of origin and destination to ensure a smooth, secure and orderly migration based on the respect for human rights, with the perspective of Italy joining the group of signatory countries in the near future.

No emergency situation can ever justify a different approach from the one oriented towards the protection of people’s rights as it has instead happened in Italy in this period. The difficult objective of harmonising border control activities with protection guarantees must always be inspired by the protection of human rights. It is therefore essential to put in place all the necessary tools to reconcile the need to manage a complex phenomenon with the duty to protect people’s rights.

Legal, political, and practical measures are needed to expand the channels for regular migration from third countries and to permit asylum seekers to work in the countries of destination. Ensuring the application of decent work labour standards to all migrants working in Italy, including temporary workers, posted workers, and those in precarious, informal and irregular situations is urgent. Specific labour inspection and interventions of other means are needed to protect migrant workers, just as vulnerable and precarious Italian workers, obliged to accept abusive work conditions and to fight against the illegal employment of agricultural workers for very little pay, (known as *caporalato*) and other forms of forced or abusive labour. Attention is required to improve systems that recognise formal and informal

qualifications and competencies of migrant workers; that link in particular migrants and employment needs to overcome gaps and barriers, to provide specific and targeted professional training and that protect the migrant workforce from formal and structural discrimination. In addition, labour market dynamics need to be addressed through interventions that quickly respond to the needs of integration of migrants and unemployed workers, as well as guarantee unemployment benefits on equal terms to all workers, migrants and nationals alike. Specific attention is required to ensure that migrant and diaspora organisations find support in partnership with social, public and private sector actors without losing their own community ideals, objectives, and missions.

Education policy in Italy also deserves particular attention, building on long-standing public investment and social appreciation of education, with a dual strategy of serving as an engine of social and cultural integration of migrant children and youth and their families, while also providing equal opportunities to all populations at risk of social and employment exclusion. Overall, the educational system must continue its inclusive, public and universalistic task.

More broadly, Italy should develop an open and inclusive vision of participation, integration and citizenship, based on having shared the same place of residence, territory, political community, as well as common adherence to rights, responsibilities, contributions and benefits. Migrants can be considered not as passive assistance objects, but active subjects for sustainable development in Italy and in countries of origin and transit. The underlying key is therefore, the recognition of dignity, rights and duties, with an investment aimed at building equal and greater opportunities within wider public policies aimed at preventing and combating all forms of vulnerability and marginality.

<sup>39</sup> This attention is confirmed in remembering the need for disaggregated statistics also based on the migration condition in other objectives and targets.

<sup>40</sup> For an analysis of the coherence of Italian and European migration policies with the framework drawn up by the Agenda 2030, see Coresi, Fabrizio, Paolo Pezzati and Andrea Stocchiero. *Il governo delle migrazioni nel caso italiano ed europeo nel quadro degli SGD. In Sviluppo sostenibile... per chi? Una visione critica per la coerenza delle politiche italiane ed europee*, by Andrea Stocchiero. Rome: GCAP, 2018.

<sup>41</sup> See Caritas Italiana’s research for “Il Peso delle Armi”, ediz. *The Mill 2018 and the GCAP Report (cit.)* For some documented examples.

## 7.2 Recommendations

### 1. Address migration starting from common values: promote a values-based narrative on migrants and refugees.

- Articulate and promote in Italy and beyond a vision of migrants and refugees as full participating members of Italian society and as contributors to the development and welfare of Italy in all spheres.
- Root the narrative in the recognition of the rights and dignity of the person and, in relation to economic, social and political dimensions, promoting and sustaining integral human development.
- Ensure that human rights are referred to as a universal acquisition, in particular the social, economic, cultural, civil and political rights enshrined in the UN Human Rights Conventions.
- Call for media responsibility in creating awareness of the rights and contributions of migrants and in disseminating accurate and positive narrative, images and stories on migration, migrants and refugees.
- Acknowledge and promote the importance of migrants' and refugees' contributions, recognising the value of their economic, cultural and social contributions, including flows of skills, knowledge, ideas and values that migrants – including Italians - transmit from and to their origin countries.

### 2. Develop and promote inclusive, universalistic, non-discriminatory policies

- Enable equal access to goods and services. This means that all forms of discrimination are combatted and that those who are marginalised or living in poverty are empowered to be active in the decision-making processes that affect their lives.
- Coming out of the prevailing paradigm of border security, promote policies with an universalistic perspective, creating concrete opportunities for inclusion with particular attention to frontiers social area.

- Strengthen anti-discrimination and equality legislation, public policy, business practices and union action and eradicate discrimination in all spheres: particularly in employment, in the education system, and in accessing other resources and rights.

- Break down barriers to education and specialised training and promote the creation of opportunities for the access to the educational and academic system recognizing the integrative potential of the educational system.

- Urge political, social, educational, business, sports, religious, and community leaders as well as public figures to speak up with strong messages of solidarity and respect, promoting equality of treatment and opportunities and condemning all discriminatory behaviour and actions.

- Enhance access to political and citizenship rights.

### 3. Develop and apply coherent and comprehensive integration policies

- Advocate for proactive communication and policies by the national and local public administrations to welcome migrants and refugees and encourage integration.

- Strengthen the roles and actions of local governments in promoting and facilitating migrants' inclusion and integration, and ensuring that local governments address all resident and arriving migrants regardless of status.

- Ensure that reception measures for all migrants and refugees are based on a common objective of fostering personal autonomy and emancipation from need. Guarantee adequate reception support addressing the needs of people for a reasonable period of time.

- Revise citizenship acquisition rules and procedures to allow children born in Italy of migrant parent(s) and young foreigners to acquire citizenship within several years of arrival, also reducing the time of procedures in a reasonable manner.

- Incorporate education on human rights and equality, migration, intercultural knowledge and respect, integration, and social cohesion in school curricula at all levels in Italy, as a matter of urgency.

- Ensure the immediate availability and accessibility of language classes, integration courses and work authorisation for all working age migrants and refugees from the time of arrival in Italy.

- Take specific measures to facilitate early access by migrants and refugees to employment in decent work, as well as to apprenticeships. Facilitate technical skills' adaptation to Italian/EU standards, etc.

- Ensure that all migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers in Italy have full health care and social protection coverage as well as access to participation in the national social security system.

- Conduct a review of new rules on residence permits and on reception management to evaluate their impacts vis a vis security and safety of status and adequacy of level of support and interventions.

- Expand legal, institutional and sectoral measures at all levels for recognising foreign educational attainment, skills qualifications, and work experience.

### 4. Uphold human rights and labour rights under law and fully enforce labour law, decent work standards, and occupational safety and health protection for all migrants.

- Promote the ratification of the UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990) and ensure full implementation of the Italy-ratified ILO Conventions 97 and 143 on migration for employment and ILO Convention 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers.

- Ensure that all workers, including migrants are fully protected from abusive conditions at work and from precarious and unsafe living conditions, irrespective of legal status or nationality. Pay particular attention to combating exploitation in the world of work, as it affects vulnerable people, both foreigners and Italians in difficult situations.

- Ensure that labour inspection in Italy has the mandate, resources and training to reach all workplaces where migrants and nationals are employed to ensure compliance with decent work and occupational safety and health standards.

- Facilitate migrant entrepreneurial initiatives by easing registration formalities and ensuring fair, equal, and non-discriminatory access by migrant entrepreneurs and businesses to financing, in particular by commercial financial institutions.

### 5. Increase the dialogue and engagement with migrants' organisations and civil society in Italy

- Create an enabling environment for the participation of diaspora and migrant organisations in the process of designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating public policies at national, city and local community levels affecting migration, integration and development.

- Strengthen dialogue with social partners and civil society and engage with migrants and the diaspora to include their input in designing coherent, planned, target-oriented, tailor-made migration programmes and integration policies that are effective and that do not contradict other policies.

- Make financial resources, knowledge and expertise available to build the capacities of refugee, diaspora and migrant organisations, including trainings, informational meetings, guidance on calls for proposals and capacity building measures on development cooperation standards.

### 6. Uphold protection for and integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Italy

- Ensure no deportation and forced return of people to countries in armed conflict and/or experiencing widespread human rights violations regardless of outcome of formal determinations.

- Strengthen legal security for all refugees' residence status to ensure integration and uphold psychological health of refugees, in particular by abolishing "temporary asylum" status regulation.

- Provide specific, targeted support for labour market inclusion of recognised refugees and people granted other protection, as well as ensuring effective access to employment for asylum seekers.



**7. Strengthen Italian and international cooperation to address structural factors compelling migration, including absence of decent work, poverty, injustice and armed conflict as well as to support integral human development.**

- Promote the implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, as well as the compliance with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in Italy's domestic and international policy, rooted in the full realisation of human rights for all.
- Demand that all overseas development assistance (ODA) strictly supports sustainable development as enumerated in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Ensure that budgets for migration and development are linked only if both of them support the sustainable development agenda and humanitarian assistance, avoiding any conditionality linked to management of migratory flows and/or funding border of migratory/mobility control actions.
- Respect international commitments by allocating 0.7% of Gross National Income to Official Development Aid (ODA) without counting reception costs of asylum seekers as ODA.
- Conduct a thorough review of Italy's international agricultural, commercial, environmental, financial and fiscal, industrial and trade policies, development cooperation, and arms production and exports to determine their impact on situations compelling migration and refugee flight.
- End Italy's arms exports and stop immediately sales to countries in areas of conflict or whose human rights standards are dubious.
- Work together with diaspora and migrant organisations in international development assistance to build on their knowledge and understanding of countries and people and serve as bridges between Italy and its development partners.
- Fully implement the national instruments required by the 125/2014 law, including full operation of the Italian

Development Cooperation Agency, supporting already tested initiatives, such as the Summit of the Diasporas.

**8. Enhance international cooperation and regulation for human mobility in line with international law and human rights and humanitarian principles and values.**

- Reaffirm the principle that international law, policy and practice respond to concrete issues of human mobility with coherent, effective and values-based public policies.
- Promote the principles of the Global Compact for Migration, encouraging the Italian government to reconsider the option of joining the group of the signatories.
- Adopt common principles and guidelines in Europe for the governance and regulation of entry into the European territory of migrants and applicants for international protection.
- Ensure that legal and safe entry routes for migrant workers and asylum seekers are encouraged.
- Demand that the European Union complies with its international obligations for the protection of human rights at its external and internal borders, including by supporting and reinforcing search and rescue operations at sea and by suspending immediately actions to deter, prosecute and criminalise non-governmental/civil society rescue and landing operations.
- Extend humanitarian admission programmes for asylum seekers through greater involvement of all EU Member States and their shared participation in and contributions to resettlement programmes.
- Transform mechanisms for meeting and discussing cooperation on migration between Africa and Europe to spaces for real dialogue, in which Europe develops positions of support to intra-African human mobility legal systems and policies, avoiding instead the placement of obstacles to them, which in the past have included the distorted use of development cooperation instruments.



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- 1)** Tana Anglana, expert consultant on migration and development for the project “National Summit of Diasporas” and deputy member on behalf of Diasporas in the Consiglio Italiano della Cooperazione.
- 2)** Elena Masi, Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS).
- 3)** Daniele Panzeri, responsible for migration and development in IOM-Italy.
- 4)** Tiziana Ruberto, Italian Ministry of Labour
- 5)** Andrea Stocchiero, Policy officer Focsiv (network of Italian NGOS’) and consultant Concorde Italia.
- 6)** Monica Dragone, Cooperation Office of the Municipality of Milan.
- 7)** Mirella Orlandi, Cooperation Office of the Region Emilia Romagna
- 8)** Modou Gueye, President of association Sunugal.
- 9)** Simona Federico, Arci-AICS (Italian civil society network and Italian NGO).
- 10)** Giovanni Sartor, Head of International Cooperation Department, Manitese
- 11)** Farsi Prossimo ONLUS
- 12)** Ndour Mor Talla, President of Senegalese Association of Fossano

