

Louis Henri Seukwa (ed.)

Integration of Refugees into the European Education and Labour Market

Requirements for a Target Group
Oriented Approach



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General introduction

Louis Henri Seukwa

Background

Handling the political, economic and social consequences of flight and migration has been a major challenge for many countries in Europe. This challenge finds its expression in contradictions on refugee-related topics. While on the one hand it is regarded as a social security problem, as a threat to a nation's prosperity and a burden for the welfare system, migration – and thus flight as one form of migration – is on the other hand also viewed as a way to ensure the competitiveness and viability of these countries given the demographic change and the ageing of the population and the challenges coming along with it, such as imbalances in the pension system and a skills shortage. These contradictions to be observed in European refugee and migration policies, which are usually based on defending the security and economic interests of nation states, are intensified by the goal set by the EU member states to apply humanistic ideals such as human rights and democratic principles to the group of refugees. The requirements for equality associated with them, that is the non-discrimination against a particular group in the fight for access to and control over resources that are generally considered by the society as being of material and symbolic value – and thus as desirable – are hard to reconcile with the common practice of giving priority to the interests of the national. This narrow view adopted in migration policy, which is tailored to the interests of the EU states, tends to ignore the global interdependencies of the causes of flight. One of the main push factors for flight and migration movements worldwide is the global structural imbalance caused by the rich countries of the north through the excessive exploitation of natural and human resources to the disadvantage of the poor countries of the south.

With the EU Council Directive 2003/9/EC of 27 January 2003, laying down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers as well as for the promotion of access to education and of participation in employment and VET, at EU level an important signal was sent to the member states regarding the recognition of asylum seekers and refugees as subjects of integration, and hence subjects of education – regardless of whether they have a secure residence status. Explicitly including the group of refugees in the EQUAL programme of the European Union can, in this context, be seen as the intention to fulfil the aim as formulated in the directive to harmonize reception standards as well as to promote access to

education and participation in employment and VET in the integration policies of the member states. From 2001 to 2007 EQUAL made it possible, to experiment with new ways to fight against discrimination and inequalities across Europe – in the labour market in particular. For the first time in the history of the European Union, the group of asylum seekers and refugees had been explicitly considered in an employment programme through EQUAL.

Despite the success of this programme, praised alike by the EU Commission and the individual countries involved for the implementation of its operational and strategic results (in particular, in the European Thematic Group 5, focusing on asylum seekers and refugees), EQUAL as a participant-oriented programme – i.e. one that designed its activities on basically all levels around the direct benefit of the participants – was not restarted after 2007. It thus remained an experimental programme, much to the disadvantage of a transfer of best practices developed in the model projects in sustainable structures.

Even though one of the most important strategic programme goals was to ensure the horizontal and vertical mainstreaming of the innovations developed here for sustainability purposes, the question of what happened to the many EQUAL network initiatives, the so-called development partnerships for the promotion of vocational and educational integration of asylum seekers and refugees, remains open. Whether these networks, which had been organized on a local, regional, national and transnational level, could be transformed into sustainable structures after the experimental phase to prepare the target group for the labour market is not sure. Also, the question as to the vocational future of the many participants who benefit from the EQUAL programme remains unanswered, i.e. the question of whether they could be brought into employment and if so, in what way and in which area of the labour market their integration took place, whether it was the formal, non-formal or informal sector.

Up to today, no systematic ex-post evaluation on the sustainability of the EQUAL measures has been carried out to determine if the target group-specific integration models devised and tested in the different development partnerships of the countries could be transferred into permanent structural integration measures. Neither has there been a post-study to follow up on the participants and on the effectiveness of their career development after EQUAL.

Study questions and objectives

In this context the idea for this project was born. The project, though, is not supposed to evaluate the EQUAL programme from the perspective outlined above. It rather aims at analyzing the results achieved by EQUAL with respect to the

harmonization of reception standards, as formulated by the EU Council Directive, and the promotion of access to education and participation in employment and VET in the integration policies of the member states. Based on case studies in four European cities, the question of access to education and training programmes as well as to the labour market for refugees and asylum seekers was examined, while also highlighting the conditions for the success of such measures. The project thus aims at investigating the question of in what way and under which (legal, political, structural and individual) circumstances the vocational preparation and integration of this extremely disadvantaged group of migrants can be successful in Europe. What role can be ascribed to their biographies, which are characterized by transnational mobility, and thus to the specific competences they bring with them in the process of vocational preparation and integration? These questions follow up on the goals of the Leonardo da Vinci programme to develop innovations and assure quality in the vocational education of a group of people which is extremely marginalized in the European context that is for instance the group of refugees and asylum seekers.

Regarding the sometimes significant historical, economic and structural differences between the European cities whose VET integration structures as well as their functioning from the perspective of refugees and asylum seekers are examined and compared here, questions are raised on the countries' ability and willingness to implement such harmonization measures as laid down by the EU Council Directive in integration policies, bringing up issues of compatibility as well the gap between theoretical ambitions and the reality of harmonization. The circumstances under which harmonization is possible are thus to be investigated on an empirical basis.

All these questions are linked to specific theoretical assumptions on the vocational integration of refugees and asylum seekers, reflecting the particular perspective of the partners involved in the project. These will be summarized in the following.

Theoretical approaches

The resources approach: Regarding the extremely difficult situation of asylum seekers and refugees in basically all European countries, refugee research has, up to now, primarily focused on the legal, social and structural mechanisms of discrimination with respect to the integration in the receiving countries as well as on individual deficits as a drawback (cf. Radtke/Gomolla 2002, Neumann et al. 2003, Brekke 2004). As a matter of consequence most practical projects are deficit-oriented in their approach to integration, and the majority of the offers

based on these approaches focus on compensating the deficiencies asylum seekers may have, whether linguistic, mental, physical, cognitive, cultural, social or material. This project, however, is based on a firm resources perspective towards integration structures and the group examined here.

Resources perspective on structures: This perspective has been methodologically operationalized in the project through social space analysis of the research unit “city”. It is based on the theoretical assumption that the spatial distribution of what Pierre Bourdieu calls “structural capital”, that is the quantitative and qualitative availability of valuable infrastructures, institutions and services, constitutes one of the most important structuring dimensions of the social space (cf. Schroeder 2002). Due to the spatialization of the different forms of capital (economic, cultural, social and symbolic), specific *capital configurations* are to be observed in urban quarters, resulting from the given local objective conditions including housing conditions and the availability of jobs, social and healthcare services etc. “As a social and physical location, residential areas provide an average probability of acquiring material and cultural goods and services available at a given time” (Bourdieu 1991, p. 31). It is these forms of capital varying across social spaces – the material conditions which are unequally distributed – that condition the residents’ development potential and their scope of action, thus their acquiring ability, and that define their access to and control over educational, vocational and labour market resources.

Based on this assumption, in all four cities examined here a comprehensive survey of the existing structural resources was conducted, focusing on VET-related institutions of integration (i.e. institutions preparing for the labour market), while also addressing the question of accessibility and usefulness of these structural resources for refugees and asylum seekers when considering the specific needs and requirements of this target group.

Resources perspective on refugees: It is mainly unfavourable associations that pervade the dominant social construction of asylum seekers, labelling them with negative, hence stigmatizing attributes such as “criminals”, “sluggards”, “parasites” or “illegitimate beneficiaries of social services”, and they are even viewed as “victims” by social and educational workers and other so-called “mentors” or “helpers”. Also, due to the fact that their biographies are usually characterized by several traumatic experiences including their precarious situation in the receiving countries as a whole, refugees tend to be essentially regarded as helpless beings and victims. The project EduAsyl, however, takes a different approach and assumes that due to their primary socialization in different contexts of their countries of origin as well as due to their transnational biographies and experiences of

flight, these young people are equipped with various competences acquired in the formal, non-formal and informal education sector. Systematically considering these existing individual resources and competences shall thus be the theoretical basis for examining the success of any kind of education, social pedagogy or social work as well as labour market support programme which aims at reducing the individual effects of the structural disadvantages refugees face. This contributes among others to preventing the downgrading of refugees in the formal and non-formal education and VET systems of the receiving European countries, which is usually the result of a wrong assessment of their qualifications and competences, as well as the unnecessary prolongation of the time this target group spends in the education system.

Lifelong learning and life-wide learning: In turn, the advantages of making use of the resources already available, inter alia by including the qualifications and competences acquired in the countries of origin and during the flight in integration-related work, are obvious. The transnational experience of flight under quite adverse conditions can thus be viewed as a biographical resource which may manifest itself in resilience capabilities regarding all the challenges which go together with the existing conditions of a refugee in everyday life.

Moreover, the capitalization of all learning experiences made by the refugee in the *course of time* in integration work also contributes to promoting lifelong learning for this target group – despite biographical breaks and disruptions related to the flight. Focusing on the plurality of (educational) places (formal, non-formal, informal), which may serve as learning locations before and during the flight, constitutes, furthermore, a contribution to *life-wide learning*.

With this term we want to highlight the localization of education, that is to say that *place* is fundamentally constitutive for educational content and for the competences resulting from it. In this way, alongside the formal and non-formal sector, the informal sector as a *place* for education, and thus for competence acquisition, gains in significance. The combination of these three educational locations or sectors is decisive in order to get a comprehensive overview of all the resources migrants bring with them in the context of their transnational biographies. As empirical studies on the relation between the formal and informal sector with regard to the issue of transfers of competencies in migration situations have shown, the distinction between different sectors (formal, non-formal, informal) in which educational experiences prior to flight were made by the refugees and thus competencies acquired is irrelevant when it comes to use of these competencies in the migration context of Europe (cf. Seukwa 2007). This is due to the fact that many competences acquired in the informal sector in the countries of origin as well as in transit countries (linguistic and calculating abilities, farming,

negotiation or selling and handicraft skills etc.) are also of use in the formal education sector in Europe. This indicates that the qualitative difference between both sectors regarding their contents is less significant than commonly assumed. The decisive difference, however, lies rather in the conditions under which experiences are made and competences are acquired. The formal education sector has a legal character and is either under direct control of the state or funded most of the time at least partly by the state when under control of independent institutions. It is usually only to be accessed through clearly regulated admission formalities, while the educational method is strictly defined and structured.

The informal sector, in contrast, tends to develop on the margins of society in many countries, especially in those of the “South”. It comprises people of all ages and both genders that have very little share in the different “forms of capital”. In the context of these countries, the informal sector is an important place of action for the disadvantaged majority of the population, which demonstrates their ability and will to survive through transgression – despite and beyond all forms of heteronomy. Since this sector requires disobedience, violations of the law and subversive creativity as paradigms of liberation, which are constantly practiced by the people “from below”, a nuanced look at the difference between the legal and the illegal as distinguishing factor between the formal and informal sector is necessary. It is the relativity of the distinction, in combination with the similarity of the educational contents in both sectors, which make the transfer from one sector to the other easy despite the change in context.

Employment biographies and life situations – the Capital theory: VET research has shown that the vocational integration of disadvantaged adolescents and adults is most successful when their whole life situation is stabilized through appropriate educational intervention (Baur et al. 2004). While previously, educational work focused on vocational qualification and training, assuming that this would create the conditions for social integration, today it is the stability in the individual life situation that is regarded as prerequisite for successful vocational integration. Thus, if the success of vocational support programmes is to be evaluated, it is simply not enough to focus exclusively on the educational pathways and the employment biographies of the participants. The successful completion of such educational programmes, along with the possibility of entering training or work, depends on the forms of handling the difficult life situations refugees have to face. Their financial situation, their residence status and other law-related issues, the stability of their social relations, their civil competences, their housing and health conditions as well as the forms of their recreational activities are significant dimensions that have an impact on the success of an educational support programme.

“The social situation of an individual is dependent on different dimensions, which are not to be reduced to the financial aspect. Apart from the material circumstances, factors such as education, employment or unemployment, housing conditions, separation, single parenthood, social networks etc. have an impact on the life situation. The term refers to the whole social interconnections, in which people make use of their material and immaterial possibilities. The life situation determines people’s development potential and the possibility to live their life the way they chose without losing self-respect”. (cf. Engels 2006, p. 109 ff.).

We thus assume that there is a close – albeit not causal – relation between the life situation of an individual and his/her possibilities to ask for and to acquire *education* (cf. Voges et al. 2003). With regard to considerations made by the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, we understand education as a product of individual possibilities of access to and control over different forms of economic, social and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1983). According to Bourdieu, the life situation of an individual is determined by the specific quantity (volume) and configuration of the types of capital: economic capital, which can directly be converted into money; cultural capital, which manifests itself in certificates or educational degrees and may pay off in the form of a well-paid job; social capital, which is made up of different types of useful social relations and also has significant influence on the social positioning and social status of the individual. From this perspective, it can be shown that the educational and employment careers of refugees develop under quite adverse conditions, since their access to “capital” is extensively restricted. Basically no form of capital can be accessed without restriction or is available without control. Their “acquisition potential” for different types of capital, i.e. their capacity to shape their educational career and to realize their aims in life, is in fact minimal, and in many cases their specific “capital configurations” allow for nothing more than to aim at individual self-realization under highly precarious conditions for years. The legal, physical, economic and social capital available to them is insufficient to be able to act “profitably” in the fields of education, training and employment. That some individuals are able, despite the most adverse conditions, to earn educational degrees and to find employment, deserves greatest respect. That others have resigned – who would blame them for it?

Research methods

Based on these theoretical perspectives, the empirical data have been analyzed in the city reports on the vocational integration of the study group in the four European cities of research (Florence, Glasgow, Hamburg, Gothenburg¹).

1 The Swedish partner – Göteborgsinitiativet, an NGO working in the field of social support and training for asylum seekers and refugees – has, due to internal financial problems, opted out

The city approach: As research locations, cities and metropolitan areas in the countries involved have been chosen. The decision has been made for research-pragmatic reasons, since cities and metropolitan areas are centres of attraction for refugees and migrants, for the simple reason that the possibilities to find a job or training or to study are better there. They are also destinations for asylum seekers or newly arrived immigrants which migrate in the context of family reunion. Apart from better opportunities to find employment, the existence of networks of ethnic communities plays a significant role in the cities, since these support structures serve as bridges to integration. The same is true for family connections already present in the cities. As the influx of migrants and refugees leads to an increase in the diversity of the urban population, municipal integration policies need to respond to the demands of the different population groups, providing them with equal opportunities for integration and promoting the peaceful coexistence between the local population and the migrants. In order to do so, most cities are equipped with qualitatively and quantitatively well-established integration structures (cf. Gag/Schroeder 2011).

In these four cities, data have been collected, from the structural perspective, on the VET institutions existing in the formal and non-formal sector. Following the target group-oriented approach, data have been collected, from the perspective of the study group, on the functioning of the existing structures and their accessibility for asylum seekers and refugees as well on the recognition and usefulness of their transnational biographies as a resource for vocational integration. For that purpose, problem centred face to face interviews with six asylum seekers and refugees were conducted in each city, collecting data on their transnational biographies and the competences and qualifications they bring with them. Also, data on the way these competences are utilized or not in the VET institutions of the receiving countries were of interest, including the individual expectations regarding integration and future prospects of the people interviewed. The evaluation and analysis of the data was bundled in city reports. These are coherent and consistent analyses based on the VET structures available, the individual biographies and the concrete reception and integration situation of the asylum seekers and refugees. In the analysis and presentation of the study results, each city has its own focus – depending on the contextual background with respect to relevant legal and political conditions, the institutional

from the project in February 2011. Thanks to the intervention from a flanking EU programme, the European Social Fund, also represented as a silent partner in the partnership, a way to finance and finalize the Swedish reporting and participating in the project was nevertheless found. Swedish participation from that on was fully financed by the Swedish ESF Council, Management Authority for the European Social Fund in Sweden, and the budget completely separated from the budget of the LdV project.

context of the VET systems (regarding their availability and accessibility for the asylum seekers and refugees) as well as the integration practices as applied by the institutions and refugees.

Summary of the outcomes

The city report of Florence, entitled “The paradox of being a recognized refugee in Italy: living in an open prison, Florence, Tuscany”, thus focused on a very specific problem of the city and provincial territory of Florence, whose main characteristic is the absence of far-reaching policies on the right of asylum with regard to recognition of status, reception and integration. Consequently, recognised refugees (single individuals and families) face a life of precarious social and living conditions, unemployment, lack of concrete possibilities for adult education, training or professional requalification. The most visible (and *symbolic*) characteristic of this situation are the “*Occupied Public Buildings*” (abandoned public buildings – hospitals, schools, railway stations, offices, etc.), in which many people of our target group, single individuals and families, have been living for the past 10 years.

The city report of Glasgow, entitled “A life in limbo: barriers to VET and labour market integration for asylum seekers awaiting for the granting of ‘Leave to Remain’”, focuses on the plight of asylum seekers as they wait for the cogs of the decision-making process to slowly come to a conclusion. The length of this wait and policies that exclude access to vocational education and paid employment deny asylum seekers full integration into Glaswegian society, with the consequence that there may be an impact on emotional and financial well-being that exacerbate the trauma of what has happened in their lives before and the trauma of finding themselves in a new country. Through the biographies of refugees and asylum-seekers featured here, the report analyzes their personal experiences and coping strategies. The report also looks at the formal and non-formal structures that are in place to support refugees and asylum-seekers with a focus on practices that try to help in the integration into VET and the labour market as well as the challenges they face. In the report, the following question is posed: Are the principles of integration in Glasgow really different from the reality of barriers to integration faced by asylum seekers in the present political climate?

The Hamburg city report, entitled “Vocational integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Hamburg – roundabout routes from model to structure” reflects exclusion and inclusion mechanisms of formal and non-formal educational programmes in Hamburg, while focussing on the factors and concepts which improve refugee-sensitive vocational integration work in that city. It shows how

useful medium and/or long-term regular financial support of model and experimental projects in the field of vocational integration of refugees and asylum seekers is for the sustainability of innovations, i.e. their transfer from experimental projects into regular structures, thus changing progressively, in a positive sense, the political discourse as well as the administrative practices regarding the vocational integration of this disadvantaged group in Hamburg. However, these positive changes also bring with them some challenges regarding, for instance, the systematic inclusion in regular VET structures where refugees and asylum seekers have been excluded until now. In order to help the local Hamburg VET institution to tackle this inclusion and diversity management challenge successfully, a concept of refugee monitoring in educational and VET systems was developed; (see “Refugee Monitoring”). And a description and comments on first steps in implementation of such a Refugee monitoring concept in Hamburg was made with a focus on the situation of young refugees in the Hamburg transitional system from school to vocation and recommendations

The city report of Gothenburg, entitled “The reception and introduction of asylum seekers and new arrivals in Gothenburg: Successes and failures in the development of a new system”, describes the new national system for examining asylum applications and goes on to analyze the reception of asylum seekers and refugees in Gothenburg, the second biggest city in Sweden. The system primarily supports new arrivals in finding employment, but does not sufficiently deal with the impact of needs such as housing, family reunion, medical and psychological treatment as well as specific needs of traumatized refugees on the successful integration of this target group into the VET system and the labour market. The report shows both possibilities and difficulties within the system and closes with a number of recommendations.

Based on these particularities of the VET and labour market integration systems and practices for refugees and asylum seekers in the four cities of research, bad, promising and good practices as well as recommendations for the integration of refugees into the European education and labour market have been formulated, on a local as well as on a European level. Latest i.e. the recommendations on European Level takes advantage from the outcomes of the case studies and draw consequences which might help technicians and stakeholders in the field of VET for asylum seekers and serve as evidence base for policy drives at EU level.

Cities Reports

I.

The paradox of being a recognized refugee in Italy: Living in an open prison, Florence, Tuscany

Margherita Buchetti, Rita Cardini, Daria Franceschini, Chiara Trevisan,
Maria Omodeo Nicola Solimano, Claudia Zaccai

Chapter 1: General Introduction – National Asylum Framework in Italy

The first and the most important law concerning the right of asylum in Italy is the Constitution of the Italian Republic, article 10. A constitutional principle that still is not enforced in the ordinary legal order:

The Italian legal order complies with the rules of international law generally recognized. The legal condition of the foreigner is regulated by the law in accordance with the international law and treaties. The foreigner who cannot exercise his/her democratic liberties granted by the Italian Constitution has the right of asylum in the territory of the Republic according to the conditions established by law. It is forbidden the extradition of the foreigner for political crimes.

In 1990, the Law n. 39/90, “Norme urgenti in materia di asilo politico, di ingresso e soggiorno dei cittadini extracomunitari e di regolarizzazione dei cittadini extracomunitari ed apolidi già presenti nel territorio dello Stato”, (Urgent legal measures in the field of political asylum, of entry and residence of non-EU citizens and of regularization of non-EU citizens and stateless people that already are in the territory of the State), abolished the geographical reserve to the Geneva Convention of 1951 – that limited in Italy the recognition of refugees coming uniquely from Europe – and provided a set of rules that regulated the asylum matter only in part.

With the law of 28th February 1990, n. 39, the Italian State finally ratified completely the Geneva Convention of 1951, that entirely became law of the Italian State.

In September 2002, the law was again modified with the approval of the Law L. 189/02, “Modifica alla normativa in materia di immigrazione e di asilo” (Amendment of the set of rules in the field of migration and asylum), implemented only in 2005 with the “Decreto del Presidente della Repubblica 16 Settembre 2004, n. 303, Regolamento relativo alle procedure per il riconoscimento dello

status di rifugiato” (Decree of the President of the Republic, September 2004, 16, n. 303, concerning the procedure for the recognition of the refugee status).

These amendments brought many changes to the law of the 25th July 1998 n. 286, “Testo unico delle disposizioni concernenti la disciplina dell’immigrazione e norme sulla condizione dello straniero”, (Measures concerning migration and the condition of foreigners), that is the general law in matters concerning migration in Italy, but it also changed the set of norms on asylum (cf. art.31 e 32). In fact the most important changes about asylum matters concerning the procedure for asking and obtaining the status of refugee under the Geneva Convention.

It is interesting to note that this law influenced considerably asylum matters, in particular through the decentralization of the asylum procedure and the institution of some Territorial Commissions, that have to examine the instances of recognition of international protection. These Commissions are now in several north and south Italian cities and they are made up of government officials and representatives of the Local Authorities. A representative of UNHCR participates *de jure* to the work of these Commissions.

These Commissions are directed and coordinated by the National Commission for the Right of Asylum, once the only organism to have functions of recognition of the refugee status in Italy.

It is, however, in the three-year period 2005 – 2008, with the reception of the European law in asylum matters, that in Italy an important legislative reform on the right of asylum takes shape.

In 2005 the “Directive 2003/9 with minimum standards on the reception of asylum seekers in the member States” was been implemented with the Legislative Decree “Implementation of the directive – D.lgs. 140/2005” that establishes the norms on reception of foreigners asking the recognition of the refugee status on the national territory.

Then the Directive 2004/83/CE of the Council on “Minimum rules on the attribution of the refugee status or of persons otherwise in need of international protection to non-EU citizens or stateless people, as well as minimum rules on the contents of the recognized protection” has been implemented with the Legislative Decree 19/11/2007 n. 251 so-called *Decreto Qualifiche*. This Decree establishes the criteria that Italy, as a member State, must use in order to decide if an asylum seeker has the right to international protection and which kind of protection he/she has to receive, if the refugee status or a kind of subsidiary protection.

Whereas with the Legislative Decree 28/01/2008 n. 25 so-called *Decreto Procedure*, modified and integrated by the Legislative Decree of the 3rd October 2008, n. 159 was implemented by the Directive 2005/85/CE on “Minimum rules for the procedures applied in the Member States in order to recognize or to revoke the refugee status”. With this set of laws some minimum rules for the pro-

cedure applied in order to recognize and revoke the refugee status have been introduced. In fact these two decrees modify these issues in a substantial way but, despite the changes made in order to regulate the entire asylum field and to improve the situation of refugees and asylum seekers in Italy, an organic law that guarantees those asking protection in Italy the access to a solid system of protection, assistance and integration is still necessary. Italy still remains the only EU country where there are no organic policies and a national system of reception, protection and integration. Furthermore this situation would reduce the operative difficulties both for the local administrations and for the private-social sector that work in the field of assistance and safeguard of the rights of people under international protection.

In response to these problems, in April 2001, the UNHCR, the Home Office and the National Association of the Italian Cities (ANCI) created and implemented the National Asylum Program (PNA), inserted in the Law n. 189/2002 in the System of protection for asylum seekers and refugees (SPRAR). With the institutionalization of this system, a coordination structure, the Central Service of Information, Promotion, Consultancy, Monitoring and Technical Support to the Local Authorities was set up. Among the aims of this Program there was the constitution of a reception network in order to accompany the asylum seekers all during the status recognition *iter* and the predisposition to intervene in support for the refugee integration.

In fact the SPRAR is a network of Local Authorities that – in order to implement “integrated reception” projects – have access to available resources, of the National Fund for Asylum Policies and Services.

On a territorial level the Local Authorities, with the support of the Third Sector, guarantee an “integrated reception” that goes beyond the only distribution of board and lodgings, offering also in a complementary way information services accompaniment, assistance and orientation, through the building up of individual paths of socio-economic integration.

Several tasks concern the Central Service such as the monitoring of the presence on the territory of people asking or having the status of international protection; the creation, the maintenance and the constant updating of a data bank of the interventions implemented at the local level for people asking or having the status of international protection; the dissemination of information on good practices; technical assistance to the Local Authorities, as well as the predisposition of reception services; support to the information services and orientation carried out in the governmental centers for asylum seekers.

SPRAR Report – 2010

In order to read correctly the data concerning the activities of SPRAR, it is necessary to remember the extraordinary number of arrivals in the year 2008 that determined a growth of the reception needs in Italy during the following two year period, as it is equally important to remember the events in 2011. In fact the migration fluxes from Tunisia and Libya of the last months have had a strong impact on the claims of international protection and, consequently, on the reception system for refugees and asylum seekers in Italy.

The SPRAR reception network at a national level

Moreover, during the two year period 2008-2010 some general considerations about the changes of the characteristics of the asylum seekers and refugee population who arrived in Italy in this period are interesting. We noted mainly the emersion of a significant number of situations, indicated by both the territorial and the governmental reception centers, concerning physical and psychological conditions, serious disabling diseases of people also victims of violence and torture. This important increase of vulnerability situations made the research of places with specific services inside SPRAR complex, most of all for those presenting problems connected to mental disease.

Therefore in total the System of protection has 3.146 places that, during 2010, guaranteed the reception of 6.855 beneficiaries, both asking or having the status of international protection. From this point of view, analyzing the accommodation of SPRAR in the Regions, we note that the primacy of reception goes to Lazio – 1.580 receptions, 22.39% for a total number of places of 466 – (where the reality of Rome doubtless create a difference) and then Lombardia 1.163 receptions, 16.48% for a total number of places of 254, Sicilia 807 receptions, 11,44% for a total number of places of 469, Puglia 499 receptions, 7,07% for a total number of places of 314 and Emilia Romagna 439 receptions, 6,22% for a total number of places of 255.

Whereas Toscana is present with only 307 receptions, 4,35% for a total number of places of 173.

Brief socio-demographic profile of people received in SPRAR network

Analyzing the most important characteristics of the 6.855 people received in the SPRAR network in 2010, the data which emerged during the previous years on

gender, age and family members was confirmed. These elements, even if in a general way, identify the “beneficiary type” as being a young single man (5.209), between 18 and 40 years old (about 3000).

In 2010 the first five nationalities were Somalia, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Nigeria and Iraq, that remain almost unchanged compared to the previous years – 2007-2010.

The significant presence of people coming from the Horn of Africa, region from where, as it has already been underlined in the past, is constant because of the flow of forced migrations.

Moreover it is interesting to note the paths of arrival in Italy. The people received in SPRAR came mostly by sea (60%), 15% through an airport frontier, 9% from an overland frontier, whereas 5% arrived from EU countries or came back in Italy under the 2nd Dublin Regulation.

A statistical pattern

In 2008 in Italy a significant increase of the asylum requests occurred, in line with the European standards (30.300). Many of those presenting a request arrived mainly by sea. In 2009, the number of asylum requests decreased drastically, this decrease depends also on the restrictive policies carried out in the Canal of Sicily by Italy and Libya, as the rejection on high seas. From 2008 to 2009 the asylum requests fell by half (17,600). In 2010, this trend continued with 8,200 requests classifying Italy at the 14th place for destination among the 44 industrialized countries. This change is due to the ratification of the “Treaty of friendship, partnership and cooperation” with Libya approved by the Parliament in February 2009, that determined the intensification of the frontier controls in order to contrast irregular migration with a significant decrease of the arrivals by sea and consequently of the international protection instances.

In fact at the end of 2010, the refugees living in Italy were circa 56 thousand, whereas the number of the new asylum instances sent to the Territorial Commissions were lower than the previous year by 31%, that is 12.1217.

During 2010, most of the people who presented a request for protection came from Africa (4.284), Europe (4.018) and Asia (3.560). In particular, besides the asylum request presented by ex-Yugoslavian citizens or Kurds coming from Iraq and Turkey by sea or overland in Italy through the Italian-Slovenian boundary, also in the last year as in the previous three year period the majority of the instances was made by citizens escaping from Africa and Asia mainly through trajectories that connect the sub-Sahara to the Mediterranean sea.

In particular people escaping from conflicts or persecutions who arrived in Italy to present an international protection request in 2010, came mainly from, in decreasing order, ex-Yugoslavia (2.249), Nigeria (1.632), Pakistan (1.115), Turkey, Afghanistan, Iraq, Ghana, Iran, Ivory Coast and Bangladesh.

Compared to the two year period 2008/2009 the numbers of migrants escaping from the Horn of Africa and Bangladesh decreased significantly.

The most part of recognitions of the refugee status concerned, for the year 2010, citizens coming from Eritrea (418), Afghanistan (224), Turkey (204), Iran (199), Palestine (191) e Iraq (144), that are also in part the priority addressees of the concession of subsidiary protection. In fact, to the citizens coming from Afghanistan, Eritrea and Iraq this form of safeguard has been recognized, and also to Pakistanis and Somalis. Whereas the proposal of humanitarian protection was formulated in a more consistent way for people asking protection coming from ex-Yugoslavia (1401), Nigeria (313), Turkey, Pakistan, Liberia and Ghana, the most number of negative results concerned citizens coming from Nigeria (1.595), followed by Ghanaians and Somalis.

Despite the limitations of the European law on the possibility of moving away in another country of the EU, many refugees leave Italy – also in certain cases immediately after the recognition of protection in Italy. Concerning this situation, it is interesting to note that a majority of the returnees so-called Dublin in Italy is constituted by people to whom a form of protection in Italy was recognized and then they presented a new asylum instance in another member State.

The rights of people asking International Protection

- **Legal Assistance:** they can request legal assistance, during the judicial appeal and obtain the recognition of the expenses on State relief.
- **Health care:** once obtained the permit of stay for a request of international protection, they have the right to be enrolled in the National Health Service.
- **Lodgings:** they are lodged in Reception Centers for People asking International Protection (CARA) during identification and/or during the exam of the request. At the end of the reception period (from 20 to 35 days) and having obtained the residence permit for a request of international protection, they must leave the Centers.
- **Training:** In the Centers Italian language courses are sometimes offered. For minors enrollment in schools is facilitated.
- **Subsidy:** Asylum seekers who have the requirements to benefit of a reception place, but who have not found a SPRAR or CARA reception possibility, can request for financial help.

- **Work:** if the Commission for the recognition of the refugee status does not issue a decision on the request within six months from its presentation and if the delay is not imputable to the people asking protection, the Italian law provides for the renewal of the residence permit for six months and it allows the asylum seeker to work until the conclusion of the status recognition procedure.

The typologies of residence permits for international protection in Italy

- Refugee status under the Convention of Geneva of 1951 – The residence permit has a duration of 5 years and it is renewable at each expiry.
- **Subsidiary Protection** is given to a non-EU citizen or stateless person, who has not the requirements to be recognized as a refugee, but founded reasons exist to believe that if he/she went back to his/her country of origin, or in the country he/she had his/her habitual residence, he/she would run the effective risk of being subjected to serious damage. **The residence permit** for subsidiary protection has a duration of three years. At the moment of its renewal, it can be converted into a residence permit for work reasons, if the request of conversion is presented before the expiry of the previous permit; the applicant has a document of identity: passport or a travel document; the applicant has a work contract or an autonomous activity.
- **Humanitarian Protection**, in case the Commission, even if it does not approve the request of international protection, believes that grave humanitarian reasons exist: **The residence permit** for humanitarian reasons has the duration of one year and it can be converted in a residence permit for work reasons at the same conditions indicated for the international protection.

The rights of people under international protection in Italy

- **The right to health care** guarantees the same treatment recognized to the Italian citizen for both social assistance and health care.
- **Work** – concerning subordinated work, autonomous work, enrollment to a professional register, professional training and internship on the work place they have the right to have the same treatment as Italian citizens.
- **Travel documents** – can freely circulate on the national territory. In order to travel outside Italy, only refugees are given a Travel Document with a duration of five years and renewable.

- **Family unity** – The family members who on an individual basis do not have the right to international protection have in any case the same rights recognized as the holder of international protection status.
- **Family reunification** – it is possible to ask for family reunification permission when married; the children underage, whether born within or outside the marriage, are not married, provided that the other parent, if in life, has given his/her consent; – dependent children of age who cannot provide for their essential life needs because of their state of health; dependent parents who do not have an appropriate family support in the country of origin.
- **Education** – the minor has the right to education, as the Italian citizens, in particular during school age (from 6 to 16 years old). The adults have the right to education and professional training according to the laws established for foreigners who regularly stay in Italy.
- **Attending university** – access to the universities is permitted to foreigners who regularly stay in Italy on equal terms with Italian citizens.
- **Housing** – the participation to the notices for the allocation of public residential housing on equal terms with Italian citizens.

The Toscana Region 2012: The migration phenomenon

During the years, besides the traditional migratory presences coming from the Asiatic continent (the city of Prato is home to one of the biggest Chinese communities of Italy), the neo-communitarian population from East Europe has increased, whereas the arrivals from countries like Morocco and the Philippines, that have reached now a consistent migratory seniority have slowed down (therefore their numbers increase mainly with new births and family reunification).

The migratory phenomena in Tuscany is essentially different at a provincial level, in fact Florence, Regional capital, absorbs by itself 30% of the regional total as well as, it is important to underline, a significant presence of almost 12% in the Province of Prato. Also in the Provinces of Arezzo, Pisa, Pistoia and Lucca the number of migrants are well over the 25 000 presences, whereas those of Livorno, Massa Carrara and Grosseto record much lower presences.

In Tuscany between 2005 and 2010 the foreign population recorded a growth of 69% with a greater increase in 2007 (17,4%) and in 2008 (12,5%). In the same period the percentage of the foreign population on the resident population increased constantly, passing from 6% in 2005 to 9,7% in 2010.

For all the five considered years, the three numerically most significant nationalities in the Tuscany territory were, in a decreasing order, Albania, Romania and Chinese Republic. For all of them a percentage increase during the five considered

years; in particular the number of people of the Rumanian community grew most of all arriving at a total of circa 217% with a significant peak in 2007 (87,5%). The Chinese community increased less than the Albanian one during all the period considered (37,8% against circa 45%) and however a new strong increase is recorded in the last two year period (9,5% and 11%).

The gender analysis shows a substantial parity of the number of men and women compared to the total of the foreign population; in 2005 it was precisely 50% whereas during the next years a weak female prevalence is recorded and in 2010 it is at 52,7% against 47,3% of the male presences. If we read the data in light of the several nationalities, it is possible to note that the female prevalence is given by the Rumanian and Albanian communities whereas the Chinese Republic is characterized by a male prevalence.

The presence of foreign minors compared to the total of foreign residents does not have had substantial changes during the six considered years varying from 21,2% in 2005 to 20,7% in 2010. Whereas, if considered in connection with Italian minors, the foreign minors percentage increases constantly and in a relevant way from 8,6% in 2005 to 13,3% in 2010.

Consequently, another interesting data shows the increase of foreign minors that in the five years period 2005/2010 is 65% against 1,7% of the same period for Italian resident minors.

Between 2005 and 2008 the residence permits issued in Tuscany compared to the number of permits issued in Italy increase very little passing from 7,5% in 2005 to 8,5% in 2006 and in the two years after, it stops at 8,4%.

If we compare the national data concerning the released permits with the regional one, we note a percentage increase of the latter above the national data (45,8% compared to 31% during the five years period in exam). Concerning the number of permits released for asylum, asylum request and humanitarian reasons, these increased between 2005 and 2008 by 304,7% at a regional level, a percentage greater than the medium national increment stopped at 258,4%; on the contrary, the permits for work reasons increase by 16,4% in Tuscany, whereas they decrease in Italy by 2,3%.

In Tuscany the concessions of Italian citizenship status in the last five years recorded an increase very near to the national one (129,6% against the national 130%), but the percentage of foreigners who have citizenship compared to the total of resident foreigners is very low and it appears almost stable passing from 0,9% in 2005 to 1,2% in 2010.

The reception system for asylum seekers and refugees in Tuscany

In Tuscany from 2008, the Local Authorities that are in the SPRAR network increased by one unit; each of them heads a project for ordinary beneficiaries.

Between 2007 and 2011 the financed places decreased by 2,5%, with a maximum peak of 224 places in 2008. Concerning the financial source, only in 2008 12,5% places were financed with extraordinary funds. On the contrary, if we consider the beneficiaries of the places, in Tuscany all the places financed during the five years considered are dedicated to ordinary beneficiaries.

The beneficiaries of the SPRAR system in Tuscany

If we examine the number of people received, between 2007 and 2010 a decrease of 5% is recorded and it concerns only the represented category, that is the ordinary beneficiaries category. If we connect the number of places with the number of people received, it was possible to evince the medium time of reception in the SPRAR centers. From this analysis, it results that between 2007 and 2010 there was a substantial balance in the medium time of permanence in the centers (224 days in 2007 and 233 in 2010); 2009 is the year when we can note a greater time of stay (249 days).

Chapter 2: A survey of Reception Centers for young asylum seekers and refugees in the City and Province of Florence

Introduction

Concerning the European project EduAsyl, our working group, during a first step of research, has dealt with the mapping of the reception centers for asylum seekers¹ or people under international protection² in the Florentine territory. This study

1 The asylum seeker is a person who has crossed an international frontier and who makes, in another State, an asylum request for the recognition of the refugee status. His/her request is examined by the authorities of that country. Until the decision moment concerning his/her request, he/she is considered an asylum seekers. Not all the asylum seekers are then recognized as refugees. [Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees – www.unhcr.it].

2 For people under international protection we consider those who have the refugee status and those who are under subsidiary or humanitarian protection. The refugee is a person who, for a founded fear of persecution “for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership to a determined social group or political opinion, is outside the country where he/she is citizen and cannot or because of that fear does not want avail himself/herself of the protection of that country”. [Source: Con-

has had as aims both the analysis of the “reception conditions” of people under international protection, adults and minors in the City and the Province of Florence, and the exam of the integration policies carried out by the different reception centers for this specific category of migrants.

In order to carry out this Mapping we have considered both the reception centers of the City of Florence, divided into districts, and the centers of the remaining provincial area. A further distinction has been done between the centers for adults and families and those for Unaccompanied Foreign Minors and Unaccompanied Minor Asylum Seekers. The latter group, even if it represents a smaller segment of this universe, in any case it shows the most vulnerable and fragile group of young people. The protection of the minor’s “superior interest” is always in conflicts with migration policies of control.

Moreover we have surveyed the occupied buildings and we have decided to focus our study research on them. In fact, the precariousness situation and the living conditions of asylum seekers, refugees and people under International protection, that is people escaping from persecutions, wars and calamitous events in their origin countries and therefore migrants for humanitarian reasons and with a legally and recognized status by the Italian State, need a specific concern.

2.1 The methodology of work

After having observed that a mapping including all the reception centers, both those involved in the *SPRAR* program (National System of protection for asylum seekers and refugees)³ and those not involved in this program, had never been

vention of Geneva of 1951 about the refugee status]. The subsidiary protection is useful to give a status to foreigners who, even if they are not in the definition of refugee under the Convention of 1951, because an individual persecution is without foundation, need anyway of protection because, in case of repatriation in the country of origin, would be subjected to a grave damage because of armed conflicts, generalized violence and/or massive violations of human rights. The subsidiary protection was codified on a European level and it entered in the Italian system in 2008.

Until 2008 in Italy, as in other EU countries, the concession of the subsidiary protection was not provided for. Those who were not in the refugee definition, but would be in danger in case of repatriation, can benefit of a residence permit for humanitarian reasons. The definition of humanitarian protection is remained in a residual way in the Italian system, even if it foresees minor rights than the subsidiary protection and the refugee status. [Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees – www.unhcr.it].

- 3 First Italian public system that is widespread throughout Italy for the reception of asylum seekers and refugees under Convention, with the involvement of central institutions and Local Authorities, depending on a shared responsibility between Home Office and Local Authorities. The law n. 189/2002 introduced the *SPRAR* and the coordinating organization of the System, that is the “Central Service Bureau of information, promotion, consultancy, monitoring and technical sup-

carried out, our working group needed to precede a quantitative analysis of this phenomena to the qualitative phase shared with the other countries involved in this project. Therefore, after a first research on web, we contacted the directors of the several reception centers in the Florentine territory, and then we have surveyed only those which receive our research target. In fact, it was necessary to look first at the reception centers that give lodgings both to Italians and foreigners, and after, through phone conversations, we located the specific centers taken into consideration. The information provided in order to carry out this mapping have been collected both through a direct contact with the center, and through repeated phone conversations. Then, the collected material was analyzed and elaborated according to the specific goals of this research.

2.2 The quantitative analysis and the distribution of the reception centers on the territory (last update: December 31, 2010)

The statistical data was obtained to the date of December 31, 2010. The reception centers have been divided into those which are official, and that receive adults and families or unaccompanied minors asylum seekers, and those which are occupied buildings. It was necessary, then, a further distinction between the centers of the City of Florence and those of the remaining provincial area.

In the table n. 1 are presented the aggregated data concerning the 289 asylum seekers or people under International Protection surveyed in the Florentine territory. As we can see, 59 people live in occupied buildings. Most adults and families involved in reception programs inside reception centers live in the area of the City of Florence, whereas only 37 are received in centers outside the metropolitan area. Unaccompanied minor asylum seekers are only 4.

port to Local Authorities” (entrusting ANCI – The National Association of Italian Cities – to manage these services). *SPRAR* is a network of Local Authorities that accede, according to available resources, to the National Fund for policies and asylum services, in order to carry out “integrated reception” projects. At the territorial level the Local Authorities, with the support of the Third Sector, guarantees “integrated reception” interventions that are not limited the distribution of board and lodging, with complementary activities such as:

- Information,
- Accompaniment,
- Assistance and counseling, through the setting-up of individual paths towards economic and social integration.