



Transparency and Self-employment
for migrant workers through
Assessment Center

GIVECOMPETENCEaCHANCE



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme



IMMIGRATION IN SICILY

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GC-AC Give Competence A Chance

Transparency and Self-employment for migrant workers through
Assesment Center

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1. THE REGIONAL CONTEXT (Characteristics and number of the immigrant population in Sicily)

Considerations on the regional economic situation.

The international financial crisis has heavily affected Southern Italy and Sicily, especially with respect to the manufacturing sector, transports and trade. Even the building sector, traditionally quite alive in Sicily, has been experiencing a strong rundown. Tourism, a mainstay of local economy, saw an exacerbation of the 2007 negative trend and registers a 9.3% decrease in incomes. Industry is also experiencing a negative trend, with a very low number of buying orders, even comparable to the ones of 1992. Labour market is thus registering a strong increase in the number of people seeking a job.

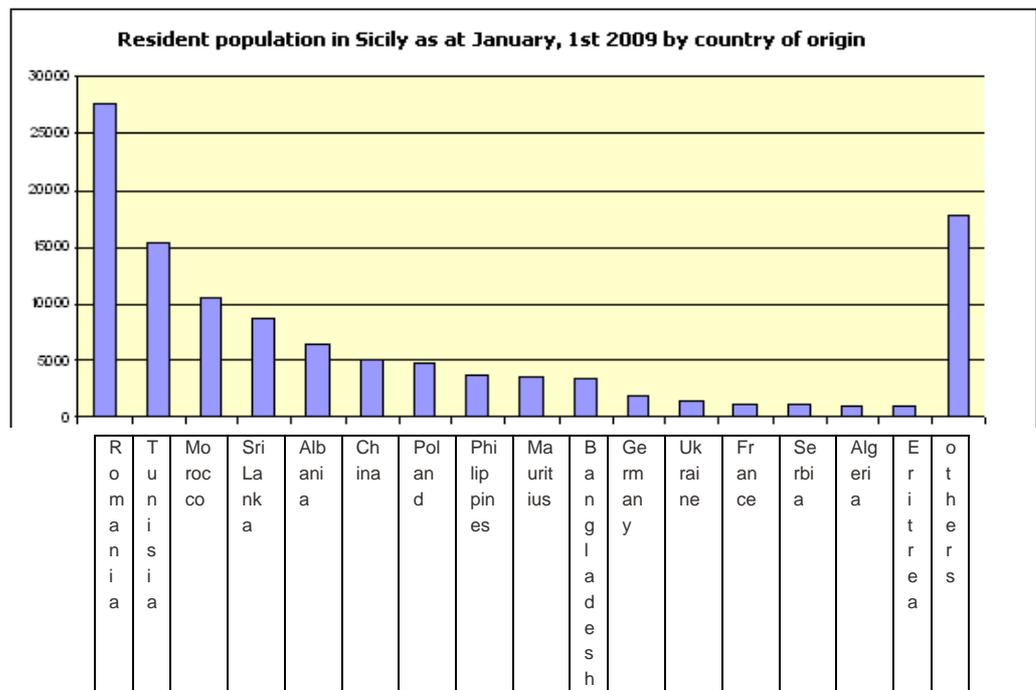
Although the general current situation shows a particular frailty, we notice that Sicily is still attractive to immigrants. The number of immigrants living in the region was 24.900 in 1991 and is now above 114.000 people, the incidence on overall population rose from 0.5% to 2.3%. However, in general, Southern Italy and, particularly, Sicily, often represent for immigrants an intermediate step along the process of settlement in our country. Immigrants living in Sicily are indeed just 2.9% of national overall.

Before examining the situation by single province, we must think over some Istat demographic indicators, that will help us understanding how and how much immigration weighs on some local trends and dynamics. A first element comes from the perspective of gender. We noticed, in 2007, the female component overtaking the male one, revealing that migration was no longer concerning only male workers, but it also involved their families and women employed in the labour market. Female ratio grew further in 2008, reaching 2.6% (representing over 60.000 resident immigrant women). Another interesting element is the one related to the birth of foreign children in Italy: 1777 babies in 2008. Such figure, although far from the data of Northern Italy, concurs to determine a positive natural balance of the Sicilian population. Sicily, moreover, has the highest ratio of foreign minors in the whole South of Italy (20.4% of overall foreigners).

At the beginning of 2008 the main age group of immigrants was the one including people between 18 and 39 years old (48% of overall immigrants), while the group between 40 and 64 years old reaches 28%. This composition, particularly unbalanced on the youth side, reveals that the average age of immigrants living in Italy is 32 years old, compared to the about 42 years old average age of the overall Sicilian population.

1.1 The countries of origin of migration streams

The increase in the Romanian component, a consequence of the accession to the EU, is a firm fact since 2007; this community has become the main one in the island (representing 17.8% of overall immigrants). The more old established communities as, for instance, Tunisians (15.1%), Moroccans (9.6%), Sri Lanka (8%), Albanians (6%) and China (4.6%) shift to one position downwards. For the first time, Europe is the most represented continent in the island, being the origin of 39.6% of overall immigrants. Africa is the continent of origin of 35.1% immigrants and Asia of 20.9%.



1.2 Characteristics and number of the immigrant population in the whole territory

According to ISTAT, as at December 31st 2008, Sicily registered 114.632 resident immigrants, a 14% sudden growth compared to the previous year and 16.8% compared to the related ISTAT datum as at December 31st 2007. Sicily shows, then, an higher increase than the national context, where the growth of immigrant population only reached 13.3%.

Examining in detail the province context, we observe that the increase in the regional population is equally distributed among the nine provinces of the region, featuring some peaks in the most recent settlement areas, characterized by an higher inclination towards such growth.

Palermo and its province register 23.812 resident immigrants, with a 12.1% increase compared to the previous year, and featuring **the highest percentage of immigrant women** in Sicily (57.7%). There are several different countries of origin, more of 52, from the African continent to Latin America, from Asia to Europe: Ivory Coast (13.9%), Tunisia (12.5%), Morocco (12.5%), Ghana (10.7%), Romania (10.5%), Bangladesh (4.8%), Countries of the former Yugoslavia (4.6%). Then, in descending order, follow: Mauritius, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Peru, Philippines; Cabo Verde, Liberia, Sudan, Ecuador. Immigrant women (42.%) even increasing are still less than men (58%). The main age group includes those who were born between 1980 and 1999, then comes the group between 40 and 50 years old (24%) and the elderly (14%) up to 70 years old. According to Caritas, the needs expressed by immigrants living in the area of Palermo focus on poverty (18.5%), unemployment (0.9%), housing (17.1%), legal advice (15.8%), political asylum (7.1%), health problems (3.6%), usury problems and micro-credit requests (0.7%), addiction problems (0.4%) or handicap-related issues (0.4%).

Immigrants declaring a domicile are 52.3%, those of non-fixed abode are 14.8%, while 32% do not release any information on housing conditions. Only 14.6% declares to be employed, while the remaining ones are unemployed or do not specify their job situation.

Catania recently moved from a little more than 17.000 immigrants in 2007 to 20.550 people in 2008. The third province by immigrant population is **Messina** with 18.882 immigrants and a 17.8% increase. Such figure means that there are three foreign residents out of every one hundred inhabitants in this provincial capital. Each one of the three large metropolitan areas reveals a **female preponderance**.

Palermo features the highest percentage of women in Sicily (apart from the small province of Enna), with 57.7% of overall residents, that is one of the highest absolute values in the South of Italy (13.750 people). Messina and Catania respectively register 55.2% and 55.9%.

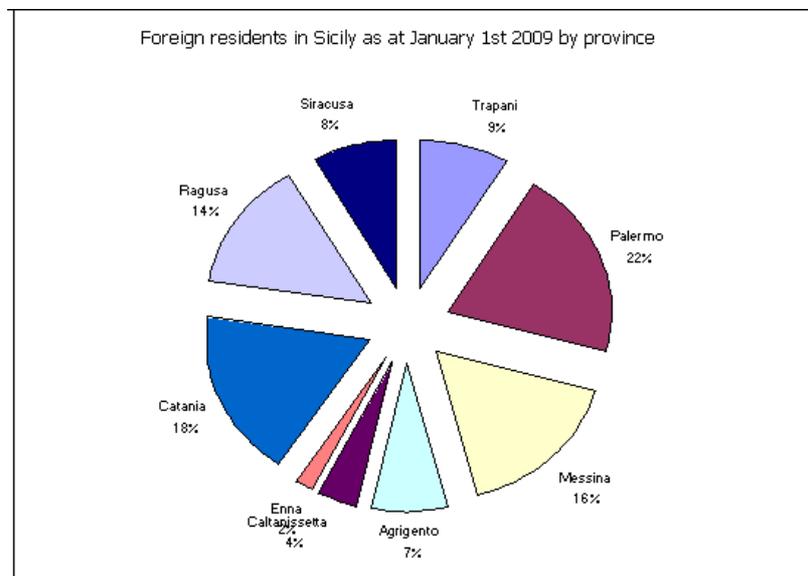
The increase in foreign presence walks at the same rate in the provinces of Trapani and Ragusa; both register a 15% growth **and report a significant preponderance of women on men**.

Sri Lanka and Bangladesh citizens steadily rank first in Palermo, but there is a strong increase in the female component coming from Romania.

Also in Messina most of the new communitarian citizens of Romania are women. The whole community is catching up with the Sinhalese in the primacy of presence in the Straits town.

Such primacy, found in nearly every Sicilian province, is, on the contrary, quite limited in the two areas where the Maghrebian concentration is traditionally higher, that is to say Trapani and Ragusa, where the Tunisian component is still the wide majority.

We also underline the strengthening of Chinese community, particularly in the provinces of Catania, Trapani, Agrigento, Caltanissetta and Enna.



2. REGIONAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

To this day, the Sicily Region still has not issued a regulation on immigration.

A bill named “Interventions for the immigrants rights” was submitted in 2007 by the Partito Democratico to the Regional Assembly of Sicily. The law draft suggests the creation of a regional assembly for immigration, new health assistance measures, the right, for immigrants with regular permit to stay, to vote in local elections, the introduction of language facilitators and cultural mediators in schools.

A provincial office for integration was opened by the province of Catania. The office, located in the town centre, provides assistance for immigrants and refugees.

The provincial Council also approved the creation of a Committee for non-EU immigrants, a proposing and advisory organisation centred on the issues of immigrants, that also represents an opportunity of participation and discussion among the different communities, the Third sector and institutions. The head office will coordinate the activities of the other offices located in 58 Etna area municipalities, of local hospitals and consulting rooms and of the provincial employment agency.

A particularly interesting innovation is that a notice has been recently issued concerning the creation of an intercultural mediation office in Palermo, included in the Territorial Plan of the social and health district 42. **Law 328/2000 “Outline law for the creation of an integrate system of intervention and social services”**.

The general aim of such innovation in the management of social issues consists in removing the cultural obstacles and relational and language difficulties.

This action, moreover, corresponds to the common objective of the immigrant-dedicated Area aimed at: contributing to the promotion of the immigrants’ welfare (thus satisfying their material and psycho-social needs), by creating a single reference centre both for immigrants and for the operators, in order to develop a virtuous circle of civic growth and peaceful coexistence (involving both foreigners and local people);

creating real combined actions, by connecting services and systems, needs, demand and offer;

strengthening the implementation of reception and assistance procedures in the health services, social services, schools and legal system by identifying specific intervention methods, promoting medium and long-term cultural activities;

providing information, making it easier to access services by removing obstacles;

enable the understanding of the information provided;

intervening in the possible “crisis” and conflicts, handling inter-cultural incidents;

facilitating the communication between immigrants and operators, favouring the discussion and interaction among the different cultural identities sharing the territory;

monitoring the offer provided by the service of cultural mediation in public bodies and private social agencies belonging to the DSS 42 area, in order to support the networking of such resources.

3. JOB SITUATION OF IMMIGRANT POPULATION

Throughout 2008, for the second successive year, employment in Sicily decreased by 0.6%. Such decrease only involved male workers (-1.3%), while female employment registered a 1% increase.

Agriculture and **Industry** endured the crisis, as well as **Building industry**, that reached a 2.7% increase, especially in the first semester of 2008.

The Bank of Italy notice, in its report on Sicily, that the unemployment rate of immigrants between 15 and 64 in Sicily is, as it happens in the whole country, higher than the unemployment rate of Italians.

The average unemployment rate over the first three quarters of 2008 was 60% of immigrants against 44.1% of Italians. The higher rates of unemployed immigrants registered in Sicily and, more in general, in Italy, are also shared by the other European countries (Spain, Greece and Portugal) who only recently experienced a massive immigration.

The majority of immigrants are employed, while the average percentage of independent self-employed workers was 22% in the 2005-2008 period, nearly three points less than Italians. Immigrant workers are, furthermore, more often employed in the most traditional sectors.

In 2008, 72% of immigrants, compared to 53.2% of Italians, were employed in agriculture or in those manufacturing sectors defined by the OECD as low or medium-low technological profile, or in sub-sectors of the Service industry not including credit brokerage or professional activities.

The presence of immigrants in the most traditional sectors in Sicily showed a 3.4% increase between 2000 and 2008, against a 2.1% decrease in the Italian presence.

The INAIL database reports, as at 2008, 86.122 foreign employed, thus taking the number of foreign workers employed in the region to a further 7.9% (+1% compared to 2007).

Through the analysis of the data we observe a quite unvaried **female participation** ratio (36.2%) in the foreign workers' labour market. Most employed are in Catania (15.372 people), followed by Ragusa (14.432), Palermo (14.136) and Messina (12.766).

The highest number of new jobs was observed in the province of Ragusa, with 10.276 new employed workers and 9.682 separations. Such figures can be easily explained by the seasonal characteristic of local agricultural economy.

Through the observation of the evolution of employment between 2007 and 2009, in all of the nine Sicilian provinces, 2007 results to be the year when the initial figures doubled. In the space of eight years, finally, the number of immigrant workers grew by 100%.

The main sectors for immigrant employment are: Service industry (52.1% of employed), that is predominant in Messina, Palermo and Catania, especially regarding trade and accommodation and catering. Then follow Industry (particularly building

industry), mostly in the metropolitan areas and in the province of Siracuse, and also agriculture, gathered in the areas of Ragusa and Trapani.

Female Work

As for gender differences, the significant quota of permits to stay issued to women for job reasons is remarkable.

In detail, 50.4% of women obtained the permit for subordinate employment and 4.3% for self-employment. Such element is particularly interesting when compared to the number of permits to stay issued for family reasons (33%).

This is an evidence of the considerable number of women promoting a personal migration project, disregarding the family of origin, seeking an improvement in their economic situation.

The progressive *feminization of migration* gets more meaningful when considering the countries of origin of immigrants. Regarding the main ten countries of origin represented in Sicily, two important communities as the Moroccan and the Tunisian ones still register a sharp predominance of men with a work stay permit and the same goes for Sri Lanka, China and Bangladesh.

Foreign communities where the structure by gender is getting balanced are those from the Philippines, Mauritius and Eastern Europe countries, particularly Romania and Poland.

Self-employment

Self-employment activities of immigrants are mostly individual enterprises. On the basis of the data processed by the CNA research centre, immigrants' independent enterprises are, as at May 2009, 5.538 (+11.6% compared to 2008), the 82.9% of whom are centred in trade and business sector.

The remaining principal portions are prerogative of agriculture (3.5%), building industry (3.1%) and Service industry (2.5%). 53.2% of enterprises is run by Moroccans and Chinese people, performing activities in trade business. As for the other sectors, Moroccans prefer building activities, while Chinese people prefer catering and restaurant activities.

We underline the dynamic participation to **entrepreneurial** life of a good 50 communities, particularly the Senegal and Bangladesh communities, which are involved in the trading sector in the metropolitan areas, and Tunisian community, working in agriculture. **Such figures confirm that self-employment is seen by**

immigrants as a “fast track” to reach integration in Sicily.

Sicily could once again in its history take charge of providing a territory favourable to exchanges, beyond the merely economic meaning of the word, in order to contribute to interaction and to strengthen ties that entrepreneurial activities themselves can create. We furthermore remind that the richness produced in Italy by immigrant workers contributes to the development of the countries of origin. Last year, over 187 million euros were sent abroad, representing 2.9% of overall money sent from Italy.

According to Movimpresa, as at June 30th there were over 13.400 non-EU small entrepreneurs running individual enterprises registered in the Books of the Chamber of commerce of the island, that is to say 4.29% of regional overall.

The quarterly survey by Infocamere reveals that immigrant-run enterprises in Sicily register a 0.19% increase compared to the previous quarter. **The most representative Sicilian province for immigrant-run enterprises is Palermo, with 3.460 non-EU entrepreneurs on 60.885 overall entrepreneurs.** Then follow Messina with a 5.26% incidence (2.058 non-EU enterprises on 39.139) and Ragusa with 4.86% (1.104 enterprises on 22.735).

Catania ranks second after Palermo for number of enterprises: 2.477 non-EU enterprises and a 3.67% incidence (67.443 overall individual enterprises).

The most receptive sector to foreign entrepreneurs is trading, as they can provide goods at a competitive price in a sector that, in Italy is today characterised by a low value added.

The remaining portion is distributed among agriculture, building activities and service industry.

4. PROFESSIONAL TRAINING NEEDS AND LOCAL OFFER

The method applied to gather information consisted in interviewing privileged witnesses, chosen among operators of public and private bodies, economic institutions and associations involved, for different reasons, in professional training.

We underline the past difficulties met in the development of training courses within this area of active policies, such difficulties were due to:

- low attendance to the courses implemented;
- spread course abandon phenomenon;
- difficulties in the relations with labour market and enterprises.

Apart from these basic obstacles, the courses provided are considered to be quite useless: when immigrants find a job this does not seem to be related to their education or professional training, on the contrary, professional training is responsible for greater expectations towards a labour demand that is centred, instead, on low-profile tasks and unqualified jobs. The role played by the career guidance service and by professional training can just be marginal when we observe that, concerning immigrants, hiring is largely beforehand determined by the market demand and, moreover, it exploits the black labour market.

The age group of those attending training courses is very wide, including both young people coming from compulsory school, and adults who have already got over the initial steps of their career.

As for women, many job and professional training requests come from Eastern Europe citizens, including over 50, recently straightened out as personal aide or helpers.

There is a growing number of young people, who came to Italy for reasons of family reunion, attending training courses, particularly coming from Eastern Europe countries. This is often due to parents leading their children towards professional training, in order to introduce them to the local labour market.

We also underline that many of those who apply for training courses often have an expiring permit to stay (issued for work or family reasons), recently obtained thanks to regularization. Their language and social skills reveal that, even if only recently straightened out, these people have been living in Italy for many years and already had job experiences (illegal).

Many of them are driven to attend professional courses is the will to find a more regular and stable job. In some cases this concerns people already working regularly, who want to learn new skills in order to change job or to improve their position.

Regarding men, apart from being a way to take advantage of the unemployment periods (today lasting six months maximum), it mainly seems to meet the need for strengthening already existing specializations and for obtaining official certification of such professional specialization, aiming at an easier hiring.

For women, on the other hand, although many of them have already been living in Italy for a long time and some of their children were born here, the training course, and the related *stage*, often represent their first experience in the world of work. In some cases the course plays a role beyond employment, aiming at implementing wider processes of social reintegration.

The average education level of those attending the courses is medium, most of them have a middle school/junior high leaving certificate. About 20% of immigrants

attending the courses attended technical high school in their countries of origin.

Many of the women coming from Eastern Europe also have a university degree or different level of qualification in the health sector, but, unfortunately, they often are not legally recognized.

Although facing an increasing demand for professional training, the number of courses for immigrants implemented in Sicily suffered from a series of constraints, from the structural rigidity of the courses financed by European Social Fund, to the significant economic difficulties of the Region in performing investments in professional training/retraining activities.

Enterprises can count, today, on surplus unqualified workers, so they seek more qualified workers. In the building industry, as well as in other sectors, unqualified workers are not in demand, so professional training is consequently often indispensable for facing a period of considerable crisis of the markets.

We must also add to this elements the growing “feminization” of migrants in the labour market, as a consequence of women’s wish to find their own social and work dimension once they reach a stable condition.

The current instruments of professional training for immigrants are basic and ordinary, while courses, in order to be effective, should be more specifically targeted.

Short training courses depending on different types of financing

Considering what stated above on the constraints of professional training, and the fact that new regulations significantly reduce the allowed period of time for immigrants to find a job, short training courses, lasting about 40-100 hours, usually aimed at already employed immigrants, are the most in-demand.

This category includes both professional training courses, and alphabetization, social-cultural or social-working courses, aimed at providing understanding of the basics of social and institutional organization of the receiving country, besides informing on the fundamental elements of work regulations.

Such courses are mostly financed by public employment agencies or temporary job agencies. The last ones are bound to allocate a portion of their profits in a professional training-aimed fund.

The contents of such type of training regard low-profile jobs, no more appealing to

Italian workers, but requiring specific social skills.

There are, finally, some Pilot Project training offers promoting skill certification processes, to be obtained through career guidance and professional courses.

5. SOCIAL PROTECTION NETWORKS

Throughout the whole country, but particularly in Sicily, social relations are the main channel for job search and for the improvement of work conditions, if we consider that 50.4% of immigrants found their present job thanks to a relative, a friend or a fellow countryman; 29.2% found their own jobs and 15.3% found a job through Italian friends or immigrants coming from different countries.

We notice, moreover, the creation of ties on social basis, originating forms of solidarity and protection among the components of a community. As a matter of fact, immigrants create some kind of substitute kinship, called “ethnic niche”, often representing an important tie along migration process.

We observe, then, that also social networks favour the match between job offer and demand, and that within such networks immigrants can find information on job opportunities and can influence employers’ choices.

Such ethnic networks, mostly composed by relatives and fellow countrymen, structure the economic action: it is a self-organisation of the offer, regulated by personal relations, influencing the process of job hiring and the way the demand meets the offer in the labour market. The relation nets among fellow countrymen become support agencies for the process of economic and social integration, often plugging the gaps of the receiving territorial institutions and playing an important role in different issues: from reception to housing, from job seeking to social and emotional support. These networks can determine positive effects, but also some negative ones, as they could sharpen “ghettoization”, direct people towards illicit activities or establish exploitation relations.

Our research involved in the analysis of such networks some very active institutions and associations in the provinces of Palermo and Trapani cited below:

Palermo

- UIL Patronage
- CGIL
- Multi-task office and Employment agencies

- Municipal immigrants Office
- Caritas
- ANDA-RIRFA
- Centro S.Chiera di Palermo Centro
- Pellegrino della Terra
- ANYMORE Association

Trapani

- CGIL
- Multi-task office and Employment agencies
- Municipal immigrants Office of Alcamo
- NO COLORS Association
- Caritas
- Opere Pie Riunite Pastore San Pietro Association (Alcamo)
- Missione Speranza e Carità (Biagio Conte)
- Gange onlus Association

The above listed organisations provide people, **particularly immigrants**, with personal services, they have normal opening hours and provide a constant service. They mainly work in the provinces of Palermo and Trapani. It is a relevant element that both the associations and the institutional agencies observed are **mainly oriented towards basic primary needs satisfaction**.

Over the target identification phase, we made an attempt to perform a quick field research, involving, thanks to firm personal contacts and relations, the associations of the Third Sector working on immigration and the public bodies, as: the Municipal Immigrant Office of Palermo and Alcamo, the CGIL Immigrants office and Patronages.

We have to report, however, that the majority of such contacts was not able to provide structured information enabling us to draw a detailed picture of the phenomenon in the territory.

6. SERVICES IN-DEMAND AND LOCAL OFFER

Regarding the needs expressed and the “reasonably satisfying” solutions applied, most interviewed people consider **housing** as the main need of immigrants. Housing-related issues had already been underlined at the beginning of the nineties (Censis, 1990) and

they kept on being a problem over the following decade without any significant variation (Caritas Rome, 1999; Ismu, 1999).

Work and health service come after, followed by **information**, that is necessary to access the first two, and Italian language learning. Women seem to consider health service and, to a lesser degree, social-educational services more important than men do.

Professional training is considered as a medium-importance service both by men and women. Women also participate in “ad hoc” actions, caring cultural specificity.

Services for immigrants

The majority of the social protection agencies consists in information and guidance, followed by reception and listening services, social and health services, services for minors, economic support and mediation.

Users are, generally, both immigrant men and women, but there are also foreigners-dedicated services and services for Italians only, and there are gender-oriented services, involving exclusively women, both immigrant women and Italian women. More than half the users are between 30 and 35 years old.

The most in-demand services regard general information and guidance, career guidance, legal consulting and bureaucratic assistance, social and health services, professional training and alphabetization, first reception, services for minors (15%), cultural mediation and economic support.

In order to solve the language problems of many immigrants, that represent a considerable problem in the perspective of a real integration, it would be advisable to provide a large improvement in the services of language and cultural mediation.

An emblematic example is the mission of the “Pellegrino della Terra” association. Since 1996, the association has been helping immigrants to access the world of employment and, specifically, **the victims of human trade**, mainly those coming from Nigeria, now living in Palermo and surroundings, in association with the Methodist church, the Waldensians and the Combonians fathers’ association of Palermo.

In order to partly solve work problems, “Pellegrino della Terra” created a *Listening Centre* assisting young women in collaboration with other institutions. They provide immigrants with counselling, health service, assistance and patronage, language courses, food and basic goods thanks to the cooperation with the Food Bank ,the Waldesians and the Methodist Church of Palermo.

The new play area and intercultural toy library “**Il Giardino di Madre Teresa**”, run

by the Anymore Onlus association of Palermo, whose aim is to provide working mothers with practical help. The initiative involves 0-5 years old children.

Catania: good practice on the regional territory

A *Help Centre* run by Caritas opened in 2006. The Help Centre is located near the Central Station of Catania, main area of poverty concentration.

The Centre, a daytime hospitality space providing social first aid to homeless and to all those living in poverty and social exclusion, also took up several initiatives to favour immigrants' integration in the Etna town.

The intervention method is centre on a project for social recovery and re-integration, based on a tight network cooperation with the other aid agencies, both public and private, working on the same territory.

The services provided by the Help Centre are very varied and articulated as proximity services: social assistance and secretarial help, job guidance, legal assistance, counselling, medical consulting room, canteen, courses of Italian language for foreigners and social-cultural awareness initiatives. Communication is particularly important, that is the reason why a magazine, "*Scarp de tenise*", and a street TV channel, *Telestrada*, were created. Between December 10th 2006 and July 31st 2008, 3650 people, coming from 62 different countries and with a 42 years old average age, turned to the Help Centre for assistance.

After three years, some positive elements emerge from the activities of the Help Centre, as the coherence between the targets set and the activities performed, plus the increase in the number of services provided, also shown by the high number of people turning to such services.

Among the integration initiatives taken in Catania, the Italian and Mediterranean cooking school for resident immigrants, provided by Diocesan Caritas, was a big success. The initiative, called *Italia in Tavola*, is a model of the opportunities promoted by the *Help Centre* in order to improve the social-professional status of users, through the acquisition of valuable skills for the labour market.

Considering the research results, we confirm that the fundamental problem in the offer of services is the lack of **an institutional network able to thoroughly coordinate the different services working on the regional territory.**

We underline, however, that the Sicilian government has passed the reform of public administration right in these days. The competent departments, together with municipal and provincial councils, are required to plan the different intervention activities united in the effort, avoiding doubling and overlapping.

7. THE ROLE PLAYED BY “MULTIFUNCTION OFFICE OF THE REGION” IN THE TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS

Multifunction offices originate, in Sicily, from the general reformation process of regional agencies for professional training, including the creation of specific multifunction offices to ensure services such as reception and information, advice and guidance to both local and immigrant non-employed or unemployed, but also to those enterprises seeking workers or interested in upgrade/retrain courses for their employees. (Department of Work circular n.2, June 8th 2000).

The Outline convention, July 4th 2000 between Region Sicily and the Sicilian professional training agencies, establishes that Provincial offices for Work and Maximum employment can subscribe specific conventions with the agencies running multifunction offices in their territory, in order to make use of the services provided by such offices as specified in the Department of Work circular n.2, June 8th 2000.

But it is only with the issue of the Department of Work circular n.6, March 16th 2001 that the real upgrading of the offices' activities as actual employment services finally started, under the direction and coordination of the peripheral offices for work. Multifunction offices will thus be able to implement active work policies – like the mediation service between work offer and demand- specific to the Employment Agencies.

There are 20 offices spread over the territory, located in six Provinces: Palermo, Trapani, Enna, Agrigento, Ragusa and Messina. They are usually placed inside the Employment Agencies buildings and they work in close synergy with such agencies. The objective is to assist users in their job research or in their career-building or training pathway, through individual or group meetings with the advisers.

“Multifunction” include Operators, Guidance assistants and Counsellors, Training Planners, expert Tutors on learning processes.

The services provided are, in short:

- good connection with the SME interested in giving job opportunities;
- short courses, seminar-like, trying to integrate professionalisation with other interventions, **particularly language-oriented** and aimed at the guidance and social dimension (knowledge and awareness of social and production reality, information on the services available, job information and career guidance);
- introduction of a personal perspective on training pathways through the growing importance given to individual meetings;
- professional training seen from the perspective of network cooperation

among different private and public institutions both representing local people and ethnic communities, in order to succeed in satisfying the several needs of immigrants attending training courses, from transportation to housing needs.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The lack of specific **connection and coordination between the information** available on the territory and the different services provided is a critical element.

The lack of an exact stream of information makes it more difficult for the institutions to properly plan activities.

In order to properly cope with the changes in the immigration phenomenon in Italy, increasingly characterized by an high stabilization level, it is, by now, indispensable to promote **inter-institutional cooperation and social consultation**, at local level, among the involved agencies working on the territory, in respect of the analysis of foreign citizens' needs and difficulties, of the planning of social integration policies, of the relevant monitoring activity and *verification*. Volunteers' associations, non-profit organisations of the Third Sector, trade unions and places that are frequented by immigrants (local police offices in charge of public order and administrative service, immigrants offices of local administrations, central and peripheral employment agencies, embassies and consulates) **must connect each others** and define more effective synergies than the current ones.

The desired process is not free from difficulties. Besides the challenge of flexibility and coordination, there is also the challenge of making the different political and organisational policies, typical of the local reception context, coexist. This seems to be a reminder of Italy already being a "multicultural" country well before experiencing significant international immigration.

The survey results obtained make it clear that we are observing is an articulated and heterogeneous "archipelago", resulting from a multitude of non-linear evolution paths. Such paths originate from organizational "activation processes" where planning hypothesis and organizational outlines, sometimes based on very different perceptions of immigrant phenomenon, combined with different models of provision of services in such context and limitations that derive from specific organizational traditions.

The attempts at creating homogeneous typologies and groups, aimed at finding a direction in such complexity, seem to be bound to identify only partial dimensions: the emergent framework is characterized by **sharp non-homogeneousness** both from a territorial perspective and with relation to the main objectives of the different organizations involved.

In short, **the reflection on immigration remains incomplete if limited to provide useful skills to immigrant workers**, it needs to be re-thought in the perspective of

their role as new citizens. Many immigrant have already been living in Italy for quite a long time and obtained, or are waiting for, the long-term residence permit, aiming at staying indefinitely.

When trying to let this idea take shape and mature, though, we face two main reservations, **one financial-related and the other cultural-related**, often raised with the best intentions, but still not justifiable.

The reservation raised on financial issues consist in the objection that reception, accessibility and integration are expensive processes and that immigrants should not represent a further charge on the balance of State or of local government. But as immigrants represent 7% incidence on local population and 10% of national wealth creation, their presence does not consequently represent any loss for the system Italy, nor for immigrants themselves and for their countries of origin, which received 6.4 billion Euros from migrants living in Italy, a considerable help to their development in spite of unkept promises as for international politics.

Immigrants pay a yearly 7 billions for National Insurance contributions, but few of them get retirement pension. Moreover, immigrants pay at least 4 billion Euros taxes, but their incidence, according to the Bank of Italy, is only 2.5% of overall public expenditure for school system, retirement, health and income support, that is to say about half what they produce in terms of revenue.

The reservation raised on social-cultural-religion issues is more deceitful and leads to “fear” immigrants as if they were “polluting” our society with their different cultural traditions, and could weaken the affection for our religion



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