

# REGIONAL REPORT ON MIGRATION, SUSTAINABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

## Activity 1.1.1: Audit on migration, sustainability and development education

Version 2 drafted in April 2018

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## Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 Rationale behind	3
1.2 Aims and objectives	3
1.3 Available data and recourses	3
1.4 Limitations	4
<b>2. Literature review</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Public opinion polls	4
2.2 Media response	6
2.3 Research and project production	11
2.4 Case studies of good practices	12
2.5 Migration policies and sustainable development/Migration and International commitments	14
<b>3. Field Research</b>	<b>16</b>
3.1 Introduction	16
3.2 Awareness about international migration and sustainable development and about the links between migration and sustainable development	16
3.3 Insecurity	17
3.4 Main factors that shape public opinion and instruments to shape public discourse. Gaps of information and instruments to fill the gaps	18
3.5 The role of the education systems	19
<b>4. Conclusions and recommendations</b>	<b>20</b>
4.1 National and local level recommendations for NGOs	20
4.2 National and local level recommendations for governmental institutions	21
4.3 Local level recommendations for municipalities	21
4.4 National and local level recommendations for educational institutions	22
4.5 Recommendations for future research areas	22
<b>References</b>	<b>23</b>



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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Rationale behind

Over the last 20 years, schools, local authorities, NGOs, Universities and the nuanced world of the associations have worked together to spread a new cultural model based on reception and inclusion, intercultural development education, undertaking the role of promoters of a better knowledge and awareness of the global-local interdependencies between economic, social, cultural and environmental phenomena. Gaps and rigidities are not lacking in this complex task: for example, upper secondary schools, and Universities in particular, are strongly bound on what they teach: not connected, fragmented, specialised, sectorial and auto-referential subjects, knowledge that lose sight of complexity and interconnections.

Moreover, this continuous work of dissemination of knowledge and awareness lacked (and still lacks) the necessary continuity and unity, as it has always been based on scarce and irregular funding and rooted in a troubled and hostile political and cultural environment, both at national and local level. The issues which the InterCap project focuses on are surrounded by false rumours, populism and rough knowledge that feed on disorientation, ignorance and economic insecurity feared by people, who are blind to the entanglements and complexity of the global-local phenomena in the current development area.

As suggested by researchers, Italy is behind schedule in the educational alignment to other countries' standards of sustainability and resilience. Similarly, Italy's engagement in support of an effective and long-sighted action of dissemination aimed to help the general public understanding the complex reasons underlying the migration phenomenon and its interlinkages with the environmental/economic sustainability is behind schedule (Barilla Center for Food and Nutrition 2017). A recent literature review seems to confirm this trend.

## 1.2 Aims and objectives

This research aims to give a general picture of the relation between migration, sustainable development and education and school sector in Italy, with a particular focus on Tuscany region.

## 1.3 Available data and recourses

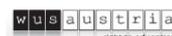
To write the report the most recent surveys, reports and researches have been used. All these sources are from some of the most influential Italian Research Institutions. Research and studies realised by experts of the themes and by NGOs have also been used. Institutional material and in more limited cases journalistic resources have been used too.



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## 1.4 Limitations

The report, in the short time given to the researcher, has been written using the resources on internet. To a lesser extent, printed sources have been used. Another limitation is the lack of research and project production at Italian level.

With regards to the field research, the main limitation is that we did not manage to carry out the focus groups so we decide to collect stakeholders' feedback with phone interviews (2 cases) and written interview (4 cases).

# 2. Literature review

## 2.1 Public opinion polls

Migrants and asylum seekers are increasingly perceived as a problem in Italy. As the economy of our country goes global, politics is following the opposite path, becoming increasingly nationalist. The threats posed by Islamic terrorism over the last few years provide grounds for stricter policies of containment, namely those towards refugee seekers. However, statistics reveal another surprising fact: those refugees who reach the EU countries account for less than 10 % out of the global total, and most of them are actually fleeing from ISIS. The perpetrators of the terror attacks that have shaken Europe, instead, are almost invariably born and raised in Europe and there they became radicalised. Due to its geographical position, Italy has often found itself at the receiving end of the migration flows; however, despite the percentage of arrivals is constantly increasing, Italy is among the last countries in Europe when the ratio of the number of refugees to the total population is concerned: 3 refugees per thousand inhabitants. (M. Ambrosini 2017, Fondazione Migrantes 2018, Ciabbari L. 2015, Oxfam Italia 2017).

The recent survey Osservatorio Europeo sulla Sicurezza, carried out by Demos/Fondazione Unipolis (Fondazione Unipolis 2017) draws attention to how much the perception of unsafety caused by the presence of immigrants in Italy has reached the higher figure for the past ten years: 46 %. Only in 2007 there was a higher rate (51 %), whereas in 1999, the year when municipal and European elections both occurred, the fear of immigrants was just as widespread. In both occasions, immigration was one of the key topics of debate, caused by the concerns about the increase in crime and eventually resulting in the centre-right's democratic electoral win. This subject has been taken up again only now since then, as a consequence of news such as the large influx of migrants from North-African coasts and the hideous violent events that took place in Rimini, Macerata, Firenze, etc.



Today's scenario does not appear very different from the one in 2007. However, the current situation has specific features that mirror several shocks occurred over the past ten years on an economic, social and politic level. Despite the relative stability existing since 2012, the labour market situation, as well as the deep inequalities within society, is a key reason why Italians have closed themselves off from migrants and asylum-seekers.

Italy is today facing also problems that were not perceived as such ten years ago, such as terrorism and the environmental uncertainty linked to the earthquakes and the other hazards that have hit Italy in the recent past. Let us look in detail at the standard indexes provided by the Osservatorio.

*The global uncertainty index*, measuring the major concerns perceived by Italians, holds the first place with 76 %. Italians are mostly concerned about the “destruction of the environment and nature” (58%), “pollution” (55%), “safety of food” (47%), “terrorist attacks” (44%), “globalization” (39%) and “falling victim of natural disasters” (38%). The fear of natural hazards, such as earthquakes, landslides and floods, has increased by 13 points compared to 2016.

The index of economic uncertainty comes second, accounting for 63% of the overall concerns of Italians. What Italians fear most can be summarized as it follows: “losing a pension or not having it at all” (38%) and “losing a job, becoming unemployed” (37%) and “not having enough to live on” (37%), as aftershocks of the past economic crisis.

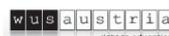
*The index of “insecurity due to criminality”* holds third place with 41% (Iafrate 2017). The index of the overall uncertainty, which sums up the three main sources of insecurity mentioned above, presents the same value as ten years ago (29%), even though the “chart of the insecurities” now comprises data such as “politic uncertainty” and “our children's future”, that did not exist in the past.

The relationship existing between immigration and the rise in criminality is a widespread conviction. As a matter of fact, the past surveys Osservatorio di Demos had pointed out how the perception of the rise in criminality was directly linked to the increasing fear of the foreigners and perceived as a danger for individual safety and a threat to employment. Over the last two years, however, the Osservatorio highlighted how the relevance of criminal phenomena has been scaled down, while the fear of the migrants has risen instead. According to 78 % of the respondents, there has been an increase of criminal events in the last five years, although data have decreased by 3 points compared to 2016 and 10 compared to 2007. Conversely, the fear of the foreigners has been increasing: 39 % of respondents see migrants as a threat to public order security; 36 % sees them as a threat to employment. Both figures show higher values than 2007, when they jumped to 50%, but tensions still remain.

With regard to the demographics of the respondents, those with a lower education level seem to be the more xenophobic. However, whatever the level of education, xenophobia is higher among right-wingers, while left-wingers feel safer. (Diamanti 2017).



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Looking at the data from the Eurobarometer (Eurobarometer 2017), it clearly emerges that “immigration and terrorism are the leading concerns at EU level”. Immigration is seen as a concern by 39 % of respondents, while terrorism by 38 %. According to the survey, “though the increase is limited (+1), immigration has gained ground for the first time since autumn 2015, after a 20-percentage point decline between autumn 2015 and spring 2017. After a steep rise between autumn 2016 and spring 2017 (+12), which took terrorism to the top of the ranking for the first time, this concern has now lost some ground, falling to second place.”

For Italian respondents, immigration and terrorism are the two most important issues facing the EU at the moment (38 % and 34 % respectively). At a national level, immigration is the second most important issue facing Italy according to the respondents of the Eurobarometer survey (33 %) while the first one is unemployment (42 %). Terrorism is seen as one of the two most important issues by 13 % of respondents (6<sup>th</sup> most important issue). These data confirm the one found for Italy by the survey Osservatorio Europeo sulla Sicurezza (Fondazione Unipolis 2017) analysed before.

## 2.2 Media response

Not a day goes by in Italy where media do not cover immigration. Both the studies carried out in the past and the present ones have highlighted how the phenomenon has been historically linked to danger, crime, social unrest and other negative associations (Di Luzio 2011, Montesano 2010, Calvanese 2011, Binotto, Bruno, Lai, 2012). Among the most recent studies, it seems important to refer to the Rapporto dell’Associazione “Carta di Roma” ([www.cartadiroma.org](http://www.cartadiroma.org)), a research on the mediatic behaviour on the migration flows over the last year (Beretta P., Milazzo G. 2016, Lai 2017). What follow are the main findings of the report.

Almost 44% of the news reported in the newspapers examined covered the arrivals in Central Mediterranean countries. News on criminality and insecurity increased by an average of 10 more compared to 3 years ago. Conversely, reports on immigrants’ reception decreased by one third compared to 2016. Crime stories, such as that about the gang rape in Rimini, were covered 137 times in a month, with peaks of 28 news a day. Sensational news and alarmistic claims rose from 27% in 2016 to 43% in 2017. 4 headlines/news out of 10 bring about anguish and distress. The remaining 57% adopts a neutral language (52%) or a reassuring one (5%).

Immigration and politics go almost always hand-in hand in the ongoing debate (Musarò, Parmiggiani 2014, Binotto, Bruno, Lai 2016). The reception of immigrants is regarded as a phenomenon to be managed at grassroots level by local and European decision-makers, while the award of the Italian citizenship to those born there is deemed as a topic to be discussed in the national arena. National press focuses more on the political debate, often arguing in favour of one or another solution according to the political position of the newspaper. On the other hand, local press gives higher importance to relevant issues at a



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local level, paying a special attention to criminal events with migrants as perpetrators, or on the problems perceived as such (Erta 2014).

Since 2017, the narrative depiction of migrants started evoking feelings such as doubt, mistrust, suspicion. For instance, the front pages of newspaper started featuring events such as the potential collusion between NGOs and traffickers of human beings, which fosters doubts on the real intention of humanitarian associations. Terrorism, crime, decay, transmission of diseases and threats to public order and security are other topics often linked to the above feelings.

As far as discrimination is concerned, the analysis of newspaper headlines carried out in the “Carta di Roma” report highlights four areas of denigrating depictions of migrant people, several of which spread, intentionally or not, offensive and discriminatory claims: religion, violence, costs and diseases. These points deserve a greater deepening (Beretta P., Milazzo G. 2017).

Mass-media often spread generalizations based on religious stereotypes. In these, Islam is often depicted as a sect of extremists that presents consistent incompatibilities with the Catholic religion and the Western culture and values. Islam is almost always linked to terrorism, denial of women’s fundamental rights and violence, usually used to “subdue infidels”. What follow are some of the headlines appeared in the main Italian newspaper over the last year.

**Tab. 1. Denigrating depictions of other people’s religions. A collection of newspaper headlines on the national press:**

<p>“Migrants abound where terrorist attacks occur”</p> <p>“The more Muslims, the more terrorism”</p> <p>“Islam is willing to exterminate us with chemical and nuclear weapons. Assassins, thieves and terrorists: that is what the Imam inmates are”</p> <p>“Turin, capital of the submission to Islam”</p> <p>“Secludes and rapes his own sisters: ‘they were too westernised’”;</p> <p>“I have become islamophobic and I am proud of it!”</p> <p>“Here they go again saying that Islam has nothing to do with it!”</p> <p>“Quaraan kills more than handguns”</p> <p>“‘Migrants’ or ‘refugees’ are invaders anyway”</p> <p>“Guess what! Western terrorists grow up in the mosques”</p> <p>“Islam slaughters 35 Christians”</p>
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Muslims are frequently depicted as a socially dangerous group, fairly homogeneous despite the diversities at its core. Their crimes often provide pretexts to highlight alleged connections between their condition as migrants, holding a different ethnicity, “race”, culture and religion, and their natural propension to commit crimes and violence, especially against women (Lai 2015). Whenever such crimes concern Italian perpetrators, they fall within the category of gender-based violence. Conversely, when foreign perpetrators are concerned, regardless their being legal migrants, asylum-seekers or refugees etc. – the “migration framework” is the one that prevails, while that of gender-based violence fades into the background. What follow are some of the headlines appeared in the main Italian newspaper over the last year.

**Tab. 2. Denigrating depictions of violence. A collection of newspaper headlines on the national press:**

- “Minniti (the former Italian Ministry of the Interior, AN) and his statistics prove that Italy nowadays imports more criminals than goods”
- “To cut down the rape cases we need to curb the influx of migrants. Foreign people rape more than Italians; stats never lie”
- “Migration is the leading cause of rapes in Italy”
- “Rome: robbed and raped by a refugee”
- “Alleged refugee, real rapist”
- “Illegal migrant rapes a girl”
- “Beaten by her Moroccan husband”
- “Rome: tied to a pole and raped”
- “Fear for a 15-year old girl harassed and beaten by two immigrants”
- “Two refugees arrested for sexual abuse”
- “Raped by an asylum-seeker in Bergamo”
- “13-year old girl raped by two Nigerians at the playground”
- “80-year old woman goes shopping. Raped by a foreign man”
- “Nigerian helps a 75-year old, then beats her up and rape her”
- “Raging migrant rapes a dog”

With regard to the costs of immigration and reception, the denigrant depiction of migrants usually puts in comparison the resources allocated for the integration and reception of migrants with those taken away from Italians, fostering the inappropriate perception of an



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alleged “embezzling” of subsidies and other resources to which Italians should be entitled. Ad-hoc storytelling techniques accentuate the gap between “us” and “them”, depicting migration as an unsustainable cost and extending the condition of “assisted” to the whole group of migrants while their real contribution to the Italian economy is overlooked and their status as refugees deemed as a lucky privilege. Tab.3 reports some of the headlines appeared in the main Italian newspaper over the last year.

**Tab. 3. Denigrating depictions of the immigration costs. A collection of newspaper headlines on the national press:**

- “Migrant women chow down the government maternity grant”
- “Migrant women have even their (graduate!) baby-sitters paid by our government”
- “Immigrants have their soccer camps paid by us!”
- “Indigent students receive from our government 83 % less than the amount paid for migrants”
- “Refugees get their cottages, while 30 % of the inhabitants of Amatrice (a small town in central Italy, heavily affected by earthquakes in 2016, AN) still have got nowhere to stay”
- “Our borders are always open to refugees, but closed to the retirees fleeing fiscal treatment”
- “INPS (the Italian social security institution, AN) must be drunk not to realize how much money is lost for migrants”
- “Refugees steal the orchards from retirees”
- “Nowadays Nigerians take mafiosi’s jobs”
- “Educational grants have been drawn up into migrants’ business”

Another recurring generalisation by mass media is that concerning the diseases brought over by immigrants to our country. This false claim feeds on the citizens’ worry about their health and the transmission of rare and untreatable diseases. The incubus of viral plagues in our country is palpable in the following claims, where migrants are spreaders of epidemics or, alternatively, people with mental issues causing danger to society (see Tab. 4).



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**Tab. 4. Denigrating depictions of the migrants’ diseases. A collection of newspaper headlines on the national press:**

- “Nigerian leper causes panic in Rimini”
- “A non-Community malaria”
- “The Ministry confirms it: foreigners bring diseases to Italy”
- “Scientists confirm it: immigrants are crazy”
- “Refugees alarm: 38 cases of TB and 2000 of scabies”
- “Milan, 2.000 refugees have scabies”
- “Uncontrolled migrants. And viruses follow them”
- “Imported malaria: here is the evidence”
- “The mental issues of those arriving on the barge”

With regard to the relationship between media, environment and sustainable development issues, it would be useful to make some reference to the last Rapporto OSA-Osservatorio sullo Sviluppo Sostenibile e l’Ambiente nei Media, realized by Pentapolis (Pentapolis 2017). The report shows how media are likely to cover environmental issues only in the aftermath of natural hazards, and only treating them as sensational news, without drawing any attention to the interlinkages between these events and other social phenomena, which include migrations.

All in all, the Report points out a still uneven presence of environmental issues in media coverage. This, along with the little influence of pressure groups and the ineffective activism by the competent press, caused a substantial lack of interest by decision makers and, consequently, in public opinion. There is the worrying tendency to “forget that sustainability in the energy and food industries, waste disposal and rural development, is definitely going to have an impact on the future economy” (Pentapolis 2017).

The reports mentioned above highlight the need to change the narrative on migrations, underlining its structural relation with the sustainable development issues and the root causes of this phenomenon in all the diverse contexts, through new researches and evidences. The ultimate goal will be that of fighting against disinformation, stereotypes and fake contents circulating through media and political discourses, both at national and local level.



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## 2.3 Research and project production

This short paragraph draws on evidence from some reports and projects on the topics of the InterCap project.

A Report from Legambiente (Legambiente 2016) underlines the difficulties to define who is an environmental migrant and also to identify the interventions to be done in this field. Still, it is evident that the causes for which part of the Earth are unfit for habitation are vast and complementary. In this context the fight to energy and water resources buying up and to land grabbing play an important and decisive role. The Report shows that environmental migrants are not included in the refugee definition recognised by the Geneva Convention, so from the point of international protection they do not have any right. This makes the international protection system unsuitable to deal with what is happening in the last few years in terms of migrations. It is, therefore, urgent, the researcher underline, to review the definition of refugee of the Geneva Convention of 1951 and of the subsequent protocols. “If a formal recognised definition of environmental migrants is missing at international level and there is uncertainty on the variety and complexity of the reason behind the choice to migrate, a fact remains certain: environmental migrants flee from uninhabitable conditions of their territories, caused by disasters or by the slow transformation of environmental conditions. In one case or another, climate change is at the basis of this phenomenon”.

An interesting project of the University of Florence is the creation in 2017 of the Master in Management of Reception Services for Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers. The professional profile that emerges from the master's proposal is characterised by a particular ability in managing relationships and collaborations with the services for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and other subjects in this field, with the institutions involved and with the territorial communities interested in reception.

Over the last few years, the CESPI Institute of Rome has been carrying out researches to address the root causes of international (and illegal) migration, such as conflicts, instability, poverty, environmental/climate change and unemployment in the countries of departure. In these studies, the approaches based on the single sectors are denied in favour of highlighting the role of international cooperation for development and thus changing the narration on migrations and sustainable development issues between Italy and the countries of departure and transit. For further information, see A. Stocchiero, *Per un Migration Compact in stile italiano. Le ambiguità della lotta alle radici profonde delle migrazioni: il caso dell’Etiopia nella rotta del Mediterraneo centrale*, Cespi, Roma, 2017 [www.cespi.it](http://www.cespi.it)



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## 2.4 Case studies of good practices

InterCap’s main themes have been addressed in several initiatives undertaken at the level of organised civil society. The most significant example of this is the Alleanza Italiana per lo Sviluppo Sostenibile (ASviS), created in 2016 by Associazione Unipolis and the “Tor Vergata” University of Rome, to raise awareness of Italian society and institutions on the importance of the UN Agenda 2030 for sustainable development and to push them to take action to realize them (<http://asvis.it/l-asvis>).

The Alleanza reunites 180 among the most important institutions and civil society networks, such as business associations, trade unions and non-profit associations; CSOs focusing on specific development goals, such as health, economic welfare, education, work, environment, gender equality, etc.; local agencies; universities and research centres; other relevant actors in the fields of culture and information; foundations; associations and international networks revolving around the above topics; (Calvano 2017). In 2017, ASVIS realized the first edition of the Festival dello Sviluppo Sostenibile (Sustainable Development Festival – 22<sup>nd</sup> May-7<sup>th</sup> June 2017), a great event to raise general awareness and rethink the cultural and politic scenarios at national level.

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The fruitful relationship between immigration and development has shown itself with the decentralised cooperation, whose projects traditionally aimed to curb the diasporas with the collaboration between the countries of origin and the Concord Platform, where Italian NGOs for development, solidarity and international development are reunited (for further information on these initiatives, please see Summit nazionale delle diaspore, *Il Sistema Italia con le diaspore e nuove generazione per la cooperazione allo sviluppo. Raccolta di informazioni in occasione del Summit nazionale delle diaspore per la cooperazione italiana*, Roma, november 2017). On the other hand, over the last ten years several initiatives promoted by grassroots movements, civil society and local authorities, such as the Co-development programme managed by the City of Milan, have successfully taken place. As Concord Italia claims, such initiatives have flourished at national level in an “institutional vacuum”, not relying on a political environment or coordination tools. As a consequence of this, the ongoing initiatives aimed to promote social inclusion, better mobility and dialogue with asylum-seekers and returnees, currently carried out by the Ministries of the Intern and



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Employment social inclusion, are highly fragmented and financed by EU funds (Mendola, Rosati 2017).

At regional level, the Region of Tuscany is currently developing laudable programs bringing together the themes of immigration, development, education and information. It is important to mention, in this regard, the “Senza Frontiere. Associazioni di migranti protagoniste di una nuova dimensione della cooperazione internazionale Toscana” project, implemented by a pool of associations (Arci e Anci Toscana, CESVOT, COSPE, Euroafrican Partnership e Funzionari Senza Frontiere) and focused on strengthening the migrants’ associations and the potential perspectives of cooperation between them and the other actors of cooperation in Tuscany. In addition, they have also mapped the migrants’ associations actively operating in the region, set up training workshops, funded parallel actions from other partner associations in the fields of sustainable local development, education and enhancement of existing networks. In these co-development projects, foreigners who are resident in Tuscany were given the opportunity to connect their home countries to the ones that they are being hosted in, as well as the feeling of being active part of the hosting community. On the other hand, the above projects have successfully laid the foundations for a better reception of migrants, more respectful towards their needs and aimed at developing their awareness on the actions to be undertaken to achieve a sustainable development.

There are a number of other important regional initiatives that are worth a mention, such as the “Toscana senza frontiere” (Tuscany without borders) project to set an inclusive and pragmatic model of righteous TV information. Broadcast on “Toscana TV”, Toscana senza frontiere was born to represent on the TV those foreign citizens resident in Tuscany, featuring a brief multilingual newscast and several interviews to people experiencing virtuous stories of integration and inclusion in Tuscany. It is worth to mention that the TV host was chosen among professionals from the second generation of immigrants: a positive choice that has proven so in a number of ways.

Finally, during the “Week on Education to Sustainability - Agenda 2030” promoted by UNESCO in November 2017 and during the entire school year 2017-2018, many initiatives have taken place on the issue of “Climate Change and Environmental refugees”, since the reality of people forced to flee from drought, floods and famine caused by climate change, as well as from the wars waged to gain control over the natural resources, while the gap between the rich and the poor increasingly widens, cannot be overlooked anymore. (<http://www.arpat.toscana.it/notizie/arpatnews/2017/190-17/settimana-unesco-2017-per-leducazione-alla-sostenibilita>).

These projects, experiences and practices have been primarily carried out by regional and local institutions and NGOs and should ideally be supported by research activities by universities to develop, systemize and disseminate knowledge and approaches in a field where systemized knowledge is scarce and often unexploited.



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## 2.5 Migration policies and sustainable development/Migration and International commitments

On October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017, the Italian Government approved the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, (provided for by Law 221/2015), as a joint action between Italy and the UN Agenda 2030. The Strategy, defined by experts from civil society and local and national authorities, focuses on five different areas, all marked by letter P: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership, all to be implemented through the achievement of national goals. The Strategy originated by deepening the outreach of the previous “*Strategia d’azione ambientale per lo sviluppo sostenibile in Italia 2002-2010*”, which has been now integrated with the objectives included in the UN Agenda 2030; the ultimate aim of this plan is that of “creating a new model of circular economy for a low-carbon society, resilient to climate change and other global issues”. The 5 Ps driving the Strategy, all mirroring the interrelations between economic dynamics and social growth, are also going to be used to define the targets whose knowledge on the interdependencies of the flows (in migration, labour-market, trade, finance and communication) needs to be strengthened. The monitoring on the Strategy will reveal eventual contradictions and unsolved issues, enabling the actors of sustainable development to evaluate the measures taken, the consistency of national policies and the emerging issues on reception, access to rights, freedom of movement and the relations between global strives and national interests.

**Tab. 5. The five areas of intervention**

**People:** Erasing poverty and reducing social exclusion by overcoming the territorial disparities; Ensuring conditions suitable for developing human potential; Promoting health and environmental, social and cultural wellbeing.

**Planet:** [Curbing the loss of biodiversity](#); Ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources; Creating resilient communities and territories, treasuring lands and landscapes.

**Prosperity:** Funding and promoting research and innovation; Guarranteeing full employment and quality training; Promoting sustainable models of production and consumption; [Decarbonizing economy](#).

**Peace:** Promoting a non-violent and inclusive society; Tackling discriminations and ensuring both legality and lawfulness.

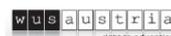
**Partnership:** Combating imbalances and inequalities in wealth and opportunities to achieve better governance and rights; **Migration and Development**; Health; Education; Sustainable agriculture and food safety; Environment, climate change and energy for development; Safeguarding natural and cultural heritage; the private sector.



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Through an holistic approach to phenomena, the above Strategy identifies several areas where joint action is not just possible, but also increasingly necessary: a) transnational welfare, immigration and cooperation; b) economy (trade, investments, entrepreneurship, labour), immigration and cooperation; c) flows of knowledge, brain and *skill drain* and cooperation; d) environment, immigration and cooperation (both in terms of unpredictable events such as natural hazards, and of long-term processes like desertification and sea-level rise due to climate change); e) finance, migrants' remittances and cooperation (how financial systems should be reformed to improve the value of remittances and financial inclusion); f) rural-urban development, migrations and cooperation; g) safety, migrations and cooperation; h) democracy, *peace building*, migrations and cooperation with regard to the role played by diasporas in helping the establishment of the rule of law in both countries of origin and destination.

The MIUR is engaged in many of the strategic choices, which is the reason why a *Piano per l'Educazione alla Sostenibilità* (2017) was adopted. Knowledge is essential and transversal to change, to combat poverty, to promote an open and inclusive society; this transversality is also underlined in the choice of SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, in which quality education, awareness and communication all play a key role.

Concerning the relations between schools, Universities and research reported in the UN Agenda 2030, the MIUR set itself ambitious objectives for its work programme: a) facilitate the development of networks and areas for joint action between the actors of sustainable development and education towards sustainability to promote concrete action to spread knowledge and competences, lifestyles and sustainable models of production and consumption; b) develop plans for disseminating education to sustainability at all levels of education; c) propose actions and initiatives to drive the application of academic research and learning processes towards sustainable development actions; d) promote the realization of tools for non-formal education; e) support the good governance of public administration.

In addition, a set of guidelines for contrasting stereotypes, gender-based violence, and inequalities has been developed, in line with the Istanbul Convention, the Italian reform law "Buona Scuola" (l.107/2015), the updated Guidelines on Environmental and Food Education. Massive investments in properly training teaching staffs on these issues are foreseen. Other actions focus on university and research (scholarships, doctorates, tax incentives to enrol in ad hoc degree programs, ad-hoc funds for research), information and communication (information campaigns targeting all citizens and disseminated through the distribution channels of Ministries and educational institutions, along with their testimonials and sponsors). It is not really possible to say at the moment whether the actions deployed are going to be effectively implemented or not, given the unprecedented political and parliamentary situation created by the national democratic elections held last 4<sup>th</sup> March.



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On the issue of asylum-seekers and their reception at regional level, the *Libro bianco sulle politiche di accoglienza di richiedenti asilo politico e protezione internazionale* is a valid document attesting the joint action between the associations of Tuscan municipalities (Anci Toscana) and the Region of Tuscany (<http://www.regione.toscana.it/documents>). This policy paper takes into proper consideration all the instruments already in use by the Region of Tuscany with the intention of integrate and improve them; however, on the other hand, this also constitutes a valid working basis from which a concrete improvement in terms of quality, equity, effectiveness and efficiency can be achieved, at both national and European level.

Over the last 10 years, Italy and especially the Region of Tuscany have distinguished themselves by their actions of decentralised cooperation, a type of intervention managed by Italian local authorities (Regions, Departments and Municipalities) in close collaboration with NGOs, local associations and ethnic and migrants' associations. Unlike the traditional development aid, decentralised cooperation operates on processes instead of projects, in order to develop the economies and the labour-market of the involved countries, their environmental protection and the reduction of migratory flows. For further examples of good practices in this regard, please refer to point 2.4 above.

### 3. Field Research

#### 3.1 Introduction

Six people have been interviewed from representatives of different educational sectors: primary and secondary schools, University researchers, professionals from associations and local authorities, selected for their competences and knowledge on the InterCap themes. Unfortunately, due to time constrains it was impossible to organise focus groups, so we contacted people asking them to participate to a telephone interview. Most of the people contacted were not available for the interview, so they were asked to answer to a written questionnaire instead.

#### 3.2 Awareness about international migration and sustainable development and about the links between migration and sustainable development

The interviews have generally shown that the topics of international migration and sustainable development are not sufficiently covered by media, politics and public opinion. The interviewees also stated that, in their perception, information on this topic is often flawed. However, they have expressed different views in this regard.



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For some of them, national media do not focus enough on the relationship between migration and sustainable development, but rather consider them as two single subjects, migration and sustainable development. Often, they observe, any possible argumentation is characterised by interpretations that are strongly affected by political influences and pressures. The debate connected to migration is, in fact, no more than an expression of well-defined prejudices and cultural and politic point of views.

Interviewed teachers report that migration is discussed almost only in a negative way and this leads to difficulties in bringing this topic to schools, at educational level. One teacher states that “it is difficult to work with students on this topic when not at a systemic level”. In addition, she thinks that students are more aware of this issue than their parents. “The level of awareness of public opinion – continues another teacher – is low, if not zero. The connections between sustainable development and migration are always underestimated since there is a trend to focus on other topics. Adults are very influenced by media, and they rarely bring the topic of migration to light”.

From the interviews it has also emerged that media usually deal with such topics with superficiality and that youth do not have the capacities and the instruments to go deeper and understand what lies behind certain issues.

Indifference toward these issues seems to be the main behavioural trait that pervades even those seemingly aware of the above interconnections.

As a confirm of what already observed, one University teacher says: “There is very low awareness that environmental factors are at the roots of the actual migration trends. Processes such as land grabbing or desertification/soil depletion, as well as climate change, that causes destructions and devastation of the territories, for example, are little known even though some international institutions and various report indicate them as warring elements at the basis of the destruction of subsistence economies, which in turn force people to flee from rural areas or their countries”.

Media on one side and politics on the other, have yet to demonstrate the willingness or the capacity to explain to the vast public the reality of the phenomenon and the adequate measures to deal with them. This is a big problem.

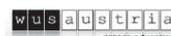
### 3.3 Insecurity

Our societies are largely and increasingly perceived as insecure. The Italian one makes no difference, as this perception closely depends on the economic and social situation of citizens. This seems to be the opinion shared by the experts interviewed, even though some differences in the interpretations and the point of views do exist.

Contexts where permanent jobs are rare obviously foster insecurity and instability among fellow citizens. This perception usually increases when there are many “foreigners”, as they are commonly seen as treats instead rather than resources. In some other contexts



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migrants are seen as necessary, in others as a social and economic problem. From this crisis, old and new prejudices and misleading point of views emerge, and are easily exploitable by media and by some political parties and movements.

“A bad socio-economic situation”, adds another interviewee, “leads to more racism and hate. Most Italian politics are contributing, with their speeches, to depict migrants as the cancer of our society.”

Hardships in finding a job, inequalities and depletion of welfare, extensively justified as “necessities” given the actual economic situation, make people insecure and afraid to lose the job because of migrants. Migrants then serve as “easy” scapegoat on which to let off fears, politic inefficiencies and faults. This fact emerges from many of the interviews carried out.

Other causes of insecurity, for the interviewees, are: a) terrorism and the fear of terroristic attacks; b) the arms race of last few years; c) more in general the climate of war that we are living in, like we were back to the Cold War.

According to one teacher, we need to focus our educative efforts on international terrorism, identified by the majority of people as linked to the Arab population and Islam as a whole.

### 3.4 Main factors that shape public opinion and instruments to shape public discourse. Gaps of information and instruments to fill the gaps

On this topic, interviewees are unanimous in highlighting the “not very educative” role of mass media and social media. The representations of migrants that can be found on the media are often associated to negative features, linked to degradation, violence, criminality and, unfortunately, in some cases fuelled by crime news.

It is beyond doubt that television, the Internet and social network far too often offer sensational information through simplistic views and morbid narration, thus contributing to spread anxiety and (unnecessary, in many cases) concern over social issues.

All the information channels have a big impact on shaping public opinion on the topic of the project, but, according to the respondents, they are also very difficult to control when a more objective communication is concerned. What we need from media is a different, sincere communication on migration and sustainable development, with a special view on human values.

One of the person interviewed believes that the negative image of migrants needs to be fought by acting on three different fields: politics, culture and education.



University and schools have a very important role in fighting against the negative image of migrants, especially with new generations. According to one of the teacher interviewed, there is the need “to do more education for peace, starting directly from teacher training in Universities. With regards to civil society, for example, here in Cecina [a municipality of the Region of Tuscany]”, the teacher says, “we organise an event called ‘Seminando il Futuro’ (‘Sowing the Future’) that involves charities and schools in addition to citizens. It is, anyway, difficult to organise such events, because of lack of collaboration of local authorities and of funding.”

What emerges therefore from all these interviews is that media, in Italy, are fuelling the sense of risk and insecurity that Italians are feeling towards migrants.

### 3.5 The role of the education systems

Over the last few years, the attention of Universities and schools towards migration has definitely increased. This is a common understanding of this between interviewees, as they all think that there is still much work to do in both Universities and schools with regards to migration and sustainable development.

This increased attention from University, according to interviewees, can be seen in the integration, among the faculties offered, of new subjects linked to migrations and interculturality. In schools this can be seen in the implementation of education projects, trainings, thematic workshops and the identification of systematic figures with specific tasks connected to inclusion and multiculturalism.

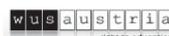
What emerges from one of the interviews is that teachers’ training, both with regards to University and in-service training, needs to be strengthened. Teachers need to be equipped with the proper instruments to discuss about migrations and sustainable development in a way that capture the attention and interest of students. These instruments could come from Global Citizenship Education.

The necessity of better teacher training also emerges from the answers of the teachers interviewed. They often underline the fact that they feel unprepared, “little competent” on topics such as migration and sustainable development. In addition, they sometimes must confront with insensitive teachers that obstacle the realisation of project to rise students’ awareness on migration and sustainable development. According to one of the interviewed teachers, there are few of them, that due to personal interest or sensitivity, have received a training on these topics and actually include what they have learned in their lessons.

What emerges from the interview of one teacher is that in lower secondary schools, migration is often tackled as a problem, and not as a resource for Italy. Global citizenship education is also tackled in a sectoral way. The definition of learning programs is often left



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to the own initiative of teachers, so lessons are given without focusing on the transition between knowledge and being an aware citizen.

Another teacher observes: “I have been trained on these topics with a competent and innovative NGO, that has taught us the most efficient and interactive methodologies to convey them in class.” But she voluntarily decided to participate in the training, so again everything is left to the willingness of the single teachers.

To conclude, one University Professor emphasised that “There is a big confusion of concepts and data, and many teachers are really ill-informed. At a University level, I have noticed, sadly, that the trainings offered are not always free from stereotypes or prejudices, nor critically informed on the topics addressed. Global Citizenship Education is very little present in University courses, and not too much at lower and upper secondary school levels. Topics related to ecology are mostly treated in a superficial way and are often missing in training paths like Education Sciences, even though there are high level researchers in Italian Universities on this subject. We should first revise University programming with regard to some important topics related to human rights, equal opportunities and gender, ecology and sustainable development, migration: all transversal and transdisciplinary themes that have a big impact on the life of each one of us”.

## 4. Conclusions and recommendations

The report shows a general consideration that will be the basis of the recommendations below and that is important to mention.

No informed and aware citizenship can be built unless the focus on the difference between sectoral and complex thinking will be placed. The first one rigidly separates problems, loses sight of interconnection and interdependencies and hides people to be hold responsible. The second one, allows to concentrate attention on the existing links among phenomena, eases the identification of causes and responsible actors and favours searching for the best solutions. By adopting a territorial approach, citizens may better understand the negative phenomena linked to migrations, connect good practices for combating social exclusion and acquire the necessary strength and awareness to be able to promote change.

### 4.1 National and local level recommendations for NGOs

- To foster and implement decentralised cooperation experiences that link migratory Diaspora with the country of origin by involving the different actors of both territories (destination and origin), like local authorities, local associations, migrant associations, NGOs and schools.
- To promote better information on InterCap’s topics, in particular migration and sustainable development, in the territories interested by migration and at national



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level through reports, researches, people's stories to combat disinformation, stereotypes and false information that are spread in the media and in politics. To favours debates, exchanges, analysis and historical reconstructions of the migratory processes, studies and researches able to analyse causes and reasons.

- To develop – within the school context – educational courses and informative materials that, through the collaboration with teachers of different topics, highlight the complexity of the phenomena of international migration and sustainable development? and of their intercurricular nature, also starting from concrete everyday issues and from one's own territory (glocal approach).
- To develop educational courses on “media” to combat stereotypes, prejudices, to strengthen critical thinking and behaviours towards the messages of the media.
- To strengthen, at the same time, the collaboration with Universities, in the research field and the training of teachers-to-be.
- To find agreements with the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) – as confederation of NGOs and civil societies – to make interventions in the school stable, structured, monitored and assessed.

## 4.2 National and local level recommendations for governmental institutions

- The MIUR should open a deeper reflection on the competences that are necessary for the future and that, nowadays, schools and also Universities, in many cases, are not able to provide.
- The “Indications for the national school curriculum” of primary and secondary school (I and II level) should be more oriented to develop interdependencies and links among phenomena and disciplines (both in horizontal and vertical directions, which means among different subjects and classes of the schools cycles).
- The Italian national government should launch awareness-raising campaigns on the media to sensitise and inform the public opinion of the interconnectedness between migration and development, in a constant and pervasive way. Furthermore, it should foster the understanding of the root causes that push people to leave their territory or their country, etc.
- Ethic committees and those working for equal opportunities and fighting racism should undertake a more robust role.

## 4.3 Local level recommendations for municipalities

- To foster the collaboration on the different territories with associations, informal movements schools and citizens would be useful and fruitful
- To promote decentralized cooperation experiences (see above, point 4.1)



## 4.4 National and local level recommendations for educational institutions

Creating an informed and aware citizenship should be supported by the Universities that put the development of human societies and its quality at the centre of the focus of the attention and use it to better understand why the distance between people and politics, human needs and science, equality aspirations and reality is getting deeper. Furthermore:

- Training of trainers – both university training and in-service teachers’ one – must be strengthened especially in relation to the identification of good practices, effective behaviours, together with different institutions (schools, social services, employment centres, health services and public security forces)
- Universities should be the primary channel to train professionals who know how to find their way in these contradictions and look for solutions according to the UN 2030 Agenda.
- As the best existing experiences show, Italian universities could cooperate – with the development actors of their territory, supporting them in systematising knowledge that comes from their good practices and in training themselves, stimulating and guiding experience exchange.
- The University and the other local actors may launch together a big cultural campaign to review the specialised disciplines in order to purge them from the ideologies that are currently influencing them, making them really rigorous and useful, filtering them through quality development objectives of the human societies and therefore transforming them into an incredible progress tool.

## 5.5 Recommendations for future research areas

- To foster the research on the central topics at the core of InterCap project (interconnections between migrations and sustainable development) would be important taking into consideration the scarce number of researches in Italy
- To develop “qualitative” researches that start from the experiences and personal stories of the many “environmental migrants” or those fleeing from situations of progressive impoverishment and who are currently living in Italy. Such initiative could be a good idea and also a good basis for a future transformation into educational material



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