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**NEWCOMERS@WORK: STRENGTHENING  
THE EMPLOYABILITY OF YOUNG  
REFUGEE AND MIGRANT NEETS**

**Work Package 2: Development of the  
Newcomers@Work Curriculum**

**Needs Analysis - National Report**

**ITALY**

Nourane Bouchlegem  
PRISM Impresa Sociale

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## Report Summary

This National Report provides a comprehensive overview of the Italian labour market, focusing on youth and migrants' employment. It acknowledges Italy's diverse and skilled workforce but highlights the persistent challenge of high unemployment, especially among young people and women. The country hosts a significant number of migrants, mainly from Romania, Albania, Morocco, China, and Ukraine, who encounter similar barriers to accessing the labour market, including discrimination, language barriers, lack of qualification recognition, and limited training and support. To strengthen the Italian economy and society, promoting migrants' employment is essential to integrating them into the labour market through the implementation of good practices.

The report delves into the pressing issue of youth unemployment, which has been further exacerbated by the unprecedented challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, generating unique obstacles in the quest for employment and integration into the Italian labour market. Discrimination can be a significant barrier for young migrants seeking employment while implementing policies and initiatives that actively combat discrimination in the workplace and during the hiring process is essential for creating a fair and inclusive job market. Encouraging diversity and providing equal opportunities for all candidates, regardless of their background, can lead to a more equitable and prosperous society. Moreover, enhancing work opportunities for young migrants involves creating an enabling environment that supports their professional growth and advancement. This includes incentivizing employers to hire young migrants, offering mentorship and coaching programs, and developing work arrangements that accommodate their unique circumstances. Providing a nurturing and supportive work environment is vital for enabling young migrants to thrive and contribute fully to the Italian economy. The report underscores the significance of key policy initiatives like the "Garanzia Giovani" (Youth Guarantee) program, vocational training, start-up grants, and integration programs, as they contribute significantly to employment and integration efforts in the Italian labour market.

In summary, the report emphasizes the critical need to address unemployment challenges, especially among young people and women, and to facilitate the integration of migrants into the Italian labour market. Doing so is essential for the country's economic growth and social cohesion. By implementing targeted policies and effective good practices, Italy can harness the talents and skills of its young and migrant populations, leading to increased economic development and cultural diversity. To promote migrant integration into Italian society, the research suggests the implementation of language courses, vocational training, mentorship and coaching programs, networking events, and awareness-raising campaigns to combat discrimination. The involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, including employers, trade unions, NGOs, and educational institutions, is crucial for the success and sustainability of these practices.



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# Part 1: Desktop research on newcomers' challenges and good practices

## Introduction to the report

The labour market is a fundamental aspect of any country's economy and plays a crucial role in determining the standard of living of its citizens. In Italy, the labour market has been characterized by high levels of unemployment, particularly among young people and women, and challenges in the integration of migrants into the workforce. According to recent data from Eurostat, in June 2023, the unemployment rate in Italy was 7.8 %, higher than the EU average of 5.9% (Eurostat, 2023). Furthermore, the youth unemployment rate in Italy was 35.3%, significantly higher than the EU average of 15.6%. To address these issues, the Italian government and various stakeholders have implemented policies and initiatives to promote employment and integration (Valli & Rosas, 2020).

Despite efforts to address high unemployment rates, certain groups, such as migrants, continue to face significant barriers to accessing the Italian labour market. The challenges faced by migrants in Italy are diverse, ranging from discrimination to language barriers, lack of recognition of qualifications, and limited access to training and support. As a result, migrant workers often struggle to find decent work and experience higher levels of job insecurity and low pay (OECD, 2020). Therefore, it is important to promote the employment and integration of migrants into Italian society and the labour market. This report highlights some of the challenges faced by migrants in accessing the Italian labour market and emphasizes the importance of implementing good practices to promote their employment and integration. By doing so, Italy can better leverage the talents and skills of its migrant population, contributing to economic growth and social cohesion.

This report provides an overview of the labour market characteristics in Italy, with a focus on youth unemployment and the employment of migrants. It highlights the challenges faced by migrants in accessing the labour market, such as discrimination, language barriers, lack of recognition of qualifications, and limited access to training and support. The report emphasizes the importance of promoting the employment and integration of migrants into Italian society and describes some of the good practices that can be implemented to achieve this goal (Mascherini & Ledermaier 2016). Furthermore, the report provides data on youth unemployment in Italy, which has consistently been higher than the EU average. It examines the challenges of youth unemployment, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and suggests possible solutions. The report concludes by emphasizing the need for further efforts to address the challenges of unemployment, particularly among young people and women, and the integration of migrants into the Italian labour market.

The report can be divided into the following sections:

- **National context:** Provides an overview of the Italian labour market, including its size and diversity, and highlights the challenges of high unemployment rates among young people and women and the integration of migrants.



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- **Key Challenges:** Discusses the challenges of youth unemployment in Italy, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. It also suggests some possible solutions to the problem.
- **Skills Required:** Discusses the importance of promoting the employment of migrants in Italy and the challenges they face in accessing the labour market. It also describes some of the initiatives and policies that have been implemented to address these challenges.
- **Good practices:** This final section is dedicated to a more in-depth exploration of commendable policies, projects, or initiatives aimed at facilitating the integration of young migrants into the job market. This could involve showcasing successful employment schemes, vocational training programs, or mentorship initiatives specifically tailored to the needs of this demographic.

## Section 1: National context

### *Migration Statistics and Labour Market Conditions*

Italy's position as the third-largest economy in the Eurozone and the eighth-largest economy in the world (World Bank, 2021) is surely one determining factor to the higher numbers of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, and Asia coming to its shores while looking for a better future (IOM, 2021). As of 2020, Italy had one of the largest migrant populations in Europe, with over 5 million migrants residing in the country (Migration Policy Centre, 2020); they play a crucial role in the Italian economy, and their integration into the labour market is essential not only for their economic and social well-being but also for the country's overall economic growth (OECD, 2020). However, the labour market integration of migrants in Italy faces significant challenges, including discrimination, language barriers, lack of recognition of qualifications, and limited access to training and support (International Labour Organization, 2019; Migration Policy Centre, 2020).

The Italian labour market displays regional variations, with the north being the hub of industrial activity, while the southern regions are predominantly engaged in agriculture and tourism. The major sectors contributing to the GDP in 2021 are services (EUR 281,264 million), manufacturing (EUR 76,359 million), construction (EUR 20,261 million), and agriculture (EUR 7,729 million). Fixed-term contracts (55.5%) and full-time positions are the most common types of employment, with an upper secondary school diploma being the most requested qualification (EURES, 2023).

Over the past few years, Italy has experienced a declining population, reaching a historical low of 58,983,122 people in January 2022. The foreign population stands at around 5,193,000 (8% of the total population), with a higher concentration in north-western regions. Northern Italy is home to 46.3% of Italians, while central Italy houses 19.8%, and the south and islands are inhabited by 33.8% of the population. The most populous regions are Lombardy, Veneto, Lazio, Campania, and Sicily. The southern regions, specifically Molise, Basilicata, and Calabria, face a significant demographic crisis. (Trading Economics, 2023).



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Despite the negative economic impact of the pandemic, 2021 witnessed higher-than-expected GDP growth (+6.2%) and steady progress in the employment situation, with a decrease in jobseekers and an improvement in the inactivity rate. As of March 2022, the unemployment rate stands at 8.30%, while youth unemployment is at 24.5%. However, the percentage of NEETs (aged 15-29) remains high at 23.10%. The labour force participation rate has increased by 1.2% since April 2021, reaching 65.5% in March 2022. Italy's economy experienced signs of slowdown due to uncertainties and energy supply crises caused by the war in Ukraine. The services sector showed strong growth in May 2022 (+30%), driven by the recovery of the tourism industry. On the other hand, the manufacturing and construction sectors experienced slowdowns compared to the previous year.

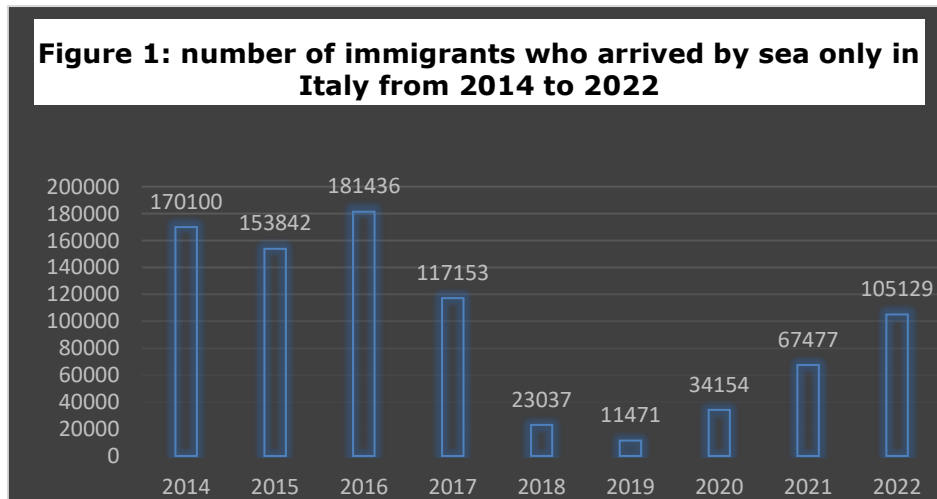
The Excelsior Unioncamere/ANPAL Information System forecasts demand for 1,531,450 workers between May and July 2022. The services sector requires the majority of these new hires (1,209,060), followed by the industry sector with 322,400 expected additions, primarily in manufacturing and public utilities. Regions such as Rome, Milan, and Naples show high revenues, while Trieste, Reggio Emilia, and Cuneo offer significant opportunities for young individuals. In May 2022, a total of 444,310 new hires are anticipated, with the majority (126,690) requiring a secondary education qualification. Roles demanding tertiary education, especially in dentistry, healthcare, and computer sciences, are difficult to fill, with 45.5% of vacancies falling under this category. The textile and clothing sector, motor vehicle repair, electricians, and well-being sector present challenges for filling roles requiring a vocational qualification or diploma, accounting for 43.5% of vacancies. The fields of mechanics, mechatronics, energy, electronics, electrical engineering, IT, and telecommunications provide most job opportunities. The National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) investments are expected to play a crucial role in Italy's economic recovery, especially in the green economy and IT and telecommunications sectors. The NRRP allocates 37% of investment and reform expenditure to support climate objectives and 20% for the digital transition. The budget for the green revolution and ecological transition amounts to EUR 59.46 billion, fostering employment growth in mechatronics, agri-food, fittings, and construction. The plan also aims to develop new supply chains related to hydrogen, satellites, microelectronics, and cybersecurity, offering green and digital products and services, including telemedicine, smart mobility, electric cars, and sustainable mobility. The demand for green jobs will be high, particularly in sustainable architecture, electric motor systems, environmental IT, environmental law, and energy and eco-design management. Professionals with a mix of e-skills are estimated to account for more than 20% of the total demand, spanning various sectors and requiring digital and mathematical abilities.

Examining employment and unemployment data can provide valuable insights into the overall labour market situation in Italy. For instance, the number of employed individuals increased by 82,000 to 23.590 million in June 2023, while the number of unemployed individuals fell by 44,000 to 1.867 million in the same period (Trading Economics, 2023). The labour force participation rate also edged up to 66.5% in June 2023, indicating a positive trend (Trading Economics, 2023). To further address the complexities of the labour market, it is essential to consider not only the overall employment figures but also the quality of employment. For example, part-time employment and wage growth in different sectors can provide insights into the nature of employment opportunities available in Italy. By analysing these aspects, policymakers and stakeholders can better understand the



labour market dynamics and formulate targeted strategies to tackle youth unemployment and improve the integration of migrants into the workforce.

Annually, Italy has witnessed both regular migration and irregular migration in various waves and is influenced by European and international contexts. According to the International Organization for Migration, regular migration refers to migration activities that occur through recognized and authorized channels. This includes individuals who enter a country through proper visa channels, often for tourism, work, study, or family reunification. On the other hand, irregular migration, involves migrants entering or remaining in a country without proper authorization, which may lead to undocumented status. This indicates that even regular migrants who entered a country through legal and authorised measures could find themselves in an irregular situation after a certain period. The statistics on migrant arrivals in Italy from 2014 to 2022 depict a dynamic landscape influenced by global conflicts, socio-economic conditions, and policy responses. The following graph indicates the number of immigrants who arrived by sea only in Italy from 2014 to 2022.



Source: Eurostat, Il ministero dell'Interno 2024

Peaks in migration, notably in 2016, coincide with heightened unrest in the Middle East and Africa, driving significant numbers of individuals seeking refuge and opportunities in Europe. Conversely, the sharp drop in arrivals in 2020 aligns with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, reflecting the impact of travel restrictions, border closures, and health concerns on migration patterns worldwide. The presence of asylum seekers, particularly from countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh, underscores the ongoing humanitarian challenges associated with displacement, while the significant number of unaccompanied minors highlights the vulnerability of migrant populations.



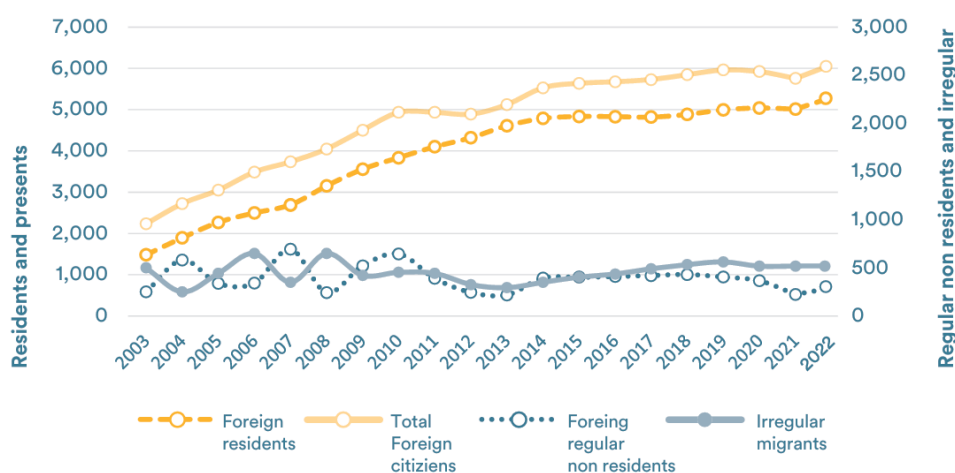


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As we try to have a better understanding of the Italian context and the profile of migrants, the following figure published in ISMU’s report on migration in Italy 2022 as The Twenty-eighth Italian Report on Migrations 2022 offers a more specific vision of the profiles of the foreign population in Italy and how it changed over the years.

**Figure 2: Foreign population in Italy from January 2003-2022 by resident status (values in thousands)**



Source: ISMU analysis on Ministry of the Interior data

Figures reveal that in 2021, the second year impacted by the pandemic, Italy saw a modest upturn in the expansion of its foreign population. Statistics from January 1st, 2022, demonstrate that the count of foreign residents in Italy exceeded 6 million, leading to an elevation in the proportion of the foreign community relative to the overall resident population from 9.9% in 2021 to 10.1% in 2022, with both metrics taken on January 1st. This increase implies a shifting demographic terrain in Italy, shaped by variables like migration patterns, economic circumstances, and governmental responses to the ongoing pandemic. In the same figure, numbers show a modest uptick in the foreign resident population, amounting to approximately 2 thousand individuals, has coincided with a slight decline in the irregular foreign population, according to recent data. This trend is largely attributed to the initial effects of the "2020 amnesty" initiative, as reported by Fondazione ISMU, an Italian research institute specializing in migration studies. Furthermore, there has been a notable surge in what is referred to as the "non-resident regular foreign population," comprising migrants possessing valid resident permits yet not officially registered in the civil register "Anagrafe". This increase has played a pivotal role in bolstering the overall foreign population figures, driven by a resurgence in the issuance of first resident permits on an annual basis. Notably, this uptick appears to be primarily propelled by migrants originating from outside the European Union. (ISMU 2022)

Overall, migration is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon in Italy, shaping the country's social, economic, and cultural landscape. While it brings diversity and contributes to the Italian economy, it also presents challenges related to integration, social cohesion, and the effective management of migration flows. As such, policymakers continue to grapple with finding sustainable and comprehensive approaches to address the opportunities and challenges associated with migration in Italy. According to the latest report from the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), the top five countries of origin for foreign residents in Italy are Romania, Albania, Morocco, China, and Ukraine



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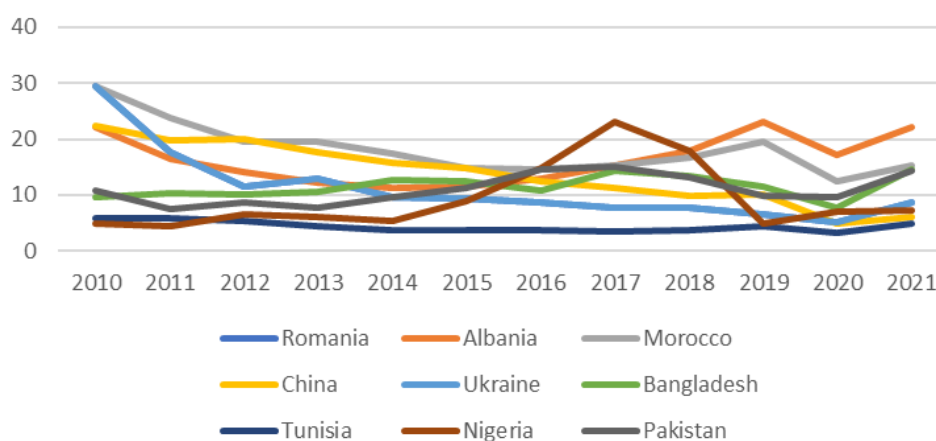
(ISTAT, 2021). The report also notes that other significant groups of migrants in Italy include people from Bangladesh, Tunisia, Nigeria, and Pakistan, among others. The data underscores the significance of migration as a driving force behind Italy's demographic composition and societal dynamics.

Examining the scale of migration, the report reveals that a substantial number of foreign residents have made Italy their new home. The presence of migrants from a diverse range of countries highlights the country's status as a destination of choice for individuals seeking better opportunities, economic prospects, and improved quality of life. This influx of foreign residents contributes to the cultural diversity and richness of Italy's social fabric. The annual flows of migration, as depicted in the ISTAT dataset, illustrate the consistent patterns of movement over the years. Romania, Albania, Morocco, China, and Ukraine emerge as the top countries of origin for foreign residents in Italy, showcasing the enduring appeal of these destinations to migrants seeking to establish themselves in the country. This steady stream of arrivals from these countries suggests a sustained pattern of migration that has persisted over the years, contributing to the overall growth of the foreign resident population.

Here's a graph summarizing the annual flows of migration for the top countries of origin for foreign residents in Italy from 2010 to 2021:

In addition to the top five countries of origin, the report underscores the significance of other migrant groups originating from Bangladesh, Tunisia, Nigeria, and Pakistan, among others.

**Figure 3: Annual Flow of Migration to Italy (2010-2021)  
Top Countries of Origin**



Source: ISMU analysis on Ministry of the Interior data

These countries contribute substantial numbers of migrants to Italy annually, further diversifying the origin countries of foreign residents. The annual flows of migration from these countries reflect the ongoing movement of individuals seeking various opportunities, such as employment, education, family reunification, and asylum. Promoting the employment of migrants is thus crucial for the Italian economy and society, as they can bring important skills, knowledge, and perspectives to the workforce and contribute to economic growth and cultural diversity (Migration Policy Centre, 2020).



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A study by the Migration Policy Centre at the European University Institute provides a comprehensive overview of the migration trends and patterns in Italy. The study highlights the diverse backgrounds of migrants in Italy and their contributions to the Italian labour market (Caneva, 2014). Furthermore, employment can provide migrants with social and economic integration, improve their living conditions, and enhance their sense of belonging to the host country (International Labour Organization, 2019).

Implementing good practices that promote the integration of migrants into the labour market is essential. Practices such as language courses, vocational training programs, mentorship and coaching programs, networking events, and awareness-raising campaigns to promote diversity and combat discrimination can be effective (International Labour Organization, 2019). On the other hand, involving a wide range of stakeholders, including employers, trade unions, NGOs, and educational institutions, is crucial for the success and sustainability of these practices (Migration Policy Centre, 2020). In this sense, the Italian government has implemented policies aimed at promoting the employment of migrants. The "Integrazione Lavorativa dei Cittadini Stranieri" programme (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali, 2017), for example, aims at promoting the integration of migrants into the labour market by providing language courses, vocational training, and mentorship programmes. Similarly, the "Cura Italia" decree, introduced in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, includes measures to support the employment of migrants, such as extending work permits and simplifying procedures for hiring non-EU citizens (European Parliament, 2020).

Nevertheless, the high youth unemployment and NEET rates in Italy are particularly concerning for migrant youth who face even greater challenges when it comes to finding work and integrating into Italian society. The government and other stakeholders must prioritize initiatives that target these specific groups to promote their integration into the labour market. Investing in education and training programs that are tailored to the needs of migrant youth can help them acquire the necessary skills to compete in the job market. Additionally, promoting entrepreneurship and implementing policies that address discrimination and improve access to decent work opportunities can help migrant youth overcome the obstacles they face. While the Italian government has made progress in addressing these issues, further efforts are needed to ensure that migrant youth have equal access to opportunities and can fully contribute to the economic growth and cultural diversity of the country.

### ***Youth Unemployment Data***

The high youth unemployment rate and NEET rate in Italy are significant challenges for the country's economy and society. These rates reflect the difficulties that young people face in entering the labour market and obtaining decent work. The government and other stakeholders must take steps to address these challenges and promote the integration of young people into the labour market. Such initiatives may include investing in education and training, promoting entrepreneurship, and implementing policies aimed at reducing discrimination and improving access to decent work opportunities.

The elevated youth unemployment rate in Italy poses a significant challenge to the nation's labour market. In 2021, Italy experienced a youth unemployment rate of 30.6%, nearly three times the national average unemployment rate. This rate is notably higher among males, at 31.2%, compared to females, at 30.1%. The age bracket of 20-24 years old



exhibits the highest youth unemployment rate, standing at 35.8%, while the 15-19 age group shows a comparatively lower rate of 22.7%. Furthermore, there is a concerning rate of young individuals who are neither employed nor engaged in education or training (NEETs). In 2020, the NEET rate for the 15-24 age range reached 20.9%, surpassing double the average NEET rate for all age groups in Italy. Notably, this NEET rate is significantly higher for females, at 27.3%, compared to males, at 14.4%. Similarly, within the 20-24 age group, the NEET rate is 26.7%, while for the 15-19 age range, it is 13.2%. These statistics underscore the urgency of tailored strategies and interventions to address youth unemployment and promote economic opportunities for the younger population in Italy. Table 1, below, illustrates the youth unemployment rate in Italy for the age group of 15 to 24 years old, spanning from the year 2010 to 2022.

**Table 1 Italian youth unemployment rate by sex (2010-2022)**

Data find	Unemployment rate												
Territory	Italy												
Ages considered	15-24 yr..												
Years	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total (m/f)	28,0	29,2	35,3	40,0	42,7	40,3	37,7	34,6	32,2	29,2	29,8	29,7	23,7
Female	29,4	32,2	37,6	41,4	44,6	42,6	39,6	37,2	34,9	31,1	32,1	32,8	25,8
Male	27,0	27,1	33,8	39,0	41,3	38,7	36,3	32,9	30,4	27,8	28,4	27,7	22,3

### **Key Policies Tackling Youth Unemployment**

In Italy, there exists a comprehensive array of labour market programs and policies strategically designed to combat the critical challenges of youth unemployment, and inactivity, and foster the successful integration of migrant youth. These initiatives align with a broader international approach to tackling the multifaceted issue of youth unemployment, which encompasses a set of strategic actions to bridge the gap between education and employment. This overarching approach emphasizes the creation of supportive work environments, the promotion of apprenticeship programs, the facilitation of vocational training, and targeted interventions aimed at enhancing the employability of young individuals, particularly those facing additional challenges such as migrant youth.

At the heart of this approach lies a commitment to nurturing a skilled and agile workforce capable of contributing to the evolving demands of the job market. By focusing on equipping young individuals with practical skills and knowledge aligned with market needs, these initiatives aim to elevate their prospects of successful integration into the workforce. The integration of these multifaceted strategies and initiatives encapsulates Italy's comprehensive endeavour to address youth unemployment and provide a pathway for the successful integration of migrant youth, all the while aligning with broader global efforts to nurture a dynamic and resilient workforce.



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Here are some key policies:

- **Garanzia Giovani ("Youth Guarantee"):** The Youth Guarantee is a European initiative aimed at ensuring that all young people under the age of 25 receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship, or a traineeship within four months of leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. The program was launched in Italy in 2014 and is still ongoing. It provides individualized support and guidance to young people, including migrants, to help them find employment or training opportunities
- **Vocational Training:** Italy has implemented various vocational training programs aimed at equipping young people with the skills and competencies required by the job market. These programs provide training in different fields, including agriculture, tourism, and technology, and are designed to match the needs of the local labour market. A good practice example is the "**Alternanza Scuola Lavoro**" (ASL, or "School-Job alternate") program, which provides vocational training for students in upper secondary school. The program allows students to gain work experience while still in school, providing them with practical skills and competencies that are highly valued by employers. The program aims to reduce the gap between the skills required by the job market and those taught in schools, increasing the employability of young people, including migrant youth (Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca, 2021).
- **Start-up grants and incentives:** Italy provides start-up grants and incentives to encourage entrepreneurship among young people. These incentives are available to young people, including migrants, who want to start their businesses. The government has also launched initiatives to support the development of start-ups, including providing access to funding and mentorship, for example, the "**Rete Imprese Italia Start-up**" (the Italy network Start program), launched by the Italian government, provides funding and mentorship to young entrepreneurs to support the development of innovative start-ups (Alberti & Pizzurro, 2017).
- **Integration programs:** Italy has implemented integration programs aimed at helping migrants, including young migrants, integrate into Italian society. These programs provide support in different areas, including language learning, job search assistance, and access to social services. For example, the "**Itaca Project**" (Progetto Itaca, 2023) supports unaccompanied foreign minors who have arrived in Italy, helping them to integrate into Italian society and find employment. The program provides a range of services to participants, including language classes, vocational training, job placement support, and mentoring. The program aims to help migrant youth develop the skills and competencies needed to enter the job market and achieve economic independence.

In Sicily, there are also specific policies aimed at tackling youth unemployment, including:

- The "**Garanzia Giovani Sicilia**" program ("Youth Guarantee Sicily"): This program is a regional initiative that provides support to young people in Sicily aged between 16 and 29 years who are not in education, employment, or training. The program offers training, internships, and job placement services to improve the employability of young people, including migrant youth (Regione Sicilia, 2023)



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## Section 2: Key Challenges of NEETs / Youth / Migrants in the Country

### *Key Barriers to Labour Market Integration for Youth*

The youth unemployment rate in Italy has been consistently higher than the EU average; according to Eurostat, in 2021, the Italian rate was 30.6%, compared to the EU average of 15.7%. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused widespread economic disruption, leading to job losses and hiring freezes across many sectors. Young people have been among the hardest hit, as they are often employed in temporary or low-wage jobs that are more vulnerable to economic shocks (Eurofound, 2020).

Research on labour market entry barriers for young people has shed light on the multifaceted nature of the issue. In this context, it becomes evident that the COVID-19 pandemic acted as a catalyst, intensifying pre-existing challenges and creating new obstacles. The pandemic-induced economic disruption resulted in widespread job losses and the imposition of hiring freezes across various sectors, disproportionately affecting the young workforce. One significant aspect to consider is the prevalence of temporary or low-wage employment among young individuals, making them particularly susceptible to economic shocks. As indicated by Eurofound's study in 2020, these vulnerable job positions rendered young workers more susceptible to the adverse impacts of economic crises.

Expanding upon this analysis, it is imperative to explore the regional differentiation of the youth unemployment problem within Italy. Regional variations in economic opportunities, industrial structures, and educational resources contribute to the divergent experiences of young people seeking employment. Moreover, examining specific demographic and socioeconomic groups within the youth population can offer deeper insights. Research should be extended to encompass factors such as gender, ethnicity, and educational attainment to better understand the varying degrees of vulnerability to unemployment. To bolster this discussion, an exploration of data and research from various regions and demographic categories is essential. While acknowledging the constraints of this summary, a comprehensive understanding of the youth unemployment challenge demands a more expansive investigation, drawing from an array of national reports and research studies.

The long-standing issue of youth unemployment in Italy is a complex problem that requires a multifaceted approach. Some possible solutions include investing in education and training programs that equip young people with the skills and qualifications needed to succeed in today's labour market. In addition, there is a need to promote entrepreneurship and support young people in starting their businesses. Policies that encourage more flexible work arrangements, such as remote work and job sharing, could also be effective in creating more job opportunities for young people (Mascherini & Ledermaier, 2016).

According to the European Commission (2020), the following 5 are the most pressing challenges faced by the Italian youth to enter the job market:

- 1. Lack of work experience and skills mismatch:** Many young people struggle to find employment because they lack work experience and there is often a disconnect between the skills they possess, and the skills demanded by employers.
- 2. Educational attainment:** Those with low levels of education are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed, as many employers require a certain level of education.





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3. **Discrimination:** Young people from certain backgrounds, such as minority groups, may face discrimination in the hiring process.
4. **Limited networks and geographic barriers:** Young people may lack access to professional networks that can help them find employment, and limited job opportunities in certain geographic areas can make it difficult for them to find work.
5. **Lack of career guidance:** Young people may lack guidance on career paths and training opportunities, which can make it difficult for them to navigate the job market.

### ***Key Barriers of Labour Market Integration for Migrants' Youth***

Migrants make up a huge portion of the Italian labour force, particularly in sectors such as agriculture and domestic work. However, they are often employed in low-skilled and low-paid jobs and are at a higher risk of exploitation and discrimination (Valli & Rosas, 2020). Migrants' employment in Italy has been extensively studied in academic literature. Research has shown that migrants often face multiple barriers when trying to access the labour market, including language barriers, lack of recognition of their qualifications, and discrimination (IOM, 2017). Moreover, many migrants are employed in sectors characterized by high job insecurity and low pay, such as agriculture and domestic work.

Despite these challenges, some studies have highlighted the potential benefits of migrant employment for both the Italian economy and society. For example, research has shown that migrants' entrepreneurial activities can create job opportunities and contribute to economic growth (Bolzani & Mizzau, 2020). Furthermore, the employment of migrants can contribute to the cultural diversity of the Italian workforce and can enhance social cohesion (OECD, 2016). However, to fully realize the potential benefits of migrant employment, it is crucial to address the barriers that migrants face and to promote their integration into the labour market. This can be achieved through a range of policy measures, including language courses, vocational training, and support for the recognition of foreign qualifications (Pettrachin, 2020).

Drawing on the seminal work of Ambrosini (2013), a comprehensive examination of the intricate labour market landscape for migrant youth in Italy unveils a constellation of challenges shaping their trajectory toward economic and social integration. Among the key causes of labour market integration problems for migrant youth in Italy we can include the following:

- **Discrimination:** Discrimination continues to cast a shadow over the labour market landscape in Italy, disproportionately affecting migrant youth. Despite legal frameworks in place to counteract discrimination, empirical evidence indicates that discriminatory practices persist. In this sense, migrant job applicants often encounter biases during the hiring process, resulting in a narrowed scope of employment prospects. Such discriminatory practices not only deny migrant youth access to gainful employment but also perpetuate social and economic disparities.
- **Lack of recognition of qualifications:** Migrants in Italy often face difficulty in having their qualifications recognized, which can lead to them being underemployed or employed in jobs that do not utilize their skills. A notable hindrance lies in the intricacies of credential recognition, which can vary widely across different countries



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and educational systems. Consequently, even if migrant youth possess valuable skills and qualifications, the failure to have these credentials acknowledged can lead to their underemployment or placement in roles that fail to harness their full potential.

- **Language barriers:** Language barriers compound the difficulties faced by both migrant youth and young natives seeking employment opportunities. Fluency in the Italian language is often a prerequisite for various job roles, particularly those demanding effective communication and interaction with customers or clients. As highlighted in the analysis by Ambrosini, the inability to navigate the language intricacies can effectively bar migrant youth from entry into specific sectors, further limiting their employment prospects.
- **Limited access to education and training:** The scarcity of accessible education and training programs poses another significant challenge for migrant youth in Italy. Limited access to skill development initiatives hampers their ability to acquire the competencies and qualifications demanded by the contemporary labour market. As reiterated by various sources, including the International Labour Organization, this educational gap perpetuates a cycle of disadvantage, as young migrants are unable to keep pace with the evolving skill demands of industries.

### Section 3: Skills required from NEETs / Youth / Migrants to enter the labour market.

The term NEET refers to young people who are not in employment, education, or training. In Italy, the NEET rate among young people aged 15-29 has been consistently high in recent years. Entering the labour market can be challenging, especially for NEETs. Youth, migrants, and NEETs must have the resilience to overcome obstacles and the persistence to continue pursuing their goals despite setbacks. Overall, a combination of technical and soft skills, language proficiency, cultural competency, networking, and persistence and resilience are crucial for youth, migrants, and NEETs to succeed in the Italian labour market. To successfully enter and remain active in the labour market in Italy, young migrant NEETs need to possess a combination of skills, including:

- **Language proficiency:** The ability to speak, read and write Italian is critical to entering and succeeding in the Italian labour market. Young migrant NEETs need to acquire strong Italian language skills to effectively communicate with colleagues, clients, and customers. (Pieroni et al., 2022)
- **Technical and vocational skills:** In-demand technical and vocational skills are necessary for obtaining employment in specific sectors such as construction, agriculture, hospitality, and healthcare. Young migrant NEETs should seek training opportunities to acquire these skills. (Magnani, 2015)
- **Soft skills:** Soft skills such as communication, teamwork, time management, problem-solving, and adaptability are essential to succeed in any workplace. Young migrant NEETs should develop these skills through training and on-the-job experiences. (Sergi et al., 2018)
- **Cultural competency:** Italy has a unique cultural and social environment, and young migrant NEETs must understand and adapt to it. This includes knowledge of





social norms, etiquette, and customs, as well as cultural sensitivity and awareness. (Tarricone, 2011)

- **Networking:** Networking is critical to obtaining employment and building a successful career in Italy. Young migrant NEETs should engage in networking activities to build relationships with employers, mentors, and other professionals in their field. (Bissola and Imperi, 2014)

## Section 4: Best Practices in Light of National Research

In the context of the comprehensive research data and information provided earlier concerning the national situation, this section serves as an amalgamation of noteworthy practices and significant Italian-led initiatives that have demonstrably influenced our field of study.

Careful consideration has been given to the wealth of research findings, and we have distilled our focus into four pivotal governmental initiatives. Each of these initiatives is thoughtfully examined, with a keen emphasis on elucidating their primary objectives, the tangible outcomes, and effects they have yielded, and an insightful analysis of the lessons we can derive from their concerted efforts.

By meticulously highlighting the reasons behind their success, we endeavour to extract valuable insights that can inform and inspire further advancements in our field. This section, therefore, stands as a testament to the commitment of these initiatives to excellence, offering a nuanced exploration of their impact on the national landscape and the potential implications for future research and policy endeavours.

**Table 2: Italian Good Practices**

N.1: "Insieme si può"	
Title of the practice	Insieme si può ("Together we can")
Implementing organisation and involved stakeholders	<p>The practice is implemented by the Municipality of Palermo, in collaboration with various local associations, educational institutions, and social enterprises of the city of Palermo.</p> <p>Involved stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I.R.A.S.E.</li> <li>• Direzione Didattica De Amicis di Palermo</li> <li>• Istituto Comprensivo Garibaldi di Salemi</li> <li>• CPIA di Trapani</li> <li>• Associazione "Incontrosenso"</li> </ul>
Short description of the practice	The "Insieme si può" initiative aims to promote the social and professional integration of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in the city of Palermo, Sicily. The program offers a range of services, including language courses, vocational training, job orientation and



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	placement, and social and cultural activities. The program is designed to support the participants in their journey towards self-sufficiency and active participation in the local community.
Groups targeted by the practice	The initiative targets migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers living in Palermo, with a focus on young people and women.
Main objectives of the practice	The main objectives of the "Insieme si può" program are to promote the social and professional integration of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in the local community, to facilitate their access to the labour market and education, and to foster their participation in social and cultural activities.
Scope of practice (pilot project, national measure, etc..)	The "Insieme si può" initiative is a local program implemented in Palermo, Sicily, and has been in place since 2015 as a project-based initiative.
Time of implementation (including start and end date if indicated)	The program was launched in 2015 and is ongoing
Effects / Outcomes/outputs of the practice	The program has helped hundreds of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers to improve their language skills, acquire vocational skills, and find employment opportunities. As of 2021, more than 500 participants have completed the language courses, and over 200 have received vocational training. The program has also facilitated the integration of migrants and refugees into the local community, fostering social cohesion and intercultural dialogue.
Lessons learned / success factors	The "Insieme si può" program's success is attributed to the strong collaboration between the Municipality of Palermo, local associations, educational institutions, and social enterprises. The program's holistic approach, which combines language courses, vocational training, job placement, and social and cultural activities, has also been a key factor in its success.
Sources used (including website / links)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progetto "Insieme si può" <a href="https://www.deamicispa.edu.it/index.php/progetti/1039-progetto-insieme-si-puo">https://www.deamicispa.edu.it/index.php/progetti/1039-progetto-insieme-si-puo</a></li> <li>• "Insieme si può" video story <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bpnm53x1IYs">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bpnm53x1IYs</a></li> </ul>



N.2: "PERCORSI"	
Title of the practice	PERCORSI - Paths towards Integration
Implementing organisation and involved stakeholders	The project was implemented by the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, in collaboration with the Italian Episcopal Conference (CEI) and the Italian Association of Christian Workers (ACLI). The project also involved the participation of a network of territorial stakeholders, including local authorities, educational and vocational training institutions, and social cooperatives.
Short description of the practice	PERCORSI is a project aimed at promoting the social and work inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers in Italy. The project consists of several activities, including training and capacity building for stakeholders, the establishment of a network of territorial stakeholders, and the provision of integrated services to beneficiaries.
Groups targeted by the practice	Refugees and asylum seekers
Main objectives of the practice	The main objective of the project was to promote the social and work inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers by establishing a network of territorial stakeholders and providing them with the necessary tools to offer personalized and integrated services to the target groups.
Scope of practice (pilot project, national measure, etc..)	National measure
Time of implementation (including start and end date if indicated)	Time of implementation: The project was implemented from January 2017 to December 2019.
Effects / Outcomes/outputs of the practice	<p>The project was successful in achieving its objectives and produced the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The establishment of a network of territorial stakeholders that is still active and provides integrated services to refugees and asylum seekers in several regions of Italy.</li> <li>• The provision of training and capacity-building activities for stakeholders.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provision of personalized and integrated services to beneficiaries, including language courses, vocational training, and job placement services.</li> <li>• The project received funding from the European Union and the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, which ensured its sustainability.</li> </ul>
<p>Lessons learned / success factors</p>	<p>The success of the project was due to the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The involvement of a wide range of stakeholders, including local authorities, educational and vocational training institutions, and social cooperatives, ensured the provision of personalized and integrated services to the beneficiaries.</li> <li>• The use of a participatory approach that involved the beneficiaries in the design and implementation of the integration plan ensured their active participation and engagement in the process.</li> <li>• The establishment of a network of territorial stakeholders ensured the sustainability and replicability of the project.</li> </ul>
<p>Sources used (including website/links)</p>	<p>Progetto Percorsi: un bilancio e uno sguardo al futuro (video)  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nVKRzp1Cw_4&amp;t=6s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nVKRzp1Cw_4&amp;t=6s</a></p> <p>Progetto PERCORSI  <a href="https://poninclusione.lavoro.gov.it/areeintervento/integrazionemigranti/Pagine/Progetto-PERCORSI.aspx">https://poninclusione.lavoro.gov.it/areeintervento/integrazionemigranti/Pagine/Progetto-PERCORSI.aspx</a></p>
<p><b>N.3 “Progetto Quid”</b></p>	
<p>Title of the practice</p>	<p>"Progetto Quid: moda etica e inclusione sociale"</p>
<p>Implementing organisation and involved stakeholders</p>	<p>Progetto Quid is a social enterprise that produces ethical clothing and employs marginalized groups, including young migrants.</p>
<p>Short description of the practice</p>	<p>Progetto Quid is a social enterprise that produces ethical clothing while providing employment and training opportunities to marginalized groups, including young migrants who are NEETs. The organization offers training in textile production, design, and sales, and has a supportive work environment that helps employees develop their skills and confidence. The clothing produced by Progetto Quid is sold in their shops and online stores, as well as in partnership with other retailers.</p>



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Groups targeted by the practice	Young migrants who are NEETs and other marginalized groups.
Main objectives of the practice	To provide training and employment opportunities to young migrants who are NEETs and other marginalized groups, and to promote ethical and sustainable fashion.
Scope of practice (pilot project, national measure, etc..)	National measure, with shops in Verona and online sales.
Time of implementation (including start and end date if indicated)	Ongoing since 2013.
Effects / Outcomes/outputs of the practice	Progetto Quid has provided employment and training opportunities to over 400 marginalized individuals, including young migrants who are NEETs. The organization has developed partnerships with other retailers, schools, and local authorities to promote social inclusion and ethical fashion. The clothing produced by Progetto Quid has received positive reviews and has won awards for its innovative approach.
Lessons learned / success factors	Progetto Quid's success is based on its commitment to ethical fashion and social inclusion, as well as its innovative business model that combines training and employment. The organization has been able to secure funding and support from various sources, including private donors and public institutions. The supportive work environment and training provided by Progetto Quid have helped employees develop their skills and confidence, leading to positive outcomes for both individuals and society.
Sources used (including website/links)	<a href="https://www.quidorg.it/">https://www.quidorg.it/</a>
<b>N.4 "Studiare Migrando"</b>	
Title of the practice	"Studiare Migrando" (Studying While Migrating)
Implementing organisation	School of Italian Language for Foreigners (ItaStra) at the University of Palermo, in collaboration with the Institute for Educational Technologies



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and involved stakeholders	of the National Research Council (CNR) and supported by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).
Short description of the practice	"Studiare Migrando" is an e-learning platform aimed at young migrants and refugees, providing them with interactive multimedia materials to learn Italian and academic subjects necessary for passing third-grade exams. The approach integrates language skills and academic content, with a focus on cognitive processes and logical abilities. The practice emphasizes readability, and non-Eurocentric content, and uses visual aids like images and videos to enhance understanding and memory. It offers support from various personnel, including community operators and tutors, and also provides personalized remote assistance through ItaStra for those without direct support.
Groups targeted by the practice	Young migrants and refugees seeking to learn Italian and pass third-grade exams, especially those without access to specialized support.
Main objectives of the practice	<p>Facilitate language acquisition and academic learning for young migrants and refugees.</p> <p>Assist students in passing third-grade exams.</p> <p>Address culturally sensitive and historically/politically relevant topics.</p> <p>Provide an interactive e-learning platform accessible via smartphones.</p>
Scope of practice (pilot project, national measure, etc..)	Innovative e-learning initiative targeted at young migrants and refugees for language and academic learning implemented as a pilot project.
Time of implementation (including start and end date if indicated)	Time of Implementation: The project started in 2017 and is planned to continue until 2023.
Effects / Outcomes/outputs of the practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of an interactive e-learning platform with multimedia materials.</li> <li>• Improved language skills and academic knowledge among young migrants and refugees.</li> <li>• Enhanced understanding of culturally sensitive topics and historical/political context.</li> <li>• Facilitated learning through visual aids and non-Eurocentric content.</li> </ul>



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Lessons learned / success factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Integration of language and academic content enhances learning effectiveness.</li><li>• Visual aids and innovative approaches improve comprehension and memory.</li><li>• Collaboration between educational institutions and organizations contributes to successful implementation.</li></ul>
Sources used (including website/links)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• E-learning website: <a href="https://www.studiaremigrando.it/index.php/it/">https://www.studiaremigrando.it/index.php/it/</a></li><li>• YouTube trailer: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IM26nHtF6pA&amp;t=142s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IM26nHtF6pA&amp;t=142s</a></li></ul>



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## PART 2: Analysis of Interviews

In this section, we delve into a comprehensive analysis of interviews, providing a nuanced understanding of the experiences and perspectives of NEET young migrants in Italy. The analysis is structured into two distinctive sections, each offering a unique lens into the multifaceted dynamics of integration and empowerment. The first segment dissects the individual interviews conducted directly with NEET young migrants, unravelling their personal journeys, challenges, and aspirations. The second section amplifies the narrative by focusing on a group dynamic, exploring insights gathered from a targeted focus group. This collaborative setting involved engaging discussions with youth workers, social workers, and educators—those at the forefront of facilitating integration and empowerment. Together, these dual perspectives shed light on the intricacies of the migrant experience and present a holistic picture of the strategies, challenges, and aspirations that shape their path towards socio-economic inclusion.

### Section 1: Analysis of semi-structured individual interviews (IDIs)

#### *Interview Analysis*

##### **Introduction**

The interviews were conducted in Palermo on behalf of PRISM Impresa Sociale s.r.l., aiming to explore the experiences and perspectives of migrant NEET individuals. They took place at the SAI MSNA Centre on Viale Michelangelo, a space dedicated to accommodating Unaccompanied Foreign Minors. This centre serves as a vital hub offering not only essential lodging and support but also a comprehensive range of services. These services include accompaniment, assistance and orientation, all of which are essential components in the holistic development and socio-economic integration of the migrant youth. The SAI Reception and Integration System consists of a network of local authorities that access the National Fund for Asylum Policies and Services for the implementation of integrated reception projects, within the limits of available resources. At the territorial level, local authorities, with the valuable support of the third sector realities, guarantee integrated reception interventions that, in addition to ensuring board and lodging services, also provide in a complementary way measures of information, accompaniment, assistance and orientation, through the construction of individual paths of socio-economic integration.

Throughout these interviews with migrant NEET individuals, valuable insights have emerged, shedding light on the diverse experiences, aspirations, and challenges faced by young migrants seeking integration and opportunities in Palermo. These conversations have provided a deeper understanding of the determinants influencing their journeys, the distinct hurdles they encounter, and the strategies they employ to navigate their paths. The significance of technology, the role of employers, and their entrepreneurial aspirations have also come to the forefront, offering a comprehensive perspective on the multifaceted process of integration. In conclusion, these interviews shed light on the resilience, determination, and potential of migrant NEET individuals. By understanding their experiences and listening to their voices, we are better equipped to pave the way for a more inclusive and thriving community in Palermo. The narratives shared here are not only a testament to the challenges faced but also a source of inspiration for forging a brighter future together.





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### **Respondent background information:**

The five participants were interviewed individually: each one, with unique backgrounds and aspirations, has shared stories and insights, shedding light on the determinants, challenges and opportunities faced in their journey towards empowerment. Coming from different countries (Gambia, Tunisia, Bangladesh, Guinea, Cameroun) and backgrounds, the 5 participants share a common journey of seeking integration and opportunities in a new land: ranging from individuals who have worked as cooks and gardeners in their home countries to those with limited education, their diverse backgrounds underscore the complexity of their integration process. While some participants have prior professional experience in their home countries, others face a complete lack of formal education. Despite these variations, a shared determination to contribute positively to their new community is evident across all respondents. This broad range of backgrounds enriches the understanding of the factors influencing their integration and the strategies they employ to overcome challenges.

### **Determinants and risk factors:**

The determinants and risk factors highlighted by the five interviewees collectively illuminate a tapestry of challenges and aspirations as they navigate the path to integration and empowerment in Palermo. Language proficiency emerges as a pivotal determinant, with participants recognizing its paramount role in accessing employment and education opportunities. Their shared determination to learn and communicate effectively underscores the resilience and agency driving their integration efforts.

Distinct challenges faced by these migrant NEETs underscore the importance of tailored support. From limited access to education in their home countries to navigating unfamiliar digital landscapes, each participant's journey is uniquely shaped. Efforts to bridge these gaps through targeted education and training programs can play a pivotal role in equipping them with the skills and confidence needed to succeed. The role of technology and employers is crucial in this integration process. Varying digital literacy levels and aspirations underscore the clear need for comprehensive digital skills training that empowers participants to harness technology for networking, job searching, and self-promotion. Engaging local businesses and employers can create a symbiotic relationship where the talents and potential of migrant NEETs are utilized to meet the needs of the local economy. Language proficiency, tailored support, digital skills training, engagement with local businesses, and fostering entrepreneurship are key elements that collectively shape their integration process. These insights provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by migrant NEETs, offering valuable guidance for the development of targeted interventions and support programs.

### **Key conclusions:**

- **Language Proficiency as a Central Determinant:** Language proficiency emerges as a critical determinant, pivotal for accessing employment and education opportunities. The participants unanimously recognize its paramount role in their integration efforts, highlighting its importance for effective communication and socio-economic empowerment.
- **Resilience and Agency:** The collective determination of the interviewees to learn and communicate effectively showcases their resilience and agency. Their commitment to overcoming language barriers underscores their drive to integrate successfully into Palermo's society and workforce.



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- **Tailored Support for Unique Challenges:** The distinct challenges faced by each participant, ranging from limited education to navigating digital landscapes, underline the need for tailored support. Targeted education and training programs can empower them with the skills necessary to navigate and excel in their new environment.
- **Role of Technology and Employers:** The role of technology and employers is crucial in the integration process. Varied digital literacy levels highlight the need for comprehensive digital skills training, enabling participants to leverage technology for networking and job searching. Engaging local businesses can create mutually beneficial opportunities, enhancing economic integration.

### **Barriers to education and employment:**

The distinct barriers highlighted by the interviewees underscore the complexity of their integration journey. Limited access to education in their home countries and varying levels of formal schooling emerge as common challenges. The absence of proper documentation and legal status further compounds their difficulties, with the risk of police stops adding to their concerns. Language proficiency remains a pervasive obstacle, affecting not only their ability to secure jobs but also to effectively engage with their new environment. The lack of familiarity with local customs and culture also presents hurdles to finding suitable employment. Despite these barriers, participants' resilience and determination are evident as they strive to overcome these challenges and seek opportunities for personal and professional growth.

### **Key conclusions:**

- **Limited Access to Education:** The participants' shared experiences of limited education in their home countries underscore a common barrier. This lack of formal schooling poses challenges to their integration and access to opportunities in Palermo.
- **Documentation and Legal Status:** The absence of proper documentation and legal status compounds the difficulties faced by the interviewees. Concerns about police stops highlight the vulnerability and uncertainty they navigate while striving for integration.
- **Language Proficiency:** Language proficiency remains a significant barrier, affecting both employment prospects and effective communication. The participants recognize the vital role of language in their integration efforts and are determined to address this obstacle.
- **Cultural Adaptation:** Unfamiliarity with local customs and culture presents hurdles to finding suitable employment. Navigating the nuances of the local environment proves challenging for participants, impacting their integration journey.
- **Resilience and Determination:** Despite these multifaceted barriers, the interviewees exhibit remarkable resilience and determination. Their efforts to overcome challenges and actively seek opportunities demonstrate their commitment to personal and professional growth.

### **Supports to finding employment and education:**

The role of external support systems in facilitating integration is crucial. Participants expressed gratitude for the assistance of local organizations like SAI MSNA, which offers



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valuable guidance, document support, and job search assistance. However, scepticism toward political institutions is also evident, highlighting the need for reliability and effectiveness in support structures. The potential of local businesses in offering professional opportunities is recognized, suggesting a symbiotic relationship that can benefit both the participants and the local economy. Notably, the significance of individualized mentorship and assistance is underscored, emphasizing the importance of tailored guidance to navigate the complexities of finding employment and educational pathways.

#### Key conclusions:

- **Importance of Local Organizations:** The pivotal role of local organizations, exemplified by SAI MSNA, in facilitating integration is evident. The participants express gratitude for the valuable support, guidance, document assistance, and job search resources provided by such organizations.
- **Scepticism Toward Political Institutions:** While local organizations receive appreciation, interviewees also express scepticism toward political institutions. This highlights the critical need for support systems to be reliable, effective, and responsive to the unique challenges faced by migrant NEETs.
- **Potential of Local Businesses:** The potential of local businesses in offering professional opportunities is recognized as a mutually beneficial avenue for integration. This symbiotic relationship could enhance participants' employability while contributing to the local economy.
- **Individualized Mentorship:** The significance of personalized mentorship and assistance emerges as a key factor. Participants value tailored guidance to navigate the complexities of finding employment and educational pathways, emphasizing the role of dedicated support in their integration journey.

#### The future:

The interviewees' aspirations for the future reflect a blend of optimism, ambition, and adaptability. While expressing a liking for their current location, participants remain open to exploring other opportunities beyond Palermo. The desire for stable employment and the pursuit of entrepreneurial dreams emerge as consistent themes. The dream of establishing one's own business, often a restaurant, showcases their aspirations for self-sufficiency, creative expression, and community contribution. This outlook on the future reveals a dynamic balance between appreciation for their present circumstances and the willingness to embrace new horizons, highlighting their determination to create a better life for themselves.

#### Key conclusions:

- **Diverse Outlooks:** Interviewees exhibit a range of optimistic, ambitious, and adaptable perspectives about their future.
- **Fondness for Locale:** While appreciating their current residence, participants remain open to exploring opportunities beyond Palermo.
- **Employment and Entrepreneurship:** A common theme is an aspiration for stable jobs and the pursuit of entrepreneurial endeavours.
- **Entrepreneurial Dreams:** Many express a recurring desire to establish personal businesses, often centred around restaurants.



- **Self-Sufficiency and Creativity:** Entrepreneurial pursuits reflect a yearning for self-reliance, creative expression, and community contribution.
- **Balancing Present and Future:** Their forward-looking approach demonstrates a balance between gratitude for their current situation and a willingness to embrace new horizons.

#### **Any other comments:**

Though specific comments vary across interviews, a common thread of appreciation for the N@W Project and the interview process itself is evident. Participants expressed gratitude for the opportunity to share their stories and aspirations. Their willingness to engage in open discussions underscores their commitment to integrating into their new community and harnessing available resources to overcome challenges. This overarching sentiment of hope, coupled with the acknowledgement of the complexities they face, reflects a shared vision of empowerment, growth, and meaningful contribution.

#### **Additional remarks and commentary from the interviewer**

As the interviewer, these conversations have provided valuable insights into the lives of migrant NEET individuals striving for integration and success in a new environment. The determination, resilience, and aspirations demonstrated by each participant underscore the strength of the human spirit and the potential for positive change. The rich tapestry of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives presented in these interviews paints a vivid picture of the challenges and opportunities faced by young migrants in Palermo.

Throughout the interviews, it became evident that the journey toward integration is multifaceted, and influenced by a myriad of factors. Language proficiency consistently emerged as a cornerstone, impacting participants' ability to access education, employment, and social interactions. The determination of these individuals to learn the local language speaks to their unwavering commitment to surmounting this barrier. The role of technology was also intriguing, with varying degrees of digital literacy among the participants. While some rely solely on their phones for personal solace through music, others recognize the potential of digital tools for employment and networking. This highlights the need for tailored digital skills training that empowers them to harness technology for their benefit. Moreover, the entrepreneurial aspirations of these individuals offer a glimpse into their dreams of self-sufficiency and community contribution. Fostering an environment conducive to entrepreneurship could not only empower these individuals but also invigorate the local economy.

As we reflect on these interviews, it is apparent that comprehensive and targeted support systems are essential for the successful integration of migrant NEETs. Collaborative efforts involving local businesses, educational institutions, and community organizations can play a pivotal role in providing the necessary tools and opportunities. Below, is a table summarizing the main findings and commentary, highlighting the significant areas of focus and their implications for the N@W Project and the integration of migrant NEET individuals in Palermo.



**Table 3: Semi-structured interview findings (by PRISM Impresa Sociale s.r.l.)**

AREAS	Semi-structured interviews' Findings
<b>Determinants and Priorities</b>	The diverse backgrounds of participants reveal the complexity of their integration journey. Language proficiency emerges as a crucial determinant, and participants' determination to learn the local language underscores their commitment to overcoming barriers.
<b>Distinct Challenges and Strategies</b>	Varying levels of education, limited digital literacy, and unique obstacles underscore the need for tailored support. Targeted education and training can bridge gaps in skills and knowledge, empowering participants to succeed.
<b>Technology and Employer Role</b>	Participants' varying digital literacy levels and aspirations highlight the importance of comprehensive digital skills training. Engaging local businesses can create a symbiotic relationship, benefitting both participants and the local economy
<b>Entrepreneurial Aspirations</b>	Strong entrepreneurial ambitions reflect participants' determination to contribute to their new community. Support mechanisms that facilitate entrepreneurship can empower them to achieve personal and economic success.
<b>Overall Implications</b>	The insights gained from these interviews underscore the multifaceted nature of the integration process. Collaborative efforts involving local businesses, educational institutions, and community organizations are vital for providing tailored support and opportunities.

### Practical Recommendations

Building upon the insights gained from the series of interviews conducted with migrant NEET individuals in Palermo, a set of practical recommendations has been formulated to address the diverse challenges and opportunities that emerged during these conversations. These recommendations are intended to provide actionable strategies that can contribute to the effective integration and empowerment of these individuals within their new community. Through the implementation of these recommendations, the project aims to provide migrant NEETs with the tools, resources, and pathways they need to thrive.

#### Practical Recommendations:

- Holistic Understanding:** Develop a comprehensive guide that delves into the multifaceted challenges and opportunities faced by migrant NEETs. Highlight the pivotal roles of language proficiency, digital literacy, and entrepreneurial aspirations in their integration process. Provide an in-depth analysis of how these factors influence their ability to access education, and employment, and contribute to the local economy.



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- **Partnerships with Local Businesses:** Facilitate collaborations with local businesses to create employment pathways for migrant NEETs. Work closely with companies to design internships, apprenticeships, and employment opportunities that align with participants' skills and aspirations. These partnerships can create a win-win situation, providing businesses with a skilled workforce while empowering participants with valuable work experience.
- **Success Stories Showcase:** Create a platform to showcase success stories of migrant NEETs who have successfully integrated into the community. Highlight their journeys, challenges, and achievements to inspire others and demonstrate the potential for positive outcomes. These narratives can serve as role models and provide valuable insights into effective strategies for integration.

#### **Recommendations for Newcomers@work Curriculum Development:**

- **Language and Communication Modules:** Develop a structured language learning curriculum that focuses on practical communication skills essential for employment. Incorporate real-life scenarios and workplace interactions to enhance participants' language proficiency. Integrate cultural integration components to facilitate better understanding and integration into the local community.
- **Comprehensive Digital Literacy Training:** Design a comprehensive digital skills training program that covers a wide range of online tools and platforms relevant to job searching, networking, and self-promotion. Provide hands-on training sessions and workshops to ensure participants are equipped with essential digital skills required in today's job market.
- **Tailored Vocational Training:** Create a diverse range of vocational training programs that align with participants' skills and interests. Offer training in sectors with potential job opportunities, such as hospitality, construction, and retail. Provide practical, hands-on training that equips participants with the necessary skills to secure meaningful employment.
- **Entrepreneurship Support and Mentorship:** Establish a robust framework for entrepreneurship support, offering aspiring participants resources, mentorship, and guidance to start and manage their businesses. Provide workshops on business planning, financial management, marketing, and networking to empower participants to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams and contribute to local economic growth.





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## Section 2: Analysis of focus group interview (FGI)

### *Interview Analysis*

#### **Introduction**

The FGI, or Focus Group Interview, represented a groundbreaking endeavour conducted online through Zoom, a platform selected for its sustainability and the flexibility it offered participants. This innovative approach facilitated our engagement with experienced youth workers in Italy who have interacted with migrants on various fronts, both directly and indirectly. The diverse backgrounds of our interviewees, hailing from different regions in Italy, were instrumental in furnishing us with a holistic understanding of the varied profiles of migrants in the country.

Our interaction with these youth workers transcended the mere gathering of data; it constituted an immersive exploration of their lived experiences in the field. Through candid dialogues, participants shared invaluable insights, providing a nuanced perspective on the challenges confronting migrants, particularly those classified as NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training). NEET migrants, often unaccompanied minors, encounter multifaceted obstacles hindering their full integration into both the job market and educational system.

Our discussions delved into the richness of experiences, extending beyond the identification of challenges to a profound reflection on the methodologies employed in establishing rapport and trust with young migrants. Given that a significant proportion of NEETs are unaccompanied minors who have endured traumatic journeys to reach Italy, cultivating trust emerges as a delicate yet indispensable aspect of their support. Participants elucidated the intricacies of these interpersonal dynamics, offering diverse strategies and best practices that have proven effective in engaging with this vulnerable demographic.

The geographical diversity of our interviewees played a pivotal role in painting a comprehensive picture of the migrant landscape in Italy. By amplifying voices from diverse regions, we gained invaluable insights into the variations in profiles and experiences of migrants across the nation. This diversity not only enriched the breadth of our comprehension but also underscored the necessity for region-specific approaches in addressing the challenges encountered by migrants.

Furthermore, our conversations transcended the identification of problems, as youth workers proactively shared solutions and success stories. Participants highlighted exemplary projects and practices operating within the same sphere, showcasing effective models that contribute to the successful integration of migrants into Italian society.

#### **Respondent background information:**

The diverse backgrounds of the youth workers involved in the FGI have been pivotal in offering a comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand. With participants occupying various roles within the field, ranging from direct engagement with migrants to project coordination, the array of perspectives has significantly enriched our needs analysis.

Geographical diversity emerged as another critical factor in our needs analysis. The participants hail from different regions, namely Sicily, Apulia, and Veneto. This regional variation has notably enriched our insights, broadening the scope of our understanding. Reflecting on the diverse profiles of migrants within these regions has shed light on the specific challenges of each locale.



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The inclusion of both male and female youth workers in the FGI is a deliberate acknowledgement of the importance of gender dynamics in this field. Recognizing that individuals of different genders may respond and perceive differently to the needs of others, this gender diversity has added substantial value to our analysis. It enables us to explore the intersectionality of gender and migration, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by NEET migrants.

Furthermore, the national origins among the participating youth workers have further enriched our discussions. With a mix of young professionals, some originally Italian and others with migrant origins, this diversity has provided a comprehensive view of the complex tapestry of experiences within the youth work landscape.

Specific participants, such as cultural moderators from a migration centre in Caltanissetta, Sicily, have brought a localized and first-hand perspective to our discussions. Situated in a city with a population of 253,688, their experiences offer a microcosmic view of the challenges faced by migrants in that specific context. Additionally, engaging with project managers from reputable organizations like ActionAid Italia, and Associazione In.Co, and the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) have provided insights into the development, organization, and implementation of activities within their respective organizations.

### **Barriers for different groups of youth migrant NEETs:**

Despite the different profiles of newcomers and NEET migrants in the different regions of the participants, they all agree upon the same challenges that face NEET migrants regardless of their background. Language barriers are a primary concern, as migrants, especially NEETs, often arrive in Italy before learning the language.

Depending on their origins, some may speak English or French, with migrants from North Africa and certain African countries predominantly speaking French, while refugees from Ukraine may speak English and others who speak only their national language or even dialect. However, Italian is not a very common language, and English is not widely spoken in Italy, making communication and information delivery difficult for both sides. The language was suggested as the top challenge migrants face in Italy. Another challenge highlighted is the lack of knowledge of Italian law.

Despite the existence of public centres to help, not all migrants, especially irregular ones, are encouraged to visit them or even know about them. This opens a big risk for migrants to be exploited, as they do not know their rights and duties under Italian law. Another challenge that was highlighted is the fact that these migrants usually do not have a chance for diversity as they tend to stick to their community in the hosting country without integration or being given the chance to know people of different backgrounds. This lack of diversity makes it difficult for them to enhance and increase their networks of people. The lack of communication with diverse people makes it difficult to explore opportunities.

Finally, a remark was made about stereotypes, especially in small towns where locals are not used to other people joining their community. Sometimes migrants face stereotypes which make their integration process more difficult.

### **Key conclusions:**

- **Language barriers:** All youth workers have agreed upon the significance of the effect of the language barrier on the integration of NEET migrants in their new community and the job market. It was identified as the primary challenge faced by migrants in Italy.





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- **Lack of knowledge of Italian law:** Not knowing the rights and obligations under Italian law makes migrants vulnerable to both legal issues and exploitation by others, especially in the job market. There was an emphasis on the importance of familiarizing arrivals with the Italian context to boost their integration.
- **Limited diversity and networking opportunities:** It was observed by the youth workers during their experience that most migrants tend to live in closed environments, maintaining contact with people who come from similar backgrounds. This reflects their limited networking skills, which could hinder their integration by preventing them from connecting with relevant contacts in their new hosting society.
- **Stereotypes and social integration:** Stereotypes, especially prevalent in small towns where locals may be less accustomed to diversity, can hinder the integration process for migrants. Facing stereotypes can exacerbate the challenges of integration, making it more difficult for migrants to feel accepted and integrated into their new communities.

### **Youth workers' approach towards different groups of young migrants:**

Despite the different types of migrants across the three regions, all participants agreed on building trust as the primary approach towards migrants, especially young and unaccompanied minors, offering a safe space. Without these two elements, it is challenging to reach your target while working with migrants. Another point that was made is to foster relations between organizations and the community. Reaching out to the local community to engage associations, other organizations, and individuals facilitates activities and develops common ground between people.

Another approach suggested is the follow-up of successful stories and setting examples, communicating through local events with residents and migrants together to foster their social integration through the involvement of the local community. This can help migrants build up a support network and reduce social exclusion. Establishing links between landlords and migrants or employers and migrants not only aids integration but also enhances migrants' networking capacity.

Another approach is to enhance collaboration with public entities such as municipalities, which may have a different approach and vision of tackling the situation. Additionally, having a better understanding of the actual needs of the people was highlighted. Participants emphasized the importance of learning about evolving needs and actively involving the target group in the integration process.

It was suggested that in building a strategy to assist migrants, consideration must also be given to the needs and interests of the local community at all levels, developing an approach that benefits both parties. It was also emphasized that integration is not a one-way road and that it is the responsibility of both the local community and migrants to take the initiative. An approach that assists the local community in learning more about migrants, their situations, and their backgrounds is essential for effective results for both sides. Since some communities have less exposure to diversity, it may be more challenging to involve them in the integration process without proper information and familiarity with the process itself.

### **Key conclusions:**

- **Building Trust and Safe Spaces:** Initial steps in working with migrants, especially young and unaccompanied minors, are crucial, as trust and safe environments are essential for effective engagement.



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- **Fostering Community Relations:** Strengthening ties between organizations and the community facilitates activities and cultivates common ground, aiding the integration process.
- **Showcasing Success and Social Events:** Highlighting successful stories and organizing local events involving residents and migrants fosters social integration, creating support networks and reducing exclusion.
- **Establishing Links for Integration:** Creating connections between landlords/employers and migrants enhances integration, bolstering networking capabilities and easing transitions into the community.
- **Collaboration with Public Entities:** Partnering with public entities like municipalities brings diverse perspectives and approaches to integration challenges, enriching strategies and initiatives.
- **Understanding Evolving Needs:** Actively involving migrants in understanding their evolving needs ensures tailored and effective support measures, enhancing integration outcomes.
- **Mutual Benefit in Integration Strategies:** Considering the needs and interests of both migrants and the local community promotes mutual benefit, fostering harmonious coexistence.
- **Shared Responsibility for Integration:** Recognizing integration as a shared responsibility encourages proactive involvement and engagement from both the local community and migrants, leading to more successful outcomes.
- **Education and Awareness in Communities:** Providing education and information about migrants' backgrounds and situations to the local community is essential for fostering understanding and support, particularly in communities with limited exposure to diversity.

### Good practices in youth work with migrants:

Good practices primarily revolved around collaboration with employment agencies, which facilitated the integration of migrants by steering them away from working in the black market, thus reducing the risk of exploitation and improving their overall well-being.

Another highlighted good practice involved collaboration with a theatre agency, providing migrants with opportunities to express themselves through art and theatre. This initiative not only allowed them to learn more about the culture of the hosting country but also helped them expand their networks and connect with people outside their immediate circles.

Another notable practice shared was a relevant work experience from Bari, where three series of workshops were organized focusing on interculturalism, housing, and jobs. These workshops involved a diverse array of stakeholders, including public entities, associations, corporations, and individuals. The aim was to create an official document dedicated to the municipality of Bari with specific recommendations to improve the integration strategy. This collaborative tool, based on a special act called the Collaboration Act, facilitated cooperation among stakeholders to add value to the community. It was emphasized that this practice allowed the municipality of Bari to gain a comprehensive understanding of problems and challenges from both migrant and community perspectives. The document includes a mapping of all services with suggestions on how to enhance them, providing a valuable resource for improving integration efforts shared with the municipality.



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### Key conclusions:

- **Collaboration with employment agencies: Good** practices predominantly involved collaborating with employment agencies, which played a significant role in facilitating the integration of migrants by steering them away from the black market and enhancing their overall well-being.
- **Cultural expression through theatre collaboration:** Collaboration with a theatre agency provided migrants with opportunities for artistic expression, allowing them to explore the culture of the hosting country and expand their social networks beyond their immediate circles.
- **Stakeholder engagement in workshops:** Another key conclusion was drawn from a successful workshop series in Bari, which engaged various stakeholders, including public entities, associations, corporations, and individuals, to develop a comprehensive strategy for integration. This collaborative approach facilitated a deeper understanding of challenges and led to concrete recommendations for improvement.

### Any other comments and commentary of the interviewer

As the interviews with youth workers engaged in migrant integration efforts draw to a close, it's evident that their experiences offer valuable insights into the challenges and successes of integration initiatives. From collaborative efforts with employment agencies to innovative artistic endeavours, these interviews illuminate the diverse approaches employed by youth workers across different regions. It is essential to acknowledge the dedication and commitment of these individuals in their efforts to create inclusive and supportive communities for migrants. Their first-hand experiences provide invaluable lessons and inspiration for policymakers, organizations, and communities alike as they work towards fostering greater integration and social cohesion.

### Key conclusions:

- **Diverse Approaches to Integration:** The interviews revealed a diversity of approaches employed by youth workers across different regions. From collaboration with employment agencies to creative endeavours like theatre collaborations, it's evident that a multifaceted approach is necessary to address the complex challenges of migrant integration effectively.
- **Importance of Collaboration:** Collaboration emerged as a central theme in successful integration initiatives. Whether it's partnering with employment agencies, cultural organizations, or local stakeholders, the interviews underscore the importance of working together to create supportive environments for migrants.
- **Empowerment through Art and Culture:** The utilization of artistic expression, particularly through theatre collaborations, emerged as a powerful tool for empowering migrants and fostering cultural exchange. These initiatives not only provide a platform for self-expression but also facilitate greater understanding and appreciation of different cultures within the community.
- **Policy Recommendations:** The interviews also shed light on the need for policy interventions to support integration efforts. From workshops addressing interculturalism, housing, and employment to the development of official documents with concrete recommendations for municipalities, there's a clear call for systemic changes to support migrants' successful integration.



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- **Community Engagement:** Successful integration initiatives involve not only migrants and youth workers but also broader community stakeholders. By fostering dialogue and collaboration among diverse groups, communities can create inclusive environments where migrants feel welcome and supported.

## Conclusions and recommendations

Bringing together four youth workers operating in diverse roles—from cultural moderators to project managers and collaborators—positively influenced the outcomes of the interviews, enriching the depth and breadth of the conversations. Each participant brought unique perspectives and experiences to the table, offering valuable insights into various aspects of migrant integration. The diversity of roles represented ensured a comprehensive exploration of the challenges, successes, and best practices in the field. Moreover, the collaborative nature of the discussions fostered a supportive environment for sharing ideas, exchanging knowledge, and identifying common themes and strategies. Overall, the collective expertise and collaboration among the youth workers enhanced the richness and effectiveness of the interview process, providing a robust foundation for drawing meaningful conclusions and recommendations.

### Conclusions:

- **Diverse Strategies, Common Goals:** Despite operating in different regions and contexts, youth workers unanimously emphasize the importance of diverse strategies aimed at migrant integration. From collaboration with employment agencies to creative arts initiatives, these approaches share a common goal of fostering inclusivity and support for migrants.
- **Strength in Collaboration:** Collaboration emerges as a central theme in successful integration initiatives. Youth workers stress the importance of partnerships with various stakeholders, including employment agencies, cultural organizations, and local communities. These collaborations not only enhance the effectiveness of integration programs but also promote greater understanding and acceptance within the broader community.
- **Empowerment through Cultural Exchange:** Artistic endeavours, particularly collaborations with theatre agencies, are highlighted as powerful tools for empowering migrants and facilitating cultural exchange. These initiatives provide platforms for self-expression, foster community engagement, and promote mutual understanding among diverse populations.

### Recommendations:

- **Policy Support:** Policymakers are encouraged to develop supportive frameworks and policies that prioritize migrant integration. This includes allocating resources for integration programs, providing incentives for collaboration among stakeholders, and implementing measures to address systemic barriers to integration.
- **Community Engagement:** Efforts to promote community engagement and dialogue are essential for building inclusive environments. Youth workers recommend initiatives such as community forums, cultural events, and neighbourhood exchanges to foster connections and promote social cohesion.
- **Capacity Building:** Training and capacity-building initiatives for youth workers are essential for enhancing their effectiveness in supporting migrant integration. This



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includes providing access to resources, professional development opportunities, and training on cultural competency and intercultural communication.

- **Long-term Support:** Sustainable integration requires long-term support and commitment from all stakeholders. Youth workers emphasize the importance of ongoing funding, monitoring, and evaluation of integration programs to ensure their effectiveness and sustainability.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This document serves as an exploration of the challenges and opportunities within the Italian labour market, with a focus on establishing secure environments tailored for young refugee and migrant individuals currently Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET). Italy's significant role in attracting individuals from diverse regions, alongside its economic challenges and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, underscores the importance of strategic investments and policy interventions.

The subsequent analysis delves into semi-structured individual interviews conducted with migrant NEET individuals in Palermo, revealing critical determinants, challenges, and aspirations for successful integration. Language proficiency emerges as a central factor, unanimously recognized by participants as pivotal for accessing opportunities. Varying challenges, from limited education to digital literacy gaps, emphasize the need for tailored support programs. The role of technology, employers, and entrepreneurial aspirations highlights potential pathways for empowerment. Despite multifaceted barriers, participants exhibit resilience and determination, showcasing a forward-looking approach. Local organizations like SAI MSNA play a crucial role, but scepticism toward political institutions underscores the need for reliable support structures. The diverse outlooks on the future underscore a blend of optimism, ambition, and adaptability. Practical recommendations, including comprehensive guides and partnerships with local businesses, aim to address identified needs and foster effective integration, providing actionable strategies for a more inclusive community.

In concluding the analysis of both the semi-structured individual interviews conducted with migrant NEET individuals in Palermo and the Focus Group Interviews (FGIs) with experienced youth workers in Italy, it is evident that these conversations have provided invaluable insights into the challenges and successes of migrant integration efforts. From the narratives of migrant NEETs in Palermo, we have gained a deeper understanding of the hurdles they face, including language barriers, limited access to education, and cultural adaptation challenges, alongside their aspirations for stable employment and entrepreneurship. These interviews underscore the resilience and potential of migrant NEETs, highlighting the importance of tailored support mechanisms, collaboration with local businesses, and comprehensive training programs to empower them and facilitate their integration into society and the workforce. Similarly, the FGIs with youth workers across Italy have shed light on the multifaceted landscape of migrant integration, emphasizing the complexities of the journey for NEET migrants. Insights from these interviews underscore the need for diverse strategies and partnerships to create inclusive and supportive environments. Furthermore, the geographical diversity of participants has enriched our understanding of the migrant landscape, emphasizing the importance of region-specific approaches. The emphasis on trust-building, community engagement, and empowerment through cultural exchange underscores the necessity of holistic and



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sustainable integration initiatives. In moving forward, collaboration, policy support, and long-term investment in integration programs are paramount to ensure the successful integration of migrants into Italian society. By learning from the experiences and insights shared by both migrant NEETs and youth workers, we can work towards building more inclusive, welcoming, and cohesive communities for migrants across Italy.





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