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Citizenship, Work and The Global Age

ASSOCIAZIONE "PER SCUOLA DEMOCRATICA"

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REINVENTING EDUCATION**

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**Citizenship, Work and The
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Linguistic Pluralism and Minorities in a New Global Perspective. Education and Linguistic Policies **2**

MAINTENANCE AND USE OF HERITAGE LANGUAGES AND ITALIAN <i>LINGUA FILIALE</i> BY SECOND GENERATION STUDENTS WITH MIGRATION BACKGROUND <i>Gianluca Baldo</i>	3
NEWLY ARRIVED ADULT MIGRANTS. EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES FOR INCLUSION POLICIES <i>Carmelo Bruni</i>	17
'BUT WHERE DID THEY GO?' IMMIGRANT ORIGIN STUDENTS CONNECTIONS AND DISCONNECTIONS FROM SCHOOL DURING THE PANDEMIC EMERGENCY <i>Tiziana Chiappelli</i>	29
THE ROLE OF THE ITALIAN PUBLIC SCHOOL ON THE SOCIAL AND LINGUISTIC INTEGRATION OF ADULT MIGRANTS <i>Igor Deiana</i>	39
DEMOCRATIC LANGUAGE EDUCATION AGAINST EDUCATIONAL FAILURE AND FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION: THE PERCEPTION OF 'DEMOCRACY' IN LEARNING/TEACHING PROCESSES <i>Giorgia Claudia Ligas</i>	49
IMPLEMENTING HERITAGE LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN MIGRANT HOSTING COUNTRIES: LESSONS FROM THE AUSTRIAN CASE <i>Anna Malandrino</i>	61
SPECIFICITY OF THE LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPE OF DETAINEES. A STUDIO BETWEEN SLANG AND GRAFFITI IN PRISON <i>Viola Monaci</i>	75

Education in a Multi Religious Scenario. A Critical Discussion on the Aims and Outcomes of Teaching Religion(s) in Public Schools **84**

RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY AND SCHOOL: AN IMPOSSIBLE COMBINATION? (RE)INTERPRETING ISLAM IN THE SCHOOL SCENARIO <i>Antonio Cuciniello</i>	85
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND EAST ASIAN RELIGIONS. INSIGHTS FOR RETHINKING EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES <i>Giovanni Lapis</i>	97
THE COMMUNITY OF PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: A PRAGMATIST PERSPECTIVE <i>Stefano Oliverio</i>	109
SECULAR RELIGION AS A TOOL FOR THE REALIZATION OF DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP. THE THESIS OF JOHN DEWEY (1859-1952) <i>Jessica Pasca</i>	121

Re-inventing the relationship between school and families: constraints, inequalities and new opportunities **130**

ERASMUS + PROJECT PARENTable. COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS OF NEWLY MIGRATED CHILDREN <i>Sara Mazzei</i>	131
ROMA STUDENTS: THE FORGOTTEN VICTIMS OF THE CORONAVIRUS <i>Maria Teresa Tagliaventi</i>	143

What is the Aim of Education? **154**

GRAMSCI, VYGOTSKY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A GENERAL ANTI-SYSTEMIC SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE <i>Giovanni Castagno</i>	155
--	-----

Social and Emotional Skills in Sociological Perspective. A Fresh Look on Learning and Assessment 166

EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT EFFECTS OF SOCIOEMOTIONAL SKILLS. AN ANALYSIS OF 2018 PISA DATA
Martina Visentin, Simona Colarusso and Orazio Giancola 167

Education Now: To Compare for Understanding the Unexpected 178

THE UNHAPPY SOCIETY. IN SEARCH OF A NEW PARADIGM TO FACE THE UNEXPECTED
Rosa Tiziana Bruno, Francesca Rossetti and Tony Urbani 179

UNIVERSITY DELAYS. THE ITALIAN ACADEMIC GAP AS A MEDIA TOPIC
Andrea Lombardinilo 191

The America Syndrome: The Influence of The United States on European Educational Cultures and Policies, Between Myth and Reality 202

LORIS MALAGUZZI, JOHN DEWEY AND THE BAUHAUS: SIMILARITIES AND INFLUENCES IN AESTHETIC EDUCATION IN THE REGGIO EMILIA APPROACH
Enrico Barbetti 203

THE COMPETITIVE HUMANISM IN THE MINISTERIAL CONGRESS OF MADRID (1999). FOR AN ANALYSIS ON THE OPUS DEI LANGUAGE AND THE CONTEMPORARY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPAIN AND THE UNITED STATES IN EDUCATION
Daniel Boccacci 215

JOHN DEWEY'S *IMPRESSIONS OF SOVIET RUSSIA*, AND THE POST-REVOLUTIONARY EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM
Dorena Caroli 225

DEWEY, DEMOCRACY, AND MALAGUZZI'S VISION FOR THE SCHOOLS OF REGGIO EMILIA
Laura Landi 237

PHILANTHROPY AND EDUCATION. AN ALTERNATIVE BETWEEN GENEROSITY AND DEMOCRACY?
Emanuela Susca 249

Economic and Financial Education: New Multidisciplinary Scenarios 258

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL EDUCATION FOR A GLOBAL AND SUSTAINABLE CITIZENSHIP AND LIFELONG LEARNING
Gabriella Aleandri and Luca Refrigeri 259

WHY DON'T WOMEN KNIT THEIR PORTFOLIO? GENDER AND THE LANGUAGE OF INVESTOR COMMUNICATION
Cecilia Boggio 271

AN ITALIAN PROJECT OF FINANCIAL EDUCATION FOR MIGRANTS
Luisa Cecarini, Francesca Maria Cesaroni, Vittorio Lannutti and Antonella Negri 283

OUT OF THE DEBT TRAP. THE FINANCIAL CAPABILITIES AGAINST FINANCIAL ABUSES
Umberto Di Maggio 295

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND ECONOMY. NEW SCENARIOS FOR THE LIFE PROJECT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR CAREGIVERS
Catia Giacconi, Noemi Del Bianco, Claudio Socci, Francesca Severini and Ilaria D'Angelo 305

FINANCIAL LITERACY AND POWERFUL KNOWLEDGE: TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES
Emanuel Mizzi 315

THE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL LITERACY OF FUTURE TEACHERS: A CLUSTER ANALYSIS
Florindo Palladino 327

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL PLANNING IN SCHOOLS: REFLECTIONS AND PRACTICAL PROPOSALS
Annalisa Valle, Teresa Rinaldi, Elisabetta Lombardi, Davide Massaro and Antonella Marchetti 339

Education for Sustainability [EFS] as a Ground for Innovation Both in Methodology and Knowledge. A Strategic Alliance for Transformative Education Between Schools and Community 348

THE ARTUR LAB: A SOCIAL INTERVENTION FOR A SUSTAINABLE WELL-BEING EDUCATION
Luigi Aruta, Ferdinando Ivano Ambra, Francesco V. Ferraro and Maria Luisa Iavarone 349

CIVIC EDUCATION AND SERVICE-LEARNING: TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE AND SUPPORTIVE CURRICULUM

<i>Sara Bornatici</i>	359
EDUCATING FOR ECOLOGICAL THINKING. THE CONTRIBUTION OF SOCIOLOGY TO THE SPREAD OF A NEW EDUCATIONAL PARADIGM	
<i>Rosa Tiziana Bruno</i>	369
NATIONAL TRAINING COURSE. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY. COMPETENCES LEARNED, COMPETENCES ACTED	
<i>Stefania Calicchia, Daniela Antonietti, Nadia Sbreglia and Michela Mayer</i>	383
TERRITORIES THAT LEARN	
<i>Giorgio Salza and Giovanni Borgarello</i>	395
THE PLACE-BASED APPROACH FOR CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION: NEW DIDACTIC SCENARIOS	
<i>Alessia Scarinci, Alberto Fornasari, Stefania Massaro and Loredana Perla</i>	406
CIVIC EDUCATION AT SCHOOL: TOWARDS CHANGING THE ROAD? THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF RESEARCH TO THE FIELD	
<i>Orietta Vacchelli</i>	415

Learning from Contemporary Complexities. Reconceptualizing Early Childhood Education and Care in Times of (post) Pandemic 424

RETHINKING PROFESSIONAL ROLES IN CONTEMPORARY ECEC BY REDUCING THE GAP BETWEEN HEALTH AND EDUCATION: LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PANDEMIC CRISIS	
<i>Chiara Bove</i>	425
FARSI COMUNITÀ EDUCANTI (F.A.C.E.). A CASE STUDY FOR INCLUSION, PARTICIPATION AND QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE (ECEC) SERVICES	
<i>Laura Landi</i>	439
EDUCATIONAL POVERTY AND ECEC SYSTEM. A CASE STUDY	
<i>Maura Tripi</i>	451

Education, Democracy and Rationalization 462

TEACHING INNOVATION THROUGH SWA: FROM THE NEOLIBERAL MODEL TO THE SCHOOL-CENTRED MODEL, INSPIRED TO THE CAPABILITY APPROACH	
<i>Antonio Fasanella, Stefania Chimenti and Fiorenzo Parziale</i>	463
WHERE AND FROM WHOM CAN DEMOCRACY BE LEARNED? THE RESULTS OF MIXED-METHOD RESEARCH IN FIVE DIFFERENT TERRITORIAL CONTEXTS	
<i>Stefania Chimenti, Sabina Licursi, Giorgio Marcello, Emanuela Pascuzzi and Daniela Turco</i>	475
HIGHER EDUCATION, BEYOND PUBLIC TO COMMON GOOD: ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE DEMOCRACY	
<i>Rita Locatelli</i>	489
BUILDING INCLUSION IN THE SCHOOL	
<i>Raffaele Tumino</i>	501

The International Dimension of Citizenship and Civic Education 514

HOW TO DEBATE NATIONAL IDENTITY IN REAL LIFE AND ON SOCIAL MEDIA	
<i>Davide Delle Chiaie</i>	515
THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD AS AN INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION OF CIVIC EDUCATION	
<i>Nicoletta Lanciano and Stefano Scippo</i>	531
COMPETENCES IN GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION: FROM THE INDICATIONS OF THE ITALIAN NATIONAL CURRICULUM TO THE INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING OF PRE-SCHOOL AND PRIMARY EDUCATION	
<i>Sara Navarro Lalanda</i>	545

Religions in the Face of Planetary Issues: What Would Be the Contribution for Education to Citizenship 560

RELIGIOUS SENSE AND DIALOGICAL EXPERIENCE AS EDUCATIONAL COMMITMENT. REFLECTIONS IN VIEW OF MONTESSORI, PANIKKAR AND KORCZACK	
<i>Rita Casadei</i>	561

PLURALISM AND INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE AT SCHOOL IN THE PROCESS OF BUILDING A EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP. PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES <i>Bernadette Fraioli</i>	573
RELIGION AND RELIGIONS: UNDERSTANDING THE COEXISTENCE OF DIFFERENT TRADITIONS <i>Silvia Guetta</i>	585
PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF LOGOTHERAPY. SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES AND RELIGIOUS VALUES FOR AN INTERCULTURAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION. <i>Carlo Macale</i>	597
BUILDING DIALOGUE THROUGH HABERMAS THEORISATION AND ISLAMIC TRADITION'S VALUES <i>Sara Mazzei</i>	607
THE RELEVANCE OF THE RELIGIOUS DIMENSION IN THE EDUCATION TO UNIVERSAL CITIZENSHIP <i>Giorgia Pinelli, Michele Caputo and Maria Teresa Moscato</i>	619
TEACHING ON RELIGION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE: FOR A PAIDEIA OF 'KNOWING HOW TO LIVE TOGETHER' <i>Andrea Porcarelli</i>	631
EASTERN SPIRITUALITY AND DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP: TEACHING OF RELIGION IN ALDO CAPITINI'S LESSONS (1949- 1950) <i>Livia Romano</i>	641
FAMILIES AND RELIGIONS IN ITALY: EDUCATIONAL ISSUES <i>Carla Roverselli</i>	651
THE ABU DHABI DOCUMENT AND THE ISLAMIC-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE FROM AN EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE <i>Marcello Tempesta</i>	661
EDUCATING IN RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY FOR A NEW CITIZENSHIP <i>Marco Dal Corso and Dario Vannozzi</i>	673

Curriculum of Digital Civic Education, Teaching of Civic Education and new Citizenship 686

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP AND DIGITAL LITERACY TO GIVE VOICE TO TEENAGERS: A PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH PROJECT <i>Cristina Boeris, Giulia Gozzelino and Federica Matera</i>	683
DIGITAL EDUCATIONAL POVERTY: A SURVEY AND SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT THE DETECTION OF A NEW CONSTRUCT <i>Stefano Pasta, Michele Marangi and Pier Cesare Rivoltella</i>	697
DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN THE FIRST CYCLE OF EDUCATION. FIRST RESULTS OF A COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH IN LOMBARDY AND MOLISE (ITALY) <i>Livia Petti and Serena Triacca</i>	711
INNOVATION THROUGH E-LEARNING, CONSTRUCTIVISM AND COOPERATIVE THINKING: THE EXPERIENCE OF PREPARED! <i>Domenico Vito, Mita Lapi, Stefania Fontana, Antonio Ballarin Denti and Lorenzo Cozzi</i>	723

Inclusive Citizenship Education in Times of Crisis 734

THE CHALLENGES OF GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION BEFORE THE COVID-19 AND BEYOND <i>Marta Ilardo and Marta Salinaro</i>	735
CIVIC EDUCATION IN TIMES OF CRISIS – THE IMPORTANCE OF MEANING AND MEANING MAKING <i>Bastian Vajen and Jessica Burmester-Kock</i>	745

Transforming Citizenship Through Civic Education. Approaches, Methods, Experiences 758

LANGUAGE EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP <i>Monica Barni</i>	759
HISTORY, CIVIC EDUCATION AND HERITAGE EDUCATION: THE CHALLENGES OF TEACHERS IN DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY <i>Beatrice Borghi</i>	771
THE 'CLIMATE' OF THE POST-COVID CLASSROOM. NEW IDEAS FOR CIVIC EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP TRANSFORMATION <i>Maria Cinque, Irene Culcasi, Italo Fiorin and Claudia Russo</i>	783

THE CONCEPTS OF HERITAGE AND EDUCATION FOR ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP IN THE REPRESENTATIONS OF FUTURE TEACHERS: A SURVEY <i>Filippo Galletti</i>	795
'WE, FOOD AND OUR PLANET': TOOLS AND METHODS FOR TEACHING CIVIC EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH FOOD <i>Sonia Massari and Elena Cadel</i>	809
A GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR RE-INVENTING CITIZENSHIP. INSIGHTS FROM AN EMPIRICAL RESEARCH EXPERIENCE IN A MULTICULTURAL NEIGHBORHOOD <i>Alessandra Mussi, Chiara Bove and Sara Basaglia</i>	819
BUILDING INCLUSIVE AND WELL-BEING SCHOOL COMMUNITIES AND 'CITIZENIZATION' THROUGH CHILDREN'S ACTIVE PARTICIPATION. THE ISOTIS STUDY <i>Giulia Pastori and Valentina Pagani</i>	831
BUILDING INTERCULTURAL CITIZENSHIP: PARTICIPATORY PATHWAYS AMONG EDUCATORS OF UNACCOMPANIED MINORS, SCHOOL AND TERRITORY <i>Isabella Pescarmona, Lorena Milani and Federica Matera</i>	843
THE ROLE OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION: LESSONS FROM THE FIELD <i>Roberta Salzano</i>	853

Evolution of VET systems in Europe between demands for economic recovery and reduction of inequalities **866**

TERRITORIAL DUALISM AND CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING SUPPLY <i>Roberto Angotti, Achille Pierre Paliotta and Simona Carolla</i>	867
ANALYSIS OF EXPERIENCES AND DATA TO IMPROVE AND RETHINK THE ITALIAN MODELLING OF EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING CONCEPTS AND PRACTICES <i>Manuela Bonacci</i>	879
INDIVIDUALIZATION OF TEACHING AND WBL, REAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS <i>Ivana Guzzo</i>	897
THE KEY ROLE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEMS IN THE DIGITAL TRANSITION. RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE OF VET POST COVID-19 <i>Alessandra Pedone</i>	907
INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING BETWEEN PERSONALIZATION AND DIGITIZATION <i>Gabriella Aleandri, Nuria Llevot Calvet and Olga Bernad Caverro</i>	917
ADULT COMPETENCIES IN ITALY BETWEEN COMPANY'S RESPONSIBILITY AND INDIVIDUAL RIGHT TO TRAINING <i>Roberto Angotti and Luca Dordit</i>	931
WORK EVOLUTION AND RELATION DIMENSION: PEDAGOGICAL AND TRAINING TRAJECTORIES FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT <i>Fabrizio d'Aniello</i>	945
INNOVATIVE, MEDIA, STRATEGIC: WHICH SKILLS FOR THE NEW COMPLEXITIES? <i>Maria Caterina De Blasis</i>	957

Networks of Practice: Informal Learning and the 'Employability' Policy/Curriculum Discourse in STEM **968**

THE PRACTICE ARCHITECTURES OF TECHNOLOGICAL ENHANCED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS <i>Sam Fowler</i>	969
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Re-Entry to School Rethinking Adult Education in the CPIA **984**

TEACHING METHODS, TEACHING TRAINING AND ADULT EDUCATION. A SURVEY IN THE MOLISE REGION <i>Filippo Bruni</i>	985
SOCIAL INNOVATION AND GOVERNANCE OF NETWORKS IN LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMS <i>Giuseppe Luca De Luca Picione and Amalia Caputo</i>	1008
THE REFUGEES WELCOME RECEPTION MODEL AS AN EXERCISE OF ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION	

<i>Mirella Ferrari</i>	1007
NEW PROFILES OF ADULTS IN EDUCATION. CLUSTERING STUDENTS TO RETHINK INNOVATIVE TARGETING STRATEGIES OF CPIAS	
<i>Lucia Fortini and Domenico Trezza</i>	1025
FOR A CREATIVE COUNTERCULTURE. THE HEGEMONIC POWER OF (ADULT) EDUCATION	
<i>Vanessa Lamattina</i>	1041
THE TERRITORIAL NETWORKS FOR LIFELONG LEARNING BETWEEN STRATEGY AND OPERATION	
<i>Raffaele Sibilio, Paola Buonanno and Angelo Falzarano</i>	1053

School Work Alternance: What Challenges for National Educational Systems? **1064**

THE ARTICULATION OF SWA IN ITALY: CONTEXT, PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES OF SCHOLASTIC INNOVATION	
<i>Stefania Chimenti, Antonio Fasanella and Fiorenzo Parziale</i>	1065
SWA/PTSO PROJECTS: CAREER TRAJECTORIES AND STUDENT EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS. BUILDING OF A TYPOLOGY	
<i>Antonio Fasanella, Maria Paola Faggiano, Veronica Lo Presti and Maria Dentale</i>	1077
THE HOST ORGANISATIONS' POINT OF VIEW ON ITALIAN SCHOOL-WORK ALTERNANCE PROGRAMS	
<i>Noemi Novello, Alessandra Decataldo and Brunella Fiore*</i>	1093
CIVIL ECONOMY AND SOCIAL AGRICULTURE: REGENERATIVE FACTORS IN MARGINALIZED YOUNG PEOPLE	
<i>Daniela Pavoncello and Sabina Polidori</i>	1107

Newly Arrived Adult Migrants. Educational Challenges for Inclusion Policies

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ABSTRACT: *The migratory process has been significantly affecting Italy for more than 30 years, but still the policies coping with of the phenomenon appear problematic, not to say inconsistent. The normative regulations still result in a political debate stubbornly encrusted on the 'accepting versus rejecting' dilemma, as if such a pervasive macro sociological process might be managed simply relying on an 'on/off' entry mechanism. A presence so massive and so relevant deserves a different reflection and appropriate policies capable to actively value migrant's contribution to a pluralistic society. The lack of policies oriented for example to the enhancement of the native languages of migrants in conjunction with the learning of the Italian language has meant that integration has been declined, at best, in a very minimal and scattered inclusion, downplaying the educational resources of those who enter Italy with specific human capital coupled with specific training needs in relation to welfare services. I here intend to present and discuss preliminary outcomes from a local research on the living conditions of third countries adult nationals hosted at reception facilities in the province of Viterbo and surveyed by local authorities via a questionnaire. The questionnaire is part of the more complex research programme covering both the census of local social services, NGO and associations working in close touch with the migrant population and the mapping of native young people attitudes towards migrants. The hypothesis that has guided the research concerns the suspicion that foreigners constitute a human capital not fully recognized and appreciated especially in the primal steps after their arrival.*

KEYWORDS: *Migrants, Social inclusion, Minority language, Education*

Introduction

It is well known that the migration process has also been affecting our country significantly for more than 30 years now, to the extent that it can be said that these flows have now assumed a structural and irreversible character at national and world level (the World Migration Report 2020, the International Organization for Migration estimates that in 2019 the number of international migrants has grown to around 272 million, or 3.5% of the world population). Despite this, so far the social policies aimed at managing the phenomenon in Italy have appeared to

have few incidents, not to mention inconsistent. Maurizio Ambrosini writes in this regard in the premise of his recent work: «The migratory phenomena are much discussed, but not as well known. They are on everyone's lips, but very few would be able to remember its consistency and trends. They occupy a very high rank in the political agenda, or more precisely in communication and political propaganda, but the solutions proposed are mostly reduced to catchy slogans and phrases» (Ambrosini, 2020, V).

Such a massive and incident presence, on the other hand, deserves a different reflection and adequate policies that are able to enhance its contribution in an active way.

From this perspective, the research of which the first results are presented here was born, conducted in the territory of Viterbo, as part of an action-research project, financed by the Asylum, Immigration, Integration Fund (FAMI). with the aim of promoting an integrated management of migratory flows, supporting all aspects of the phenomenon: asylum, integration and repatriation. The aim of the initiative, on the other hand, is to provide knowledge and intervention tools, with respect to the characteristics of the immigration phenomenon to the operators of the municipalities engaged in territorial social services.

The research concerns the existential conditions of non-EU foreigners in the area of Viterbo, detected through the administration of a questionnaire in the reception or reference structures of migrants. The survey with questionnaire is only part of the more complex research program that also concerns the census of social services activated in the area for the immigrant population and an analysis of the attitude of young people towards the phenomenon.

The hypothesis that guided the research concerns the suspicion that foreigners constitute human capital that is not fully valued and appreciated, so that, the country is in a position to 'waste and not fully exploit' the precious human resources which, if adequately addressed, could make a more significant contribution than they are currently able to do, to the economic and cultural enrichment of our country; with the added advantage that, in the face of a tendency of young people trained in Italy to look abroad, with heavy losses of 'investment' in human capital, part of the lost investments could be recovered.

Here we will present only the first data relating to the survey conducted. In the sample there are only 615 people due to the impediments caused by the Pandemic, which did not allow us to conduct the survey even in the premises of the Prefecture of Viterbo, as scheduled. The research will continue in September with a survey on knowledge and attitudes towards the phenomenon of 13-17 years old attending schools in the area, as well as with the survey of active social services for immigrants in the area.

1. Immigrants in the Viterbo area

We can begin by saying that the data on the presence of foreigners residing in the Viterbo area is close to the national value (8.7%, equal to just over 5 million people). In fact, in the area of Viterbo as of January 1, 2019, there were 30,552 foreigners and they represent 9.8% of the resident population.

The largest foreign community is from Romania with 44.2% of all foreigners present in the territory, followed by Albania (4.9%). Morocco (4.1%). Ukrainians (3.3 %) and Nigerians (2.8%). Also in this case, there is a similar situation with what happens at the national level, where the most present community is the Romanian one, followed by Albanians, Moroccans, Chinese and Ukrainians, although with different proportions. It can be noted that even in the Viterbo area, as in Italy, there has been a similar and progressive increase in attendance since the beginning of the new century. They were about 2.1% in 2001 (AA. VV. 2002). just as they were 2.8% in Italy (Caritas Italiana 2002).

This data refers us to the fact that, as mentioned, their presence is now a feature of our metropolises and our communities (Allievi, 2020; Ambrosini 2020). and this should push us to a different approach towards them, and this for various reasons, which we will try to illustrate below. Furthermore, this overlap may lead us to the hypothesis that, despite the diversity of needs and difficulties that immigrants encounter, depending on whether they are in a large metropolis or in a small town, certain initiatives could be transversal in the territory in light of the common characteristics of migrants. The sample is made up of 40% of women and 60% of men. About 30% is made up of young people and 41% of young adults.

TAB. 1. *Age of interviewers*

Age	Value	Percentage
Underage	11	1,9%
18-29 years old	173	29,3%
30-44 years old	243	41,1%
45-65 years old	159	26,9%
Over 65 years	5	0,8%
Total	591	100,0%

35% of the respondents are single and more than half, about 57%, are married.

TAB. 2. *Marital Status of interviewers*

Marital Status	Value	Percentage
Single	210	35,0%
Married or cohabiting	341	56,8%
Separated o Divorced	33	5,5%
Widowers	16	2,7%
Total	600	100,0%

Thus, from the first results of the survey (615 questionnaires) it emerges that from the training point of view, one third of foreigners have an average level of educational qualification from upper secondary school upwards, another third an intermediate level of educational qualification. A fair division emerges with regard to educational qualifications in the sample.

TAB. 3. *Educational qualification of interviewers*

Educational qualification	Value	Percentage
Illiterate	7	1,2%
I can read and write but I have no qualifications	81	13,5%
Primary School	84	14,0%
Secondary school (Scuola secondaria di primo grado)	176	29,2%
Professional qualification	54	9,0%
Secondary School (Scuola secondaria di secondo grado)	129	21,4%
First or Undergraduate Degree	44	7,3%
Postgraduate or Master Degree	27	4,5%
Total	602	100,0%

The main problem derives from the difficulties of recognition and equivalence of qualifications: more than 60% of respondents state that the qualification obtained is not recognized in Italy.

TAB. 4. *Where the interviewers obtain their educational qualification*

Where he obtained his educational qualification	Value	Percentage
In Italy	77	15,6
Abroad, but is recognized in Italy	112	22,6
Abroad, but is not recognized in Italy	306	61,8
Total	495	100,0

The competence in the knowledge of the Italian language is not high, but it is not so low either. About 31% have a basic level, 39% an intermediate level of knowledge and 20% advanced.

TAB. 5. *Level of linguistic competence of interviewers*

Level of linguistic competence	Value	Percentage
Breakthrough A1	128	21,3%
Waystage A2	120	20,0%
Threshold B1	113	18,8%
Vantage B2	122	20,3%
Effective Operational Proficiency C1	56	9,3%
Mastery C2	62	10,3%
Total	601	100,0%

What is important, however, is that the linguistic competence, in the light of their testimonies, was acquired for almost 63% of them, above all, in an informal way, talking every day with other people or by themselves.

TAB. 6. *How the interviewers learned Italian*

You learn Italian...	Value	Percentage
Talking to people every day	205	34,1%
A school for foreigners held by Italians	177	29,5%
By myself	176	29,3%
At school in Italy	28	4,7%
A school for foreigners run by my compatriots	7	1,2%
By Tv or internet	4	0,7%
Studied Italian in my country	4	0,7%
Total	601	100,00%

Also in this case, training is not certified. In fact, 85% declare that they do not have a certificate confirming the acquisition.

TAB. 7. *Interviewees who have obtained a linguistic certificate*

Have you obtained a language certificate?	Value	Percentage
No	486	84,5%
Do not remember	1	0,2%
Yes	88	15,3%
Total	575	100,0%

This does not directly affect employability, to the point that there are no significant differences based on linguistic competence in Italian. And let's look at the data, the lack of employment is spread equally across the different levels, except in the case of basic skill.

TAB. 8. *Does language competence help you find work?*

Level of linguistic competence	Are you working now?			Total
	No	Yes, I only have one job	Yes, I do more jobs	
Breakthrough A1	45,6%	2,2%	52,2%	100,0%
Waystage A2	31,5%	12,4%	56,2%	100,0%
Threshold B1	31,3%	8,1%	60,6%	100,0%
Vantage B2	28,6%	6,7%	64,8%	100,0%
Effective Operational Proficiency C1	30,6%	4,1%	65,3%	100,0%
Mastery C2	37,3%	5,1%	57,6%	100,0%
Total	34,7%	6,6%	58,7%	100,0%

While it emerges that, again from the employment point of view, employment grows with the growth of the educational qualification.

It therefore seems that the absence of a program oriented, for example, to the enhancement of the skills of migrants in conjunction with the learning of the Italian language has meant that the phenomenon is declined, at best, in attempts of minimal integration, under-estimating resources education of those who are present in our country as a foreigner, the contribution that these could provide to the country.

TAB. 9. *Does educational qualification help you find work?*

Educational qualification	Are you working now?			Total
	No	Yes, I only have one job	Yes, I do more jobs	
Illiterate	57,1%	42,9%	0,0%	100,0%
I can read and write but I have no qualifications	35,9%	60,9%	3,1%	100,0%
Primary School	37,5%	54,7%	7,8%	100,0%
Secondary school (Scuola secondaria di primo grado)	34,3%	62,3%	3,4%	100,0%
Professional qualification	32,4%	56,2%	11,4%	100,0%
Secondary School (Scuola secondaria di secondo grado)	36,2%	53,2%	10,6%	100,0%
First or Undergraduate Degree	30,6%	61,1%	8,3%	100,0%
Postgraduate or Master Degree	28,0%	68,0%	4,0%	100,0%
Total	34,7%	58,7%	6,6%	100,0%

TAB. 10. *The relationship between educational qualifications and job skills*

Educational qualification	Job Skill			Total
	Low	Middle	High	
Illiterate	100,0	0,0	0,0	100,0
I can read and write but I have no qualifications	96,6	1,7	1,7	100,0
Primary School	91,1	8,9	0,0	100,0
Secondary school (Scuola secondaria di primo grado)	91,3	8,7	0,0	100,0
Professional qualification	82,3	11,5	6,3	100,0
Secondary School (Scuola secondaria di secondo grado)	86,4	6,8	6,8	100,0
First or Undergraduate Degree	75,0	12,5	12,5	100,0
Postgraduate or Master Degree	56,5	21,7	21,7	100,0
Total	86,7	9,0	4,3	100,0

In fact, if we go deeper and analyse the qualifications, we find that 2/3 of graduates are engaged in activities of low professional qualification. In other words, it seems that, in the territory, it is not possible to fully use the cognitive and cultural skills of which these people are carriers. If we then aggregate the qualifications into 3 levels, we obtain a clearer representation of this trend.

TAB. 11. *The relationship between educational qualifications (aggregate) and job skills*

Educational qualification	Job Skill			Total
	Low	Middle	High	
Primary School	92,7	6,9	0,4	100,0
Secondary School	83,6	10,0	6,4	100,0
Degree	67,3	16,4	16,4	100,0
Total	86,7	9,0	4,3	100,0

Conclusion

We thus find ourselves faced with a situation of underestimation and consequent under-utilization of resources that could instead favor a more rapid integration into the labor market and therefore into the social fabric, if only the regional structures and services of the CPIA, education and vocational training, the Employment Centers were the recipients of integrated policies and specific resources aimed at recognizing and enhancing the educational skills of migrants, together with existing Italian language learning services.

If this is the case, and the doubt refers to the impossible to extent the data to the entire population, we would clearly find ourselves faced with an inefficient choice.

For example, in the Report of the Leone Moressa Foundation of 2015, *Stranieri in Italia. Attori dello sviluppo*, a clear contradiction was found: if at European level immigrant citizens record on average lower employment rates than natives, for Italy the process is the reverse. The explanations can be different, partly due to the historical traditions of the labor market in Italy, with the presence of a significant number of inactive persons, or the presence of immigrants - more consistent than in other European countries - of the first generation and without a family in the following. But above all, belonging to younger age groups than Italians seems to influence this inclination more than other elements (Fondazione Leone Moressa, 2015, 26).

What emerges from the analysis of migration policies in our country is that instead of analyzing, facing and trying to govern the process, we continue above all to try to contrast, limit, reject or, even worse, refuse to become aware of the characteristics deep of the phenomenon, thus losing sight of the opportunities that the presence of these people could provide to our country.

Why is this relevant? Let's start with a reflection on our Welfare system, this is configured as a hybrid with respect to the classic typology that distinguishes between Bismarkian and Beveridgian systems: it is Bismarkian from the point of view of social security and work, it is Beveridgian from the health and social welfare point of view. The financing of this system therefore takes place, respectively, through contributions paid by workers and/or employers and through general taxation.

This being the case, it is easy to understand that the demographic situation and the economic situation (in terms of created wealth) have a deep impact on the welfare system.

The first consideration from which to start is that, we owe foreigners a significant contribution to the demographic growth of our country, considering that since 1975 Italy has been below the demographic reconstitution parameter of the population and we have become, after Japan, the country where aging has the highest incidence.

As can be deduced from the ISTAT analysis compared to the 2019 demographic balance, once again there is a negative natural balance «this is the lowest level of natural turnover ever expressed by the

country since 1918» (2019, 2). In particular, the data relating to births is the new «negative record of births since the unification of Italy ... The deficit of births compared to deaths is entirely due to the Italian population (-270 thousand). while for the foreign population the natural balance remains largely positive (+55.510)» (Caritas, Migrantes 2020, 28).

For economists, it is an established fact that, the aging process of the population, tends to reduce the growth rate of the economy (Bini Smaghi 2013). As a result, pension spending becomes less sustainable with the contraction of economic growth. This gives rise to a vicious circle that puts the country's macroeconomic sustainability at great risk. In this scenario, the contribution of immigrants is essential.

For the former INPS President Tito Boeri, immigrants make 'a substantial gift to Italy as many pay social security contributions without receiving any pension'. In his 2016 report on the financial status of INPS, Boeri recalled that immigrants gave Italy a point of GDP, about 15 billion euros, in the form of contributions that will never be collected (Il Sole 24 Ore, 2017). On the basis of what is reported by the Leone Moressa Foundation, it has been calculated that the contributions paid by immigrants each year ensure the payment of over 600 thousand pensions to the elderly Italian population, thus allowing the overall retention of the social security system of our country (Fondazione Leone Moressa, 2016).

A second consideration, correlative to this, must be made with regard to their direct contribution to the country's economic growth. «It is estimated that immigrants in terms of GDP, in the decade 2001-2011 alone, contributed 2.3 points, without considering the 'delayed over time' contribution relating to births: immigrants have had more children than Italians, who can be considered potential workers if they have the opportunity to stay in Italy» (Dandolo, 2018, 169).

Their contribution from the point of view of self-employment and the ability to do business and boost the demand for work is also important. It is precisely in this context that the dynamism and initiative of immigrant work in Italy are clearly understood, showing a greater ability than Italians to take on the risk associated with similar initiatives. Sometimes it was the persistence of the economic crisis that led immigrants, expelled from subordinate work, to look for an alternative in their own business. This is a process inherent in other countries with a longer migration history: «In the United States, for example, the development of the most innovative companies in Silicon Valley was characterized precisely by the presence of Indian or Chinese engineers. The European Commission itself, in the 2020 Entrepreneurship Action Plan, has attributed an important role to migrant entrepreneurs for the relaunch of the Union and its economic-productive system, recognizing and underlining, for the first time, the importance of their contribution entrepreneurship» (Di Pasquale, 2015, 47). To achieve these goals, however, it would be necessary to set up social policies aimed at giving

more space both to the development of their human capital and to their use consistent with the training received, rather than in underestimated roles. Still today, however, we are embroiled in regulatory measures that are the consequence of a political debate still focused on the dilemma 'to accept or reject', as if a macro sociological process so invasive and pervasive from a socio-demographic and economic point of view, can be faced simply on the basis of on/off of revenue in the territory.

Even the latest legislative provision, the legislative decree 130/2020 then converted into law 173 on 18 December 2020, even if it introduced significant innovations (e.g. the new special protection permit or the permit for natural disasters) are destined to open up new scenarios and to considerably broaden the number of immigrants who will be able to stabilize in Italy, however, it insists above all on issues such as residence permits, methods of expulsion, transit through territorial waters, detention in centers for migrants, recognition of international protection.

In short, the phenomenon of immigration in our country has typically been dealt with in passive and defensive terms, rather than active and proactive, in the light of a representation of the phenomenon that has more the characteristics of the invasion (which does not exist: Impagliazzo 2015; Ambrosini 2020). and those of a «global dilemma» (Rampazi, 2020) as a result of unavoidable planetary sociological dynamics. Overall, therefore, it can be said that the phenomenon of immigration has touched the emotional chords rather than rational, imposing a fearful gaze, often fomented and exploited by a policy more interested in building consensus, than in dealing with the phenomenon through a reading, yes problematic, but also balanced and credible. There was no lack of co-responsibility even on the part of certain press, which was also more interested in chasing the mood of public opinion, rather than helping to reason objectively on the individual events reported (Pompei, 2007; Marini, Gerli 2017).

In conclusion, in which direction to go? We asked our interviewees and, although in the partiality of the data, it was an open question and we are still working on its closure, it emerges that we have divided the stimulus into 3 suggestions: 1) What does the foreigner who has just arrived in Italy need? 2) What it needs once it is stabilized; 3) What are the services they need. Unluckily we have not yet been able to reconstruct the data by reconnecting it to a number of easily manageable modes, we must limit ourselves to an initial evaluation produced by a quick and summary reading of the data. Compared to the first point, (the answers) indications are more frequently used, such as: hospitality, help with documents, language school, an accommodation a home. Compared to the second, however, the words that seem to recur the most are a job and citizenship. Finally, as regards the services to be activated, they are those that concern the orientation to job

opportunities and the orientation to extricate oneself from the maze of bureaucracy

We can speak of a sort of quadrilateral that has a fundamental role for the purposes of inclusion even if it does not solve it, due to the clear complexity of the phenomenon: home, work, citizenship and services for inclusion. But the need for a review of the welfare policies for immigrants clearly emerges (Campomori, Caponio 2015; Vitiello 2020; Accorinti 2021)

All this must also strongly engage the school sector, because it constitutes the nerve center of the system. In fact, as emerges from an interesting work by Giancola and Salmieri of 2018 «inclusion of students with migration background is strongly effective in primary education, rather than in further educational steps. At lower education levels, inequalities between 1st and 2nd generations have been decreasing over the last decades. But when considering higher levels of education attainment, intergenerational mobility has not yet been reached and inequalities between natives and non-natives are wider. Being Italy a new destination country and only lately a settlement country, integration policies in upper-secondary education have not been yet a priority of the political agenda. Once at upper secondary level, students with migratory background are almost systematically oriented towards 5-years long professional and technical or 3-year professional tracks (Azzolini, Barone, 2012) where they risk early drop-out and social segregation. Summing up, a segmented (and differentiated) approach prevails in the Italian secondary school system where no inclusion policy supports vertical continuity along school paths» (p. 330).

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