



## **Vocational and technological education for migrant workers: The true way to make effective integration in host societies**

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The paper aims at investigating policies oriented to make effective integration for migrants in host societies through vocational and technological education, along with the 1919 ILO Constitution Preamble, where this way deals with objectives of peace, social justice and an equal economic competition.

The central idea refers to the implementation of instruments to allow migrants reaching professional positions similar to those for nationals, to reducing the gap in job opportunities between 2<sup>nd</sup> generation migrants and others, to prevent society from the trap of segmentation in labor markets, finally to tackle the problem of the working poor.

Focusing on the need to realize better conditions for migrants in specific areas such as legal status, life conditions and job opportunities, a number of twenty-five proposals are suggested for an inclusive policy based on educational instruments.

### **1. Why it is worth investing in vocational and technological education for migrants**

Any migration policy should be drawn and put in action with the aim at allowing migrant workers not only to be entitled to the so-called legal status, but also to fully enhance opportunities for migrants to effectively exercise fundamental rights as nationals do, including political, civil and social rights<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Giovanni CELLAMARE: *La convenzione delle Nazioni Unite sulla protezione dei diritti di tutti i lavoratori migranti e dei membri della loro famiglia*. Milan (IT), Vita e Pensiero, 1992.; William CHIAROMONTE: *Lavoro e diritti sociali degli stranieri. Il governo delle migrazioni economiche in Italia ed in Europa*. Turin (IT), Giappichelli, 2013.; Matteo CORTI (ed.): *Il lavoro nelle Carte internazionali*. Milan (IT), Vita e Pensiero, 2016.

As the European Commission shows, both European and Member States migration policies must take into account “the importance of integration into host societies”<sup>2</sup>. In this light, “in” and “out” of the European Union, host States are expected to adopt adequate measures to promote the equalization of living and working conditions between nationals and migrants, as “new citizens”. Among these measures, one of the most important actions deals with the area of the intervention related to the organization of vocational and technological education<sup>3</sup>.

This area had been mentioned in the Preamble of the 1919 ILO Constitution (among “other measures”), in order to realize three main objectives, with a long-term view which seems to be extraordinarily actual nowadays:

- first, *peace*;
- then, *social justice*;
- and finally, *an equal economic competition*.

Investments in affirmative actions to develop education all over the world for migrant people (juniors and seniors) could definitively represent a *unique* road-map:

- 1) first, to approach the crucial issue of integration “starting from scratch”, that is making it reasonably possible for migrants to reach professional positions similar to those for nationals (same vocational training, same jobs);
- 2) second, to reduce the gap in job opportunities between 2<sup>nd</sup> generation migrants and others similar to them in the host society (same age, same job);
- 3) third, to prevent society from the trap of segmentation in labor markets, also due to the fact that firms are demanding ever more sophisticated skills, linked to Industry 4.0 and, more simply, to technological innovation (same technological education, same job opportunities);
- 4) finally, to tackle the real problem of the working poor also due to an ever-higher rate of unemployment in marginal groups (same dignity, same life)<sup>4</sup>.

Consequently, measures focused on implementing vocational and technological education for migrants may help reduce the following:

- 1) political and civil conflicts, eventually depending on too many differences in migrant living and working conditions, in order to achieve the ILO objective of *peace*;
- 2) the increase of migrant unemployment rate and by consequence the marginalization of their economic and social conditions, in order to achieve the ILO objective of *social justice*;

<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/legal-migration\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/legal-migration_en).

<sup>3</sup> Alfredo TAGLIAVIA: La formazione professionale degli immigrati: problematiche e possibilità operative. *Studi emigrazione*, vol. 44., n. 165., 2007. 219–233.; Tiziano TREU – Massimo ROCCELLA: *Promozione dell'impiego e formazione professionale*. In: *Diritto del lavoro dell'Unione Europea*. Padova (IT), Cedam, 2016. 177–225.

<sup>4</sup> Alessandro GARILLI: Immigrati e diritti sociali: parità di trattamento e tutela multilivello. *Diritti Lavori Mercati*, n. 1., 2017. 13–37.

- 4) the waste of the migrant potential to contribute to an economic competitive advantage for the host State, in order to achieve the ILO objective of *an equal economic competition*<sup>5</sup>.

Basically, any migration policy should aim at allowing migrant workers to be entitled to legal status as an essential step to fully enhance their opportunities to effectively exercise fundamental rights as nationals do. Eventually, legal status depends on national regulations all over the world, including European Union Member States, bound by the 2014/36 EU social directive, in order to achieve results on common standards of entry and stay for third-country citizens as seasonal workers. This mere point of view is important to make Member States affirm the principle of equal treatment in labor conditions and to enhance the implementation of a minimal integration, which is founded on employment relationships.

Anyway, three limits of such a vision make this strategy insufficient:

- first, the acquiring of legal status remains a necessary pre-step to allow the participation in labor markets;
- second, the mere position of the equal treatment principle doesn't involve a process of active integration of third-country citizens;
- third, the social directive applies just to seasonal workers<sup>6</sup>.

Consequently, in order to organize a more efficient policy for migrant workers, as a whole, specific efforts need to be made, respectively:

- first, to enhance national homogeneous policies in order to impose legal conditions for the acquiring of legal status;
- second, to actively realize policies under both the social and economic perspectives, to counteract less favorable conditions of migrants in communities, also under the point of view of the labor market;
- third, to open to migrants more job opportunities, also in more structural labor markets than the seasonal one<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Sergio DUGONE: Immigrazione, formazione professionale, integrazione occupazionale. *Studi Zancan*, vol. 7., n. 3., 2006. 148–161.; Francesco CARCHEDI: Immigrazione e formazione professionale. *Osservatorio ISFOL*, vol. 1., n. 2., 2011. 47–66.

<sup>6</sup> Laura CALAFÀ: *Migrazioni economica e contratto di lavoro degli stranieri*. Bologna (IT), Il Mulino, 2013.; Laura CALAFÀ – Alessandro GARILLI: Immigrazione e lavoro. Introduzione. *Rivista giuridica del lavoro e della previdenza sociale*, n. 4., 2017. 553–556.

<sup>7</sup> Monica MCBRITTON: Lavoro extracomunitario, mercato del lavoro, contratti. *Rivista giuridica del lavoro e della previdenza sociale*, n. 4., 2017. 582–598.

## 2. Three policies to make effective integration starting from education

The above-mentioned efforts should aim at overpassing limits of a mere general integration policy based on legal status, by looking at the main question under the substantial, not just formal, implementation of the principle of equality.

### 2.1 *The 1<sup>st</sup> policy: investing in training and legal status.*

The 1<sup>st</sup> objective refers to enhancing national homogeneous policies to regulate legal conditions for the acquiring of legal status. To make it effective, a new specific policy oriented at enhancing the vocational and technological education for migrants should be put into action, both in the original country and in the host one, with the aim of helping their professional mobility in labor markets. Moreover, better chances may increase the opportunity for migrants to acquire legal status through other ways than the general ones, by exploiting, for migrants, separate conditions of obtaining legal status other than those open to low-skilled workers<sup>8</sup>.

### 2.2 *The 2<sup>nd</sup> policy: investing in training and life conditions*

The 2<sup>nd</sup> objective refers to actively implementing policies under both the social and economic perspectives, to remedy the less favorable conditions of migrants in communities, also under the point of view of the labor market. To make it effective, a new specific policy should be put into action, by selectively introducing social and economic compensations, which promote the integration of migrants, taking into account their evident initial disadvantages in nearly all normal life situations, depending, among others, on linguistic gaps, basic money gaps, home-access gaps. The match between a more open aptitude by communities and workers to offer and accept, respectively, the learning of the local language and access to better accommodation remains the pre-objective for long-term integration, for migrants and their families, including 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> migrant generations.

Cultural obstacles to such policies need to be positively corrected, otherwise the whole process of integration could be undermined, because of its potential effect in terms of long-term distortions also in labor markets. As to the envisaged economic compensations, adequate new instruments should be introduced, and among those, again, a new vocational and technological education policy<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Edoardo ALES: Il diritto alle prestazioni sociali dei migranti economicamente non attivi: una parola definitiva dalla Corte di giustizia. *Giornale di diritto del lavoro e di relazioni industriali*, vol. 154., n. 2., 2017. 295–311.

<sup>9</sup> Maurizio AMBROSINI: Perché e come gli immigrati continuano a lavorare in Italia. *Rivista giuridica del lavoro e della previdenza sociale*, n. 4., 2017. 557–581.

### 2.3 The 3<sup>rd</sup> policy: investing in training and job opportunities

The 3<sup>rd</sup> objective refers to opening for migrants more job opportunities also in more structural labor markets than the seasonal ones. To make it effective, a new specific policy should be devised to link seasonal labor markets to others, namely by opening new job opportunities for migrants in other seasons, even for similar skills, also looking at low-skilled labor markets. This is practical, even if one could not exclude a wider employability in different sectors or firms of low-skilled workers, even helping them to change their initial professional situation in order to do any different and better jobs. This effort reasonably aims at a policy oriented at improving their skills, that is exactly a proper vocational and technological education policy<sup>10</sup>.

### 3. Twenty-five proposals for an inclusive policy based on educational instruments

To implement such a policy (oriented at implementing vocational and technological education for migrants) many efforts should be put into action through several policy instruments respectively mainly based on *school programs*<sup>11</sup> and *linguistic actions*<sup>12</sup>, as for example the following:

- 1) inserting linguistic programs in schools (primary and secondary) specifically oriented at removing gaps for migrant children;
- 2) supporting ICT abilities in school programs, where gaps in language ability are less important;
- 3) imposing an ever more intensive balance between school and labor at any secondary school level, in coherence with the actual program so-called “alternate school-labor” in Italy, with different engagement in different schools (that is more intensive in technological programs and less intensive in high school programs);
- 4) financing free English and Maths programs in any school for any student, with implicit specific benefits for migrant children;
- 5) reducing labor costs, but selectively, for employment contracts aimed at training (that is apprenticeships, internships and other types of training contracts);

<sup>10</sup> Nicola LUPOLI: *La formazione come bene comune. I migranti adulti tra formazione professionale e ricostruzione identitaria*. Milan (IT), Franco Angeli, 2012.

<sup>11</sup> Luisa LEONINI – Enzo COLOMBO – Paola REBUGHINI: Nuovi italiani. Forme di identificazione tra i figli di immigrati inseriti nella scuola superiore. *Sociologia e Politiche sociali*, vol. 12., n. 1., 2009. 59–78.; Andrea RAVECCA: Immigrant children school experience: how gender influences social capital formation and fruition? *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education*, vol. 2., n. 1., 2010., 49–74.; Davide AZZOLINI: A new form of educational inequality? What we know and what we still do not know about the immigrant-native gap in Italian schools. *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education*, vol. 3., n. 1., 2011. 197–222.

<sup>12</sup> Simone CASINI – Raymond SIEBETCHEU: L'aula ideale per la formazione linguistica ai migranti nel mondo globale. *Studi emigrazione*, vol. 50., n. 191., 2013. 495–506.

- 6) enforcing severe controls at impeding irregular work both for children and adults, reducing its negative impact on foreign people, taking into account its larger statistical diffusion among the migrant workforce;
- 7) investing in active labor policies, funding specific training programs where the labor market is statistically involving more migrants (agriculture, construction, others);
- 8) enhancing training programs in sectors where manual jobs are more required and where migrants are less penalized because of their linguistic gaps;
- 9) offering migrants real access to vocational and technological programs, facilitating their participation through specific diffusion and communication in their groups, even thanks to social media, and through specific reductions of fees for them;
- 10) organizing a set of vocational training programs specifically reserved to migrants, also with a psychological and linguistic support by professionals in cultural intermediation;
- 11) helping the development of courses in cultural intermediation, also really open to migrants;
- 12) increasing the amount of public money to support passive labor policies, indirectly reducing the rate of migrants hit by unemployment;
- 13) changing regulations in the matter of legal status, namely for work, with the aim of opening more job opportunities to migrants in regular jobs;
- 14) counteracting bias depending on prejudice and diffidence against migrants, allowing them to access to civil locations, looking at the whole national territory and, as regards to the metropolis, paying due attention to gradual and homogeneous distribution of their families in cities (city centers vs. suburbs);
- 15) imagining initiatives that promote the culture of female work, in order to counteract the negative impact of any culturally different vision that may be deep-seated in original migrant communities;
- 16) obliging migrants to actively follow specific courses to learn principles of the host State Constitution, including political, civil and social fundamental rights, to better allow their involvement in the community;
- 17) involving associations, namely trade unions, to help migrants in the process of integration, also by paying specific attention to their expectations in labor markets;
- 18) suggesting that migrants develop an active role and participation in trade union activities, in general and in workplaces;
- 19) adopting specific initiatives to diffuse the idea that personal engagement in high schools, and also in professional secondary schools, may help migrants to easily reach a good level of integration in host communities, for them and their families;
- 20) struggling against school drop-out, also organizing specific school programs that immediately involve migrants in vocational and technological training programs;

- 21) enhancing social media diffusion of the idea of equal treatment in training and work between migrants and others;
- 22) encouraging private companies to fund participation of migrants and their children in school and university programs, also by distributing grants linked to specific criteria based on personal abilities, age, expectations, economic situations;
- 23) realizing free cultural events in host communities, where topics on inclusion, fundamental rights, mutual inter-cultural respect are discussed with the aim of diffusing the idea that school and training programs are the only effective way to implement a real migrant integration process;
- 24) inviting migrants and their families to free events devoted to fundamental values of the host State Constitution, also sharing the importance of the principle of solidarity with them;
- 25) asking migrants to recognize themselves in the same universal values of the host society, in a reciprocal virtual relationship made up of rights and duties.

#### **4. Along with education: new job opportunities for “new citizens”**

As a partial result, an educational policy, directly oriented to migrants both under the vocational and professional perspectives, may indirectly, but efficiently, make it easier for them to get a job and therefore a better social position, namely in order to allow them to reach an ever-better integration in host communities. Again, looking at the future, this kind of reasoning and operating may produce benefits in terms of integration also for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> migrant generations, so protecting the host society from risks of segmentation, marginalization and exploitation. The original idea of the duty of organizing vocational and technological education focuses on the wider issue linked to Human Resource Management, because of the undeniable inherence of any educational policy with its real implementation in companies, as a bridge built between new workers (including migrants) and new job opportunities.

In this light, both employers and policy makers are called to actively face the challenge. On the one side, employers are asked to actively contribute to the promotion of a progressive and culturally inclusive HRM, specifically oriented to migrants, taking into account that the initial effort to change traditional recruiting policies and to invest in personal training of new and low-skilled workers may have as a result the starting of two positive processes:

- firstly, the process of improving the general well-being of workers, because of the implicit positive effect of the multi-cultural composition of labor, although several biases need to be considered and tackled;

- secondly, the process of hiring and training new workers for the specific needs of particular organizations, with some positive foreseeable results depending on the inclusion of people who are newly-trained and newly-psychologically involved in firm objectives.

On the other side, policy makers are asked to actively enhance the capillary inclusion of migrants in ordinary services, already provided for general workers, in order to improve the supply quality in job markets. The basis and the hopeful final goal of these processes are the affirmation of the principle of equal treatment, reversibly concerning other groups, also with the aim of focusing on migrants to facilitating their access to active and passive measures for unemployed people. The mechanism of the “conditionality” between active and passive employment policies should involve migrants like nationals, and in this perspective a major effect could be envisaged in favor of migrants, paradoxically, taking into account their major difficulties in access to services, and to employment services as well.

## 5. The “vocational and technological education” from the ILO Constitution to nowadays

As written above, originally “the organization of vocational and technological education” had been mentioned in the Preamble of the 1919 ILO Constitution (among “other measures”), in order to realize three main objectives: first, *peace*; then, *social justice*; finally, *an equal economic competition*.

Concerning with that Preamble and its contemporaneous inherence, three main issues need to be highlighted:

- 1) how the organization of vocational and technological education deals with *peace*;
- 2) how the organization of vocational and technological education deals with *social justice*;
- 3) how the organization of vocational and technological education deals with the *an equal economic competition*.

A larger serious approach to the huge question of *peace* would need to be dealt with outside of this contribution: labor policies may just help improve basic conditions in communities, allowing working people to live in peace, namely migrant workers side by side with non-migrants. This means pacific cohabitation among different social groups. To achieve this goal the priority is the word “integration”, firstly by reducing obstacles in interpersonal relationships.

Moreover, peace and justice, including *social justice*, run together. And justice, under both the social and economic perspectives, requires a common language made up of words such as the following: mutual confidence, respect, reciprocal help, because they are convergent and dependent on mutual recognition of people as persons with their own dignity. Strangely, this phenomenon seems to be simple and immediate before being complex and mediate, seems to be personal before being legal (where it produces the theory of fundamental rights), finally seems to be founded on education aimed at employment relationships before being founded on remedies.



Finally, even an *equal economic competition* depends on microeconomic behaviors more than on macroeconomic ones, because it focuses on the observation of real interests and expectations more than on the general observation of social trends, demagogically suffering from biases and worries. This phenomenon is easily emphasized. To tackle it, the idea is that education, with soft and hard skills, supporting professional and therefore also personal relationships, may effectively construct new and larger bridges for open dialogue, family to family, group to group, definitively person to person, all equal in dignity.

In other words, and moving toward a reasoning aimed at the heart of the migration problem, such a process, made of *peace, social justice* and *an equal economic competition* (on the basis of a similar vocational and technological education), frees the expression of skills of any kind in firms and families (that is in productive and domestic organizations), with evident benefits in terms of the implementation of migrant worker integration.

By contrast, host societies could be protected from negative effects of irregular work, labor market segmentation and even social risks, thanks to positive implicit effects derived from the diffusion of high-skilled workforce. These effects would be observed in several fields: professional, linguistical, economic and legal. With such a vision, migrants would be helped at the start, but thanked in the end.