ESPoR The manual

edited by
DIEGO BOERCHI

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ESPoR Project
European Skills Portfolio for Refugees
FONDO ASILO, MIGRAZIONE E INTEGRAZIONE (FAMI) 2014-2020
OS2 Integrazione/Migrazione legale. ON3 Capacity Building -
lett. m) Scambio di buone Pratiche

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To those who are committed to creating a work market populated by competent, satisfied and engaged people.
To those who believe that only by developing chosen skills can rewarding careers be built.
To those who believe in people, their abilities and their aspirations.

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Preface

In introducing this publication, I decided to ask the support of two excerpts from the novels by Ivo Andrić– Nobel Prize for Literature in 1961 and narrator of the events of a land, Bosnia, which is interweaving of cultures, crossroads of travel, amalgam of diversity and laboratory of their cohabitations. The two excerpts focus, respectively, the image of the path and that of the bridge, both relevant to the path of research, experimentation and intervention documented in this volume.

THE PATH. At the beginning of all roads and paths, at the basis of the very thought of them, lies sharply and indelibly carved the path on which I made my first free steps. It was [...] on those hard, irregular, like gnawed away roads, where all is dry and grievous, without beauty, without joy, without the hope of joy, without the right to hope, where a bitter morsel, which has never been eaten, quivers in the throat with every step, where heat and wind and snow and rain eat the ground and the seed in it, and everything that still sprouts and is born, gets stigmatized and bent and bowed so much that, only if it was possible, its other end would be stuck back into the ground, only to push it back into the shapelessness and darkness from which it broke away and sprouted. Those are the endless paths that, like threads and ribbons, streak the hills and slopes around the town, flowing into the white road or disappearing near the water in the green willow groves Human and animal urge sketched out those paths, and the necessity has beaten them. There, it's hard for one to leave, to go, to return One sits there on a stone hiding under a tree, in a dry place or in scarce shade, resting, praying or counting the peasant's earnings. On those paths, that are swept by wind and soiled and cleansed by rain, where one meets only tormented cattle and silent, grim-faced people, that is where I conceived my idea of the richness and beauty of the world. That is where I, ignorant and weak and empty-handed, discovered the fragrant, swooning happiness, happy for everything that wasn't there, cannot be there and never will be. And on all the roads and ways that I passed later in my life, I lived only on that poor happiness, on my [...] idea of the richness and beauty of the created world. Because, under all the worldly roads, there has always flowed, visible and palpable only to me, the sharp Visegrad [his child- hood town] path, from the day I left it, up to this day. Actually, I've used it to measure my step and adjust my walk. And all my life it has never left me. In the moments when I felt tired and poisoned by the world in which, by a bad coincidence, I lived and only miraculously

> stayed alive, when the sight grew dim and the direction turned uncertain, I
> would spread before me, like a prayer mat, the hard, poor, divine Visegrad
> path which cures every pain and nullifies every suffering, because it contains
> them all and surpasses them all. That way, a couple of times a day, using every
> calm in the life around me, every pause in a conversation, I would travel a part
> of that road.

The recipients of the documented project are those people who have certainly
walked many paths in their lands of origin and thus, it is important for these roads
not to be forgotten, but, as the above passage suggests, to be remembered in order
to fuel the new routes on which these people are walking. So, there is a need to
treasure the experience gained and the awareness of what has been learned and
acquired, perhaps through non-linear trajectories of development and training,
sometimes bumpy or impervious like the paths narrated in this excerpt. And also,
there is a need to facilitate the connection between the paths of the past with those
of the future, to recognize that – as the excerpt emphasizes – the paths that follow
are always crossed by the original ones through which people had passed.

And the link between past and future reminds of another image, the bridge.

> Thus, everywhere in the world, wherever my thought wander and stop, they
> encounter faithful and silent bridges, like an eternal and ever insatiable human
> desire to connect, reconcile and join everything that challenges our spirit, eyes
> and feet to stop division, contradiction or parting. So, even in dreams and in
> the free game of fantasy, while listening to the most beautiful and bitter music
> I have ever heard, the stone bridge cut in half suddenly appears in front of me,
> as the broken parts of the broken arch painfully protrude towards each other
> and with a last effort they show the only possible line of the missing arch. It's
> the devotion and the extreme stubbornness of beauty that allows only one pos-
> sibility: the nonexistence. In the end, everything through which this life of ours
> is expressed – thoughts, efforts, glances, smiles, words, sighs – is all reaching
> out to another shore, as towards its aim, and only there will it be granted its
> true meaning. Everywhere there is something to overcome or to bridge: dis-
> order, death, meaninglessness. Everything is a transition, a bridge whose ends
> are lost in infinity, beside which all the bridges of this earth are only children's
> toys, pale symbols. And our hopes lie on the other side.

And the intent of the project documented here – born from the insights of Pro-
fessor Cristina Castelli, founder and former director of CROSS, who promoted it
and carried it out with generous support – is to build bridges. Bridges between
skills, the resilience potential gained in their own country of origin together with
the professional and existential opportunities the new safe harbour will hopefully
bring. Bridges that the recipients of the project have to first build in their mind in
order to link a present Self with a future Self within the representation of a single
Self in which there is no break between before and after but the perception of a
continuous growth. Bridges that must be recognized by those who welcome mi-
grants to facilitate their integration and employment. Bridges between researchers
from different countries who found themselves in the objectives and operational

tools developed during the project. Finally, bridges between the project itself – which, as the term projectum points out, emphasizes a jump ahead – and the everyday work in the field, which hopefully can be of help for what has been elaborated and validated in this initiative.

Alessandro Antonietti
Director of CROSS
Scientific director of the ESPoR project

I. Introduction

Diego Boerchi

The purpose of this manual is to share the objectives, structure and details of the skills portfolio model for asylum seekers and political refugees called "ESPoR". After this introduction, the second chapter is dedicated to the orientation needs of migrants, which are often bypassed by the urgency to find employment, whatever this may be. The third chapter presents three psychological models for career counselling and the fourth considers decision-making processes re-examined in the light of the specific target. These are a very important part of the manual because they allow us to grasp the meaning of the ESPoR model: those who have already had the opportunity to get to know it so far have considered it innovative, not so much because it proposes innovative activities, but because its intended purpose is to act on the dynamics of knowledge and personal maturation, which are almost always bypassed by the classic interventions to support job placement. The fifth chapter identifies the resistance reactions that often characterize the most effective orientation processes and counselling models, while the sixth focuses on multicultural counselling, highlighting that this cannot be based solely on a generic attitude of welcoming the other, but that it also requires specific skills. Two methodological chapters follow. The seventh is dedicated to autobiographical narration, which, in the process of assessing skills, evolves from a less structured mode, aimed at gaining a first awareness of one's own characteristics, to processing the bereavement that results from the loss of one's own profession and to the development of the right attitude towards career redesign, towards a more structured method, which results in a stronger belief in one's own skills and motivations and a better ability to present oneself on the labour market. The eighth chapter, on the other hand, is dedicated to group orientation, in order to ensure that each of the meetings, which are mainly conducted in group form, is as efficient as possible.

After the theoretical introductory part, the model itself is presented, with specific sections devoted to each intervention. Images of the forms prepared for some of the planned activities are provided, whereas material to be printed for operational use is available at the website www.refujob.eu. The last chapter is devoted to research conducted in 2020 and 2021. The results of this research highlight the effectiveness of the intervention in improving perceived self-efficacy regarding the Ability to work and the Ability to find a job thanks to the development of adapting a professional pathway to achieve one's career goals.

The final recipients of the manual are first and foremost the operators who take care of accompanying migrants in training, retraining and support to job placement. Anyway, this final target rarely has a specific training on career coun-

selling. The initial part is dedicated to theoretical assumptions and it is of funda-
mental importance to them but probably not sufficient to cover their skills gap.
It is more luckily for some- one to deeply understand this path if is already an
expert in career counselling, thus the initial part will be primarily an opportunity
to better understand the objectives and methodologies of the model, but will only
partially provide new elements. On the other hand, these professionals will need
a deeper knowledge of the final target of the model and of the approach to multi-
culturalism that here is not sufficiently in-depth.

In other words, it is difficult for the manual alone to be sufficient to guarantee
that the operator will develop adequate professional skills independently. The ide-
al thing is to activate specific training interventions, composed in the initial part
by training interventions in groups and, subsequently, by group and individual
coaching alongside the conduct of the first groups.

Finally, it is recommended to also consider this model for different targets than
the initial one: other targets considered weak in the autonomous management of
their career choices will feel the strong need to redesign their career and could
benefit from this path.

II. ESPoR: from necessities to recipients, going through the process

Diego Boerchi

ESPoR, the European Skills Portfolio for Refugees, was mainly created to meet two typical needs of all those who are looking for a new job. These needs, however, are emphasized for those who have to do that after abandoning their entire "life" for political reasons or physical survival, in order to travel to a nation having different culture and habits other than those of their country of origin.

2.1 *The need for knowledge*

A clear need for job seekers is that they can talk about their professional skills in order to be welcomed into the labour market of the host nation. The Curriculum Vitae, supposedly the most appropriate tool to promote a person's professionalism, can only be adequately prepared to the extent that the person perfectly knows: 1) the skills and motivation possessed; 2) the actual market- ability of these skills; 3) the recipient of the CV. Migrants are not usually in a position to meet even one of these three conditions. It is therefore essential to take a previous step to help them better understand what their professionalism is, what are the characteristics and opportunities of the labour market that is welcoming them, and hence what is the professionalism that they can offer to this specific context. However, this process presents several difficulties.

The first difficulty they face is language, both to be able to work and adequately present themselves to the labour market of the host country. Any Italian employer considers it essential, or at least prefers, to hire a worker who speaks their language: it is usually essential to be able to communicate with the people to give them instructions on the work to be done, the procedures to be followed, and to share information about what has been done.

This is also the main channel that an employer uses to know the candidate and understand if he/her meets their expectations. If the inability to support a job interview in Italian is already an element that greatly reduces the chances of finding an employment, it should be considered that a general knowledge of the language is not enough. For example, it is not always easy to translate a title or profession into a language other than their own. For instance, in these cases it is necessary to clearly describe the contents covered in a specific course and provide an idea of the level and commitment, specifying when the course was done and how long it lasted. Even professions that have a very precise characterization in

the country of origin, but are not known in the host country, should be translated with expressions that make them comprehensible, and should be accompanied by a list of the main activities that have been carried out.

Another difficulty is to understand whether their knowledge and technical skills meet the professional expectations of a European company. For example, it is necessary that migrants know exactly what skills a chef needs to have to be able to work in Italy, in order to enhance the skills they already possess and to define an action plan to develop the ones they are lacking. Continuing with this example, migrants may discover they do not know some raw materials that are commonly used in Italy, and find that they need to acquire the HACCP certificate without which they will never be hired.

Finally, migrants will have to gather information to understand how much the Italian labour market needs that particular profession, to decide if they should continue to invest in it or if they need to specialise in something different. In this second case, they must be able to choose a profession that interests them and that allows them to retrieve, as far as possible, the technical and transversal skills they already possess. This phase also has a good level of difficulty because it requires the ability to search and interpret economic data an ability a worker rarely owns.

2.2 *The need for maturation*

There is, however, another need that is not usually considered. For migrants, who have lost all of their belongings, much of their relational network and the chance to sustain themselves through their work, their professionalism is often the only element of value they possess, and which they want to use as soon as possible in order to acquire autonomy and a more satisfying living condition. Unfortunately, as we have just seen, professionalism can hardly be used immediately. It is therefore necessary for migrants to understand it, accept it, and work to change their professionalism so that it can be used in the host country. Unfortunately, this is not easy to be carried out and, even more, accepted by a migrant. After all, they are asked to process yet another grief, an essential step in order to be able to deal with the difficult path of job placement, a path that very often passes through a qualification or retraining process that the person must choose with cognition and belief.

That is why the mere description of their previous training and occupational experiences, even if it is of higher quality than a too timely drafting of the Curriculum Vitae, is not enough. It is primarily necessary to help these people develop the belief that their career must be redesigned, and that they cannot hope to find a job in Italy that is identical to that of their country of origin. To develop the belief that this, while requiring more effort, is the only path to a professional future that, in some cases, might even be more satisfying than the situation they have lived and abandoned in their country of origin.

2.3 *The need for relationships*

Finally, it is also important to recognize the need to create a network of relationships that facilitate effective career choices. Often, the network of relationships on which a political refugee relies consists solely of the operators in the migrant reception centre and/or relatives and friends from the same country of origin who arrived previously in the host country. This network risks being particularly weak, because although it assists entry into the employment market, it does so only for an extremely limited number of job options which do not enhance the individual migrant's skills, predispositions and interests.

This is compounded by the work context, made up of the employer and colleagues, who run the risk of relating to immigrant colleagues in a stereotypical way, making integration more difficult and missing out on opportunities to improve the company climate and production, which instead characterise experiences of competent and diversity-conscious integration.

2.4 *ESPoR: process and contents*

ESPoR is a paper and computerized document that provides migrants with a concrete tool they can keep in hand and share with those who can help them get into the labour market. It contains a description of their professional skills, starting from their qualifications and work experiences, but it is not a Curriculum Vitae. The latter has a structure and, above all, a different goal, which is to be presented to the potential employers in the best possible way.

ESPoR is also, and perhaps especially, the "process" to reach the final document. It is a process of awareness and maturation of a stronger belief of their own professionalism, essential conditions to be able to enter the labour market. ESPoR is a process of maturation whose main goal is to accelerate and optimize the path for job placement. It is therefore an attempt to provide a context and activities that encourage a reflection on their professional identity, a recognition of the need to question and rebuild it, and also redesign it so that it can be attractive in the new context. It is a process that wants to produce change, and for this reason must be ready to recognize and manage the physiological resistance.

This will be sought mainly through narration, which at the beginning will be more open, metaphorical, and emotional. In this way it will leave room for primary thought processes, therefore less controlled, referring to a greater extent to unconscious contents, in order to help people activate their availability for redesign processes and manage their emotional connection. Subsequently, in the analytical identification and description phase of their training and work experiences, the approach will be more rational, based on falsification processes that have to verify the reliability of the information and decide which are enough true to be collected in the final document. The narration will be based here mainly on secondary thought processes, whose function is to control, direct, limit, postpone, and divert thought processes according to the needs of the impact with reality.

2.5 *The recipients*

The first ESPoR recipient will be migrants themselves, who will be able to see their professionalism black on white and identify themselves with greater conscience and belief. This goal is perhaps the most important and difficult to achieve: it requires migrants to work on self-representations and the labour market, on their attitudes, on cognitive and emotional abilities to play new roles – also from a professional point of view – as well as in many other fields of personal life. However, this goal is crucial to ensure the ideal conditions to be able to attack a labour market that is not easy for natives, and that is often more difficult for migrants.

The second recipient will be all the people supporting job placement and reception services that migrants will meet along the way. These are psychologists, educators, career consultants, but also volunteers who, although not usually possessing specific counselling skills, from that person's ESPoR can get a picture that is as realistic as possible – a picture of their abilities, potentialities, as well as of their wishes. It is therefore important to try to achieve the goal of being as complete as possible, but at the same time clear and "readable", even by non-experts.

III. Psychological models for migrant career counselling

Diego Boerchi and Laura Frigerio

The current labour market, characterized by complexity and instability, makes it increasingly difficult, and at the same time important, to opt for educational and career choices that prove to be useful over time. Nowadays, workers require career management skills that are rarely owned, and for which there is little training opportunity. At the same time, the world of career counselling is now being asked to rethink its goals, methods, tools and its professionals' skills, in order to ensure the ability to intervene effectively on the increasingly irregular and unpredictable professional paths.

The above-described scenario makes it easy to understand how orientation is today facing new challenges to manage, that are far more complex than ever before. If the story of last century orientation tells us of limited interventions by number of dimensions considered and role of the user (Boerchi, 2012; Mancinelli, 2013), today: "The necessity to respond to the growing need for orientation towards a working reality that is becoming progressively more complex and articulated is so important that it requires the creation of special professional structures, able to carry out this task with regard to the individual that must be oriented, and to the society, which needs to rely on a workforce- professionally prepared and integrated on the organizational level – for its economic development." (Pombeni, 1996, pp. 10-11). So, what are these new challenges? Below are listed the most relevant ones:

a. **The choice is much more limited than in the past**: sometimes it is necessary to settle for employment proposals that are poorly consistent compared to personal expectations and, in many cases, even undersized compared to personal skills and potentialities. A large number of young people are unable to enter the world of work; more and more people who are expelled from the labour market are in great difficulty because they lack either the skills or the right attitude to re-enter; there is an increase in the dissatisfaction of workers who feel trapped in a job they dislike but have to tolerate; there is also an increase in mobbing and burnout phenomena associated with higher levels of stress and greater tension in working environments;

b. **Choices are more difficult due to a context that is increasingly unpredictable**: changes in the labour market are so substantial and sudden that they endanger any choice made with the goal that it can be effective at a distance of a few years. Workers are confronted with more frequent and difficult job changes, and therefore they need to question more frequently

and with increasing competence about their professionalism and its marketability, by looking for information that is difficult to retrieve, as well as confirmations that are less and less available;

c. **Choices are made with a negative and defeatist attitude due to the economic crisis**: choosing in a critical moment could increase the tendency to move towards paths that should ensure a greater marketability in the labour market, by sacrificing personal expectations and overestimating some occupational limits, in order to prepare for the worst. Unfortunately, such an attitude is likely to have the effect which is well-described by the "self-fulfilling prophecy", as it drives people not to imagine and not to seek alternative solutions to those they are experiencing, while not recognizing and thus wasting any opportunities that are offered to them;

d. **the belief that work satisfaction is found only through a permanent contract that resolves, definitively, their career choices**: the need to think about their professionalism is growing, however, with a dynamic and almost dialectical logic. Workers must constantly inquire about their real marketability and be ready to make continuous redefinements in response to changes in the labour market. To be content with a guaranteed employment, not investing in the development of their professionalism, must give way to a lifelong training, a co-existence with flexibility, and a greater propensity to create their own opportunities;

e. **the system and career counselling professionals must intervene with a preventive logic**: it is no longer enough to intervene just when it is time to choose, while it is necessary to help people develop their own orientative skills and to understand that – almost daily – they are required to make choices about their work, which are career choices because they open to some opportunities, and reduce or close some others. In other words, Career Counselling needs to be complemented by Career Education starting from primary education, but also for the rest of people's professional life.

Career counselling is even more complex for a migrant. Difficulties in understanding that are related to linguistic limits and cultural differences, training and work experiences which only partially correspond to those of the host nation, a starting condition dictated by urgency on the one hand, and weakness on the other make it all much more complicated.

It is therefore important to refer to pre-existing models, by re-reading them in the light of these specific users, in order to guide the design and conduct of the interventions dedicated to them.

Here, four different models related to career counselling are presented and discussed with reference to the specific, intended target.

3.1 *The Social Cognitive Career Theory*

If we start from the career choices a migrant can make and go backward, we can highlight a number of elements that contribute to defining them, reaching up to the role that their own ethnicity can play. In order for the choice to be as consistent

as possible with their potential, it is necessary to act on multiple levels, starting with the knowledge of some of their personal characteristics and the knowledge of the support that can be provided by their context. However, it is also necessary to consider their training experiences, their expectations and the perception they possess about their ability to face challenging training and professional tasks.

The model that will be described below is intended to explain how people: a) develop training and career interests; b) prepare and modify their training and career plans; c) achieve performance of various qualities in their chosen training and career paths (Lent, Brown and Hacket, 2003). This model focuses on three cognitive-personal constructs – self-efficacy, outcome expectations and choice goals – and how these constructs interact with environmental factors to predict the decisions that people take in relation to their training and professional choices.

Figure 1
Re-elaborated version from "Toward a Unifying Social Cognitive Theory of Career and Academic Interest, Choice, and Performance" di R.W. Lent, S.D. Brown, e G. Hackett, 1994, Journal of Vocational Behaviour, 5, p. 93.
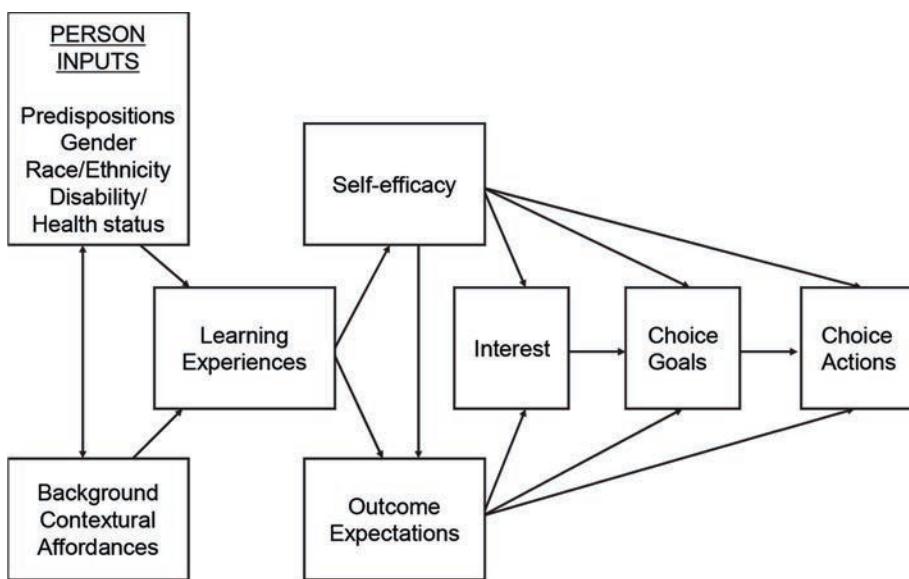
Figure 1 represents the model and allows highlighting the relationships between the following elements:

1. **Self-efficacy expectations** – Self-efficacy refers to how people consider themselves capable of performing specific activities, and greatly contributes to achieving specific performance. It is important for migrants to identify their own self-efficacy expectations, both in terms of specific jobs, training and career (such as the ability to learn, to be adequately present in the la-bour market, to overcome the barriers they might encounter). The beliefs

of self-efficacy, precisely because they are not real data but in fact just "beliefs", developed from the concrete experience that the person has had, and the influence of the beliefs of the people with whom he/she interacts. The task of the consultant is to help migrants modify these beliefs in the light of a more realistic view of their potentialities and the opportunities they may seize one day;

2. **Outcome expectations –** Outcome expectations concern the perception of the consequences that will come from acting specific behaviours, and the value that is attributed to those results. Thus, migrants will engage in learning the Italian language to the extent that they will not only have the ability to learn (self-efficacy expectation), but also to the extent that they will feel that learning the Italian language will favour a faster and more satisfying job placement. It is therefore essential to identify the expectations on the results as regards the training activities that are offered to migrants, job opportunities that will be presented to them, but also the ESPoR path, because their subsequent activation and engagement will depend on all this. For example, if migrants are convinced that despite their efforts in studying, they will never achieve significant results in work, this will greatly affect their interests and choices. It is the consultant's task to help migrants identify the results they could achieve with their commitment and external help, and the importance these results can have for them;

3. **Goals –** The goals are the intentions of performing particular actions or series of actions, and are probably the antecedents closer to the performance of the behaviour. It is important to help migrants identify the career goals they intend to pursue, supporting them to verify their feasibility and helping them identify the most challenging but achievable goals being them consistent with the real possibilities, both internal and contextual, on which migrants can count;

4. **Professional interests –** Professional interests refer to the interest that a person has in carrying out certain professions or in deepening the study of specific subjects. In the SCCT model, interests depend on beliefs of self-efficacy and expectations on the results: if people believe they have the skills to carry out tasks related to a specific job and perceive positive results associated with getting that job, they are more likely to develop an interest in a specific professional sector. It is easy to understand why there is a tendency to replicate already experienced working or ethnicity models: having already successfully tested specific tasks and having achieved satisfactory results can drive people to address professional paths that make them feel strong. The problem is that sometimes people need to change their interests to make them more consistent with the offers of the new context, and this is achieved by working with them on their own self-efficacy expectations and expectations on the results;

5. **Learning experiences –** Learning experiences are the ones that more than others affect personal self-efficacy expectations and, consequently, the rest of the dimensions. It is important to start from the previous training, working and non-working (non-formal or volunteer work) experiences of mi-

grants, not only to retrieve the skills they possess, but also to understand why they developed specific interests. At the same time, it is important to give them the opportunity to experiment with new learning contexts that enable them to develop new interests, as well as new skills;

6. **Barriers and resources –** Barriers and resources directly affect people's sense of self-efficacy, usually reducing the likelihood that they choose between a broader range of alternatives. With regard to migrants' situation, it is useful to help them understand what the barriers and the resources really are, and that they are not the result of an erroneous interpretation of the context. Subsequently, migrants will be helped to identify the most effective strategies to break down the barriers and enhance the available resources;

7. **Personal inputs –** Finally, there are personal characteristics that can influence the sense of self-efficacy through the mediation of learning experiences, among which we find ethnicity, but also gender, disability and health status, as well as predispositions and attitudes. These elements are characterized by the fact that they cannot be modified, while it is possible to modify the way they are considered and the effect they have on learning experiences. Since their interpretation depends to a large extent on cultural elements, it is possible that there is a clash with the limits that have been placed on people in their country of origin, and that people today set these same limits for themselves, despite the new context does not justify it. For example, it is possible that a woman, just because she is a woman, has had little work experience and thinks that it is not appropriate to access some of the retraining courses she is offered in Italy. It is important to understand how many real margins are there in order to break these influences and which, on the other hand, are insurmountable (e.g. health problems) and should be appropriately taken into account.

3.2 *The constructivist approach to career choices*

Constructivism is a psychological approach that merits particular attention when conducting interventions with political refugees. The holistic conception of a person, the sense of agency attributed to that person and the attention paid to past, present and future experiences with a view to integration and continuity have prompted various orientation theorists to study its potential in the employment context. By combining theoretical considerations and empirical verifications, it has been shown that adopting a constructivist approach to career counselling for migrants is effective, as this favours integration and the signification of past life stories with the aim of creating new ones. Within each individual orientation process, the main stakeholder is the person involved, with their beliefs, experiences, values and narratives, and the ultimate goal is to achieve the best possible adaptation to the context in order to develop the career plan that best meets the needs of the individual person and society.

Although the constructivist approach has been studied and implemented in various areas, it has proven to be particularly suitable for generating and fostering

those reflective and transformative processes that are essential in career choice pathways in contemporary societies. The concepts of reality, knowledge of the world and of human beings proposed by constructivism make it possible and authorize the person to explore their own processes of knowledge construction and the meanings they attribute to experience (Iannis and Durighello, 2016), including that of training and work.

Peavy (1997) identified and analysed certain fundamental concepts of the constructivist paradigm and then adapted and applied them within a counselling process, outlining the main steps and verifying their effectiveness. In particular, starting from the belief that no single view of reality exists, he emphasized the importance of activating, as part of the counselling intervention, a process aimed at exploring ideas and meanings different from those proposed initially by the person. This first intervention can then be followed by a reflection on what the most suitable and effective idea is for the person himself, the one that therefore deserves to be tried out and developed. From constructivism, Peavy also takes the view of the human being as a self-organizing entity, a generator of meaning, each with their own story, full of events, experiences and knowledge in constant evolution. From this, he highlights the need to adopt a holistic and dynamic approach to counselling that is able to accompany this process of generation and development of knowledge and meanings, both about oneself and about the external world. This is the main reason why it is important to refer to this approach when working with migrants: their view of reality, including their working reality and their view of themselves within this, are the result of a process of construction, personal and social, which took place in another country, a different one from the one in which they are now. It is therefore essential to investigate their view and the process with which it was built in order to understand how functional it could be to a satisfactory career path in the host country and, on the other hand, how much it may need to be deconstructed and then reconstructed in order to increase the probability of successful employment.

This practice of construction and reconstruction of meanings takes place thanks to language, actions and interactions that an individual establishes with others. The approach proposed by Peavy, called socio-dynamic counselling, has its theoretical foundations in the school of social constructionism. The particular importance attached to the language used by clients derives from the belief that this has a certain influence on the beliefs and personal meanings that are constructed. The stories, and the way they are told, are in fact shaped by the environment in which the person was helped to grow up.

This is why, for the purpose of more effective counselling, and therefore of a more functional, authentic and sensitive counsellor-client relationship, it is important for the former to know the cultural heritage and backgrounds of their clients (Aysan and Totan, 2009). This process is particularly difficult for native counsellors welcoming political refugees. The language is different, but it is not simply a linguistic problem: language is the instrument we use to think, and two people who speak different languages think differently, at least in part. The cultural mediator, whose task is not to limit himself to carrying out a literal translation of the spoken word, has been introduced precisely to bring two worlds closer

together, even though these are sometimes much more distant from each other than might be supposed.

Peavy (1997) continues his discussion by emphasizing the importance of sharing a person's own meanings with other people and, specifically, with the career counsellor. In order to do this, during the counselling path, particular attention is paid not only to the process of re-constructing the self, but also to active and attentive collaboration and co-participation between client and counsellor. The figure of the counsellor, an expert in the career counselling intervention, does not overshadow or overwhelm the client, who is, in fact, the main expert on their own life experience. The counsellor will not, therefore, be at the centre of the process, and will not take on the role of a specialist possessing a battery of standard instruments, techniques and practices, but rather, within a perspective of shared responsibility, will be a curious professional who seeks to know and understand the client's past experience and cognitive background (Aysan and Totan, 2009).

Only once the counsellor and client have got to know each other and have shared their starting assumptions will it be possible to proceed with identifying the best ways to enter into a dynamic relationship with the person and their knowledge, using, if necessary, instruments that can stimulate self-reflection, expressiveness and personal creativity. The ultimate goal of a counselling path is in fact that of achieving greater self-awareness, along with awareness of one's past, present and future experiences and the promotion of a proactive attitude towards reality and different contexts (Iannis and Duringhello, 2016).

The most effective tool to help the person in this process of exploring their own life and career history is autobiographical narration, which will be discussed later. Through the telling of their story, the person is made aware of their past and present situation and is prepared to build their future. During the counselling process, all the roles assumed in the course of life are examined and explicitly acknowledged, including those in scholastic, educational and general life pathways. The aim is the functional integration of roles and belief systems in order to tune into, and therefore adapt to, the social context in general and the employment market in particular.

Constructivist approaches to career counselling have been found to be particularly effective in working with people from different cultural backgrounds, such as asylum seekers and political refugees. There are various reasons for this.

- **Use of a narrative approach** – Narration is a practice shared by many African and Middle Eastern cultures, the main areas of origin of the specific target (Pierce and Gibbons, 2012). Talking about oneself and recounting one's own story, as well as being an excellent opportunity to share part of one's cultural background within the counselling process, also helps to integrate the different experiences lived during the course of one's life. Additionally, It contributes to externalizing personal values, beliefs and the different roles adopted in the course of one's existence. Using an approach focusing on the process of "constructing one's own career path" enables the concrete steps towards the search for employment to be defined (Abkhezr and McMahon, 2017) and promotes greater capitalization upon one's ap-

titudes and skills, with positive effects on the person's job satisfaction and on the host country's economy.

- **The holistic view of the person** – Constructivist career counselling not only focuses on seeking immediate employment but can also, by adopting a holistic view of the person, help refugees to define and achieve long-term life goals, by giving a meaning to their personal stories. Particular attention is therefore paid to the integration of differences in cultures and values of the societies of origin, which are often collectivist, in contrast to the typically individualist Western society. The migrant's expectations and own sense of life will also be part of the career choice process, together with the migratory project and its modifications over time due to changes in context and the person's ever greater understanding.

- **The importance of the counselling relationship** – In career counselling targeted at refugees and asylum seekers, it is essential to establish a collaborative and trusting relationship, allowing free exploration, reflection and integration of stories, experiences, meanings and values (Pierce and Gibbons, 2012). To improve the climate of trust and collaboration, it is important to clarify the specific nature of the career counselling process, to explain to migrants the differences between the stories they recounted in previous interviews, often focusing on traumatic experiences and aimed at obtaining a humanitarian permit, and those that will be developed and built upon in the counselling process, which centre on effective work experiences and are aimed at more functional and satisfying career choices. It may also be useful for the counsellor to know the migrant's cultural background, including the role of work in that society and the most typical professions of the country of origin (Abkhezr and McMahon, 2017).

- **The migrant as an active agent** – The client in a counselling process is called upon to tell their own story personally, reflect on it and construct their own career path. The counsellor, for their part, must be careful to occupy a place on the sidelines, to remain in the background, as the migrant is the real protagonist, the central figure. At first this is likely to create confusion in the migrant, and the counsellor may be called upon to act in a more propositional way than they would like. However, it must be clear that the goal is to make the client ever more competent and, consequently, autonomous in the process of getting to know themself, understanding the context and in choosing and monitoring their own career. Good counsellors are those who, over time, become ever less useful.

So far some of the many positive aspects that the constructivist approach offers in career guidance for migrants have been presented; however, it is also important to take into consideration some critical issues involved in this approach. One of these lies precisely in the holistic view of the person adopted by this approach. Despite the added value of narration described above, mention should be made of the difficulty of frequently having to deal with stories of traumatic events experienced before and/or during the migrant's journey (Pierce and Gibbons, 2012). The counsellor will therefore have to be able to help migrants explore their new

selves, construct life stories with a gaze towards the future and increase their sense of agency and their intentionality (Abkhezr and McMahon, 2017).

Given the importance of narration in the constructivist approach, critical issues are encountered in the use of a language that was often not originally the migrant's own. As previously mentioned, the counsellor may find themself in difficulty because they are is unable to reach an adequate understanding of the spoken language, of certain intrinsic cultural aspects, as well as of some nuances of meaning. This issue is also closely linked to the difficulty deriving from the counsellor and the client belonging to two different cultures. It will therefore be essential for the counsellor to enquire about the client's cultural and social background as well as their value set, in order to facilitate both the generating of ideas and the choice of instruments and strategies that could prove to be most useful in relation to the client's specific culture. Knowledge of the migrants' culture, but also their ethnicity and language, and the religious or socio-political groups to which they belong, could therefore help gain a better understanding and contextualization of life stories, as well as job expectations and the outcomes of the counselling pathway. Adding to the complexity of these issues is the fact that counsellors must also be aware that clients may have to realise that certain traditions, beliefs and cultural values may need to be integrated with Western ones in order for the clients themselves to achieve a better and functional adaptation to their new context (Abkhezr and McMahon, 2017). The task of career counselling is in fact to offer clients a space to think, reflect and tell their stories, but also to help them in their search for employment and new opportunities, in the construction of stories of hope and potential, which reveal an orientation towards the future (ibidem).

The use of a constructivist approach to career counselling with asylum seekers and political refugees that exploits narration as an instrument allows connections to be created between events and life experiences that took place in very different contexts and times, which acquire meaning in the construction of a person's own history. The newly constructed narratives will thus enable subjects to experience greater self-understanding, a sense of continuity in their life and a feeling of optimism and trust, which are fundamental elements not only for their own occupational and personal development, but also for an effective adaptation to their new context (Abkhezr and McMahon, 2017).

3.3 *Career management skills*

A last theoretical reference concerns the orientation skills, which in the international literature are called "Career Management Skills". They are skills referring to self-knowledge, to the collection and management of information, to the management of interpersonal relationships that are useful for their career, to the ability to choose and monitor and, increasingly, to adaptive attitudes and capabilities that are particularly useful in an ever-changing context. It is important for every counselling intervention, even one aimed at an imminent choice, to have an educational value: it must help the person become more skilled in making the career choices that they will face in the future. This will make them ever more autonomous

and effective, which are particularly important aspects for a target client who often develops dependence on the reception system whenever this completely replaces the person in carrying out concrete operations, such as requesting a document or making important choices, including those involving careers. In this context, we simply list a few of them, namely those that have been identified within the European CMS LEADER project, for being sufficiently extensive and up to date:

1. **Personal efficacy**
   - Knowledge of their skills and their adequacy to the labour market
   - Decision-making skills and implementation of the activities needed to address career-related issues
   - Innovation and positive attitude towards the future
2. **Relationships management**
   - Ability to find and evaluate the validity of information
   - Ability to seek support and to build professional relationships supporting their career
   - Ability to create and maintain professional networks, also through social media
3. **Job search and access to training**
   - Ability to find job opportunities and successfully manage selection processes
   - Ability to create alternative career opportunities and prospects
   - Ability to handle changes and transitions in the world of work (Career adaptability)
4. **Balanced management of personal life and career**
   - Ability to decide life and career goals so that they are compatible
   - Ability to manage their goals, time and finances to support their career
   - Ability to adapt their roles, work responsibilities, schedules and contexts
   - Ability to maintain the right balance between private life, training and work
   - Ability to handle transitions in a flexible and adaptable way
   - Ability to cope with adversity and changes in their life and career (Resilience)
5. **Understanding of the world**
   - Ability to understand how changes in society, politics and economics can affect their lives, training and work
   - Ability to understand how roles in private life, training and work change over time
   - Ability to act effectively in society (Social sensitivity)
   - Ability to identify, create and exploit fortuitous situations, both positive and negative (Readiness towards randomness)
   - Ability to act internationally on issues related to life, learning and work (Mobility)

IV. The process of choice

LAURA FRIGERIO AND DIEGO BOERCHI

Gati and Kulcsár (2021) defined choice as a dynamic process involving definition of the problem, the collection and processing of information and, ultimately, selection of one of two or more alternatives based on beliefs, values and individual preferences. There are, however, several pitfalls within this linear approach, which have been studied and analysed in recent decades by cognitive psychology and behavioural economics. Specifically, the latter discipline, which has generated a sort of mini-revolution, has highlighted people's limitations and uncertainties, which prompt them to make important mistakes even in processes of making career choices.

Migrants are, perhaps, the target most affected by the risk of making unsatisfactory career choices, due to intrinsic factors (skills, motivations, cognitive bias, …) and extrinsic ones (a different context from that in which they grew up, limited possibilities, influence of ethnic prejudices, …). For this reason, it is important to share some theoretical knowledge on the processes of choice in general, highlighting their complexity and characteristics, and then focus on the processes of career choices, which affect everyone, before posing some questions that are specific to migrants. Career choices are considered to be simultaneously the most important and most complex that a person will have to make in the course of their life, because they have both short-term and long-term implications, involving and influencing the economic, relational and emotional aspects of a person. However, while until a few decades ago the career choices that a person made during their life were limited, in the 21st century a person's working life involves numerous steps and transitions (Gati, Levin and Landman-Tal, 2019). The technological and I.T. revolutions have broadened the variety of educational and occupational alternatives to choose from; globalisation and an uncertain labour market require workers to be more flexible and adaptable. It therefore becomes important for the individual to be able to construct and manage their career, navigating through the large amount of information and numerous options available (Gati, 2013). One of the objectives of the ESPoR project is, in fact, to help migrants acquire and implement their own decision-making skills and abilities, in order for them to become autonomous and responsible decision-makers as regards the development of their own careers.

4.1 *Evolution of studies on the decision-making process*

Over the years, decision-making processes have been studied by various disciplines. The first theories, defined as classical, were developed in the field of eco-

nomics and considered the subject as a perfectly rational decision-maker, with well-defined and stable preferences, exclusively interested in maximising personal profit. The Homo economicus or economic man, as he was called, after having independently and accurately processed all the available information, is able to make optimal decisions for himself (Thaler, 2015). The models that have used these assumptions as the basis to explain and predict people's economic and decision-making behaviours are called normative models. According to Mitchell and Krumboltz (1984), these models explain how to make the best choice by considering all possible alternatives and evaluating whether the expected consequences correspond to one's goals. However, empirical evidence has largely contradicted this hypothesis (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979, 1981). Normative models could therefore be used as a theoretical reference for an ideal decision-making process, but they lose their relevance when they are used to analyse everyday decisions, or, as in the case of this manual, in choosing an effective career. Kahneman and Tversky (1982, 1986, 2011) conducted various studies that demonstrated how daily choices do not follow logical and probabilistic rules, as mathematical models would like, but are influenced by heuristics, bias, prejudices and many other factors. From these empirical discoveries, and in an attempt to explain the effects of bias and heuristics in the processes of reasoning and choice, Kahneman (2011) developed the Dual Process Theory, which postulates the activation of two different ways of thinking when an individual is about to make a decision, one more intuitive (System 1) and the other deliberated (System 2). The first to be activated, automatically and unconsciously, is System 1, which, using partial information, mental images, stereotypes and heuristics, processes information in a holistic manner. System 2, on the other hand, is activated later, and is characterized by a slower, more intentional, analytical and, in a certain sense, more rational way of thinking. While the first system is more likely to be activated in situations in which immediate decision-making is required, the second comes into play when decisions are more complex and important for the subject, or when it is necessary to make comparisons. For the activation of this system, it is therefore necessary for the decision-maker to have sufficient motivation and resources (ibidem). Following these discoveries, descriptive models have been developed in sociology and psychology to explain decision-making processes. These models focus on the differences between choice processes that are ideal, explained by normative models, and those that are real, which describe the behaviour adopted by decision-makers in daily life. However, since these models mainly explain the critical issues and suboptimal processes in human judgment, they cannot serve as a theoretical basis for the development of new models, and therefore have not been incorporated and developed in career counselling practices (Gati, 2013). In recent years, prescriptive models have been proposed with the aim of overcoming the limitations and critical aspects of previous models and starting from an in-depth knowledge of the limits of human beings. These models have a strong pragmatic value, as they help people make better decisions and have more realistic goals, such as making satisfactory rather than rationally correct choices (Phillips, 1994). In specific relation to career choices, the goal of prescriptive models is to help the decision-maker activate more systematic and efficient career choice processes,

instead of striving to reach the optimal or most rational decision (Bell, Raiffa & Tversky, 1988; Gati and Tal, 2008). The models that will be presented below and which form the theoretical basis of ESPoR fall into this category.

4.2 *Career choices*

Since the circumstances in which decision-making theories are used, such as when an individual must make a choice, seek to achieve a set of goals, or choose between several alternatives, each with factors to be taken into consideration, and, finally, when it is necessary to collect and process information, often in conditions of uncertainty (Gati, 1986; Gati and Asher, 2001a; Katz, 1966; Pitz and Harren, 1980), also apply to career choices, the latter can be considered a specific case of decision-making (Gati and Kulcsár, 2021). According to Gati et al. (2019), the aim of career choice processes is to choose the alternative that best matches the individual's characteristics and goals. It would therefore seem obvious to analyse and study these processes with reference to decision-making theories. However, although career counsellors are aware of the research conducted on human decision-making in the fields of cognitive psychology and behavioural economics (Gati, 1986; Phillips, 1997), the findings have not been integrated into career choice interventions, since these theories have been considered "too rational", "too complex" and "too quantitative" (Gati and Kulcsár, 2021).

For years, career choice theories have therefore focused on other aspects, particularly on the interaction between a person and contextual factors. Examples of these early models are: career development theories, which focus on the evolving circumstances in which decisions are made (Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, & Herma, 1951; Gottfredson, 1981; Mitchell and Krumboltz, 1990; Savickas, 2005; Super, 1972, 1990); the Person-Environment Fit (P-E Fit) approach (Holland, 1973), which focuses instead on the outcomes of the decision-making process, i.e. on the degree of matching between the characteristics of the individual and the environment; and the Theory of Work Adjustment (TWA) by Dawis and Lofquist (1984), which highlights the importance of the correspondence between a person's abilities and the requirements of the occupation, as well as between the person's needs and those the job can satisfy.

However, what these approaches lack is reference to the decision-making process itself, which needs to be considered, particularly in a labour market such as that of the 21st century, characterized by instability and continuous changes, meaning that the worker must become an autonomous and responsible decision-maker regarding their own career development. For this reason, the ESPoR project has also included the objective of helping migrants acquire and implement decision-making skills and abilities to enable them to construct and manage their careers, orienting them among the large amount of information and choices available (Gati, 2013) and in a very different occupational context from the one in which they grew up.

To provide a clearer view of what is involved in the process of career choices, Gati and Kulcsár (2021) identified certain elements that are important to take into consideration:

- The number of alternatives, their type, often determined by the individual's stage of life (there is a difference between choosing a summer job as a teenager, a post-graduate job, a job following a dismissal in adulthood or, as in our case, a job in relation to a specific migratory project) and the familiarity that the person has with them;
- The consequences of each option, which differ in terms of time (in the short-, medium- or long term) and type (psychological, social or financial);
- The predictability of having to make a decision, which can be obvious, such as choosing a job once settled in the host country, or unexpected, such as following a dismissal;
- The reversibility of decisions, since some can be changed or revised, while others are almost irreversible;
- The factors considered relevant when comparing alternatives, such as income, prospects for advancement, places and hours of work, interests, skills, level of urgency for renewal of a residence permit, etc., and the relative importance that the subject attributes to them;
- The opinions of other relevant people, who may be interested or involved in the choice, directly or indirectly, and who can therefore influence it.

These elements of career choice show the complexity underlying the process, and it is not surprising that many individuals find it stressful (Argyropoulou, Sidiropolou-Dimakakou & Besevegis., 2007) and therefore seek help from others (Vertsberger and Gati, 2015). This situation is further complicated if, as in the case of migrants, insufficient information is available regarding job opportunities and how to access certain jobs and they lack the required knowledge and skills. In addition, they may encounter values, cultures and work beliefs in the host country that are very different from those of their country of origin, and they may not always enjoy a support network that can help them orient themselves and integrate in the host country's labour market, as well as into its society.

Once the characteristics of choices and the decision-making process have been identified, the question arises as to how their quality can be evaluated. Initially, attention was paid to the results obtained, to the closeness of the correspondence between the career chosen and the individual's characteristics, thus implicitly indicating the existence of a "good career choice", which would allow the individual to achieve a certain occupational satisfaction. Over the years, however, it has been seen that choices, and the related satisfaction, are influenced by unpredictable factors over which the subject often has no control. In order to make the subject fully aware and conscience of their choices, the focus has shifted to the decision-making process, over which the subject has control and room for improvement (Katz, 1979; Mitchell and Krumboltz, 1984; Phillips and Jome, 2005). The basic idea is that better processes lead to better results. The acquisition of career decision-making skills can therefore be a goal to be achieved in the short-term (Katz, 1979) that is functional to reaching the long-term goal: the choice of occupation and achievement of any related success and satisfaction.

To conclude this discussion, Lent and Brown (2020) highlight a tendency to ignore the difficulties associated with the decision-making process itself and to the context in which it takes place and underscore the consequent importance and need to develop approaches that connect and integrate aspects of both the career choice process and content. To do this, decision-making theories must be adapted to suit the distinctive features of career choices (Gati, 2013). This passage is not automatic, as can be easily imagined, and is briefly illustrated in the next section through the explanation of two models.

4.3 *The most recent models for the process of making career choices*

Based on already existing theories, practices and intervention models in the field of career development (Gati and Asher, 2001; Lent and Brown, 2013; Sampson et al., 2004), on certain theories proper to behavioural economics and on new discoveries regarding the decision-making process (Kahneman, 2011), Lent and Brown (2020) have proposed the Content-Process-Context (CPC) model. In fact, they found that early attention to aspects of content, process and context, and the related problems that could arise, can positively influence the results of a career choice. The CPC model aims to promote the results of choice both in the short-term, supporting the person in the decision-making process, and also in the long term, attempting to guarantee a certain degree of occupational satisfaction and providing the person with the necessary skills to be prepared for any future career interruptions, as well as any new opportunities that may arise. The aim is not, therefore, to eliminate biases and heuristics, as this would be impossible, but to facilitate their recognition, limit their negative effects and promote the use of the more deliberate System 2 thought process, in order to allow decision-makers to make a more complete comparison of options that might otherwise go unnoticed. The CPC model incorporates several models of intervention, including the CIP model and the PIC model.

- **The CIP model – Cognitive Information Processing –** Peterson, Sampson and Reardon (1991) developed the Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) approach, integrating aspects relating to the content and features of the process involved in career choices. They concentrated on information processing domains and, specifically, analysed the five decision-making skills they had identified, which make up the CASVE cycle: communication, analysis, synthesis, valuing and execution. As can be readily imagined, by focusing on processing aspects, the CIP model emphasises the identification and restructuring of thoughts labelled as dysfunctional, with the aim of enabling the person to acquire effective decision-making skills. It should be noted that migrants sometimes do not have a sufficiently developed capacity for abstraction, which hampers complete and efficient knowledge of self and context. This means that representations of context and opportunities may be limited to the most external and concrete aspects, thus favouring thinking based on incomplete, unreliable and prejudicial information.

- **The PIC model – Prescreening, In-depth exploration, Choice** – integrating the theory of decision-making with the P-E fit model, Gati and Asher (2001) proposed the PIC (Prescreening, In-depth exploration, Choice) model. Using a systematic, analytical and dynamic decision-making process, capable of preventing cognitive overload, the PIC model aims to favour the matching of individual skills and preferences with the characteristics of different career alternatives, thus leading to better career choices. The model consists of three stages:
  1. **Prescreening** – the goal of this first stage is the identification of a small group of promising occupational alternatives that merit in-depth analysis. This is done through a systematic survey that considers a wide range of factors and aspects involved in career choices, which are then compared and subjected to an initial selection based on the importance attributed to them by the person. At this stage, it is important to help migrants consider their occupational interests, which in some cases have never been properly developed, starting from an analysis of past experiences, including informal ones, in which the person felt competent and at ease. Otherwise there is the risk that the initial alternatives are limited to those heard about through word-of-mouth among those from the same country or proposed by employers, and for this reason are exclusively those considered "typical" of migrants. It is the counsellor's task, therefore, to expand the range to other occupations, focusing especially on how much these match the person's aptitudes and skills, leaving the task of understanding their feasibility and strategies for achieving the chosen occupation for the subsequent stages.
  2. **In-depth exploration** – the goal of this stage is an in-depth exploration and analysis of the promising options, followed by identification of those that best suit the person's preferences and abilities. This stage therefore envisages the gathering of more information on each alternative, to verify whether this actually corresponds to the person's preferences, not only with regard to those aspects that they consider most important, but also those of moderate importance. In this stage, the support of an expert counsellor can be decisive, especially for people who find themselves most in difficulty with a task of this type, requiring cognitive skills for the collection and analysis of information relating to training courses and occupations and knowledge of the dynamics of a labour market that differs from the one in the country of origin. These skills and knowledge may not be sufficiently developed in the migrant.
  3. **Choice** – the aim of this stage is to identify the most appropriate alternative and classify the remaining alternatives in order of desirability. In this stage, therefore, it is verified whether the option selected has a high probability of realisation and whether the person who is making the choice has the necessary confidence in its realisation. Precisely because one of the objectives of career counselling is the development of greater autonomy in career management, it is important for the migrant to build their own occupational project with the counsellor and fully

identify with the project. If there is a clear mistrust of the first option, it is important to determine the reasons for this, analyse them and then focus on the second or third option.

4.4 *Factors involved in career choices*

The complexity of career choices has been stressed several times in the previous sections. Indeed, many factors are involved in the decision-making process and not all of these have been included or considered in the models presented. Below we offer an overview of those that appear to have the greatest influence.

- **Indecision –** Slaney (1980) considers career indecision to be the set of problems and difficulties that individuals encounter in the decision-making process, which often result in an inability to reach a career choice. Gati et al. (1996) distinguish between two types of indecision: the first, linked to the lack of readiness to make a career decision, arises at the beginning of the process; the second, which occurs during the decision-making process, is related to the absence or inconsistency of the information gathered. Identifying the specific origins of difficulties allows counsellors to focus on their main causes, with the aim of resolving them (Gati, 2013). Migrants may in fact find themselves destabilized by the large number of changes they face, and therefore may not have sufficient resources to make a career choice. Furthermore, there is also the already frequently mentioned lack of information on the host country's labour market;
- **Uncertainty –** Uncertainty characterises career decisions based on indefinite or non-crystallised preferences and those based on incomplete information. Both types must be considered during the career choice process and, depending on the stage the decision-maker is at, they can be addressed in the following ways: by broadening the range of what is considered acceptable; by clarifying individual preferences; by gathering information on the correspondence between the individual's characteristics and the alternatives; by drawing up a ranking of the most suitable alternatives (Gati, 2013);
- **Preferences and skills –** Preferences, along with individual skills, predict the satisfaction and success of a career choice (Holland, 1977; Gottfredson, 2005). "Preferences" are what the individual seeks and what they want to avoid, and include occupational interests and work values. "Skills" are what the person can do at that moment or will be able to do in the future (Betz, Fitzgerald, & Hill, 1989). Although there is widespread use of assessment of individual skills during career counselling, certain doubts have recently emerged regarding its predictive validity. Prediger (1999a) considers that self-assessment of skills by the person involved is more relevant for the purpose of making career choices. In fact, during the counselling process presented here, migrants are asked to identify and recognize their abilities; their desire to use these skills in their future employment is also investigated. To increase the levels of satisfaction with the choice and the

related occupational feasibility, it is also important to consider the degree of compatibility between the skills necessary for a given occupation and the individual's self-assessed skills (Gati, 2013).

- **Compromise** – Gottfredson (1981) defines "compromise" as the process that bridges the gap between what is desirable and what is achievable. Compromise can be considered as an intrinsic characteristic of career choices, as the ideal alternative – that is, one that perfectly matches all the individual's preferences and aspirations – rarely exists or is not always achievable (Gati, 1993). The compromise may involve career alternatives or aspects that characterise them, such as the work environment, the use of a certain skill, salary, professional advancement, etc. It is important to reflect with the migrant not only on the level of compromise considered acceptable, which is often very high, but also on which aspects they are really willing to question in order to negotiate more attention to their expectations and possibilities, to avoid making choices that subsequently prove to be very unsatisfactory.

- **Psychosocial background** – The psychosocial background of an individual has a strong influence on the information used and, consequently, on the choice of a specific occupational path (Lent, Sheu, Miller, Cusick, Penn & Truong, 2018). From the socio-cultural point of view, while there is an expansion of occupations that are legally and socially acceptable for different segments of the population, residual, yet very real forms of individual and systemic oppression have not been completely overcome (Duffy, Blustein, Diemer and Autin, 2016), and exert an enormous influence on career decisions. While it is widely recognized that marginalisation and economic constraints are risk factors for a successful career choice process, what is less clear are the ways in which these difficulties are expressed. Lent and Brown (2020) have considered the phenomenon of occupational segregation, which mainly occurs at the level of an ethnic group, from the point of view of cognitive psychology. For example, heuristic representativeness can predispose people to exclude or, conversely, to consider only particular career fields based on the stereotypes of those working in them. These barriers can lead to valid options being eliminated and the career counsellor must be aware of such barriers in order to help the migrant overcome them by encouraging them, as indicated above, to consider a wider range of options at the beginning of the process.

- **Socio-cultural identity** – Humlum, Kleinjans and Nielsen (2012) have stressed the importance of identity in career decision-making, stating that "identity problems are as important to career choices as skill variables" (p. 39). However, the theories proposed to explain career choice processes tend to ignore the role played by this factor. The need for greater consideration of the place of identity and, in particular, social identity derives in part from the fact that, as Bhagat and London (1999) argue, the psychological, sociological and cognitive processes of subjects belonging to different cultures may not be the same as those of the Western population, used as the sample source for studies and research on decision-making processes.

Dheer and Lenartowicz (2018) have therefore investigated the role played by socio-cultural identity in the decision-making processes of migrants. They first analysed the importance that this construct has in the social and psychological existence of this specific target, considering that, since it is formed from the interaction of individual and contextual factors (Hogg and Turner, 1987), it undergoes continual changes and remodelling. Subsequently, they highlighted that the decision to pursue a particular career is not only guided by economic prospects, but also by the possibility of the migrants mobilising the resources that are useful for the purpose of the choice and by the extent to which the choice offers them socio-cultural solidarity and social recognition (Seibert, Kraimer and Liden, 2001). Socio-cultural identity therefore forms a critical antecedent to their career choices, to be taken into due consideration in counselling paths. However, despite the fact that a multicultural approach is being increasingly adopted in the field of career counselling, both to meet the needs of the current labour market and because the influence exerted by socio-cultural background on career decision-making has been noted (Lent and Brown, 2013), few researchers have explored how multicultural variations act at each stage of the decision-making process (Xu, 2021).

V. Reactions to career counselling

Diego Boerchi

When conducting support interventions for job placement for the unemployed, there are often certain difficulties that it is important to recognize, understand and overcome. Political refugees are no exception: certain difficulties, sometimes erroneously attributed to cultural issues, can be explained by the emotional reaction to the situation and requests for participation that the client struggles to understand and tackle. This section is devoted to dysfunctional reactions to counselling, and concludes with some indications on the type of counselling to adopt in order to overcome these and make the counselling intervention as effective and linear as possible.

5.1 *Dysfunctional reactions to counselling*

All those who have entered the world of counselling the unemployed have faced an initial difficulty in understanding and managing the situations concerned. The reasons are often to be found in the two phenomena that are described below.

5.1.1 Job-loss grieving process

The loss of a job is one of the most intense shocks a person can experience. The procrastination or the frantic and disorganized research of a job, which often follow, seem to be primarily a sign of the grieving process related to the loss of the job itself. Migrants are highly likely to have to go through these phases when they realize that their professionalism is not marketable, at least as far as they expected, in the host nation. Migrants are also asked to handle grieving, not only for the loss of a job but also for their professional identity, which must, at least in part, be rebuilt.

The concept of "grieving process" seems to be particularly useful in understanding, modelling and acting in such situations. It seems, in fact, that it is necessary to go through some phases of loss processing to be able to pass through the different degrees leading to the next job.

Kübler-Ross (1969) proposed a model that describes the five "stages of dying" that people seem to have to deal with when they face very painful situations, especially in preparation for their own death. Finley and Lee (1981), starting from this one, proposed a seven-stage model regarding the reaction of people to the forced conclusion of a working experience. Within the ESPoR project, these models have been verified by conducting interviews with some operators involved in help-

ing political refugees to retrain and enter the labour market. The research clearly shows that the two phases added by Finley and Lee are not confirmed, while the remaining 5 of the original Kübler-Ross model are well present:

1. **Denial or disbelief** – it is the inability to think that what has happened is real, holding on – for example – to the hope that it is a mistake. Denial serves as a "swab" against shocking and unexpected news, allowing the person to mobilize other less radical defences;

2. **Anger** – it is directed both outside and towards themselves. The person is angry because he/she feels rejected, abused, and treated unfairly. Such anger is fuelled by feelings of frustration and guilt for not having acted to resolve the situation before it went out of hand;

3. **Bargaining** – it is the attempt to overthrow the conclusion process. Bargaining is motivated by feelings of disbelief, shame about their feelings of relief, and direct fear of the inability to avoid the letter of dismissal. This is usually a short-lived phase, both because the company has already explored the possibility of re-assigning the person to different roles to avoid dismissal, and because the company has already expressed the desire to support the person through an Outplacement intervention;

4. **Depression** – once understood that attempts to renegotiate is useless, the person feels depressed and tends to move away from the others. This phase is characterized by the unfamiliar experience of not feeling able to make decisions. Sleep is often disrupted and irregular. Physical fatigue during the day, caused by lack of sleep, is aggravated by mental anxiety;

5. **Acceptance** – over time, people who have been dismissed reach a stage of peace. They are neither depressed nor angry about their "fate". "They processed their grief, according to Kübler-Ross (1969), for the imminent loss of so many people and significant places in their environment, and will look back at the conclusion with a certain degree of quiet expectation, hoping something good could come out." (Finley, Lee, 1981).

Until the acceptance phase is reached, people are not able to engage adequately in seeking employment. The task of the consultants is, first of all, to identify the phase in which the person is and, subsequently, to help them develop a different attitude towards their condition so that it becomes as acceptable as possible.

5.1.2 Opposition and resistance to counselling

In addition to the personal experience of their working conditions, a migrant may develop negative attitudes towards the consultant and career counselling. More specifically, they can develop opposition to contents ("talking about these things is unuseful") and resistance to the process ("I thought you would have helped me differently"). Both types of reaction only appear to the extent that the users perceive, rightly or wrongly, the attempt of the consultant to influence their attitudes – a fairly common fact as the consultant is required to act on these attitudes because they are often dysfunctional in seeking employment. A migrant is most likely to be able to develop the fears and confusions that will be described below. That is why

the consultant must be able to earn respect and collaboration through the "expert and referent" powers that will be described at the end of the paragraph.

The aforementioned attitudes can be related to the anxiety generated by the novelty of the proposal regarding counselling, career choice, and remodelling of their work career. Meara and Patton (1994) identify three possible "fears" that may arise in career counselling beneficiaries from situations like these:

1. **Fear of the career consultant**. Not necessarily beneficiaries must know the consultants in order to be able to show resistance to them. The beneficiaries have expectations about the consultants and their behaviours and may fear that they are unable to respond to their expectations along the way;

2. **Fear of the counselling process.** It is about the procedures and requirements that the consultant tries to use to create a counselling situation. Fear of the process can be expressed in terms of refusal to cooperate, for example, in providing information or in completing evaluation tools. This occurs because the beneficiary fears that such tools are not sufficiently useful or because he/she is not willing to invest the time needed for the task in question. Other customers may be afraid of not having the skills they need to fulfil the required tasks. Others think the process requires cooperation with an authority or passive acceptance of intimidation. Others, on the other hand, experience the conflict between the wish for some authority to indicate the most appropriate path and the need to manifest an opposing attitude to all kinds of authority;

3. **Fear of the discovery**. Some beneficiaries, in the end, are afraid of what will be known about them and oppose counselling procedures fearing that such practice will expose them to unwanted knowledge. They tend to refuse, above all, the use of objective tools, such as aptitude tests or questionnaires of interest or personality, because they fear the emergence of "profiles" not corresponding to their self-image, the expectations others have on them or the choices made in the past.

There are also misunderstandings that may emerge between the beneficiary and the consultant (Bordin, 1979):

1. **Confusion of goals**. A general sharing of counselling goals requires that the consultant clearly understands the reasons that led the beneficiary to request the intervention. Such reasons may not be genuine or do not match the particular type of professional assistance the consultant is prepared to provide. The beneficiaries would like to find an opportunity for training, a job or greater clarity over their vocation and would like their role in that process to be rather passive. The consultant, however, believes that counselling is a process of change that requires active and reflective participants, and that does not end in a limited number of meetings:

2. **Confusion of tasks**. Confusion of goals creates confusion about the tasks to be carried out. If beneficiaries were supposed to assume a passive role, they would have an unrealistic faith on test and questionnaires' results, and on the consultant's interpretations. It is important to clarify, from the beginning, role expectations and responsibilities regarding the work of both participants, by bringing concrete examples of the tasks that will be required;

3. **Confusion of bonds**. Those who undertake a therapy or personal coun-
selling are available – and perhaps expect – to create a relationship of emo-
tional attachment with the consultant, and probably to "work" on emotion-
al contents. In career counselling, however, the beneficiary is more likely to
be oriented towards cognitive or rational aspects of their own personality.

In relation to strategies to "overcome" such attitudes, Kerr et al. (1983) claim
that the consultant's behaviours can be grouped into the "expert power, based
on knowledge perceptions and consultant's skills" (ibidem, p. 323) and into the
"referent power, based on the perception of the consultant's attractiveness (sim-
ilarity and liking for the beneficiary)" (ibidem, p. 323). From their research, it
appears that the expert power is more functional in undermining the opposition
to the content of the process, as it works by demonstrating – with the facts – the
effectiveness of the consultant's knowledge and skills. Process resistance, on the
other hand, seems to be better fought by relying on the consultant's attractiveness:
claiming to be similar to the beneficiary and becoming sympathetic seem to be
strategies capable of breaking down the defence mechanisms that might otherwise
take over.

"Clearly, the exclusive use of experience or attractiveness is not wise, as both
opposition and resistance are present in most consultancy relationships" (ibidem,
330). In other words, it seems that the difficulty, which is also the best strategy,
consists in being able to prove to be experienced professionals and, at the same
time, people that are similar to the beneficiary and friendly towards him. What
makes this approach difficult is the risk of not being able to maintain a fair bal-
ance between the two types of behaviour, and the fact that the consultant may be
perceived as inconsistent. In general, we do not expect an experienced person to
maintain his/her authority by demonstrating friendliness towards the beneficiary,
and that a person similar to ourselves can be, at the same time, very experienced.

5.2 *What type of counselling should be offered?*

There are several ways to support people in a career counselling path, and these
vary according to their object, subject, tools used, and methods. Each of them is
the result of different approaches that differ in the reference theoretical models
and the results they intend to achieve.

Wojtasik (2000) proposes five models to provide career counselling services,
placed in "a continuum that starts from a technocratic approach at one extreme
and ends with a humanistic approach at the other extreme." (ibidem, p. 198).

The five models proposed are as follows:

Expert – "The behavioural conception of the human being (Skinner, 1971;
Bandura, 1969) forms the basis of directive counselling. In directive counsel-
ling, the consultant assumes a significant superiority over the user. The consult-
ant "knows what is good and desirable" and directs, sometimes even manipu-
lates, the user (the customer) by providing ready-made solutions. (...) Using a
diagnostic concept of the orientational choice, the consultant can diagnose the

client's character and attributes and cross them with an appropriate vocation. This kind of career consultant is defined as an expert. An expert has extensive knowledge and experience and knows what is good for a given user (...)" (ibidem, pp. 199-200).

Informant – "has to do with information regarding employment opportunities and possibilities of choice, and pushes (in a more attenuated form than the expert) towards choices that – in the consultant's opinion – are best for the user" (ibidem, p. 200).

Consultant – "The cognitive conception argues that human behaviour depends on the flow of information from the outside and from the inside, that is, from the so called cognitive structures (Bruner, 1990; Neisser, 1967). However, individuals exceed the information data when they organize the knowledge they own. According to this conception, an intentional and systematic training explains the changes in human behaviour. The relationship between the consultant and the user should be similar to that between a more experienced and a less experienced researcher. According to this conception, a consultant will be the user's partner. They are both researchers, but the consultant's competence and experience are greater. The actions taken by the consultant include the introduction of new aspects of activity and inspiration in defining new goals. Users on their part analyse a problem in a comprehensive way, collect new information, and experience new ideas. (...) A career consultant referring to dialogue counselling is focused on the user's motivation, as well as on the values the user wants to achieve in choosing a career path. This is because the flow of information from the inside, that is, the cognitive structures, as well as from the outside, for example from the environment, simultaneously directs the user's and the consultant's actions. Users discuss their choices, so the two parts share the responsibility of the decision concerning a professional choice. In other words, problems are solved together" (ibidem, p. 2002).

Reliable guardian – "is warm, open, and accepting, stimulates the user's activity, suggests new solutions, does not impose their own opinion but, if required, does not abstain from giving a hint. The users themselves make a decision about their career by discussing with the consultant, thus the responsibility is shared. Nevertheless, most of it belongs to the user" (ibidem, p. 2001).

Laissez-faire – "The psychodynamic (Fromm, 1968; May, 1967; Freud, 1920) and humanistic conceptions (Rogers, 1961; Maslow, 1968) of the human being are the basis of liberal counselling. According to the psychodynamic conception, the forces that directly drive human actions are rooted in a person who most often is not aware of it. A change in human behaviour can be achieved through psychotherapy, which aims to make individuals aware of their own internal conflicts. First of all, the humanistic conception of the human being emphasizes the users' strengths and their enormous human potential. It assumes, however, that human beings are not always able to use these personal

attributes and resolve conflicts or compensate for their deficits. (...) This way users are self-sufficient, independently define their problems and difficulties, and also help themselves. (...) The consultant does not have any responses on what choices a user should do, being aware that each individual is different and that what is good and valuable to the consultant is not necessarily the same for the user. (...) The consultant stimulates the acquisition of self-knowledge (even regarding vocational decision), creates opportunities for self-analysis, and sheds light on the context of the problem, but refuses to give advice. The consultant gives the user the ultimate decision regarding the choice of the future path. Thus, the responsibility for choosing belongs to the user" (ibidem, pp. 200-201).

But what can be the most functional model in a career counselling path addressed to a migrant and specifically for an ESPoR path? The answer to this question is mainly related to the phase of the process.

Initially, a "laissez-faire" approach is preferred with the aim of encouraging a reflection on personal conditions, the acceptance of the need for change, the overcoming of oppositions and resistance, and the acceleration of the grieving process. At a later time, it is preferable to have a "consulting" approach, when the goal is to make a career choice and test the feasibility of a development project. In this way, it is possible to activate personal skills of information collection and management and the consultant's support, which is oriented to a critical evaluation of the elements involved and to the identification of alternative strategies and paths.

Finally, an "expert" approach may be useful when the goal is to teach some concrete behaviours (eg. how to write a good curriculum vitae) and to support people with difficulties – difficulties usually associated with poor self-analysis skills and a limited knowledge of the labour market – in making their decision and developing their own professional goal.

Within the ESPoR path, a "laissez-faire" approach is preferable at the beginning of the process, to be later replaced by a "consulting" approach during the collection and analytical description of the skills, as well as the identification of a feasible professional path. An "expert" approach, on the other hand, is to be preferred in training interventions on the labour market and on the training system of the host country, and then for active job search techniques.

VI. Intercultural counselling

SILVIO PREMOLI

6.1 *Counselling*

Counselling has long been established and has expanded its areas of intervention, "as a response to a widespread state of uneasiness and personal and social insecurity" (Rezzara, 2014, p. 82).

According to Regoliosi and Scaratti (2002), the traditional model of technocratic counselling – which used to involve a highly specialized expert able to dispense operating guidelines and solutions – is gradually replaced by a model based on guidance, facilitation, dialogue, support, involvement and participation of the recipients of the counselling activities, as well as on the valorisation of their knowledge and views, with a generative and not purely responsive value.

Educational counselling comes from two traditional areas of intervention: family counselling and school guidance. According to Domenico Simeone (2002, p. 9),

> everyone in their history and development can experience painful and difficult situations, not necessarily related to pathological phenomena but rather caused by critical events, due to the transition of life cycle from one phase to the next, or to unforeseen events, which stress the subject's adaptability. These are situations that, having little to do with psychopathological conditions, require interventions aimed at supporting the transition phases in the various stages of individual and family evolution. Often, it is not possible to answer such help requests with traditional operating modes. These modes require new explanatory models and renewed intervention methods that, starting from the subject's potentialities, can activate positive processes of change.

Goals of counselling are to improve the subjects' decision-making abilities, supporting them in making complex and meaningful choices, and directing their life towards satisfactory directions. In particular, it is crucial:
a. to bring out a new way of seeing things, a new image of themselves, an unprecedented awareness of internal and external conditioning;
b. to promote the acquisition of personal autonomy.

6.2 *Intercultural counselling*

Moving into a socio-cultural context that is completely different from the one in which a person is born and raised (as well as geographically far from the family

of origin, support networks and concrete existential references) causes disorientation in people. The migrant family joining a new context has to face very difficult challenges, such as developing a new identity while avoiding deep lacerations, transmitting the family's culture, maintaining ties with the country of origin and – at the same time – building the conditions that enable the integration into the new country (Vittori, 2003). This is especially true for those who flee from living conditions that endanger their own safety (wars, violent discrimination, ...).

Every professional who is currently working on asylum seekers' reception is necessarily and inescapably called to deal with diversity and cultural pluralism in the performance of their task; all this translates into the need to use an approach that tries to understand the other person's "vision of the world" (Bertolini, 1976; Bertolini and Caronia, 1993), trying to capture their "interiorized cultural models" (Agazzi, 1985: 24-27).

As part of counselling in an intercultural and relational context, the professional is confronted with the issue of the recognition of the Other as a different and distant person; the professional brings different cultural references, where the nature of the professional helping relationship is often unknown or at least unusual.

According to Cecilia Edelstein (p. 2004), intercultural counselling addresses people (individuals, groups, families, communities) belonging to minority groups, with the aim of favouring their introduction, adaptation and integration, improving their mental health and supporting them in dealing with the transition crises that are typical of migration processes.

In the specific case of intercultural counselling, therefore, it is necessary to add to the specific aspects of counselling, just mentioned in the first paragraph:

a. the need to become aware of the obstacles in understanding the Other;
b. the adoption of a personalistic intercultural approach;
c. the development of intercultural skills;
d. the guarantee of cultural safety conditions to the recipients of the interventions.

When this intercultural counselling is addressed to recipients who live a very special temporary situation such as political asylum seekers, it is necessary to take into account some particularly significant variables affecting the counselling relationship; it refers specifically to:

• the transitional condition experienced by asylum seekers, which generates worries, anxieties, sense of uncertainty and frustration;
• the consequences of traumas often suffered by asylum seekers during the journey to Italy (dramatic situations lived on means of transport; detention and torture in non-European transit countries; experiences of serious injury to their personal safety in the countries of origin, which generally coincide with the reasons of the request for asylum);
• conditions of strong mental disorder, related to the traumas mentioned in the preceding paragraph or the difficulties that emerged in comparison with a different cultural world. These conditions can be addressed through ethno-psychiatric or ethno-clinic skills;
• concern for relatives left in the country of origin.

Intercultural counselling for asylum seekers involves a growing number of professionals, who seek to assist them, despite the transience and uncertainty characterizing their status, in building a new life, and acquiring specific skills. In particular, it is necessary to highlight the importance of learning Italian, knowing the host society and its territorial services (public and private social services), acquiring opportunities for job placement and/or training, towards a possible social integration, and mastering the formal procedures for obtaining the "documents".

6.3 *Obstacles in understanding the other*

According to Margalit Cohen-Emérique (2007: 41), in the relationship "between people of different cultural roots there are always two cultural bearers, oneself and the other, and not only the other. Opening to cultural diversity always implies knowledge of one's culture and, above all, the discovery of the ways in which it has been internalized. (...) Understanding the other as a different being always originates from the discovery of their own social, cultural and professional identity". In the interactions between people and groups belonging to different cultures, there are frequent obstacles, filters and screens that can generate misunderstanding and misinterpretation: prejudices and stereotypes, ethnocentrism, models and professional techniques (Cohen-Emérique, 1989; 2007; id. 2011).

Both prejudices and stereotypes represent ordinary and universal human behaviour strategies in dealing with what is unknown and serve as references to categorize unusual stimuli. It is referring to a priori assessments that represent generalized and simplistic ways, for example, pictures of a social group, a minority ethnic group, members of a national community. As prejudices and stereotypes constitute methods of construction of the knowledge of reality, which are usually unintentionally activated, they can be dangerous since they are self-affirmed by even limited objective confirmations causing a strong selection of information, and therefore becoming fertile ground for discriminatory behaviours, xenophobia and racism.

The social worker should be aware that, in an asymmetrical relationship, the sense of vulnerability in parents is amplified and defensive strategies can more easily take place. The perception of vulnerability is amplified in the other (for example in the immigrant parent) just from being the subject of stereotypes and prejudices, attributing other characteristics of the presumed class of belonging and preventing the knowledge of the subjectivity and communication and the authentic encounter.

Bertolini and Caronia (1993) suggest that the operator has to "purify" his point of view, since no one is immune from the tool that automatically generates stereotypes and prejudices. It is possible to control this tool, but still it cannot be permanently cancelled. It is therefore necessary to create a "non-compromised glance", which is not a natural endowment of the operator, but the result of a never-concluded job of suspending judgment on interpretations and opinions that circulate, which is exactly a fundamental of professional and intercultural competence.

The natural tendency, typical of every human group, to interpret cultural differences through their own cultural models and their reference values, is defined as "ethnocentrism"; it is a universalist interpretation of pluralism that considers the different cultures as manifestations of a common principle, but fails when identifying univocally their references as the measure to all other cultures (Santerini, 2003). The forms of ethnocentrism introduce, through a valuation process, value hierarchies of those cultures that are been observed.

In the most classical forms of cognitive ethnocentrism, therefore, the observer, when trying to understand a situation or behaviour, uses their own frames of reference, coming to believe their culture is better than others. Starting from a position of inability to represent what appears not similar, one ends up using themselves or their group identities as terms of a comparison that can only result in judgment of value.

As far as the individual operator may appear from an ethnocentric position, it is true that each person and especially every professional in socio-educational field working with people of other cultures has to deal daily with complex questions that put them on the universalism/relativism axis in the concreteness of the choices they assume.

As an example, we mention below some relevant questions that arise in professional practices and need a careful consideration and a balanced and effective translation in the management of intercultural relations:

- the conception and the role of women, between equality and parity, on the one hand, and inferiority and submission, on the other;
- the relationship with the sacred, which often is in conflict between a vision based on secularism and a conception of life based on the central presence of religious and magical in everyday life;
- the concept of time, focused on the key words of effectiveness, progress and project, on the one hand, and linked to tradition and memory on the other hand;
- children's educational models that are in clear opposition between a liberal and modern conception on the one hand, and a traditional and rigorist one that admits corporal punishment;
- children's rights, recognized in Western cultures but still bump into the child's conceptions as parental property.

Cohen-Emérique (2007, 2011) indicates three other ways of distorting the other and self-diversity: exoticism, minimization of differences and forced recognition.

Exoticism is the opposite of ethnocentrism, since the other is uncritically valued, idealized, mythologized, based on a dissatisfaction or frustration associated with their own culture and heritage (Lipiansky, 1989). Actually, the idealization of their exoticism process is based on a self-subjective construction that does not take into account real knowledge of the other, which remains, therefore, inaccessible, not because they deny themselves to the observer, but because the latter is not really interested in getting in touch.

Minimizing (or negating) the differences is a distorted form of access to the reality of the other, particularly widespread among social workers and students of social-educational disciplines. This attitude is based on an equal and universalist

ideology which rejects any racism and is characterized by the politically correct logic; while based on a positive idea of diversity, it hides a rejection of the difference (Cohen-Emérique, 2007).

Tania Ogay (2000) explored the dynamics undergoing this desire of building a "correct intercultural" discourse and has produced a diagram (see Figure 2) which represents the two main strategies and their effects on relationships.

Figure 2
Construction and contradiction of the correct intercultural discourse (Ogay, 2000)
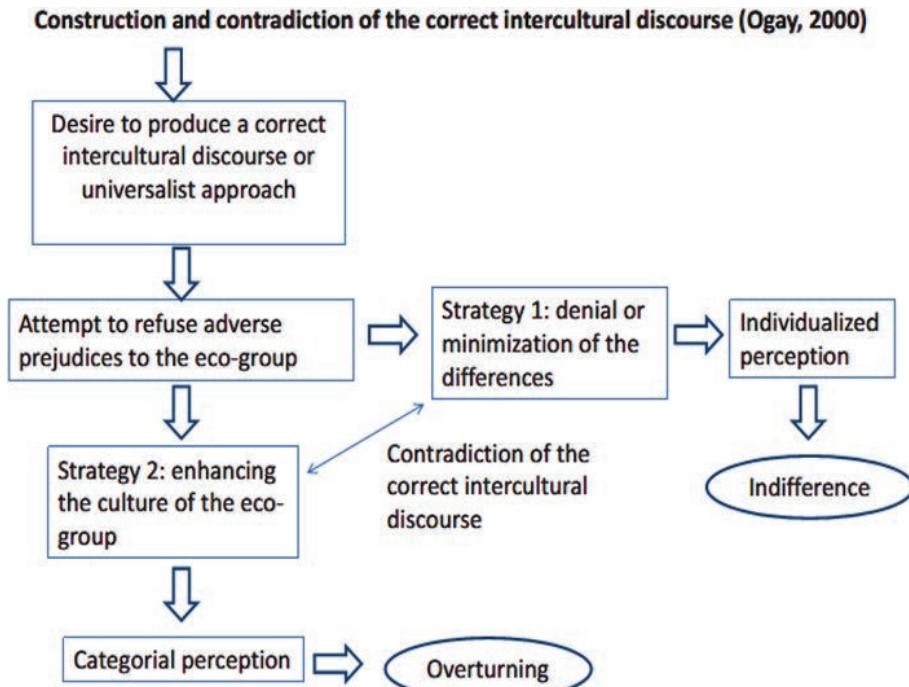
The two strategies taken into consideration, while born from a desire of respect and openness towards the other and rejection of other's bias against them and their group, become obstacles to their recognition.

On the one hand, in fact, denying or minimizing the differences carries the risk of becoming indifferent, not able to see the differences that actually exist and, in the end, not able to recognize the other in their identity.

On the other hand, the appreciation of the culture of the other group arises from an attitude that seeks to counteract the rejection of diversity, which is called "overturning" (Bennett, 1993), since it pivots on the construction of a positive image of the other culture, based on the devaluation of one's own. In both cases, the outcome achieved is the impossibility of finding a meeting point and a real comparison.

Finally, forced recognition corresponds to the attempt of assigning the other cultural features, which they do not believe to possess or reject. This way of de-

forming the other is based on the inability to recognize the subjective nature of cultural affiliation and the multiplicity of everyone's sense of belonging, though letting forms of representation of rigid and stereotyped cultures prevail.

Even the social professions training programs may constitute themselves as obstacles to understanding the other, according to the origin of the human and social sciences developed in the Western societies based on an individualistic concept of the person (Dumont, 1978; Camilleri, 1988). In this regard, Cohen-Emérique (2011) shows that the triumphant individualism of post-industrial democratic society is at odds with the concept of holistic, community and collectivism of the person who instead combines the structures of thought of different cultures, enhances their membership rather than autonomy, loyalty to the group (family, ethnicity, tribe, community) and the interdependence of its members. It is clear that the mindset of professionals in Western aid relationships, patterns, techniques, professional tools, are inadequate when they are put to the test by intercultural relations that require to understand events that are explained by the parties concerned referring to subjectivity and human relationships, which are so distant and different from the philosophical and anthropological assumptions of Western cultures.

Two extremely concrete examples are the following: the model of the individualised project and the technique of the non-directive interview.

The individualized project idea refers to:

• the notion of time as it has been developed in Western systems, putting great confidence in the capacity of rationalization and prediction of humanity (De Rozario, 1997; Gasparini, 1994; id., 1998; id., 2004). The emphasis is on reducing complexity, on control and governance of reality. Through the identification and pursuit of specific goals, achievable in the course of existence, and the preparation of the available means to that end. The human vocation to domain attempts to colonize the future and to dispel uncertainty. Will and careful preparation take the place of fate and providence;

• the Western conception of identifying their references in the individual, in their capacity for self-assertion and autonomy at the expense of the collective and community bonds.

After having highlighted this basis, the adequacy of the individual project is at least questioned whether the subject for which it is designed belongs to a traditional community where the concept of time and the individual are antithetical to those of the West.

The non-directive interview technique is inspired by the democratic structure of Western societies and aims to encourage the free expression and the personal resources of the individual user. Again, the instruments of socio-educational labour as it has been structuring in recent decades seems inadequate if addressed to those who come from cultures where the person representing authority takes the floor by giving precise indications, and where the person who needs help is supported and accompanied by significant figures of the family or community acting as mediators with the outside world. These figures are often neither heard nor considered by social workers, who tend to see them as a threat and a limit

to the user. Instead, they may represent a pool of resources which are not strictly individual, but social and community, something often lacking in native users.

6.4 *The personalistic intercultural approach*

The issue of the relationship between individuality and culture is very effectively clarified by the following consideration of Cuche (2003, p. 71), inspired by the studies of Bastide:

It is the individual who comes in contact with each other and not cultures. It is not really necessary to reify culture as it is nothing more than an abstraction. These individuals belong to social groups, sex, age, status, etc. In no way will they ever exist independently, neither in space nor among themselves. Therefore, it is not possible to understand their implication in the process of acculturation solely by referring to their individual psychology. It is also important to take into consideration social constraints that fall on them. And if an analysis in terms of personality must be made, it is impossible to forget the social and historical context that influences the individual personality.

Who plays an educational role today is necessarily and inescapably called to deal with the diversity and the cultural pluralism in the execution of their mandate.

The hermeneutical task of intercultural education consists in the diversity when overtaking, in relations between people of different cultures, the dilemma between universalism and relativism towards a new synthesis (Santerini, 1994, 184-185).

The interculture can be conceived as a new glimpse that "concerns" diversity, escaping the double temptation of opposite sign to delete it and to change it or reify it, while instead preferring to respect and defend it. Basically, it's about recovering the discourse of identity and diversity in view of the primacy of their relationship, which certainly implies a certain synthesis: unity of identity and of the difference (Gomarasca et al., 2004, 70).

The aim of intercultural education is "to recognize the cultural dimension, in the anthropological sense of the term, of each education by bringing the relationship with the other in learning" (Abdallah Pretceille, 1990, 167). In this respect, intercultural education chooses a personalist perspective that aims at enhancing people in their singularity and totality, thus their own specific identity, the references to their culture of origin, all the changes and transformations occurring in the course of a personal history (Henry-Lorcerie, Soler, 1989). This is said in the conviction, already expressed, that the meetings will involve people, not cultures. The meeting in cultural diversity has to anticipate a situation of dialogue and openness, which can be introduced into a dimension of interculturality, understood as "dynamic confrontation" established among specific people from different cultures. The relationship methods must provide a listening attitude of the person in the concreteness of their world, which allows to perform a contextualized reading and so achieve a wide understanding (Santerini, 1994, 183). The task of intercultural education, based on the relationship with the diversity and the ability to confront with the other, lives the paradox of tending, on the one

hand, to the preservation of the system of cultural meanings of the person and, on the other, to its change (Clanet, 1988, 473).

The task for an intercultural education, which fosters dialogue between people of different cultures and social cohesion, can be summarized as follows: prevent a rigid fixation of opposing identities; return density and complexity to the interpretation of events; cooperate on building co-existence on a global scale and within society (Santerini, 2003, p.7).

Essentially, the assumption of an intercultural approach with a personalist perspective is to recognize that the person with different cultural references with whom one can relate is endowed with a complex and dynamic cultural identity, constituted by multiple memberships and is not reduced to the general features of an ethnic-national culture. Individual personal identities do not only affect ethnic-symbolic influences but also personal factors, social factors, political-economic factors, environmental factors (e.g. on the axis of rural life that changes into urban life). Certainly, the social status of a human being has a deep influence and the social status of a migrant or an asylum seeker is never associated with a favourable condition.

Thus, it is clear the need to reconcile both social and ethnic reading in the analysis of phenomena and understanding of people.

In this regard, the comprehension grid proposed by Santerini (2003, pp. 179-180) seems useful to the understanding of intercultural dynamics. The information contained in it may be adapted and specified to refer to particular recipients such as asylum seekers.

To conclude, it is necessary to point out some basic principles of an intercultural approach in working with immigrant adults and families, particularly those who are dealing with deeply concerning situations (Roy, 2000; Santerini, 2003; Legault, 2000; Legault and Rachedi, 2008; Cohen-Emérique, 2011). These principles are based on the evidence that it is not correct to "close the other in their own original culture, however it is important to take into consideration other powerful dimensions to give meaning and value to their behaviours and demands" (Cohen-Emérique, 2007:41). The multidimensionality of the existence of human beings, and therefore of immigrants, is also being addressed: it is not possible to explain everything solely on the basis of cultural factors and motivations, but also economic, social, political, religious, relational, etc. factors must be taken into account (Santerini, 2003).

Those identified basic principles therefore assume that ethnic belonging is constantly connected and influenced by social, economic, legal conditions, etc.; construct a representation of migrants that must not be confined to their original identity, but that must be based on wider elements such as migratory trajectory, acculturation conditions, life plan; consider spiritual and religious factors to fully understand the situation of the migrant, and the multiple memberships and characteristics (age, gender, social status) that constitute the fundamental coordinates of the person's realization.

COMPREHENSION GRID OF INTERCULTURAL DYNAMICS
(From Santerini M., *Intercultura*, La Scuola, Brescia, 2003, pp. 179-180)

The person
Age, sex, qualification, profession, social condition

The starting point
What situation do you start from? How did you feel about your departure? What was your migration project? How did you imagine the country of arrival before the departure? How do you see it now? Was the parting traumatizing? Was there any short stay in other countries?

The present point
When did you arrive? With whom did you arrive? Was there someone here waiting for you? Has the arrival been organized? How did you experience your arrival? What were your first impressions? What was your financial status? What is your housing situation?

The migration project
Which projects do you nurture? Do you dream of going back home? Would you like to migrate to another country? Do you wish to settle down in Italy or are you still undecided? What are the reasons and thoughts that led you to emigrate?

The immigrant condition
How do you feel in Italy? What is your status (irregular, regular, waiting for a residence per mission, asylum seeker, refugee)? Do you understand the Italian language?

The lifestyle in the home country
Type of family – type of house – type of work

Changes in social condition
Friendships – origin related social network

Cultural universe
Important values, religious beliefs, groups and family roles, spiritual values, family morality, relationship with nature, work relation, etc.

Differences
Speaking about comparing different cultures, what are the main differences you notice in: Work – School – Religion – Eating habits – Family customs

Social network
Family presence – Presence of friends or backup people – Role inside the community – Involvement in the community life

Definition of the problem
Is there any problem involving social and economic integration? Integration problems? Pro blems in communicating or intercultural adjustment issues? Do you have some kind of diffi culties? Which are the cultural shocks you experienced? Role problems? Do you experience problems and/or changes in your lifestyle? Do they have some impact on your daily life?

6.5 *Intercultural skills*

Although Cohen-Emérique (2011, pp. 165-6) considers the choice to talk about an intercultural approach or intercultural skills – and clearly prefers the first option – it is believed that an intercultural approach can certainly be thought and acted even through the development and refinement of intercultural skills. Probably the French pedagogue particularly emphasises on marking the difference between a dynamic intercultural approach that provides hermeneutic reading tools for cultures (Santerini, 2003), and behavioural models that focus on specific knowledge of a culture, typical of the US intercultural management studies. The intercultural approach of reference is of an inclusive type, based on dynamic and subjective aspects of culture and in the background of the "citizenship" as paradigm of full belonging to a social context, with the aim of building social cohesion rather than exalting differences (id). This perspective, other than purely differentialist, requires operators to develop not a mere "knowledge" of cultural difference, but a real ability. The concept of skills refers to the ability to read, analyse and interpret particular and complex intercultural situations and to face and solve conflicts. The meaning of intercultural skills we refer to is well described in Milton J. Bennett's words (2002, p. 28):

Intercultural skills are therefore the ability to interpret the acts of intentional communication (words, signs, gestures) and unintentional (body language) and the customs of a person whose origins are not their own. The emphasis is on empathy and communication. The aim is to realize that people start from their own culture to make assumptions about behaviours and beliefs of people of other cultures.

Intercultural skills can also be defined as the capacity that allows, at the same time, to analyse and understand the situations of contact between people and groups with different cultures and to be able to handle these situations. It consists in the ability to take a sufficient distance in relation to the intercultural exchange situation, in order to catch and read the processes on the line and control them (Flye Sainte Marie, 1997). In this respect, the research Intercultural Skills: the theoretical models and training methods of PRIN MIUR (National Research Project – Ministry of University and Scientific Research) of the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan, directed by Milena Santerini, aims to describe and analyse the intercultural skills that teachers and social workers implement on a daily basis, and to define a training model that develops these skills (Reggio, Santerini, 2014).

The concept of skills includes a dynamic set of knowledge and competence and shows a mastery acquired in certain professional fields. In this regard, it points out a "quality of doing", an internalized knowledge connected to the capacity of analysing and interpreting peculiar situations (ibidem).

Milena Santerini (2010) identifies three levels of skills focused on:
- knowing and being able to think: this refers to theoretical knowledge that allows to grasp the socio-cognitive processes acting on mutual representations in intercultural relations; to understand the notions of culture and identity; to understand the strategies of cultural re-elaboration and identity repositioning; to identify the foundational dimensions of different cultural systems and to compare different corporate models; to understand immi-

gration on a global and local scale and the social and psychological dynamics experienced by people in movement (Flye Sainte Marie, 1997);

- knowing how to be: this is the level of internalized choices and appropriate attitudes in order to live intercultural contexts (including the idea that "the encounter with the other can change oneself"); in fact, "only a solid knowledge of one's own culture and a secure, conscious identity based on internalized values and horizons of meaning can pave the way for a positive and effective encounter with people of other cultures" (Granata, 2011, p. 138);
- focusing on the know-how: the skills do not exist in the abstract, but only in action, in the practice of behaviours when implemented in the exercise of professionalism.

The complex intercultural skills – identified in the research work – consist in three areas:

- recognize and value the differences, as ability to be open to diversity in personalistic perspective, recognizing the plural identities and catching the dynamic and intercultural negotiations, apply a historical and conceptualised look on the events and relationships.
- reduce prejudice, as ability to increase the variability in the perception of the other, to avoid simplifications and to deculturalize conflicts, recognizing the importance of other dimensions as well as that of one's own.
- build shared horizons, as ability to promote dialogue, manage conflicts and regulatory and values disagreements.

6.6 *The cultural safety*

Eventually, the assumption on an intercultural perspective in the reception facilities can be further qualified also through the suggestions that derive from the concept of cultural safety (Smye and Browne, 2002, Papps and Ramsden, 1996, Schick and St. Denis, 2005). In fact, while the concepts of intercultural skills or cultural sensitivity (Pecora et al., 2009; Flye Sainte Marie, 2007; Fontes, 1996) appraise the social and socio-educational intervention, the concept of cultural safety is an outcome, a result that records both respect and attention to values, lifestyles, family patterns and different perspectives of users. Some of the cultural unsafety indicators are: the little use of available services; the hesitation in interaction with professionals; the explosions of anger; low self-esteem; the complaints about the lack of "cultural appropriateness" of tools and interventions from dominant culture to minority cultures.

Focusing on the assessment of cultural safety and on the indicators underlining its absence or inadequacy can give to socio-educational service important elements of consideration and directions for its own transform.

VII. The autobiographical narration in career counselling

Diego Boerchi and Monica Nava

Every narrative event is necessarily the result of a personal processing dictated by both available and missing pieces of information, by the needs of those who tell the story and those who listen, by the goals it wants to achieve and much more. As a matter of fact, no narration is a simple and impersonal report of what really happened: each of them contains the same information, but the choice of what and how makes the same narrative event clearly different from one to another, if told by many people.

No event, above all the most complex ones, can be totally "embraced" and taken in full. The comprehension process is not indeed the result of a simple action of data transcription, but a complex action of interpretation of the information that we are given or were able to extrapolate. Every interpretation decodes what has happened in the light of their own models, believing them to be more useful than others, in that specific occasion. The risk is that an event cannot be understood as long as ineffective models are being used, and this is what happens every time there is no adequate model or ability to create one ad hoc. The comparison between different stories, thus between different interpretations of the same event, allows us to read the same information in view of different models, giving us the opportunity to choose which, among them, seems to be the more useful one.

What has been said so far makes sense to the extent that the object of investigation is an event that needs to be known and understood. However, things change consistently when the narration is autobiographical, becoming richer in its potentialities and applications. In this case, in fact, the interest for the events is equal, if not even lower, as compared to the interest towards the narrator: narrated, narration (understood as the way in which the event is narrated) and narrator coincides. It's the narrator himself who speaks about himself in a way that is proper and in that specific moment of life.

When we think of autobiographical narration, the language that is used often creates confusion between who is the narrator and who is telling the story. The distinction, not only linguistic, as we shall see, gives indications on how to assist people to "create meaning" from what has faded in their memories. A story has multiple senses, and reworking it means making the subject and object of the story become important. To do this we human beings need to create a protective bubble, a transitory place, a place in which we can take a pause for reflection and rethink what we have done.

Assisting a person to tell his own biography requires close attention to how even small events have contributed to making up the autobiographical story and make it easier to glimpse the design of his personal and working life. Karen Blixen (2015) tells a story: "A man lived near a pond. One night he was woken up by a great noise. He went out and after looking in several places in the end he noticed that there was a leak in the embankment from which water and fish were coming out. He managed to plug the leak and when he had finished he went back to bed. The next morning, looking out the window, he saw to his surprise that his footsteps had drawn the figure of a stork on the ground." Karen Blixen wondered at this point: "When the design of my life is complete, will I see or will others see a stork?" (page 200).

Adriana Cavarero (2001), quoting Blixen, proposes that in order to see the design of life, some lines must already be drawn. The drawing is the result of, not the blueprint for, a project. Hannah Arendt (1990) comments: "The drawing is the story of our life and reveals the meaning of what would otherwise remain an intolerable sequence of events" (page 169). If, therefore, the drawing is the result of a path, giving meaning to the path, before reaching the goal, we must pause to connect all the various elements that characterise our journey in the world, creating bonds between the past and present, and the basis for the future. In this framework, autobiographical narration in a guided context should facilitate the difference between the narrator, who is simultaneously the subject who performs the action of narrating and the object because the narration is about himself.

Keeping storytelling separate from narration triggers various interesting different points of view. As an example to illustrate this distinction, we refer to the activity of two gods: Mercury and Vulcan. If we consider storytelling, this important activity can be compared to the activity of the God Vulcan-Hephaestus who, from inside his forge, tirelessly manufactures objects finished in every detail, jewels and ornaments for goddesses and gods, weapons and shields. Every one of his actions is a harbinger of the story of the person who will wear the objects. His incessant work invites you to immerse yourself in individual stories, in which each element takes on value. For narration, Mercury/Hermes, god of communication with wings on his feet, skilled in establishing relationships between gods, invites us to reflect on how to tune in with others. This suggests that, in order to connect with each other, it is important to see our interlocutor, to see him as a whole and grasp those pieces that, from within the story, cannot be grasped by one who prefers to enter dead-ends and forge weapons for the heroes.

Recounting and narrating combine to make an experience richer, and the distinction can facilitate discoveries, encounters, and reflections with unique characteristics. But since narration is an external point of view, it should be the counsellor's task to facilitate the process of immersion by returning, in the form of feedback or considerations, elements that the subject cannot see because he is immersed in the narration.

This aspect can be defined as the Paradox of Ulysses, a paradox because in order to present himself, the "who I am", the person needs to collate his story and the external narrative. In detail, Cavarero (2001) talks about a hero, Ulysses, who does not seem to know "who I am" until he comes across the narration of his story

reported in one of the scenes of the Odyssey. In front of Homer, who entertains the guests at the court of the Phaeacians with his song about Ulysses and his exploits during the war, he bursts into tears, hiding his face when he understands the meaning of the story. The meaning of his identity, "who I am", as indicated by Arendt (1990), always postulates that "the other" is necessary.

Story-telling, if it is only autobiographical, is at risk of narcissism. The narrator has to do with others, with someone who is in perspective with his interlocutor. In a counselling intervention, we can speak of the Author's paradox: the person telling the story must be supported by the counsellor in order to connect the "who I am", from an occupational point of view, to the narration of his working life, thus promoting the meeting with his uniqueness.

7.1 *The autobiographical narration*

Each autobiographical narration certainly contains a "narrated part", a series of events that are reported in order to be known by others. That is the reason why the story of a person's life is a very rich instrument that allows to create an overview of the subject and to understand their present being in the light of what has happened in the past. But every story, as mentioned earlier, contains its own "modus narrandi", and its analysis provides an additional level of knowledge that no longer applies to events, but to the narrator, and therefore their interpretative models of reality and their needs emerging from the way they choose and emphasize events. Moreover – and that is the most astonishing part – in an autobiographical narration, the "narrator" is both subject and object of the narration: "subject" because they perform the action to tell, "object" because they talk about themselves. This aspect radically overturns the result of an autobiographical narration: the interpretation process has, in fact, consequences not only on the final result, but also on the narrator. At the end of the narration, we will not only have a new interpretation of the narrator's biography, but also a "new narrator", because the description has forced them to confront with their inner self, to challenge them, to adapt to a new self-image, and that is thanks to the way in which the narrator has been narrated.

The autobiographical narration is therefore an instrument of knowledge and of construction of the self: through it, the person better understands themselves and, at the same time, changes or builds their identity. This is exactly what makes this tool particularly suitable for guidance counselling interventions.

As the goal is to quantify some psychological dimensions (attitudes, interests, values, personality, etc.), the most appropriate instruments are definitely standardized instruments, such as tests, surveys and inventories. The goal is to simplify a complex reality by grouping, in a small number of categories, infinite reasoning, emotions and behaviours.

As the goal is to "understand the meaning" – the reason why something happens – and to participate in building a more satisfying professional identity for the person, the autobiographical narration is the right instrument to answer this need.

The limitation is that it can be proposed only to people with a sufficiently significant life history – for example, young adults – and who is capable of a proper self-analysis and can tell their story to other people. Surely, narrating to oneself is very useful but meeting a consultant asking questions and suggesting further interpretative models is usually equally important.

The autobiographical narration is a good choice in those situations where the goal is understanding the reason of choices and personal behaviour, while it is not suitable for situations where the goal is understanding objectively the real capabilities and true potential of the subject. On the path of career counselling these two needs coexist: every choice must be based on understanding the past in respect to the future, but also on the evaluation as objective as possible of their real skills and motivations. Sometimes, though, it is not necessary for the evaluation of their professionalism to be extremely precise, therefore a more structured and verified narration – thanks to the support of an expert consultant – can be sufficient to identify those skills that best characterize a person.

The autobiographical narration is definitely the core of the ESPoR model, but it is not univocal. Along the way, in fact, it modifies itself making it possible to reach different goals. At first, the main objective is to encourage a re-reading of the previous career path to create consistency, grieve the loss of a career interrupted by the escape from their country of origin, accept the idea to rethink their expectations and redesign their career in a new way and in a more effective scenario in comparison with the real possibility of a new life context. In the end, the goal is to describe to themselves and to the experts who can foster effective integration into the labour market, their skills, their motivations and expectations clearly and impressively. Therefore, before describing the model, it is important to better understand the potential and limits of this tool starting from the information provided by literature.

7.2 *The theoretical principles of reference*

The starting point to understand the history and the use of theoretical principles of self-narration is the birth of "cultural psychology". The events and the processes through which individuals give meaning to the world and their own lives are the object of this study.

One of the main exponents of this epistemological paradigm is Bruner (1990), who proposes the overcoming of the cognitive paradigm centred exclusively on the processing of information and not careful about the conception including intentional states such as beliefs, desires and intentions.

Bruner (1986), to better understand the characteristics of this new paradigm, also proposes the distinction between two different human ways of thinking: the paradigmatic and the narrative thought. In daily life, the two thoughts coexist and alternate in helping us understand who we are and what is happening around us. Neither of them is better than the other: depending on our need, both thoughts can help us understand reality. The narrations are not to be understood as "unintentional deviations from the main road of rationality, but as intentional proce-

dures aimed to reach a purpose and made possible in relation to the context and to a possible world in which the individual thinks and decides" (Smorti, 1994).

The Paradigmatic Thought is typically used in scientific reasoning. The goal is to simplify reality by reducing the endless human behaviour in a small number of categories called "dimensions of personality." This thought, therefore, proceeds through falsification and generalization, according to a vertical, hierarchical orientation, that gathers similar elements into more general categories of higher level. It's a "nomothetic" thought, meaning that it seeks to explain the events with universal laws. It is also a context-free thought: categories created and verified with falsification are more useful as they are more generalizable and therefore applicable to different contexts.

The most classical psychological tools resulted in their own right from this kind of thought are tests and questionnaires: a verbal attitude test, for example, aims at quantifying the ability to deal with an endless number of tasks though combined by some features that allow us to categorize them as "verbal skill tasks". Similarly, a personality questionnaire starts from the assumption that it is possible to define a universal taxonomy of traits.

The Narrative Thought, however, is more typical of everyday reasoning, which moves by linking events, subjects and objects horizontally. The goal is to look for the "meaning", the "reason why" of things and events. The verification of those assumptions does not mean falsification but consistency. What is important is that the links are possible, not real. It is a radically contextualized thought: the same behaviour has in fact different meanings in relation to the context in which it displays. Finally, it is an ideographic thought, whose goal is to understand the unique meanings of each person or event. The tool that more than any other uses this kind of thought is, of course, narration. Through the narration, we do not search for universal laws, but for a specific meaning regarding that particular event.

As Antonietti (2004) argues, the stories correspond to the logic of reality, rather than to the logic of science. Specifically speaking, these stories are characterized by three principles:

1. **Holistic Principle.** The overarching meaning is not given by the sum of individual elements, but by the way they place themselves. It is also possible that a new element does not merely add to the previous ones but helps create a different configuration;
2. **Principle of Unpredictability**. Although an event can be understood in a way that seems unequivocal, unexpected events can always happen;
3. **Principle of Emergency**. Even though the events are organized in temporal and causal sense, they do not depend on each other according to a consequential logic, but "stick out", emerge from the substrate of the concept and from the muddle of the backstories.

As pointed out earlier, the narrative thought is also a "constructive" thought, meaning that narrating is understanding only as far as it is, at the same time, the construction of a vision of both self and the world. The constructivist approach, which argues that "Everything that is said, is said by someone", emphasizes precisely the non-objectivity of each story and, at the same time, points out that every

learning, including that about oneself, is the result of a building action and not of a passive acceptance (Kelly, 1955).

The risks of over-emphasizing the constructive power of narration are highlighted by Antonietti (2004), who argues that "The risk is that the narration of the acts takes over the acts themselves, determining both the perception that those acts not fitting in a story may be unimportant and the sensation that the history is life-changing rather than life is the expression of models offered by the stories." "Perhaps, the possibility to "play" on the double scenario – created by the contrast between an external and an internal world and given by the subjectivity of the characters – makes the stories so exciting and fascinating." (Carrubba, 2002, p. 206).

The autobiographical narration, adopting what has been said so far, is characterized by the personal need from which it springs, which is to give meaning to their experiences and to their lives. The person who tells their story is searching for a sense of consistency and continuity of their self, and is building causal links among the events of their lives. This phenomenon called retrospective teleology (Brockmeier, 1997) is particularly interesting both to understand the specificity of the narrative thought and as useful mechanism of intervention on orientation, for example, that has the goal to define future projects perceived in continuity with past experiences and choices.

According to Bruner (1986) people interpret and give meaning to their past through two different principles: reflexivity, which affects the ability to modify the present in the light of the past and vice versa, and the ability to imagine alternatives, which is knowing how to conceive different ways of being and acting. The autobiographical narration is one of the ways to encourage the use of these two principles, and therefore the interpretation and the attribution of the meaning of the past along with the project for the future.

One final point to note is about the moment in which the autobiographical narration is perceived as a more compelling activity by the person. Even when watching the daily life, it is possible to notice that, when we want to dedicate more time telling something that happened to us, we feel the urgent need to process a highly emotional experience which, at least, does not go unnoticed. The urgency to tell something is determined by the urgency to process, i.e. to understand it in order to reduce the emotional impact if negative, or enjoy the positive experience. The need is so strong that we do not just tell others, we tell it to ourselves mentally. On the other hand, telling the story to others is partly telling it to ourselves.

Finally, we can get back to a quote from Carrubba (2002) who states that, according to Bruner and Weisser, (1991) "Self-narrations have got some important characteristics:

- they describe events of great value for the person, that are meaningful for their emotional charge and for the intentionality that distinguishes them;
- the narrator-protagonist of the facts affects considerably the course of the events and in turn the latter affect the person's projects;
- they allow to reconstruct the past, but also to make inferences about the future".

VIII. Group orientation

Diego Boerchi and Domenico Delcuratolo

The group can be a valuable tool to help people become aware of their own characteristics, to change their attitudes and opinions and, in some cases, to support the processes of choice. To better understand the role the group has within orientation paths, it is necessary to clarify the difference between "working group" and "teamwork". The first refers to a working method that can be used where the individual work is not sufficient or inefficient: in certain conditions, it can save time and financial resources and also obtain results, both in quantity and quality, the individual alone would fail to achieve. The teamwork refers instead to a group of people forming an organizational unit of a relatively small number, equipped with a certain degree of managerial and operational autonomy, the purpose of which is represented by the achievement of a particular goal. Within an orientation path, we refer to the second group, even though it must be pointed out that the goal of the group is peculiar, as it helps individuals to reach individual goals. The teamwork, for example, is particularly useful in skills profiles of individual pathway, where it is however indispensable to include, at least in the beginning and in the end, individual talks that allow to recognize and respond to the needs of professional choices of the participating individuals.

When it comes to a group and its functioning, it must be taken into consideration that group reality can be functional for each of its components in order to achieve two different purposes:

- the first is related to the orientation towards the task, which consists in the realization of a common and clear goal to all members;
- the second refers to a socio-emotional orientation, which is the need, expressed by members of a group, to meet together and share human experiences.

A group that aims at the production and achievement of particular goals expresses its full potential when both of these two levels coexist. It is a group that recognizes being together the clear goal to be pursued, the achievement of which can possibly result in the splitting of the group itself. Within the group, positive relationships and a good emotional climate can also be created, and this can facilitate and support the orientation towards the task. Therefore, it is not possible to work in good conditions and reach goals if the group is focused only on the task and neglects the relationships among the participants. Likewise, the group does not work if the party enjoy time spent together but forgets to guide its actions to the achievement of the founding goal of the group itself.

In this sense, every path of career counselling has one clear goal: help the participant to make more realistic and effective career choices, starting from a greater understanding of themselves and of the context in which this decision is taken. In

case, on one hand, there are problems in relationships, it is necessary to intervene and minimise them or, better, to activate from the beginning to create the most positive interpersonal relationships, on the other hand, when the group is too focused on spending time together and has forgotten the main goal, it is necessary to help it focus again on the main reasons why it exists.

8.1 *The context*

The context, also called field, plays a key role in the dynamics and the performative capacity of the group. A group is functional if it is characterized by:

- **Clarity of the goal.** Both with the individual, within at least an initial inter- view, and together with all participants, it is important to agree that the group is not an end but a supporting tool towards the final goal that is of individual nature;
- **Work method**. It must be active and participative. Participants will be asked to do things concretely, even during information within which they will be invited to intervene by asking questions and sharing experiences. Furthermore, it is good that the activities of the group are built on having specific spaces and timetable. The physical spaces must be adequate, comfortable and in an undisturbed environment. They also need to have a symbolic significance in order to give value to the individual and to the activities that are carried out. Compatible with the possibilities, the chosen site should remain stable throughout the course, so that it can be recognized by everyone as a reserved space, only destined to particular activities such as those of skills profiles. It is also recommended that the course has precise deadlines, so that people know from the very beginning on what days they will meet, thus conveying the idea that everything is organized and clear. This would also allow participants to organize their schedules and distribute their energy over the entire course;
- **Resources.** Speaking about professional skills profiles, the first reference is to give necessary time and support to adequately face the path and achieve the predefined goals. Attention should be paid to any kind of resource, even the simplest, so to convey the idea that planning and project work are the core of the activities. All the members of the group must also be included in the resources: hopefully, all members should feel ad- equate to the path, both considering their motivation and abilities. This condition certainly depends on the personal disposition of each person, anyway it is up to the ability of the operator to recognize and value the contribution of each member;
- **Coordination**. It is important that all members of the group acknowledge the conductor as the competent person able to ensure continuity to the activities. In this regard, the best thing is having just one conductor who may optionally be supported by other professionals who can help in constant or specific occasions.

In the context, the so-called "forces at play" refer to what people need to activate in order to ensure everything is going the right way and the desired goals are achieved. Those are:

- **Communication.** This target has especially to do with the level of knowledge of the selected language in order to conduct the meetings and share an adequate vocabulary. In the case of professional counselling with migrants, in fact, there may be cases where the language used is not under- stood at the same level by everyone. Therefore, some of them may feel more comfortable, while others may show some difficulties. It is therefore necessary to choose a language that can be shared with all participants who show at least minimal linguistic skills on it. Concerning the vocabulary, of course dealing with issues such as training and labour market will require the use of sector-specific terminology. In these cases, care should be taken so that everyone understands what has being communicated, explaining the unknown concepts and terms and making sure that the group is creating a common vocabulary that can be understood by each member. In the end, learning a richer vocabulary about training and work is, if not the main, one of the goals that have to be achieved in career orientation paths.
- **Collaboration.** It reports the willingness to participate to the process and the achievement of its goals. It depends on the conductor's ability to win one's esteem and recognition of their professionalism and on the atmosphere they are able to create;
- **Motivation**. The key is creating adequate intrinsic motivation, showing the benefits the path can bring both for the present and for future results. In some cases, extrinsic motivations towards both operators and representatives, such as, the possibility to use their participation as a sign of seriousness and desire for a quick and effective employment of the State must be considered;
- **Mutual confidence.** It is compulsive that no cases of previous conflicts or lack of trust among participants are taking place. Some of them, in fact, may already know each other and share their community life inside the hosting centre. A prior mutual knowledge can be an added value if it facilitates relations and helps the atmosphere inside the group but, on the contrary, can be a risk in case of prior external conflicts, because the latter can be transported within the counselling context. These aspects must be taken into high consideration when groups are created and the possible components know each other. If it is not possible to avoid putting in the same group people with previous episodes of conflict, then it is important to know the backgrounds and try to minimize the possible negative effects that could be transferred to the group.

8.2 *The function*

What is the function that the group has to fulfil within an orientation context? First of all, the group is characterized by being a preventive, protected and sup-

portive environment. In the case of a skills profile addressed to immigrants, people will be asked to rethink about their career and about proposing them- selves professionally in a new and profoundly different context than the original one. They will face a challenging environment that will offer both opportunities and limitations. This can generate anxiety and discomfort. The group may thus represent a preventive and secure environment, compared to the real world they will have to face once they end the course. It is easier to challenge oneself with the others if they share the same condition and if they do not depend on them for concrete training and job opportunities. It is important that participants face job interviews with clear ideas about their own abilities, their own interests, attitudes and opinions on the job, and this group can be the ideal context in which the individual calls into question the vision of oneself, be it negative or positive. They will feel more free and serene during the process of awareness of their own real abilities, resizing self-exaggerating aspects and enhancing features and skills until then ignored. On the other hand, the social comparison can be used to resize aspects of themselves that they believed to be very developed while they are not. Being part of a group also encourages questioning oneself about attitudes and opinions, helping the person to become aware that certain beliefs are erroneous and some scenarios simply different from how they had imagined them to be. The social confrontation is the driving force for change: according to the theory of socio-cognitive conflict, in fact, if the atmosphere is collaborative and the exchange is positive, there is room for the conflict created in the group to allow the individual to develop new abilities, attitudes and opinions adaptive to the new context in which they are inserted.

8.3 *The conductor*

Previously we discussed the conductor's role and style in conducting the course. In this context, we explore their role as leader of the group more deeply. Again, no style is better than the others. Each of them is more effective depending on the maturity of the group. A useful support in identifying the most appropriate style is provided by Chiesa (2009), who describes four main styles of conduct and also specifies on which target these styles can be more effective:

- **Telling,** i.e. a generally prescriptive style focused on guiding the resolution of the task, while emotional support is very limited. This style is more effective when addressed to people who are poorly responsible and do not clearly know their aspirations and how to reach them;
- **Selling,** i.e. a style of conduct in which the emotional support and the support to the resolution of the tests are both equally present. The selling style is more effective with trained people who tend to be responsible but do not know how to complete the tasks and realize their intentions;
- **Participating**, that refers to a style in which socio-emotional support is paramount. This style is used with people who know how to perform their tasks but feel to be poorly self-efficacious and unmotivated;

- **Delegating**, a style focused on granting broad autonomy on implementation of the activities and on socio-emotional support. This style is optimal in case participants are responsible people who know what strategies to adopt to achieve their goals.

By contextualizing the management styles described above and compared to those groups involved in a career counselling path, it is easy to notice that participants may have very different characteristics. As it may be difficult to immediately identify a style that can be used indiscriminately, the operator is usually required to move easily among all four styles. In particular, operators are required to recognize the level of maturity of the participants, especially during the first meetings, so that they can adopt the most effective and appropriate style.

Chiesa also reminds us that conducting the group requires, from the operator side, competence in the following areas:

- **Interpersonal-communicative**. It means knowing how to manage relation- ships with the members and the relational dynamics within the group. In this regard, the operator must allow each member to express themselves and has to stimulate those who do not participate in the discussions in order to avoid the risk of exclusion. Attention should be paid also to the spontaneous dynamics of leadership by monitoring those participants too apt to monopolize communication. The conductor is also required to know how to properly encode and decode messages and communication exchanges with and among members of the group. This implies the ability to use a clear communication towards the listener and also to be able to grasp not only explicit but also implied meanings of the messages;
- **Methodological-educational**. It refers to the ability of using the typical tools of psycho-social education, such as tutorials, simulations, group discussions, active lessons. The conductor must be able to manage them in order to make the participants feel they are the most suitable tools to help them in the path of knowledge and professional choice and to ensure that they are conducted in order to be valued by all participants;
- **Methodological-indicative**. It refers to the fact that it is useful to recognize significant orientation goals and then establish the most appropriate tools to achieve them. It refers to the skills profiles. The operator takes the leading role with the aim to facilitate personal rebuilding and re-elaboration actions thanks to the help of work and group activities, in order to facilitate the achievement of the goal established by the orientation path;
- **Managerial-organizational**. It is about organizing the operational aspects needed in order for the course and the meetings to take place. This area is across-the-board compared to the others and pertains, since it is necessary, to the concrete performance of any other type of activity. This area includes, for example, the setting up of spaces and scheduling, preparation of materials and definition of the course rules.

Finally, the above shows that the group is a highly complex reality, characterized by a series of properties within which a series of dynamics interact. If well assembled and well managed, it is extremely effective when accompanying individual members down the path of knowledge and projecting their career.

IX. ESPoR: the intervention

9.1 *The participants and the composition of groups*

Davide Massaro

The course is designed for migrants, both women and men, from different nationalities (not Italian), who have applied to the Italian State for the recognition of the refugee status and who, more specifically, are involved in some of those phases envisaged by our legislation for the international protection request. The evaluation of the ESPoR model test allowed to define some useful guidelines for the proper identification of those who can best benefit from the project itself.

First of all, the participation of people at an early stage of the international protection application path (for example, present within a CAS) should be privileged rather than that of people with an already advanced application path (e.g. within a SPRAR). It has been noticed that, the first ones mentioned above are to benefit the most from the effort of restructuring their migrant project in the eye of a new job profile. People who are in Italy for quite some time have already gained a more realistic view of their condition and real employment opportunities, but they also have a more urgent need to find a job, and that makes them less willing to attend orientation pathways and to question the path that have been made so far. The participation of subjects who have just arrived on the Italian territory is then again not recommended, especially because they are still strongly involved in the procedures of first reception and in the placement on national territory and they need to adapt to a completely new context. The ideal location of the course, therefore, seems to be from the fourth month of their stay in the CAS until the ninth month.

In establishing the groups of participants, it must be verified that each individual has the possibility to stay at the reception facility for at least three months from the moment the activities start, in order to ensure that the latter can be concluded and that the participants do not feel like the path can be interrupted by external causes.

Priority should be given to those who manifest their intention to take part in the activities on an ongoing basis and to show a high degree of willingness to share their migrant project from the labour market point of view.

It is recommended, for the composition of the groups, that the number of participants may be between 5 and 10, giving thus priority to smaller groups in those cases where the level of literacy is not optimal. It is also good for groups to be homogeneous per kind and with no excessive differences in age: both characteristics

can prevent that relationship are perceived as unequal (man/ woman, young/old) and can thus hinder the group's dynamics.

With regard to language skills, the course can be conducted in Italian, in their mother tongue or another common language. What is fundamental is that participants can master the language on an adequate and sufficiently uniform level. It is not possible to propose an ESPoR course to illiterate, unless it is substantially modified.

Even with regard to qualification and previous professional experiences, a good level of homogeneity among the participants can be of help, while the opposite may be counterproductive, especially for those who are not qualified and have little working experience, as it could negatively affect the comparison with the most qualified.

9.2 *1st Face-to-face interview: The story of my career*

Diego Boerchi

The intervention start is a particularly delicate moment for the effectiveness of the course itself, both because of the issues treated and for its symbolic role. About the latter aspect, it should first be pointed out that the decision to start with a face-to-face moment was conceived with the aim that the intervention is designed to help the individual and that the group intervenes to help in this process but it is not the addressee. At the same time, it will communicate the idea that the guest is important for the institution, and that it has been decided to invest time and other resources on them because they are believed to have enough capacity to take part and, later, to be included into the labour market. A final element of symbolicity concerns the main methodology that will be used during the course, i.e. the autobiographical narration. It is important, in order to favour a proper and realistic career planning, that from the very beginning the person recognizes the role of their previous experience as this allows to retrieve their previous skills, helps to better understand their expectations, their interests and attitudes towards the job and the way it all can be arranged together within their migrant project. This is only possible through narration. On the one hand, this helps get a better and more accurate picture of the individual, as it ensures the level of personalization that otherwise cannot be obtained through tests, questionnaires and present grids. On the other hand, it helps start and support a process of redefinition of their expectations in light of the new context in which the guest is asked to redesign their career. To summarize, the symbolic value of the first interview is therefore about communicating that:

- the individual is the core of the course
- the person has been chosen because it is believed that they can face the orientation path successfully;
- the person has good chances to enter in the labour market satisfactorily;
- the course will use narration as suitable tool in order to guarantee personalization and personal progress.

Several contents will be treated, too. The first one concerns the expectations of the participant towards the intervention. Although it has already been presented, it is important to consider a moment to verify that the person has adequately understood both the goals and the methodology that will be used, allowing the guest to ask questions to better clarify the ideas and renegotiate some aspect, if necessary. The second is to produce and collect a story about their professional history. It is important to start from the latter by promoting a free story in which it is possible to intervene only in order to foster it further: it is important that it is not guided but brought back again to previous training and work experiences in those cases where the narration is too much detached from the starting point. The third is to investigate their "immigrant" experience to understand whether they came directly at the centre after their arrival in Italy or they have previously had other experiences both as a guest and as a worker in Italy or in other European countries. Once understood that, a further aspect to investigate is their immigration plan, in order to understand whether their stay in Italy has to be considered brief, while they are waiting to return to their country of origin or they aim to remain here permanently or for a very long period. At this stage, it will be possible to investigate their working expectations, to understand their feasibility, their realism and the availability, more or less conscious, to question those projects that seem less congruent with their skills and the real demands of the labour market. In the schedule "Questions to focus and promote the autobiographical narration", it is possible to consult the phases and some suggested questions for the conduct of each of them.

Although it is not a priority need, right now, to get an accurate narration of the training and work experience of the participant, it may still be useful to begin to lay the foundations to recover at least a correct sequence of events. In fact, it is common that the stories present inconsistencies, especially in relation to the events that have occurred before and after. In this regard, the use of the "Line of Life" technique is supportive. After having collected the story of their lives and having analysed it with the help of the questions below, the conductor takes a sheet, draws a straight line, write the term "Birth" on an end and the term "Today" on the opposite. Subsequently, along with the participant, each significant experience told above is reported indicating the year and a short title. The use of pencil and rubber is recommended, as moving the experiences as the line becomes richer and more precise is part of the process. Please pay attention to the need for Arabic speaking people to represent the line of life from right to left, and then put the term "Birth" on the right end and the word "Today" on the left hand.

At the end of the interview, the operator has to fill in the "Description form starting situation" which describes their situation quantitatively and helps clarify the reasons for choices through the writing of short notes.

1° Interview: Questions to focus and promote the autobiographical narration

Expectations towards the project	• Why would this work help you find a job that best suits your and interests? • Do you think the document we will fill in at the end of the path will help you? • Do you have any idea of what would you do with the other participants and in the face-to face interviews?
Narration professional history in the countryof origin	• Can you tell me what studies and what kind of jobs did you do in your country of origin? • Did you like the courses you attended? What did you like more and what less? • Were you satisfied with the job or jobs you did in the past? What did you like more and what less? • Which is the job area you feel particularly comfortable in? • What are the jobs of particular interest for you?
Migrant experience	• Have you come from your country of origin directly to Italy? If not, in what other nations have you been? • How long have you been in Italy and in the other countries of Europe? • Are you here alone or with family, relatives and/or friends with whom you do not want to be detached? • Do you have family, relatives and/or friends in other parts of Italy or in Europe you would like to reach? • Have you already attended training courses since you arrived in Italy/Europe? Which ones? • Have you already worked since you arrived in Italy/Europe? Which jobs did you do?
Migration project	• If you If you had the possibility to freely choose, would you rather stay in Italy, go to another European country or return to your country of origin? • Considering your current situation, what would you like to do in the future? • Is your project dictated by professional opportunities or by other motivations? Which ones and why?
Professional project	• If you had the possibility to freely choose, which job or jobs would you do? • Considering your skills and the real employment opportunities,what job or jobs do you think you can start doing within the next months? • Do you see them as temporary, in the hope to find some more satisfactory job in the future, or do you think that you are probably going to do this for the rest of your stay in Italy/Europe?

Description form of the starting situation

Surname   **Name**

	Notes
Migration project ① They are planning to return to their country of origin as soon as the situation will permit that ② They are planning to stay permanently in Europe but moving to another country ③ They are planning to remain permanently in Italy	
Autonomy of choices ① Their choices are strictly limited by those of their family members and acquaintances ② Their choices are only partially dictated by the role of family members and acquaintances ③ Their choices are totally independent from those of their family members and acquaintances	Notes
Career expectations ① They would like to do a job which is equal or similar to the one they did in their country of origin ② They are available for requalification activities in order to have the same or similar work as in the country of origin ③ They are willing to completely redesign their career	Notes
Perception of reality ① Their career expectations appear to be very unrealistic compared to the real possibilities of their current context ② Their career expectations could only beachieved following a major requalification effort ③ Their career expectations appear very realistic with respect to their skills and motivations	Notes

Understanding the intervention: activity ① They are having a hard time understanding the activities that are proposed ② They only partly understand the activities that are proposed ③ They have a clear perception of the activity that are proposed	Notes
Understanding the intervention: goals ① They are having a hard time understanding the real goals that the interventionaims to achieve ② They only partly understand the goals of the intervention ③ They have a clear perception of the goals of the interventions	Notes
Expectations towards the benefit of the final document ① They have unrealistic expectations and think to be much more useful than they actually are ② They have realistic expectations ③ They think it will be of any use	Notes

9.3 *1st and 2nd group meeting: My career box*

VERONICA HURTUBIA AND MARTA RIVOLTA

"My career box" is divided into 2 meetings that introduce the in-depth analysis areas, the basis of ESPoR. It will be developed in five phases and will allow participants to start a process of evaluation of their resources and re-elaboration of the migration project, which is not always voluntary. Moreover, it will also allow participants to better understand the course dynamics and create a group. Beginning to work directly on skills and expectations for the future could create irritability or increase false expectations. To prevent this from happening, the course will focus on the past and present without further investigate the aspects of the future.

The activity begins with the presentation of the participant, their personal and geographic data and the analysis of the distinctive characteristic of the person in relation with the past and their life in the country of origin, their spare time, their work and formal or informal studies. Lastly, it ends in the present time, focusing on activities, interests, sports, social development and the kind of educational and professional paths they are attending. The general goal of these two meetings is to combine the past with the present. They sometimes seem disconnected, but in fact are linked by the skills and experiences of the subjects and, at the same time, they help strengthening the social fabric within the group.

The leading tool of this activity is a cardboard box that participants need to customize as they progress in the proposed path. It is essential for each participant to have a unique and recognizable cardboard box with the following characteristics:

- measuring about 20/30 cm (7/12 inches) per side;
- every side of the box must be of a single colour and without any patterns, so that the participants can personalize it the way they wish (if coloured, it can be upholstered with white paper or a neutral colour);
- must have a cover or a cap, that can also be used for the activity;
- it can already be pre-packaged (for example, a shoe or a packing box) or can be built directly by the participants from a sufficiently large and thick cardboard.

With regard to the methodology, the activity is carrying out as a workshop and the participants are directly involved in the creation of a product, which is the starting point for the narration of themselves to the others. It is divided into two meetings (past and present), in which participants will have to complete each side of the box following the instructions of the conductor. Each meeting is divided into 2 or 3 activities, divided as follows:

- Introduction, in which the conductor explains the goal through a short brainstorming;
- Development, i.e. the process of construction and creation to reach the goal;
- Sharing, presenting and exchanging items activity that emerged among members of the group.

In addition, it may be useful that the conductor is directly involved in the activity by building their own box. In this way, a better empathy with the group is created and an additional multicultural element to the group is added. In this case, it is good for the conductor to integrate their own experience of job changing and moving to another city. Finally, the conductor needs to be careful not to treat the theme of the future directly, as the subject will be the focus of following activities.

9.3.1 First meeting: Self introduction and a look back at the past

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Activities: 1. Who am I
Goal: introducing themselves in the group, becoming recognizable for a peculiar feature.
Duration: 60 minutes.
Materials: box, magazines, glue, scotch, scissors, pencils, crayons, markers, cloth scraps and a billboard or blackboard.
Development: it is the first activity that is important to create the group, enables participants to get to know a little bit more each other. In fact, while living within the same establishment or attending the same language courses, the subjects often do not communicate with each other and even basic information about themselves remain a mystery to others.

The three moments of the activity:

- Introduction (20 min.): the conductor explains the participants why they are going to create a career box, how the laboratories work and the durations of the activity. They ask participants to start decorating, drawing, writing on the top (or cover) of the box, beginning with a self-presentation of the name, surname, date and country of birth: a sort of identity card

that allows the various participants in the group to get to know each other and share information. It is important to foster a serene atmosphere where listening is fundamental to create cooperation and sharing among participants, who usually get curious when they discover the stories of the others and can intervene to share common aspects of their past life. Although this first moment of group training and self-observation of participants may seem simple to manage, it has to be structured and adequately conducted to avoid it from becoming a mere list of geographic, objective and self-referential information.

- Development (20 min.): the conductor faces the part of personal description and analyses in depth asking participants to represent themselves on the box, with one or more explanatory features of their own story and person: a kind of "sign" in the world. This moment is significant because the subjects are free to decide what to tell, they can totally reveal themselves to others or just remain on a surface plan, however sufficient to create a functional working group. If the origin of the participants is the same or they all belong to the same geographic-cultural area, it may happen that some peculiarities will be repeated and that the subjects have less difficulty in expressing and narrating themselves, creating a climate of active sharing and listening that goes beyond the activity itself;
- Sharing (20 min.): during self-introduction, the conductor must encourage the discussion, create links in relation to the origin of the participants and help those who speak with difficulty in the narrative build-up of their past lives. The conductor must observe the dynamics that are being created and exploit the knowledge of the participants if they are guests of the centre in which they work, to facilitate a serene dialogue and participate in the whole group.

Tips: The conductor should participate in the presentation activity and join the discussion when moments of silence occur. Set a billboard or a blackboard in a place visible to everybody and write the names of the participants on them.

Activities: 2. That is how I used to spend my time in ... (country of origin or previous stay)
Goal: strengthen the sense of cultural identity within a new context of confrontation.
Duration: 60 minutes.
Materials: box, magazines, glue, scotch, scissors, pencils, crayons, markers, cloth scraps and a billboard or blackboard.
Development: the activity seeks to help the participants visualize and recognize that the daily life in their contexts of origin has a value and is part of their identity. Discovering and sharing with the group some aspects of life and spare time that each of them had in their country of origin.

The three explanation moments of the activity:
- Introduction (15min.): the conductor explains that the second side of the box is to be built and personalized thinking about the past and the daily life in the Country of origin and focusing on the places they usually frequented and on the activities they usually pursued: practice a sport, play an instrument, visit a city, etc. It is recommended to let participants speak and take

note on the billboard or blackboard in a way that is visible to everybody in the room. This technique helps visualize the work done so far, focus on the final goal and encourage everyone's participation;

- Development (30 min.): the conductor let the personalization of the box start. Every participant selects a side and begins to decorate the way they like, with images cut out from magazines, phrases, drawings or symbols. It is important to let creativity run free in this process. Additionally, the conductor shall always encourage participants to be creative and get involved in the activity. It is therefore important to remember that every box is personal as it contains a specific experience the participant wants to share with the others without any external evaluation;
- Sharing (15 min.): the third and last moment is characterized by sharing the work done. Every participant takes the floor and tells the others what's on their box. During this phase, the conductor must pay attention not to force the narration but to guide and encourage positive comments from the group.

Tips: Set all the material on a table before the participants arrive, together with magazines and travel catalogues that contain evocative images.

Activities: 3. My footprint as a worker or a student
Goal: identify the working or studying themes in the country of origin.
Duration: 60 minutes.
Materials: box, magazines, glue, scotch, scissors, pencils, crayons, markers.
Development: Inspired by every consideration emerged from the previous activity, the conductor introduces this activity, deepening the factors that determine the identity and characteristics of the work or study that participants have followed in their countries of origin.

The three explanation moments of the activity:
- Introduction (15 min.): the conductor explains that, once the side of spare time and activities is over (activity no. 2), time has come to examine and discover the activities regarding work and studies. It is important to point out that even activities which usually are less paid or no paid at all, such as internships or occasional works, are to be considered as work because they do indicate skills. For example, a person who has given a helping hand in building their own home with expert bricklayers lived a good experience to tell the group, especially if they think to have acquired specific skills and it all has been satisfactory. It is very common, especially for women, engaging in housework, sewing clothes or cutting off the hair of their neighbours;
- Development (30 min.): the methodology of the construction of this side of the box is equal to activity no. 2. Therefore, every participant is free to personalize this third side of the box as they want to, without any restriction in materials but only in time;
- Sharing (15 min.): the moment of sharing is always the most important. It is really important that all the participants have the opportunity to present at least one of the elements of this side of the box. The conductor can select the sharing mode they may deem appropriate for an effective discussion.

Tips: The conductor, in compliance with everyone's freedom of expression, can help the participants in the narration by linking different work or school experiences together in order to share strengths and weaknesses of the activities carried out.

9.3.2 Second meeting: My luggage and I in Italy

> **Activities: 4. Italy and my training and professional integration path**
> **Goal:** identify the areas of interest of working or studying activities in Italy.
> **Duration:** 90 minutes.
> **Materials:** box, magazines, glue, scotch, scissors, pencils, crayons, markers.
> **Development:** the second meeting of the narration of their career box focuses on the present. The conductor presents the third activity explaining that they are asked to describe the work they are doing or the study path they are facing in view of a job placement.

The three moments of the activity:
- Introduction (20 min.): the work issue is a very delicate topic to tackle with. Despite having demonstrated quality and functional characteristics for some tasks, it is often very difficult to integrate refugees or applicants for international protection in the working world. The conductor introduces the activity in terms of professional training and personal gain and not in terms of achieving a paid position. Participants are asked to reflect on the opportunities they got since they are in Italy, and the progress that has been made in terms of acquiring skills and mastering the Italian language;
- Development (50 min.): The conductor asks the participants to decorate the box by inserting activities and paths that are actually taking place. In this case, being too creative is not functional, while it is more important to focus on the goal: part of what emerges from this side of the box will serve to address other activities that will lead to the editing of the ESPoR final document. In this case, it is important for the conductor to remind the participants that internships, work bursary etc. are considered professional experiences to be valued and necessary to understand what kind of professional career they want to take. Within the group, there may be people who have not worked since their arrival in Italy and have no such prospect in their immediate future. In this case, the conductor must be able to handle the frustration or inadequacy of the subjects, the positive aspects of attending the Italian language courses and the improvements in communication with a view to a social autonomy;
- Sharing (20 min.): To facilitate the moment of narration of their working and training experiences, the conductor can propose participants to get together in pairs and start telling what they represented on the box. Once this step is over, the discussion within the group can begin. The couples, if this is the chosen mode, must be formed in order to bring together more mature and competent participants with weaker, younger or less experienced ones, so that the first ones can be used, at least partly, as a tutor. The comparison with a migrant who has succeeded or is able to address the integration path in a positive way can be a stimulus to be active and more

responsive to opportunities, grasping the suggestions of those who have already found themselves in the same situation.

Tips: The conductor should be able to bring the conversation back to a more personal training and enrichment level and not to a mere paid work achievement level.

Activities: 5. In Italy I enjoy having fun, playing music, practising sports, ...
Goal: integration into the new context, preserving their identity.
Duration: 90 minutes.
Materials: box, magazines, glue, scotch, scissors, pencils, crayons, markers.
Development: on the fifth and last side of the box, participants are asked to tell what activities they usually do during their spare time, what interests they cultivate, what sports activities they practise and what kind of social opportunities they experience during the day.

The three moments of the activity:
- Introduction (20 min.): The conductor, resuming the topic of the present, explains the participants the focus is now on the aspects of sociality, which also characterizes the path of integration of the subjects. The narration is characterized by "I like", which assumes a presentation of the activities in a positive key. This activity, scheduled at the end of a challenging sharing of self path, is structured so that people can express themselves freely, focusing on those features and information that are considered pleasant and easily recountable and may result in common interests able of moving the discussion from an individual plan to a larger group discussion;
- Development (50 min.): The conductor invites the participants to intervene and, based on illustrations, photographs, drawings on the boxes, they can also decide to give the floor to another member of the group to enrich the discussion and bring different points of view. It is thus possible to create a dynamic situation that involves several people simultaneously, useful in defining the membership of the group and the birth of social relationships based on common interests. It may happen that the participants discover they want to practice the same sport and desire to create a team, organize to schedule workouts or want to discover more about the territory around them altogether;
- Sharing (20 min.): The conductor defines what topic they will explore and seeks to involve everyone in the discussion, changing themes when the conversation stops. At the end of the interventions, the conductor should thank the participants for having been actively involved in the success of the lab and then bring back the attention to the importance of their previous knowledge, social and professional experiences today, with a view to the awareness of their skills and self observation of their behaviour, fundamental for the success of the migration path.

Tips: The career box could become a personal tool to implement, modify, inserting new useful tiles as bag of the integration path.

9.4 *3rd/4th group meeting: The transversal skills cards*

Diego Boerchi

Transversal skills are all those skills that can be marketable in different contexts; their non-specificity makes them useful to perform tasks and cover different roles. Compared to the distinction made by Levati and Saraò (1998) between work-based (knowledge and skills related to a wide range of tasks) and worker-based (concerning the subject's behaviour) skills, in our case we refer to the latter.

Their most important feature is to be fundamental in order to be able to translate people's technical skills into an operational way. In fact, some people are often unable to produce quality products or services, not because they do not have the necessary technical knowledge and skills, but because they lack – for example – the ability to work in a group or coordinate others, to organize work, to monitor their progress and to meet deadlines. These skills are more difficult to develop than technical skills, and are therefore increasingly valued during the selection phase, while they receive less attention in training contexts. In addition, they are less dependent on the context and, hence, they are skills that can be easily transferred by a migrant into a working role in the host nation. It should also be said, however, that they are often skills identifying macro areas and require a specific contextualization action. The ability to influence the Other's behaviour cannot be considered fully as a skill unless it is translated, for example, into the ability to sell, to convince an audience during a meeting, to obtain effective behaviours for achieving a goal from subordinates, and so on (Gallo, Boerchi, 2011). An important feature of these skills is therefore their "transferability", i.e the possibility to reuse them, following process of re-contextualization, in a different environment and/or a different working role.

The tutorial dedicated to this type of skills aims to achieve two main goals: the first is to introduce this kind of skills, usually not known by migrants nor by most part of the Italian population; the second is to help each participant identify the skills they possess more, starting with the story of successful experiences as proof of this.

The tutorial takes place in two meetings: the first one is dedicated to the introduction and training of transversal skills; the second to tell and analyse concrete experiences in order to identify these skills and describe them in the relevant sheet. It is possible that the tutorial is not enough to describe a precise picture of each participant's transversal skills: in cases when this is not possible, it will be up to the operator to retrieve the transversal skills possessed by each person, together with a list of evidence-based experiences in some later tutorials, as soon as there is a chance.

9.4.1 First meeting: Getting to know the "transversal skills"

Goals:
1. educate people to the concept of "transversal skills" and its importance for job placement;
2. educate people on the use of previous experiences, both working and non-working, as indicators of the transversal, but also technical skills possessed.

Duration: 3 hours.

Materials:
- a set of cards depicting the transversal skills;
- four "categories" identifying as many transversal skills groupings;
- scotch tape or adhesive rubber.

Development:
- Introduction – The activities of the day are explained by defining theme and goals. The conductor has a wide list of transversal skills, previously cut into single cards, and 4 "category" sheets representing as many types of transversal skills. The conductor attacks the 4 "category" sheets on the wall and gives a first explanation about them;
- Training – The conductor asks a participant to pick a card randomly and, in order to help them understand it better, he will tell a concrete or invented but plausible personal experience that demonstrates his mastery of the skill, highlighting how important this has been to perform that specific work activity at his best. In order to make the examples more understandable and useful, it is important that they are as concrete as possible, close to the participants' experiences and clearly linked to the specific transversal skill. It is therefore important that the example is related to a successful experience, an experience that allowed a good result, and which depended on the person who made it, therefore from his/her skills, and not from teamwork or luck. It is risky to improvise an example at that precise time, so it is preferable that the operator has prepared in advance the examples he wants to bring. Subsequently, the operator seeks to involve the group in identifying the category within which the skill is best placed and, once decided what skill it is, the card will be attached to the wall with scotch tape or adhesive rubber. If at the beginning it is difficult to involve the participants because of the novelty of the concept, as the tutorial continues, they will become more and more active. At this point, the conductor will ask the members of the group to tell some of their experiences with the excuse that it can be useful to better understand that specific skill.

9.4.2 Second meeting: Identifying personal transversal skills

Goals:
1. identify a set of transversal skills that the individual believes to possess;
2. make the individual more skilled in demonstrating that he/she possesses these skills through the targeted story of previous working and non-working experiences.

Duration: 3 hours.

Materials:
- set of cards related to the transversal skills (we suggest the use of the Repertoire of Soft Skills related to the migratory experience of DimiCome FAMI project, you can see under);
- sheet of transversal skills.

Development:
- Introduction – Participants are reminded of the activity they have done in the previous meeting, and the goal of the second meeting is to tell them how to identify their own transversal skills from the stories of their previous experiences;
- Analysis – The conductor asks the participants to identify from the list of skills that each of them has in their hands, what they feel they possess most. In addition, they will be asked to identify an experience that demonstrates the foregoing. If it was already possible to collect some of the stories in the previous meeting, it is good to specify that even those can be used at the beginning. After leaving some time for personal reflection, participants are asked to indicate what skill they have chosen and to tell the experience in which they have used it. Finally, with the help of other members of the group, they will try to identify 1-2 more transversal skills that have probably emerged in that experience. It would be best to repeat this exercise twice so that each member can identify a second skill and tell a further experience;
- Sheet compilation – The last phase will be to ask participants to write the skills identified in the spaces of the left column of the relevant sheet, possibly adding others up to a maximum of six. Next, on the right column, they will be asked to indicate, with a short title, up to 4 successful experiences demonstrating the mastery of that specific skill, as in the example on the next page;
- Conclusion – The conductor recalls that it is important to invest in professional choices that allow them to exploit this "treasure" and that it is equally important to be prepared, during job interviews, not only to list their transversal skills, but also to demonstrate that they possess them through the story of their previous experiences.

Name _____

Transversal skills	*Experiences*
resourcefulness	Buying a home Starting of a retail business Testing a new promotion mode for the retail business Proposing to change the procedures for organizing work shifts
Interpersonal sensitivity	Helping two family members to make peace after a quarrel Promoting a sale by mediating between seller and buyer Helping resolve conflicts within the reception centre

Competences

Adaptability	Collaboration
Reliability	Communication
Open-mindedness	Concentration
Learning	Organizational awareness
Self-assurance	Conscientiousness
Friendly attitude	Creativity
Self-control	Decision-Making
Autonomy	Empathy
Coping skills	Time management

Resourcefulness	Problem solving
Leadership	Information-seeking
Multi-tasking	Intercultural sensitivity
Order and precision	Interpersonal sensitivity
Client-oriented	Team-working
Result-oriented	Planning
Perseverance	Persuasiveness

Sectors

COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCES

PERSONAL COMPETENCES

Cataloging

ORGANIZATIONAL COMPETENCES

Organizational awareness	Result-oriented
Time management	Planning
Multi-tasking	Problem solving

COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCES

Communication	Persuasiveness
Empathy	Information-seeking

RELATIONAL COMPETENCES

Friendly attitude	Intercultural sensitivity
Collaboration	Interpersonal sensitivity
Leadership	Teamworking
Client-oriented	

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PERSONAL COMPETECES

Adaptability	Concentration
Reliability	Conscientiousness
Open-mindedness	Creativity
Learning	Decision Making
Self-assurance	Resourcefulness
Self-control	Order and precision
Autonomy	Perseverance
Coping skills	

Sheet

Progetto co-finanziato dall'Unione Europea

MINISTERO DELL'INTERNO

FONDO ASILO, MIGRAZIONE E INTEGRAZIONE (FAMI) 2014-2020
OS2 Integrazione/Migrazione legale, ON3 Capacity Building - lett. m) Scambio di buone Pratiche

ESPoR
European Skills Portfolio for Refugees

Nome

Transversal Competences	Experiences

9.5 *5th/6th group meeting: How to train and work in Italy*

STEFANO PASTA

One of the risks that an immigrant may encounter while seeking employment is to make choices that are not consistent with training opportunities and the local labour market. These meetings were designed to provide some basic knowledge of the labour market and training opportunities in Italy, with emphasis into the local situation. Consequently, unlike the planning of other meetings, in this case, there will be some suggestions on the setting and some types of information sources, but each conductor is asked to plan the meeting from time to time to ensure that the information is updated and contextualized.

The aim is that users acquire general knowledge of the Italian system, but above all that they focus on opportunities or areas of interest for their own path, thus acquiring the ability to enter the Italian context. The conductors have a key role in calibrating, at the preparatory phase of the meetings, the information to be provided to the group according to the component level, paying attention to the fact that it may be heterogeneous among the different members.

We do not expect that – at the end of the meeting – users will have an in-depth knowledge of the Italian labour market but, having a clear picture of the general situation, they will know where to look for the information they need in order to address the issues raised by their professional and training experience. Therefore, on the one hand, they will already be provided with some information, and on the other, they will be provided with tools to deepen those of personal interest.

In order to facilitate the involvement of the group, it is constantly recommended to alternate the moments of vis-à-vis speech hold by the conductor, to moments of exchange with the users (also revealing false commonplace and myths on the subject of work spread by the migrants themselves), and search on the Web. Before the meetings, it is necessary to verify the availability of technical tools to be able to use slides during the lesson and directly consult websites.

The areas of study that will be dealt with during the meeting are four and will be described here below.

9.5.1 First meeting: The labour market

Two goals are to be met with the meeting. The first is to show how work is managed in the host nation, how it is accessed, and what the main types of contracts are. Without claiming to be exhaustive, we intend to provide users with information on how to look for work, clarifying which documents are needed for regular work and referring to temporary agencies, dedicated private offices (such as listening centres, volunteer associations, trade unions, etc.), and branches of local authorities: this is a type of information that varies greatly depending on the local context. It is also possible to encourage online search: in this sense, it may be useful to make an example of online search on one of the leading portals.

The second is to provide some information on the Italian production system and its influence on the national and regional labour market, highlighting how

this knowledge can serve to a more effective job search and to target training in the right direction. In this regard, participants may ask questions that cannot be answered immediately. In such situations, "plausible" answers are not improvised, but they are postponed to a subsequent meeting, before which the conductor will be updated, so that he can get prepared.

Below are some of the topics that can be addressed: the choice is entrusted to the conductor of the groups according to the group. In addition to mere knowledge, it is useful to provide input on how to search and deepen such information: web search, but also specific services, starting from trade unions; the main associations acronyms and the reference to the sector categories; the tracking of the nearest locations; when it is useful to address trade unions and which ones have an office for foreigners.

Topics (to be chosen according to the group):

- Provide some information on the regional labour market (which sectors are most active, which are in crisis); it may be useful to make examples of the average salaries for standard jobs; many data are available on the National Institute for Statistics (Istat) website, but it is necessary to assess the risk of excessive specificity according to the group level;
- Undeclared work and regular work;
- Full/part-time work;
- Types of contracts in general (permanent, temporary, cooperative society partners, contract works, continuative and coordinated services, vouchers) and self-employment (with VAT registration), emphasizing how a "steady job" and a permanent contract are increasingly rare even for Italians. Emphasize that the contractual conditions also vary according to the category and that it is therefore necessary to read the employment contract and payroll together, for example, with a trade unionist;
- Net salary, gross salary and payroll;
- Dismissal/resignations;
- Illness, vacations and work-related injuries;
- Unemployment benefit;
- Link between forms of work and residence permits.

9.5.2 Second meeting: The training system

The starting point can be a scheme allowing to frame, also chronologically, the host nation's training system. It does not matter that users focus on the individual subdivisions but that, at the end of the meeting, they are able to know the main structures of the school system and vocational training. It is also useful that, in addition to formal terms, users also acquire the names used in common language (preschool, primary school, secondary school, high school). It is also necessary to focus attention on the information that may be useful for the particular condition of asylum seekers: the conductor, knowing the members of the group, can then prepare – prior to the lesson – a series of information aimed at the interest of the group. For example, it may be useful to provide information on adult education

centres – searching the Web for those in the province of reference – and on the courses to fulfill compulsory education, often required to apply for a job.

Finally, a discussion will be held on the often problematic topic of legal recognition of the qualifications acquired by migrants in the countries of origin or in third countries. In any case, it is important to point out that one of the aims of the ESPoR project is to promote a career planning enhancing the skills previously acquired, and employing them for jobs that do not require a formal recognition.

Another thematic area to deal with is the chance to attend short-term professional training courses (for one or more months). It is important, eventually confronting with the operators of the centres where migrants are hosted, to contextualize this type of information in relation to the opportunities offered by the area where the centres are located. Particular attention should be paid to local public authorities providing training, private entities (by privileging those providing free courses), and to indicate the centres where it is possible to get guidance in this direction, starting to do a short online search by highlighting possible courses.

It is suggested to explain what work grants and internships are, sometimes offered to asylum seekers in their integration path.

It should also be emphasized that each course sets some specific requirements (age, residence, type of documents, reporting by a third sector entity or social services, costs, possible periods of unemployment). To this end, it is important to explain the difference between non-workers (people who have never worked regularly) and unemployed (people who have worked, even for a short period, in a regular way and then have terminated the contract) and mentioning the usefulness and/or necessity to get in touch with public employment centres. According to the level of cultural education of the group, it may also be useful to refer to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), especially for those who intend and may have a chance to move to another European country.

9.6 7*th group meeting: The professions cards*

ALESSANDRO BUFFOLI

Images can play a very important role within orientation paths, to the point that they have historically been used in different ways. A classic example is Photolangage, a tool that exploits the metaphorical potential of iconic language in order to help people narrate their own inner world. This technique provides that the conductor formulates a question to the group of participants and that each of them, from a large set of images made available, can choose the most evocative of their own experience. Stimulated by this image, each person can then verbally explain to the group the reasons for their choice, and from this begin their narration.

Another example of using images during orientation is the creation of questionnaires related to educational and professional interests that use images. Instead of describing work activities, these tools provide their iconographic representations, bypassing linguistic difficulties and often providing more responsive stimuli to

the respondents' daily experience. The aim of this type of tools is very different from that of Photolangage. On the one hand, there is an eminently projective tool, aimed at exploring the inner personal world and its consequent narration to oneself and to others. On the other hand, however, there are tools to measure a construct, providing subjects with relatively stable and "objective" information about themselves. This is the case with the Multilingual Iconographic Professional Interests Inventory – MIPII (Boerchi, Magnano, 2017), which is suggested for this tutorial, although in different ways than the standardized administration.

The general objective of this tutorial is to help participants identify their professional interests and goals and, consequently, begin to reflect on the steps to be taken. Focusing on personal interests is a central step for any user involved in a career definition path. The benefits of doing a profession in line with one's own interests are many such as, for example, increasing the sense of efficacy and overall satisfaction, a greater commitment, a greater willingness to face the difficulties. Defining interests is not an obvious step, because it is necessary, on the one hand, to look inward and focus on activities that may be pleasant, and to perform the latter at the very best, the necessary skills have been developed. On the other hand, it is crucial to know the socio-professional environment in which a person lives. When the context changes, not only the employment opportunities change, but also the same professions can be pursued in a very different way. This aspect is crucial for those who come from countries and cultures that some times are far apart from those they want to enter. For example, the farmer's profession requires knowledge, skills and different activities depending on whether it is pursued in a traditional way by a family in Africa or in a farm in Europe. In addition, the socio-productive realities of the various countries differ from each other, sometimes considerably. Therefore, in some parts of the world there are professions that are not required in other states and, speculatively, in the latter there will be jobs that are not present elsewhere. Migrants will therefore need to restructure their image of the labour market according to the characteristics of the reception area. As it is necessary to learn the language of the host country, it will be equally important to decline the professional interests according to the new reality.

Only one meeting is enough for the tutorial, although there is a possibility that the compilation of the sheets is incomplete and may be a task that the participant can complete independently before the next meeting.

Goals:
1. focus areas of professional interest;
2. begin to identify the necessary skills, that is, which are owned and which are to be acquired.

Duration: 3 hours

Materials:
- a selection of MIPII professions cards (Boerchi, Magnano, 2017) for each participant including 4 white cards;
- three professions sheets for each participant;
- white sheets.

Development:
- Introduction (10 min) The activities of the day are explained by defining theme and goals;
- Professions cards (20 min) The professions cards are introduced to the group. Among all those that make up the MIPII, it is suggested to eliminate the cards that are considered too far apart from the interest and the concrete possibilities of the participants. Each of them will then have to identify the ones that they prefer: usually 5-10. There will also be 4 white cards representing a sort of "jolly", on which the participant may indicate the names of professions not present among those made available;
- Sheet compilation (90 min.) Users will be invited to select one of the professions they have chosen at first – a work they consider to be ideal for themselves, a sort of "dream job". This task is not necessarily inaccessible or unrealistic, but can be a long-term goal, not really achievable in the immediate context. Next to this, the individual will have to select one or two professions that are considered interesting and that could be realistically pursued in the near future. Users will be given the sheet at the end of this section, with the request to fill one for each of the three professions. The goal is to provide a systematic reflection space on the possible working objectives. If the "dream job" proved to be a possible option in the short term, participants should still compile the three sheets to practice and improve their ability to compare the resources they possess with those required by a specific profession. During the compilation, participants can talk and help each other, while the conductor will pass regularly from one participant to another to help and verify that what has been written is meaningful;
- Debate in plenary (60 min) The final part will consist in sharing a profession with each member of the group, preferably the one that is most likely to be performed in an acceptable time. The group can help the participant better define the professional role and identify the skills possessed and those that the individual needs to develop further. The most important goal of this phase, however, is to test each participant in talking about the profession they intend to do: this will allow them to start identifying themselves in that profession and will push them to improve their ability to talk about themselves to others;
- Key skills in the selection process and core of the next tutorial.

Sheet: Professions cards

Name

Name of the job	
What kind of work does he do? (main tasks carried out)	
Requirements (e.g., qualifications, certificates)	
Where and how does he work? (entrepreneur, independent professional, in a company, public sector, ...)	
What characteristics must he possess to do this job?	
For carrying out this work: what do I possess?	
For carrying out this work: what am I missing?	
If I were to choose this work: advantages	
If I were to choose this work: disadvantages	

9.7 *8th group meeting: How to talk about personal professionalism*

Sara Jukic

At this point in the ESPoR path, the story of personal previous work experiences needs to be more precise and more reliable in order to achieve two goals. The first is to further promote both the identification of skills and self-efficacy perception with respect to their mastery, and the ability to use them in different contexts. The second is to improve the ability to talk convincingly about personal skills with future career consultants and potential employers.

This meeting will try to reach the two above-mentioned goals through the simulation of selection interviews. Initially, two simulations will take place, with participants who are believed to be more available. Subsequently, the compilation of a sheet will allow them to get prepared and the next simulations will prove that they can be more effective and convincing if they do not get totally unprepared for such an important appointment. The main goal of the meeting is not actually the training to hold a selection interview in the best way, but to emphasize the importance of being able to tell personal experiences in a organized and targeted way, in order to enter more effectively in the labour market.

Before describing in detail the structure of the meeting, we suggest to refer to a method that is often used by recruiters to gather reliable tales about the specific skills possessed by candidates, known by the acronym STAR. It is useful that simulations follow this structure so that participants learn to tell their experiences in a more structured, accurate and complete way.

9.7.1 The STAR method

This method is defined by the acronym "S.T.A.R." as it favours the structured tale of:
   S – a Specific experience, usually professional but not limited to,
   T – in which a Task had to be carried out,
   A – which assumed an Action,
   R – which led to a Result.
Sharing an experience through a method like the one proposed is useful because it allows:
   • the elaboration of a narration through a structured and repeatable process;
   • the emergence and enhancement of a skill set developed in a variety of learning contexts (formal, non-formal and informal);
   • the sharing of information based on facts that have actually happened and have been experienced;
   • the contextualization of their professional experience through concrete examples that are simple to process and transmit.
Specifically, through the Star method they will tell a past experience in the form of a story, which will have to point out:
   • **S – the potentially critical situation.** In the description it will be important to be specific and detailed to allow the interlocutor to clearly understand what is to be transmitted. The situation may come from a previous work experience, a volunteer experience, or an event relating to the edu-

cational sphere as the university period. In any case, it is good that the tale does not deviate too much from the work context and that it follows the 5Ws of journalism (Who? What? When? Where? Why?). The choice of the situation to tell should serve as an instrument of the improvement of a skill or a behaviour useful to the role for which a person is applying.

e.g. *The advertising revenue of the newspaper I worked for was declining due to the loss of a large number of advertisers.*

- **T – the task or challenge to be faced.** It will be important to highlight the problematic side of this goal, since the more complex and difficult it will be, the more will it be possible to enhance the efficacy of the intervention adopted. In other words, the narration of the task to be faced can be structured in negative terms as the action and the result (the next two phases) will be subsequently emphasized by using positive expressions. It's good to remember that what the Star method offers is not just a way to think and tell about their professionalism, but also and above all an effective way to "sell it" to their interlocutor!

  e.g. *I was entrusted with the task of finding useful strategies for the 10% increase in the number of advertisers compared to the previous year.*

- **A – the actions put in place to deal with the situation.** In the description it will be necessary to be as detailed as possible and focus on the enhancement of the activities set up by oneself rather than by other colleagues or by the working group. It will be useful to talk using the first person (avoiding the use of "we") with positive expressions and focusing on the passages that have led to the positive outcome of the challenge. It might be helpful to expose the personal mode to analyse the problem. The aim of the story of the action taken will be to highlight the professional skills and/or attitudinal abilities required to solve the problem, without the need to explicitly expose them.

  e.g. *My strategy was based on the design of a promotional package and its comparison with those proposed by other newspapers in the area. I also organized a training course for account executives involving industry experts and university lecturers, where we were able to discuss and explore new, more competitive and effective sales strategies.*

- **R – the result of the actions taken.** Make sure the description of the obtained result is transmitted in positive (avoid the use of "not") and objective terms (it is advisable to use any possible numeric data, even if indicative) and is sufficiently specific to highlight the role played in achieving this result. It will be important to be specific in the description avoiding unnecessary digressions and uncertainties. It is advisable to anticipate the questions by avoiding to insert examples that do not facilitate self-description in positive terms. However, it is good to keep in mind that some examples of non-positive results, if appropriately shared, may prove useful in enhancing personal qualities, such as the ability to deal with adversity or the adaptability in a variety of situations.

  e.g. *The actions taken have been so effective that we've increased the number of our advertisers by 20%!*

9.7.2 The activities

> **Goals:**
> - improve the ability to tell past experiences in an organized way;
> - improve the ability to demonstrate the skills possessed through the tale of past experiences;
> - encourage a positive attitude toward the selection interview;
> - improve the ability to effectively hold a selection interview.
>
> **Duration**: 3 hours.
>
> **Materials:**
> - professional experiences sheet.

Process:
- Introduction (15 min) The activities of the day are explained by defining theme and goals of the meeting;
- Conducting two selection interviews (30 min) Two selection interviews will be simulated by inviting two members of the group to take part. Before simulating the interviews, it will be agreed with them which is the profession they are applying for, preferably choosing what they identified as being more feasible in the previous tutorial of the Professions cards. The time for this first phase may seem limited, but it may also come to an end sooner than expected, because participants will struggle a lot to talk about their previous work experiences. The conductor chooses a skill among those important for the chosen role, which he considers to be possessed by the participant and be proved with the story. The "recruiter" will initially ask the question "Tell me an experience where you had to <skill>?". Following a first tale that is likely to be very scarce, he will try to help the participant by following the STAR structure but without exaggerating, in order to highlight the gap between the simulation conducted at this phase and the one that will be carried out later. The operator will then ask the participant questions that can guide him/her in this path such as: "S – Who were you with? When did it happen? Where were you? ... T – What should a person do in that situation? A – What did you actually do? R – What did you get behaving that way?". At the end of the two interviews, the conductor will emphasize the need for the story to be improved and that, therefore, it is necessary to get prepared;
- Sheet compilation (45 min.) There are several sheets available on the professional experiences, and each participant is asked to compile at least one of them, as closely as possible to one or more skills consistent with the profession chosen and described in the previous tutorial, with which they hope to be able to hold a selection interview as soon as possible. Depending on the group's literacy level, the sheet may be presented in full, or earlier, some parts may be deleted to simplify it;
- Conducting additional selection interviews (60 min). The conductor, who in the previous phase will have given a little more attention to the two members who simulated the job interview at the beginning of the tutorial, will invite them to hold the interview again, allowing them to keep in

hand the sheet just filled in. On this occasion, the conductor will ask more questions to the candidate in order to guide him/her better and to help him/her be more complete in telling their experience, inspired by some of the questions below. It will be easy to demonstrate that once a person is prepared, he/she is more complete, more focused and more convinced in telling his/her own experiences, making it more convincing and increasing the probability of being employed by the employer. Subsequently, other selection interviews will be simulated with some of the remaining members of the group and, immediately, the participant's strengths and areas of improvement will be shared. Since, as mentioned above, this meeting is not primarily aimed at training on conducting a job interview, it is not necessary for everyone to simulate it: for parts of the group it will still be useful because it will make them understand the importance of the narration of their previous experiences, and will still improve their ability;

- Presentation of the STAR Method (20 min). During the tutorial, the STAR method is used by the conductor but without the participants being informed. At the end of the meeting, it may be helpful to explain it, quoting some of the participants' tales as examples of the four phases;
- Conclusions (10 min). At the end of the meeting, the conductor re- calls the moments experienced, further underlines the improvements gained after compiling the sheet, and invites participants to compile additional sheets on other experiences that they believe can convince a recruiter to hire them.

STAR method guide questions

Phase 1 Situation	Who has been involved with the problematic situation?
	What did it happen? Where are we in the tale?When did it happen?
	Why did you find yourselves in that situation?
Phase 2 Task	What was the problem? (in detail)
	What made the problem difficult to solve?What were you asked to do? (in detail)
	Was it the first time you faced such a challenge
Phase 3 Action	How did you analyse the problem?
	What alternatives did you evaluate?
	What did you decide to do concretely? (in detail)
Phase 4 Result	What did your action change? (in detail)
	Why was it important? (in detail)How was the problem solved?
	What did you learn from that?

Sheet: Job experience description

Name_____

What is the name of the job?	
When did I do this work? (from…to…)	
For whom was I working? (name of company or other organisation)	
Where did I do it? (In a company, outside, at home, etc…)	
With whom did I have to work? (teamwork, autonomous work, under a line manager, etc…)	
What did I do, specifically? (taks carried out)	
What did I need to have in order to do this work? (any certificates, degree, etc…)	
What did I need to know in order to do this work? (skills possessed)	
What have I learned thanks to this work? (skills and abilities acquired)	
What was difficult for me about this work? (difficulties encountered)	
If I were to choose to do this work again: What would the advantages be? What would be disadvantages be?	
Would I like to find work of a similar kind? (future expectations)	

9.8 *Back office: preparation of the final document*

Alessandro Buffoli and Veronica Hurtubia

Once the group activities have been completed, the operator will focus on the preparation of the final document, by systematizing each migrant's path within the predefined structure. The result should be considered a draft to be used at the last meeting with the migrant, whose goals and modes of conduct will be described in the next paragraph, in order to share it with him/her and possibly complete it.

The summary document should be as complete as possible and include experiences, skills, but also career expectations. It consists of the following 5 parts: 1) brief narration of personal career; 2) educational path; 3) work experiences; 4) technical and transversal skills; 5) future professional projection. This document should not be intended or written as if it were a curriculum vitae, which instead aims to promote the person towards the labour market, and contains information that has been selected from time to time according to the recipient. In contrast, the final document can be a good starting point for writing a curriculum vitae later on, either because it has all the information it needs, or because it provides guidance on which jobs or sectors are most close to the migrant's interests and capacities.

The preparation begins with sections 2, 3 and 4, concerning training and working, formal and non-formal experiences, and the skills acquired. Subsequently, it is necessary and possible to proceed to a synthesis that returns unity to the user's profile. This is the key step in all career counselling and represents its purpose: Self-definition and prefiguration of goals to reach are two counselling products that are placed respectively at the beginning (part 1) and at the bottom of the document (part 5).

The reason for this position is in the synthetic character that the two pages express. The first has the task of presenting the subject: it will include biographical data and photography, but will also – and above all – contain a narration offering the person's profile. This page is therefore a kind of prologue, fulfilling a function that is simultaneously introductory and interpretative with respect to the content of the pages that will follow. Hence the opportunity to compile this section as a final step, after having had the chance to review and synthesize the experiences lived and the skills acquired by the migrant.

The last page also has a synthetic character, but time horizon changes. Past and present have defined the initial presentation, now it is necessary to project in the future. Thus, the final page expresses the design emerging from counselling, and offers meaning, direction, and goals the individual has manifested. It is the fruit of the experienced journey and, thanks to the projection towards the future that it expresses, is the final step the conductor will be asked to enter. It must contain those considerations that are thought to be important for the subject's career development. Interests and preferred contexts can be included, in which personal preferences, professional values and professional goals can be declined.

The compilation of the final document of the ESPoR path assumes that the migrant has actively participated in all the activities previously proposed by the

operator. The compilation phase, in fact, must be fulfilled with the information that has previously emerged in relation to training and work activities, to their technical and transversal skills, and in terms of career goals – which are more realistic, more lived as personal experiences and therefore achievable. In the event of absences, depending on when these occurred, some information will be missing, and the participant may show an unsatisfactory level of maturity over his/her career expectations. It will be the operator's task to try to compensate for the deficiencies, using the final interview or other initiatives that he will find helpful in order to fill any gap.

All information entered in the final document must be in two languages, one familiar to the user (his/her mother tongue or another well-known language) and the other useful to present themselves to the context of reference. Those who wish to stay in Italy will be encouraged to write it in Italian and in their family language. Those who are considering the possibility of settling in a European country other than Italy can choose, in addition to their familiar language, directly the language of the country they would like to go. Others, on the other hand, may choose to use English simply because it is the most popular language and therefore easier to spend in different contexts.

ESPoR document drafting

Below are some guidelines for filling in the different sections of the document. If some of the entries listed do not have enough data to be sufficiently compiled, it is necessary to delete them and not to leave them empty. In particular, the entry relating to the possession of the certificate concerning the training courses to which the migrant participated must be left only if the certificate is available, otherwise it must be removed.

I. First part – General presentation

The goal of this part is to provide the reader with a first image of the person, through some biographical data and a brief narration of his/her life story. While on the one hand, this part does not require special efforts to retrieve the necessary information (much is the material coming from the 1st individual interview "The story of my career" and the 1st and 2nd group meeting "My career box "), on the other hand, it presents the difficulty of identifying the most important information and being able to describe them in a very small space.

First part compilation:
- Application of the ID photo. It is advisable to follow the guidelines applying to any photograph to be included in a curriculum vitae. It should be taken for this purpose only, not cut out from other photos, with the face in the foreground, neck and shoulders visible and a slight smile on.
- Compilation of personal data. Name, surname, place and date of birth are indicated.
- Short self-narration. The subject is invited to write a short text containing the most salient information. They can be related to their family background, their training and work path, their fields of interest, etc. It is im-

portant that this information is a salient element for the subjects and previously analysed in their path.

II. Second part – Educational experiences

The purpose of this second part is to describe the user's educational experiences, both in Italy and in the country of origin or in other countries, paying particular attention to the skills and abilities that the course has possibly allowed to develop. Useful information to draw this section will come from the work that has been done in the following meetings: "My career box", "How to train and work in Italy", "How to talk about personal professionalism", "Description of professional qualifications and skills".

It is important that, when drafting the text, the operator has clear ideas about the educational system of the country of origin and its correspondence with the Italian system.

If there are more training experiences to tell, it is usually best to point them in reverse chronological order, that is, from the most recent to the earliest, believing that the most recent are also the most qualifying ones.

Second part compilation:

- Title: course title with type indications (primary school, secondary school, technical institute, vocational training, degree, Master course, etc.).
- Duration: for long-term courses it is good to indicate the year of beginning and end; for short-term courses, indicate the year in which the course was acquired and its duration (e.g., for a gardening course, "2013, duration 80 hours").
- Evaluation: to be filled out only if an evaluation has been made and paying attention to help the reader understand its value (for example, do not indicate "80" but "80/100": if the scale is not indicated the raw data is not interpretable).
- Possession of the certificate: indicate Yes or No depending on whether or not the person holds the document attesting he/her possesses the degree certificate.
- Language: Write the official language in which the course was held. It is possible to indicate multiple languages, including dialect if necessary, if the course was not held in one language only.
- Topics: identify and list the main topics discussed during the course, trying to use a language that can be understood by those who work in the Italian or European labour market. If the user is in possession of basic qualifications only (primary school), it is suggested to enhance skills such as reading, writing, mathematics, etc.

III. Third part – Working experiences

The aim of this third part is to describe the work experiences that the user has made in both the native country and in Italy or other countries. Both formally acknowledged experiences (with a work contract) and non-formal experiences,

such as selling fruits or other products at the market, cultivating a vegetable garden, managing a family or an association budget must be considered.

Useful information to draw this section will come from the work that has been done in the following meetings: "How to train and work in Italy", "How to talk about personal professionalism", "Description of professional qualifications and skills".

If there are more training experiences to tell, it is usually best to point them in reverse chronological order, that is, from the most recent to the earliest, believing that the most recent are also the most qualifying ones.

Third part compilation:
- Job/Role: describe the type of work the person has performed or the specific role covered, such as sales clerk, salesperson, accountant, IT.
- Duration: specify the beginning and end of the experience, indicating only the years if it was long (example: 2014 – 2016) or month and year if it was shorter (example: 11/2015 – 3/2016 or 3-5/2016 or 3/2015).
- Company – Place: indicate the name of the company, the city and the country where the work was performed; if the job was performed informally, indicate only the place and, if possible, the context (example: market, agricultural fields, home).
- Language/s: indicate the language/s spoken by the worker in the specific work, dialects included.
- Task – Relations: Describe the job detailing the main tasks carried out (e.g. budget management, customer relationship, cleaning of premises) and people with whom the worker related (examples: logistics manager, customers, suppliers, colleagues, technicians).

IV. Fourth part – Skills portfolio

The aim of this section is to list the migrant's skills, which will have to be as consistent as possible with the training and work experiences described above.

Useful information to draw this section will come from the work that has been done in the following meetings: "The cards of transversal skills", "The cards of professions", "Description of professional qualifications and skills".

Skills will be organized in two macro-sections:
- Technical skills: technical skills are linked to one or more specific jobs or professionalism. They are knowledge and skills that can be learned through professional courses, work experiences, but also non-formal experiences. For example: for a bricklayer, these skills will be knowledge of building materials, the ability to prepare concrete and build reinforced concrete elements or brick masonry, etc. It is important to find the right balance between a generic description and an overly detailed one: in the first case, the migrant's skills are not valued; in the second there is a risk to be not credible and to be boring in reading.
- Transversal skills: transversal skills are the most general, which can be found and transferred to more jobs or professions. For the compilation of this part, the specific tutorial conducted during the third group meeting is

particularly useful. Starting from the sheet compiled by the migrants, a list will be made including the transversal skills that presumably characterize them most. Each skill will be accompanied by a simple description demonstrating its possession (example: Cooperation – Especially during my work as a salesman, I have proven to be able to work efficiently with managers and colleagues).

V. Fifth part – Career paths

This section aims to collect, in a narrative form, the migrant's career wishes and plans. It is important that they are as consistent as possible, first of all with the interests and skills described above, but also with the concrete job opportunities that are supposed to be offered to the migrant.

This part may contain references to:

1. Interests. It is possible to refer to general areas of interest (e.g.: nursing professions, maintenance work) or specific professions (example: health- care worker, gardener, electrician). Especially in the second case, it may be useful to detail other elements that focus more on the interest, such as the type of user or context (example, elderly care at home or at reception facilities).
2. Skills. With reference to the stated interests, it is good to highlight the main skills that prove that the person is able to do that job. This can be done by recalling previous training and work experiences in the specific sector (e.g.: family care experiences, garden maintenance and gardening courses).
3. Professional values. If they have emerged along the way, the main professional values can also be highlighted, indicating the characteristics the worker would like to find in the work (e.g.: the importance of working in direct contact with people, the importance of carrying out manual work).

VI. Sixth part – Contextual references

The document ends with the text below, which is fundamental for understanding the usefulness and validity of the document in relation to the context and the moment in which it was produced.

This document is the result of a balance of competencies to which <NAME AND SURNAME> participated from <START MONTH> to <MONTH OF END> <YEAR> at <ENTRY NAME>. The path included both individual and group activities and has been conducted by the operator <NAME OF THE OPERATOR>.

The present document is neither a curriculum vitae nor a skills certification. Instead, it aims to provide the most complete and truthful picture of the training and work experience, skills and work motivations both to <NAME AND SURNAME> themselves, and to all operators and experts in job placement that can help them in labour market more efficiently and effectively.

Portfolio example IT-EN

Progetto co-finanziato dall'Unione Europea

MINISTERO DELL'INTERNO

FONDO ASILO, MIGRAZIONE E INTEGRAZIONE (FAMI) 2014-2020
OS2 Integrazione/Migrazione legale. ON3 Capacity Building - lett. n) Scambio di buone Pratiche

ESPoR

European Skills Portfolio for Refugees

Nome Name	**Ahmed**
Cognome Surname	**Abdel Aziz**
Nato a Place of birth	**Cairo, ET**
Nato il Date of birth	**02/05/1987**

Sono nato in Egitto e ho sempre vissuto al Cairo. Mio padre era taxista e mia madre è casalinga. Ho tre fratelli e due sorelle.
Ho frequentato una scuola secondaria di tipo tecnico e successivamente mi sono laureato in informatica. Ho lavorato per aziende che si occupavano di programmazione e gestione di software. Mi piacerebbe continuare a lavorare nell'ambito delle IT.

I was born in Egypt and I always lived in Cairo. My father was a taxi driver and my mother is a housewife. I have three brothers and two sisters.
I attended to a technical high school and then I received a Bachelor's degree in IT. I worked for companies in the field of software design and management. I would like to continue my career in IT.

Educazione
Education

Titolo Title	**Laurea in Scienze e Tecnologie Informatiche** Bachelor degree in Information Technology
Durata Duration	3 anni 3 years
Valutazione Valuation	90/100
Possesso certificato Certificate possession	Sì Yes
Ente e luogo Organization and place	Cairo University, Faculty of Information Tecnology
Lingua Language	Arabo Arabic
Argomenti Topics	Programmazione software Programmazione di database, Sicurezza informatica E-Commerce Software Engineering, Database Design, Information and Computer Networks Security, E-Commerce

Titolo Title	**Maturità Informatica e telecomunicazioni** High School Diploma in Computer and telecommunications
Durata Duration	5 anni 5 years
Valutazione Valuation	75/100
Possesso certificato Certificate possession	No No
Ente e luogo Organization and place	Integrated technical school, Il Cairo
Lingua Language	Arabo Arabic
Argomenti Topics	Informatica Information technology

Titolo	
Title	
Durata Duration	
Valutazione Valuation	
Possesso certificato Certificate possession	
Ente e luogo Organization and place	
Lingua Language	
Argomenti	
Topics	

Esperienze lavorative

Job experiences

Lavoro/Ruolo Job/Role	**Sistemista informatico** System administrator
Durata Duration	2005 - 2010
Azienda e luogo Company and place	EDS Chemical, Cairo, ET
Lingua/e Language/s	**Arabo, Inglese** Arabic, English
Mansioni e relazioni	Installazione e configurazione hardware e software; Applicazione aggiornamenti del sistema operativo, patch e modifiche di configurazione; Fornire consulenza e assistenza.
Tasks and relationships	Installing and configuring new hardware and software; Applying operating system updates, patches, and configuration changes; Answering technical queries and assisting users.

Lavoro/Ruolo Job/Role	**Commesso in supermercato** Supermarket clerk
Durata Duration	2005-2010
Azienda e luogo Company and place	Spinneys Egypt, Cairo
Lingua/e Language/s	**Arabo** Arabic
Mansioni e relazioni	Gestione cassa, posizionamento e prezzamento della merce; Assistenza clienti
Tasks and relationships	Operate a cash register, arranging and pricing products; Customer service

Portfolio delle competenze

Competences' portfolios

Competenze tecniche

- Programmazione software
- Programmazione di database
- Sicurezza informatica
- E-commerce
- Conoscenza dei sistemi operativi e delle applicazioni, nonché risoluzione dei problemi hardware e software

Technical skills

- Software engineering
- Database design
- Computer and networks security, e-commerce
- Knowledge of operating systems and applications, as well as hardware and software troubleshooting

Competenze trasversali

- **Problem solving** – Soprattutto lavorando come sistemista informatico, ho imparato a fronteggiare con velocità e autonomia le urgenze più disparate.

- **Precisione** – In entrambi i miei lavori ho dovuto mostrare precisione: lavorando alla cassa e programmando software.

- **Cooperazione** – Soprattutto lavorando come commesso, ho dovuto collaborare con un gran numero di colleghi.

- **Disponibilità** – Come assistenza clienti e nel lavoro e come informatico ho dimostrato di essere sempre pronto ad aiutare i miei clienti.

Soft skills

- Problem solving – Especially working as system administrator, I learnt to face the most varied urgencies quickly and autonomously

- Precision – In both my former jobs, I had to show my exactitude: operating a cash register and programming softwares.

- Cooperation – Especially working as clerk, I was used to collaborate with a large number of colleagues.

- Helpfulness – As customer assistant and system administrator, I proved to be ready to help my clients.

Percorsi di carriera

Career paths

Mi piacerebbe continuare a lavorare nell'ambito delle IT. Inoltre, mi piacerebbe poter lavorare in un'azienda che mi permetta di crescere sia in termini di competenze che di carriera.
Infine, mi piacerebbe lavorare in un ambiente in cui possa relazionarmi con persone diverse.

I would like to pursue my career in the IT field. Furthermore, I would like to be able to work in a company that allows me to grow both in terms of skills and career.
Lastly, I wish to work in a place where I can interact with several people.

9.9 *2nd face-to-face interview: confirmation of the final document*

Domenico Delcuratolo and Diego Boerchi

Once the writing of the document is complete, the next step is organising the second and last face-to-face interview in which the draft of the final document will be shared with the migrant. First, the meeting is another opportunity to recap the specifics of the document dispelling any doubts about its nature. It is particularly necessary to clarify with the migrant that the purpose of the document is other than the curriculum vitae, with which it is possible to confuse it. Still, even the term "Portfolio", and its physical form could create confusion, believing that it may have a legal value that it does not have. This is especially true for those people who do feel the real and psychological need to obtain documents attesting a formal recognition of their political refugee status, allowing them to extend their stay in the host country and speed things up for an economically satisfactory job.

Other than that, the final interview has two aims that vary depending on the addressee:

- for the migrant, it is an opportunity to have their professionalism written down, which helps them be more conscious, feel more convinced of their resources, and be more effective in promoting themselves on the labour market;
- for the operators, both in this reception centre and in the centres that will host migrants in the future to help them enter the labour market, so that they can easily be aware of their professionalism and career expectations, thus making their support more efficient and effective.

In order for these two aims to be attained, it is important for the operator to produce a coherent and exhaustive synthesis of the migrant's training and professional path. At the same time, it is important for the latter to recognize themselves in the content and in everything that has been described in the document. This interview therefore offers the opportunity to confront with the migrant on what has been edited and, if necessary, to modify or add information that has been omitted or to remove the superfluous or non-relevant ones. Their active involvement must therefore be encouraged, underlying that the meeting aims to complete a draft and not to deliver a final document in which the migrant could not recognize themselves at all.

9.10 *9th group meeting: Synthesis of the path*

Davide Massaro and Annalisa Valle

The last group meeting aims to sum up the fundamental aspects of the ESPoR path to which people participated, in the second part, "celebrating" the end of the path with the delivery of the final document.

In the first part, which may be sufficient to devote the first of the two hours available, the exploration work must be articulated through an explicit reference

to the two proposed macro-objectives then pursued through the previous meetings, which were:

1. exploration of the important aspects of their work project within the broader migration project and re-actualization of their own skills on the basis of the new context and real job opportunities;
2. ESPoR set-up, i.e. the drafting of the final document consisting of a biographical/work summary.

The prerequisite for the meeting to take place is the guarantee that the interested parties will join carrying their ESPoR document with them.

In regard to the method, the group meeting shall include:

- moments of confrontation/discussion of the group;
- a synthesis part produced by the operator and integrated with some of the narrations emerged during the previous phase;
- the closure of the meeting (and of its experience) by the operator.

The meeting opens up with a general explanation by the operator on the purpose of the meeting. The operator then pushes for a discussion and confrontation by asking individuals to illustrate, through some simple adjectives, the impressions of the path which is about to conclude. At this stage the operator can use a flip chart on which to pin the various adjectives that will be proposed.

The operator makes a first work of synthesis on what arose during the path, emphasizing how the experiences are miscellaneous, how one can possibly live positive or negative feelings, and how the key of interpretation shall not be the right-wrong dichotomy, but path and change can take different forms and ways in everyone. Every story is important, every story is special.

At this point the operator recalls the two macro-objectives and again invites the participants to reflect and to expose, especially in relation to the first of the two macro-objectives, what has mainly changed in their identity and their work project. The operator must be ready to cope with a variety of experiences situated in the two following groups:

1. narration of the change;
2. narration of the continuity.

The second polarity can contemplate two very distant circumstances. They are:

1. the realization that their work identity and their working expectations were essentially congruent with the new context;
2. the realization of a substantial dissatisfaction of the path made.

The operator welcomes all the narrations and repeats, once again, how they all have a value ("citizenship right").

The key links through which the operator can carry out the synthesis work are the following:

- appreciation of the process of change that has led or is leading the person to a re definition of their work identity and their job expectations;
- appreciation of the conditions of continuity in which it is possible to acknowledge a coherence between "before" and "now" from the work point of view;
- appreciation of the condition of continuity in which the person shows dissatisfaction.

In comparison to this last key link, it can be particularly useful to conduct the group into the following considerations:
- in some circumstances of life, changes can be more complex and/or hard;
- the time and the ways of reaching an aim are deeply influenced by individual characteristics;
- everyone must be proud of facing this challenge to a better condition.

The operator may also take advantage of some objective elements to which the summary work can be fastened. The operator will be able to explain to the group how the path has undoubtedly increased their knowledge on:
- the labour market;
- the network of local services involved in work orientation, launch and support;
- retraining tools;

and simultaneously an instrument will be provided: the ESPoR document.

At this point, the operator brings everyone's attention on ESPoR, e.g. inviting people to indicate those skills in their ESPoR that are particularly significant.

The operator collects the feedback pointing out any variability as abundance. Then the operator emphasizes how the ESPoR drafting has had two main functions:
- the first short-term function is the reorganization through the narrative tool of their profile and work project;
- the second medium-to-long-term one is to be able to use ESPoR as a concrete tool for better presenting/describing their own profile and work project to the referents on the labour market.

The time remaining is to indulge in a moment of farewell in which the conductor will physically deliver a copy of the final document and all participants will have the opportunity to celebrate the event.

ESPoR
European Skills Portfolio for Refugees

Macro objective	Phase	What to do	Content
	OPENING	Clarification of the aim of the meeting	
	FIRST REQUEST	Ask each of the participants to illustrate through some simple adjectives which are the impressions on the path that is about to end (pin on a flip chart) Highlight positive and negative experiences in order to reach heterogeneity.	
1. Exploration of the important aspects of their work project within the broader migration project and re-actualization of their own skills on the basis of the new context and real job opportunities;	SECOND REQUEST	Ask each of the participants to illustrate what is highly changed in their identity and their work project	The key links through which the operator can carry out the synthesis work are the following: - appreciation of the process of change - appreciation of the condition of continuity/satisfaction - appreciation of the condition of continuity/dissatisfaction "objective" elements of changes, a new knowledge on: - labour market; - network of local services involved in work orientation, launch and support; - retraining tools;
2. ESPaR set-up, i.e. the writing of the final document consisting of a biographical/work summary.	THIRD REQUEST	Invite each of the participants to indicate the skills in their own ESPaR which they believe to be of special importance	*The operator summarizes and then highlights the two main ESPaR functions:* - the first short-term function is the reorganization through the narrative tool of their profile and work project; - the medium-long-term one is to be able to use ESPaR as a concrete tool for better presenting/describing their own profile and work project to the referents on the labour market.

X. Evaluation of the efficacy of the ESPoR skills portfolio

Diego Boerchi, Roberta Morici and Federico Brajda Bruno

10.1 *Aims*

As part of the ESPoR project, ample space was given to the evaluation of the efficacy of the skills portfolio, determined by research involving more than three hundred migrants and around fifty operators. The endpoint was not that of arriving at the signing of an employment contract, as that would have required a longer research period and, more importantly, the main aim of the skill profiling proposed by the model is to create more dignified and satisfying employment for migrants, a goal that remains valid even when it involves people already employed.

The evaluation of the effectiveness of the skills portfolio focused, therefore, on changes in the migrants' attitudes towards their own careers and the orientation skills they considered they had developed (quantitative research), combined with the migrants' and stakeholders' perceptions regarding the skill profiling process itself and subsequent job placement (qualitative research).

The decision to invest in an evaluation of the efficacy of the skills portfolio was dictated by the need – above all ethical, but also promotional – to demonstrate that a targeted counselling intervention was able to make the difference in improving the occupational situation of migrants, particularly political refugees. Furthermore, such an assessment may identify possible areas for improvement and make it possible to share the results obtained with the wider scientific and professional community so that they can be replicated and act as guidelines to improve future research and interventions. Sharing the quantitative and qualitative data that emerged can contribute to defining and disseminating good practices to be followed for the well-being and satisfaction of the beneficiaries of this type of intervention. The specifics of the two types of research, first quantitative and then qualitative, are presented in detail below.

10.2 *Quantitative research*

The aim of the quantitative research was to verify whether the skill profiling intervention was able to change the skills and attitudes of migrants regarding themselves and work.

10.2.1 Procedure and tools

The procedure used was to administer a battery of self-assessment scales before and after the skill profiling process. Following an analysis of the literature and with the operators' input, it was decided that only the following three scales would be administered. The migrants responded using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Completely). To compensate for a suboptimal knowledge of Italian, the migrants could also answer the questionnaire in English or French. While specific translated and validated versions were already available for the Career Adaptability scale, translations were produced for the other two scales using the back-translation method, to ensure maximum content overlap between the versions in the three languages.

- Career Adapt-Abilities Scale (Savickas and Porfeli, 2012). This instrument was chosen to measure how people cope with career change and transitions, and is made up of four scales, each of which having six items. Concern consists of being aware, of connecting with the past and projecting oneself positively towards planning one's own future occupation. Control refers to the tendency to think that the future can, in part, be managed; it therefore reflects a person's perceived control over their occupational future and the personal responsibility to shape their own career. Curiosity represents the tendency to explore the environment, oneself and the possible scenarios for one's occupational future, acquiring information about oneself and the surrounding world. Confidence is self-efficacy in the ability to face challenges, obstacles and problems that threaten one's occupational and career goals. In addition to the Italian version (Soresi, Nota and Ferrari, 2012), it was possible to obtain the French (Johnston et al., 2013) and English (Porfeli and Savickas, 2012) versions, thanks to previous research published in scientific journals.
- Perceived Job Search Self-Efficacy Scale (Farnese, Avallone, Pepe, and Porcelli, 2007a). This is a single-factorial scale made up of 12 items. It was used to detect people's beliefs concerning the effectiveness of various activities in looking for a job.
- Perceived Work Self-efficacy Scale (Farnese et al., 2007b) is made up of 10 items and was used to measure people's beliefs as concerns effectiveness regarding future and current employment.

10.2.2 Study sample

Three hundred and eighty-eight asylum seekers, divided into 50 groups of six to ten members, participated in the career counselling interventions. The sample consisted mainly of males (82.2%). Their ages ranged between 18 and 56 years, with most being between 20 and 30 years old (71.6%). Participants came from Africa and Asia: Pakistan (23.3%) and Nigeria (22.2%) were the most represented countries, followed by Mali (7.3%), Senegal (6.9%), Gambia (6.2%) and Guinea (5.1%). Since 155 of the initial participants abandoned the intervention or were transferred to another reception centre and did not therefore have the opportuni-

ty to fill in the questionnaire at the end of the intervention, the hypotheses were tested on a sample of 233 migrants.

As regards the level of education, the sample was quite heterogeneous. Specifically, the most common educational level was a middle school certificate (30.7%), followed by primary school education (28.8%), a high school diploma (13.7%), and finally a university degree (10.5%). The remaining 16.3% did not have any educational qualifications.

10.2.3 Results

The ESPoR skills portfolio was effective in developing Career Adaptability and perceived self-efficacy in both work and looking for work.

As shown in Table 1, at the end of the process the migrants felt that they were more capable of adapting their career to make it more satisfying, of taking on a job and of seeking job opportunities. These results are particularly important as the commitment and willingness to review poor quality choices are closely linked to how much the migrant feels capable of managing their career, facing the labour market and searching for a new job.

The effect of the change was strong as regards self-efficacy in the search for work, followed by Concern and Curiosity. The effect was moderately strong as regards work self-efficacy, Control and Confidence.

Table 1
Significance and effect size of the differences between the scores of the scales administered before and after the intervention

Scale	N	Before		After		Difference between means (1)	Cohen's d effect size
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
CA Concern	228	3.19	1.078	3.99	0.693	0,795***	0,88
CA Control	229	3.70	1.029	4.29	0.644	0.588***	0,69
CA Curiosity	227	3.28	0.997	4.03	0.722	0,751***	0,86
CA Confidence	226	3.70	1.066	4.26	0.623	0,555***	0,64
Work self-efficacy	232	3.66	0.969	4.22	0.538	0.559***	0,72
Job search self-efficacy	230	3.35	0.909	4.04	0.574	0.689***	0,91

(1) The values of the differences between means are all positive, which indicates that they increased after the intervention. SD = standard deviation.

The development of Career Adaptability explains a large part of the increase in perceived self-efficacy both in work and in the search for a job.

Eighty-one percent of the increase in the level of perceived work self-efficacy was explained by the development of Confidence ($\beta = 0.290$), Curiosity ($\beta = 0.249$) and Control ($\beta = 0.219$). The model, controlled by the initial Career Adaptability level, was statistically significant ($F(8) = 121.320$, $p < 0.000$; see Table 2 for details).

Eighty-two percent of the increase in the level of perceived job search self-efficacy was explained by the development of Curiosity (β = 0.387), Concern (β = 0.264) and Confidence (β = 0.204). The model, controlled by the initial Career Adaptability level, was statistically significant (F (8) = 123.139, p <0.000; see Table 3 for details).

These results are important as they demonstrate how, in order to increase the perception of being ready for work and ready to look for a job, it is important to invest in strategies that act on career planning, on mature, skilled planning that helps the person recognize and give value to their own characteristics in a specific context, which is that of the host country's labour market.

The initial level of Curiosity explains part of the increase in perceived work self-efficacy.

The difference in R2 between models 1 and 2 was only found to be statistically significant (0.014, p = 0.003) for perceived work efficacy, indicating that it increased more for those who had a higher Career Adaptability level before starting the intervention. As shown in Table 2, this difference was only due to the initial positive Curiosity level (β = 0.235).

This result is important for two reasons. The first is that the initial level has a very limited impact on the possibility of improving the migrants' career choices, and that therefore it is potentially possible to obtain results with any migrant participating in an ESPoR skill profiling process. The second reason is that Curiosity seems to be the most important skill since it produces positive effects both when it develops and when it is already initially possessed by migrants.

Table 2
Role of the initial level and development of Career Adaptability on increasing perceived work self-efficacy

	Standardised β (1)	t	Sign.
Model 1			
CA Concern: development	**0.153**	3.466	0.001
CA Control: development	**0.328**	6.081	0.000
CA Curiosity: development	0.086	1.674	0.096
CA Confidence: development	**0.425**	6.755	0.000
Model 2			
CA Concern: development	0.107	1.576	0.116
CA Control: development	**0.219**	3.024	0.003
CA Curiosity: development	**0.249**	3.394	0.001
CA Confidence: development	**0.290**	3.186	0.002
CA Concern: initial level	0.093	1.317	0.189
CA Control: initial level	-0.131	1.753	0.081
CA Curiosity: initial level	**0.235**	3.060	0.002
CA Confidence: initial level	0.161	1.744	0.083

(1) Statistically significant values are shown in bold

Table 3

Role of the initial level and development of Career Adaptability in increasing perceived job search self-efficacy

	Standardised β (1)	t	Sign.
Model 1			
CA Concern: development	**0.333**	7.753	0.000
CA Control: development	**0.156**	3.006	0.003
CA Curiosity: development	**0.323**	6.479	0.000
CA Confidence: development	**0.213**	3.508	0.001
Model 2			
CA Concern: development	**0.264**	3.909	0.000
CA Control: development	0.096	1.340	0.182
CA Curiosity: development	**0.387**	5.310	0.000
CA Confidence: development	**0.204**	2.255	0.025
CA Concern: initial level	-0.106	1.515	0.131
CA Control: initial level	-0.076	1.017	0.310
CA Curiosity: initial level	0.101	1.324	0.187
CA Confidence: initial level	-0.007	-0.077	0.938

(1) Statistically significant values are shown in bold

10.3 *Qualitative research*

The aim of the qualitative research was to complete and perfect the results of the quantitative research, examining the most salient aspects of the skill profiling and job placement support paths in greater depth, both as perceived by the clients (refugees, as the target beneficiaries of the project) and of the other stakeholders involved (counsellors of the partner bodies).

10.3.1 Procedure and tools

The procedure consisted in conducting two versions of an individual semi-structured interview with "Beneficiaries" and "Operators" at the end of the skill profiling process, and in conducting a semi-structured interview with beneficiaries at the end of the process to support job placement, therefore after a period of 6 to 9 months had passed following the conclusion of the skill profiling activity[1].

The tools used were created ad hoc by a group of three researchers for the purposes of the study and were based on an analysis of the literature and the structure of the intervention. In particular, two interview outlines were created: a) an overall assessment of the skill profiling process, formulated in two versions (beneficiaries and operators); b) an evaluation of the participants' subjective experience in assisted job placement. The tools were prepared in both Italian and English.

The beneficiaries to be interviewed were identified by the project partner bodies in accordance with the following selection criteria: intermediate-high level of

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[1] During the planning stage it was decided to conduct a semi-structured group interview (focus group technique) in person, but the health risks, associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, of conducting activities in person, and the limited availability of equipment suitable for conducting videoconferencing sessions made it advisable to replace the group interview with individual interviews.

knowledge of Italian or English, which would guarantee the possibility of conducting the interview independently; basic knowledge of teleconferencing and videoconferencing tools to allow interviews to be carried out; having completed the skill profiling process (for interview 1) as a refugee or counsellor; having at least partially completed the job placement support path (for interview 2). Given the difficulty in identifying subjects with an adequate level of knowledge of the chosen languages, during the recruitment phase the linguistic criterion was extended to beneficiaries who possessed an intermediate-to-high knowledge of French.

Potential participants were contacted individually by the interviewer, and were informed about the purposes and methods of conducting the activity, providing the opportunity to identify the most user-friendly videoconferencing application for the participants. At the time of the initial contact, the beneficiaries were also given the opportunity to indicate their linguistic preference for conducting the interview between Italian, English and French. In cases in which the participants indicated French as their linguistic preference, the interviewer requested the simultaneous presence of an interpreter during the interview. Of the total 17 beneficiaries interviewed, 13 underwent an interview in Italian, 2 in English, and 2 in French with the help of an interpreter.

The interviews were conducted by videoconference using four different applications (Teams, Skype, WhatsApp, Zoom) chosen according to the participants' preferences and level of IT skills. With the consent of the participants, the audio content of the interviews was recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim.

10.3.2 Study sample

Each of the six partner bodies was asked to identify two operators and two or more beneficiaries suitable for the administration of Interview 1; the representatives of three bodies were further requested to identify two or more beneficiaries suitable for the administration of Interview 2.

Interview 1 was conducted with 11 beneficiaries seeking asylum, of whom 7 were men; the absolute majority of the sample came from Sub-Saharan Africa (5 men, 1 woman), but there were asylum seekers from North Africa (Morocco, 1 woman and 1 man), from the Balkan area (Albania, 1 woman), from Central Asia (Tibet, 1 woman) and from the Middle East (Lebanon, 1 man). The level of education was extremely varied, with two participants having higher education qualifications (equivalent to Level II Masters) in their country of origin, although most of the remainder reported education limited to primary school level or no education. Similarly, almost all the participants reported previous work experience as unskilled labourers in the primary or secondary sector; the only exception was a single participant who, prior to migration, was employed as a manager in the field of arts/culture.

Interview 1 was also conducted with 11 operators, 3 of whom were men. Although there was significant variety in terms of professional profile resulting from specific training, all operators reported previous experience in the support of asylum seekers and people of foreign origin living in Italy, but only in 2 cases

did they mention explicit experience with job placement support other than the ESPoR Project.

Interview 2 was submitted to 6 beneficiaries, all men from Sub-Saharan Africa. The level of education in this group was limited exclusively to primary education. Only one of the 6 respondents said he was employed at the time of the interview.

10.3.3 Results

The content of the interviews underwent Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006), as reported by specific currently valid literature.

Most of the participants reported non-specific, poorly defined motivation in the initial approach to the intervention, associated with a situation of extreme fragility deriving from the lack of employment ("Here in Italy it is difficult, without work. Without work, it is difficult").

In this regard, recurring themes concerned the complexity of the Italian employment market ("There are a lot of things: how to behave at work, that's the first thing; the rights of the worker, what their rights and duties are") and the differences found in the job market between the country of origin and Italy ("In our country they look for experience, they don't look for things you know"; "I was a bit confused about finding work in Italy, [...] I needed to understand things... to understand the reality here better. Even if you talk to people, each one tells you their own ideas, but you don't get reliable answers").

To a lesser degree, perceived discrimination by employers also emerged in various interviews ("It is difficult for foreigners [...] I have gone so many times to leave a CV and they [employers, ed.] say "go away, go away", they can't or don't want to listen"), as did legislative and bureaucratic restraints. On the other hand, the requests made by the participants were not very focused, but oriented towards a generic support for introduction into employment, as well as a generic need for further understanding of the characteristics of the context in Italy ("before looking for a job you must try to understand how people live, people's way of life ").

In this sense, the perception, shared by both beneficiaries and operators, was that the intervention is able to respond to both the implicit and explicit needs of the participants: its ability to create greater knowledge of the world of work is in fact associated with an increase in awareness of both the beneficiary's own resources and the opportunities offered by the Italian context, with the consequent structuring of more effective career prospects ("When I was doing that course [...] I learned this project of being a salesperson. Then I didn't know how to do it, so I talked to [the operator, ed.] and I said "look, many years ago I did this job. How can I do, [...] how does it work here in Italy?" So I found this thing, this good project. Because in my heart I have this project – so this is what I learned the most, I... I... loved.").

Operators and beneficiaries found an improvement in the awareness of the transversal skills possessed by the participants, especially those relating to communication ("The skills were present before, but I developed some skills when I arrived here in Italy, and during the course I discovered their name") and relationships ("After this training I understood how to behave when I go to look for a job

[...], yes, above all, how to behave"; "I learned many other things, like... how you have to live with people, how you have to behave with people").

Furthermore, the interviews confirmed the increase in perceived self-efficacy emerging from the quantitative survey ("Now I'm quite excited to find a job, I say that my CV is perfect, but a one-year course can't do this. Yes, the thing it taught me is... is to look, to look, to look, and not to stop"; "There was a day that they did a course that [...] was very useful for me, that they explained how it works when you go looking for [...] you say that you have those skills, you can do these skills. I already had these skills, but I didn't think they were useful"; "Someone in my situation thinks that I have lost my life [...] and then the first thing I thought was to throw away everything I had experienced and start a new one. The most important thing was... it helped me a lot not to underestimate what I'd seen, what I'd experienced, and not throw it away").

Nevertheless, according to the operators, refugees still have a reduced level of autonomy in the creation of occupational networks, especially with people of Italian origin, and in autonomy with respect to specific practices such as drafting a CV.

One point of particular importance is the positive evaluation, shared by operators and beneficiaries, of the group dimension of the intervention. Specifically, the group is represented in the interviewees' narratives as an essential instrument for mutual learning ("If we explain to each other, we understand better") as well as for the opportunities it offers for comparison between the participants, ensuring the chance to create the fundamental elements of a support network ("It was better in a group, because in a group we would change our ideas, we would change things, everyone says what he thinks and then... you get some experience from the others").

10.4 *Conclusions*

As demonstrated by the surveys conducted, the evaluation of the ESPoR skills portfolio provided encouraging results regarding efficacy. Specifically, the data emerging from the quantitative research suggest that the intervention was able to develop better Career Adaptability in migrants and perceived self-efficacy, both at work and when looking for work. This is probably because, on the one hand, the skill profiling aimed to increase the professional awareness of migrants and to support them in defining a career goal: this may have allowed them to set aside, or at least reduce, some perceived barriers in favour of a greater intention to use Concern in career plans to pursue (Wehrle, Kira and Klehe, 2019). On the other hand, the intervention was aimed at increasing knowledge of the Italian labour market, and this may have fostered greater Curiosity in terms of exploring the training and employment opportunities existing in the country, while at the same time making migrants feel more capable in their search for these opportunities.

The fact that the quantitative research showed that the development of a greater ability to adapt one's career choices to the new context is able to improve per-

ceived self-efficacy both in work and in the search for a job can be explained by the capacity of the intervention to promote willingness:

- to persevere, adopting an optimistic attitude and feelings of gratitude, showing Concern for one's own career;
- to rely on one's own actions in the process of looking for a job and constructing one's own career, using the perceived sense of Control;
- to develop a more complete and appropriate understanding of one's own characteristics and resources as well as the structures and state of the labour market, by activating Curiosity;
- to feel effective both in facing challenges and obstacles that threaten one's occupational goals and in the process of constructing one's own career, demonstrating Confidence in one's own capacity.

The data that emerged from the qualitative research confirm the results obtained from the quantitative research, documenting an impression, shared by operators and migrants, of an increase in communication and relational skills and perceived self-efficacy, as well as a general increase in awareness of both one's own resources and the structure and opportunities of the world of work in Italy. Furthermore, thanks to the interviews conducted, the qualitative research revealed that the main barriers encountered by migrants in the resettlement process in Italy were the complexity of the labour market and its differences from that of the country of origin, discrimination, and difficulties in adapting to local habits and customs and in creating networks with Italian people, confirming what is reported by various studies in the literature (see Boerchi, Massaro and Brajda Bruno and Brajda Bruno, Massaro, and Boerchi, under review). Given that career adaptability is an important resource in supporting employability (Savickas, 2011), i.e. the ability to find and keep a first job and the ability to manage career transitions in the labour market (Hillage and Pollard, 1998), we hope that increasing numbers of programmes such as the ESPoR skills portfolio will be used to support migrants in the processes of construction and reconstruction of their career paths. In contrast with the view that knowing how to adapt leads to a downgrading of expectations, a strong Career Adaptability makes people more capable of building future career plans, of facing career transitions and difficult work situations, and of choosing and achieving important goals for themselves (Scioli, Ricci, Nyugen, and Scioli, 2011). This is even more true for migrants, who need more adaptive resources and the conviction of being able to rely on their own capacities for action, which are key factors in the process of integration (Obschonka and Hahn, 2018).

XI. Bibliography

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