



European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Case Study on Diversity Policy in Employment and Service Provision

Brescia, Italy



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Table of Content

1	The country: Setting the city and its diversity policies in context.....	5
1.1	History of migration and composition of the migrant populations.....	5
1.2	National policy context: the law and policy on diversity in employment and the provision of services	6
1.2.1	Employment national legislation	6
1.2.2	Access to services	7
1.2.3	Equality national legislation	8
2	The city.....	10
2.1	Brief description of the city: its location and history.....	10
2.2	The city’s migrant population, its history and characteristics	11
2.3	The city authority: tier of government, responsibilities and structure.....	15
3	The city’s approach to diversity	15
3.1	Historical background and objectives of the policy approach.....	15
3.2	Responsibility: Elected representatives and officials	17
3.3	Collaboration with social partners and NGOs	17
3.4	Policy and practice on monitoring progress.....	18
3.5	Key challenges faced in implementation and broad lessons learnt.....	19
3.6	Potential future policy development	19
4	Employment policy, practice and outcomes	20
4.1	Profile of city employees: data	20
4.2	Employment diversity policy and challenges in the development and implementation of this policy.....	20
4.3	Recruitment, promotion and training.....	21
4.4	Equal pay and working conditions.....	21
4.5	Harassment, discrimination and complaints	21
4.6	Accommodation of cultural and religious needs	21
4.7	Health and safety.....	21
4.8	Recognition of qualifications.....	22
4.9	Special Initiatives.....	22
4.10	Impact of policy and lessons learnt.....	23

5	Diversity in the provision of services	23
5.1	Services provided and contracted out	23
5.1.1	Targeted services for migrants and refugees	23
5.1.2	Universal services	26
5.2	Diversity policy in services.....	26
5.3	Employment profile of service providers	27
5.4	Access to services and monitoring	27
5.5	Cultural awareness of staff	28
5.6	Discrimination against service users	28
5.7	Impact of policy on access to and quality of services and lessons learnt	28
6	Conclusion: Key challenges, lessons and learning for CLIP	29
	Bibliography	31
	Interviewed experts	32
	Appendix	33

Foreword

This report is part of the Eurofound project "Cities for Local Integration Policy" (CLIP), which started in 2006.

The City of Brescia is one of the 25 European cities that cooperate in exchanging information on their Integration Policies to start with on the terrain of housing and in the future on more terrains.

The project aims at collecting and analysing innovative policies and their successful implementation at the local level, supporting the exchange of experience between cities and encouraging a learning process within the network of cities, addressing the role of social partners, NGO's, companies and voluntary associations in supporting successful integration policies, providing objective assessment of current practice and initiatives and discussing their transferability, communicating good practices to other cities in Europe and developing guidelines to help cities to cope more effectively with the challenge of integrating migrants, supporting the further development of a European integration policy by communicating the policy relevant experiences and outputs of the network to: European organisations of cities and local regional authorities, the European and national organisations of social partners, the Council of Europe and the various institutions of the European Union.

The CLIP network is also a cooperation between cities and research institutes. Five research institutes in Bamberg, Amsterdam, Vienna, Liege and Oxford are taking care of the publications of the CLIP project. The researchers of the *Centre on Migration, Policy and Society* (COMPAS) of the University of Oxford are responsible for this report on the City of Brescia. Together with the contact person of the municipal of Brescia, Giovanni Valenti (head of the Office of Integration and Citizenship), an enormous effort has been undertaken to find all necessary data for this report. Many officials and other parties who are involved with integration and welcome policy have been interviewed, as the list at the end of the report shows. They have provided us with reports, statistics and comments on the concept version of this report. Secondly the representatives of local institutions and organisations - listed at the end of this report- have been willing to provide us with information. We want to thank all those who have cooperated in giving information and particularly Giovanni Valenti for coordinating the search of data.

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Andreea R. Torre and Alessio Cangiano

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1 The country: Setting the city and its diversity policies in context

1.1 History of migration and composition of the migrant populations

For more than a century Italy was a country of emigration rather than one of immigration. The shift occurred in the 1970s and 1980s when the number of immigrants arriving balanced that of Italian people emigrating (Martiniello, 1996; Ambrosini, 2001; Zincone and Caponio, 2005). By the second half of the 1980s, foreign workers in the country were more than 300,000 (Reyneri, 2002).

The immigrant population in Italy is characterised by a large pool of irregular residents. This is the result of many migrants either overstaying a residence permit or tourist visa or – to a lesser extent – entering the country without the necessary authorisation. Thus, the evolution of the legal foreign presence in Italy has been largely affected by the chronology of the frequent regularisation programmes. Following the first two regularisation programmes carried out in 1986 and 1990, the number of valid permits in 1991 was already above 600,000. In the 1990s, the number of residence permits grew slowly until the third amnesty, carried out at the end of 1995. More than 250,000 applications were submitted, giving rise to a sudden increase in the amount of legal foreigners. A similar situation occurred three years later with over 253,000 applications submitted for the fourth regularisation programme. However, the real turning point in the evolution of the legal foreign population in Italy took place with the most recent regularisation programme, following the new immigration law enacted in 2002 (the so-called "Bossi-Fini"). More than 700,000 applications were submitted and more than 650,000 new permits were issued, implying a 50% increase in the legal foreign resident population.

Estimates combining the different available data sources suggest that the overall legal foreign population living in Italy at the beginning of 2007 numbered about 3.6 millions people, accounting for 6.2% of the total population (ISMU, 2007; Caritas, 2007). In addition, other 350 thousand irregular migrants were estimated to live in the country at that time (ISMU, 2007). The most stable part of the migrant population – the resident foreign population, i.e. those registered with the local municipalities – numbered 2,938,922 people (1,465,849 women and 1,473,073 men) (ISTAT, 2007). Minors represent nowadays a significant part of the foreign population (666 thousand or 22.6% were less than 18 years old) and contribute substantially to its growth. After the substantial increase that occurred in response to the 2002 regularisation, the foreign population is continuing to grow due to relatively high numbers of births (58 thousand in 2006) and because of quotas for legal entry more generous than in the past (the net migration balance was +238 thousand).

In terms of countries of origin immigration to Italy is rather heterogeneous. Albanians are the largest group (375,947) followed by Moroccans (343,228) and Romanians (342,200). The fourth largest community is the Chinese (144,885) followed by the Ukrainian (120,070, of whom 97,012 are women). Other major migrant groups include Filipinos, Tunisians, Poles and former-Yugoslavs.

1.2 National policy context: the law and policy on diversity in employment and the provision of services

1.2.1 Employment national legislation

According to the Italian Constitution, statutory jobs in the civil service are limited to Italian citizens. Furthermore, according to the Article 48 of the institutive Treaty of the European Community (25th March 1957), workers' free circulation within the EEC does not concern employment within the public administration. Therefore EU citizens can be employed in the civil service only if jobs are not linked directly or indirectly to the exercise of the state sovereignty.

Non-EU citizens can not access public administration positions. There are, however some specific cases in which non-EU citizens can be employed. Article 27 of the 1998 Consolidated Law on Immigration concerning special conditions of entering the country for work allows employment for specific categories of foreign workers as university language lectures. Another exception includes trained nurses who – according to the Article 22 of the 2002 “Bossi-Fini” Immigration Act (2002/189) – can be employed only for temporary contractual jobs.

However, a large number of non-nationals work for public authorities without being employed by them or receiving associated benefits, for example as subcontracted labourers in cleaning services or the construction industry.

Non EU-citizens must hold a residence permit – and meet the other criteria which apply to all workers – in order to obtain a social allowance. Those who transfer their residence abroad lose their right to this allowance but retain their matured social security rights. Non-EU workers legally employed (i.e. paying social security contributions) have the same rights as Italian citizens. With the necessary requirements, she/he can obtain rights to services provided for by Italian legislation.

The main public institutions which grant social security rights to public and private employees are:

- INPDAP (National Institute for Social Security of Public Administration Employees) which deals with the social security tutelage of public employees;
- INAIL (National Institute for the Insurance of Work-related Accidents) which protects employees who have an accident at work or contract a professional disease, guaranteeing them the necessary financial and health services;
- INPS (National Institute for Social Security) which is the main organisation insuring private workers, both employees and the self-employed, providing them with income support when certain events occur (old age, unemployment, maternity, illness).

Contributions paid during the period of work in Italy by a non-EU worker are saved indefinitely in the INPS archives and constitute the insurance status for each worker. This status is ready to be reactivated in the event of renewed employment in Italy, or to be used for payment of a pension.

1.2.2 Access to services

Although the Italian immigration law differentiates between legal and illegal immigrants and their right to access social services, irregular migrants are guaranteed essential rights such as most public health care services and access to public schools for their children.

Italy's *health care system* is regionally based and provides universal coverage free of charge at the point of service. The National Health Plan for 1998-2000 prescribed that it should be organised according to several principles, most notably those of *human dignity* (equal rights for everyone irrespective of personal or social characteristics), *health need* (everyone in need has a right to health care) and *solidarity with the most vulnerable people* (Romero-Ortuño, 2004).

Therefore, the National Health Service (Servizio Sanitario Nazionale) guarantees health care to all citizens, Italian and legally present foreigners, without any difference in treatment. Health care is provided in addition to dependant family members of foreigners legally residing in the country. Enrolment in the National Health Service is necessary for those who wish to take advantage of the right to health care services. Foreigners legally resident in Italy but who are not registered with the National Health Service are guaranteed the following services: urgent hospital care in surgeries and in day-clinics which must be paid for upon discharge, and non-urgent health care upon previous payment of the appropriate tariffs. Health care for those insured by foreign institutions is, instead, governed by international agreements.

According to current legislative provisions, and even after the implementation of the 2002 centre-right reform (the so-called Bossi-Fini Act), migrants in Italy have the right to receive urgent and essential primary and hospital care due to illness or accident, with guarantee of the principle of *continuity* of care; pregnancy and maternity care; *full* health care if under 18; vaccinations according to the rules and within the areas of intervention set by the regions; interventions of international prophylaxis; prophylaxis, diagnosis and treatment of infectious diseases; prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of toxic dependencies. Irregular migrants are given a special anonymous public health card (*Codice SPT: Straniero Temporaneamente Presente*), valid for six months and which allows them to use the above-mentioned health care services in the same conditions as Italians. They are asked to pay the normal contribution or to declare they are unable to pay it (Rima Al-Azar, 2007; Romero-Ortuño, 2004).

In some Italian Regions, Health Information Centres (*Centri di Informazione Sanitaria – ISI*) have been established on experimental basis (i.e. in Piedmont for instance) for foreigners who do not register with the National Health Service. Foreigners without a resident permit, for instance, can have access here to both therapeutic and preventive aspects of the National Health Service facilitated at these centres. Assistance is given in related bureaucratic matters by cultural mediators.

As far as *education* is concerned, access to public schools for minors, even if irregular, is compulsory and remains free.

Adults wishing to attend school can register at the Permanent Territorial Centres (*Centri Territoriali Permanenti*) which are devoted to the education of foreign citizens. These centres operate in some Italian Regions (e.g. Piedmont and Lombardia). They offer a wide range of courses (e.g. courses of Italian and foreign languages, pre-professional training, personal assistance to disabled or elderly people). There are also courses of preparation for the

acquisition of the elementary and middle school certificates, as well as preparation for younger people who wish to proceed to higher secondary and university education. Many centres offer also more culturally oriented courses (e.g. from cinema to psychology, to handiwork, etc).

Other public services delivered to regular migrants include:

- *Housing support* - People with migratory background have the same rights as Italian citizens with regard to access to public housing, help in buying a house, and building a first house for habitation.
- *Legal Representation* - “The State-subsidized Free Defence Institute” guarantees adequate legal assistance (by a lawyer) to low income citizen. This means that the cost of the legal assistance (of the lawyer and her/his consultants) are paid by the Italian state throughout the trial process and for all the related procedure.

However it has to be stressed that, within the immigration law in force, the condition of regularity is considered as a mandatory condition for social integration. Indeed the law specifies that all social integration measures are limited to legal immigrants only. Local councils are not allowed to provide any kind of shelter even in the event of exceptional illegal influxes – something which was permitted by the *Turco-Napolitano* Act (Romero-Ortuño, 2004). Also private organisations (for example, Catholic associations such as the Caritas) are in principle forbidden to assist or host illegal immigrants, although this regulation is not observed by many NGOs and religious organizations.

1.2.3 Equality national legislation

The Italian 1948 Constitution includes a general principle of equality requiring equal treatment irrespective of “personal and social conditions”. Specific and detailed legislation against discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnic origin and religion was introduced in the Italian legal system only in 1998. Before that, the only specific legal tool was the criminal legislation concerning “hate speech”, which included also references to discriminatory acts of a different nature (Simoni 2004).

The Immigration Law 40/98 (*Legge 6 marzo 1998, n. 40*) which regulates immigration and norms concerning the foreigner’s settlement conditions in the country aimed also at facilitating the full integration among people of different origins. To this end, it established major principles to guarantee the equity of treatment irrespective of race and ethnic origins and to promote diversity as a value within public institutions¹.

Advanced antidiscrimination rules were enacted with the 1998 Consolidated Law on Immigration (*Decreto Legislativo 25 luglio 1998, n. 286: Testo Unico*). This law provides a good set of remedies against racial, ethnic and religious – direct and indirect – discrimination by individuals and public authorities. Protection extends to discrimination on ground of nationality. There are not many reported judicial decisions based on the 1998 Act. However,

¹ For instance, article 36 paragraph 3 of the 1998 Act states that public schools have to welcome linguistic and cultural differences as values for a reciprocal respect, tolerance and interchange among cultures. To this end public schools have to promote and support initiatives aiming at safeguarding languages and cultures and implementing of intercultural initiatives.

some of the reported decisions attracted significant interest because of their application to public bodies.

In addition, in order to transpose Directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC in the Italian law, and to implement strands of the European Employment Directive (Council Directive 2000/78/EC), the Italian government approved two decrees in July 2003:

1. The Legislative Decree n. 215 of the 9th of July 2003 which implements the normative 2000/43/CE for the equal opportunities independently of race and ethnic origin. According to this law, all types of direct or indirect discrimination are prohibited.
2. The Legislative Decree n. 216 of the 9th of July 2003 according to which, in addition to race and ethnicity, discrimination in employment, on grounds of religion or belief, became unlawful. Therefore this law opposes all forms of direct or indirect discrimination, restrictions or preferences in access to work, selection, employment conditions, appointment and promotion, based on religion, creed or philosophy of life, as well as disability, age or sexual orientation.

Unlike the 1998 Consolidated Law on Immigration, the above decrees do not mention discrimination on ground of nationality. Furthermore, all legal rules concerning the condition of third countries nationals and stateless persons are explicitly excluded from the scope of application of the decrees. In doing so, both decrees mention not only the rules on entry and residence, but also access to employment, assistance and welfare.

The exclusion of discrimination on ground of nationality, although admitted by the Directive, raises practical problems since often in Italy racial discrimination is disguised under the appearance of discrimination against “non-EU citizens” (Simoni, 2004).

In its Third Report on Italy (2006), the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance reported also that the current Italian legislative framework concerning diversity policies and antidiscrimination policy do not call for statutory obligations on behalf of public administrations to promote equality and prevent discrimination in the process of fulfilment of their functions. According to ECRI, this particular aspect needs to be introduced within the national legislation.

It is worth noticing that the introduction of clear legal remedies for those who are victims of racial or ethnic discriminatory acts is a relatively new subject in the Italian legal and political debate. The low priority given to combating discrimination by social and political actors implies also that there is little information and empirical research on the dimension of the actual problems.

Although racial and ethnic discrimination towards people of migrant origin can often be observed, the reaction to xenophobia has not taken the form of well-defined policy proposals, as the debate has been mostly focused on immigration law, and not on – strictly speaking – antidiscrimination law. When action was taken at the parliamentary level to introduce antidiscrimination rules (e.g. the 1998 Consolidated Law on Immigration), it was given little visibility, probably in order to avoid political costs.

The above mentioned legislative decree n. 215/03, issued by the Italian Government to enforce the EU directive n. 2000/43, has also established a specialized body for the promotion of equal treatment and the fight against discriminations based on race or ethnic origin. Indeed, the National Office Against Racial Discrimination (*Ufficio Nazionale*

Antidiscriminazioni Razziali, U.N.A.R.) was set up in 2004 to monitor the operativeness of protection tools for equality treatment.

UNAR is not an autonomous body, since it is established within the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. According to its founding act, the competences of the office include: providing independent assistance to victims of discrimination in pursuing their complaints; carrying out independent surveys on discriminations; promoting the adoption of specific measures aimed at eliminating or compensating the disadvantages related to a certain race or ethnic origin; proposing legislative reforms concerning racial and ethnic discrimination; issuing recommendations on matters related to racial and ethnic discrimination; disseminating information concerning the rules on equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin; and launching a strong awareness-raising campaign on equal rights of people of any race or ethnic origin.

2 The city

2.1 Brief description of the city: its location and history

The City of Brescia, located within the Lombardy region, is the principal town (*capoluogo*) of the Province of Brescia, which, producing 3.5% of the Italian GDP, is the fourth economic centre of the country. Brescia is a densely urbanised area characterised by a significant process of development of the tertiary sector. Although the finance sector is also growing – some of the new financial hubs are located in the city – Brescia's industry is still very much based on manufacture businesses in the areas of metallurgic industry, of textiles and food processing, and on agriculture (zootechny and milk industry). Also, Brescia's Multiutility, ASM, represents one of the largest producers of energy of the country together with AEM of Milan. Furthermore, the Province is national leader for the disposal of waste and its transformation in electricity – 35,000 private houses and all the public offices are heated using this energy. Most of the industrial areas are spread in the Province but the city of Brescia still houses some of them: le Fornaci, San Polo etc. Most businesses are medium- or small-size firms, many of which are family-run businesses. The labour market is characterised by high segmentation and flexibility.

The city has a surface of 90.7 km². On the 1st of January 2008, the number of residents was estimated at 189,742 by the Registry Office of the Brescia City Council, while the number of families residing in the city is about 90,000. The Province of Brescia has less than 5% of unemployment and its large industry and expanding labour market in the tertiary sector have allowed for the settlement of over 150,000 foreign workers, almost 30,000 of whom in the city of Brescia alone. As some recent research has shown, in this area migrants represent a significant proportion of the labour force, playing a role to a large extent complementary to local workers who are not available anymore to take up the jobs in the industrial and especially manufacturing sectors (Ambrosini, 2001; Marini, 2002).

2.2 The city's migrant population, its history and characteristics

The Lombardy Region hosts about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total migrant population of the country. In the Province of Brescia, the foreign population has more than doubled in the past 5 years, accounting nowadays for nearly 10% of the Province's total population and for 17% of Lombardy's total foreign population².

Although this large concentration of migrants tends to characterise the Province on the whole, foreign residents live mainly in some specific areas of the Province, where there is a larger supply of accommodation as well as a concentration of public services³.

Since 1990s, the municipality of Brescia started to host a rapidly increasing number of migrants, mainly characterised by families and with a tendency towards a more permanent settlement within the urban area. Currently, about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the foreign residents in the Province live in the municipality of Brescia (SISTAN, 2006).

In the municipality, the foreign population accounts for 15.3% of the total population (1st January 2008), making Brescia one of the Italian cities with the largest proportion of immigrants in the population. The increase of both the number and the proportion of foreign residents have been dramatic especially since the end of the 1990s – after the 1998 regularisation act. (fig. 1). It is indeed thanks to the contribution of the foreign residents that the overall population has remained more or less constant in the past two decades, as the number of Italian residents has significantly decreased. The Municipality estimates that, taking into account birth rates and family reunions, this trend will take the proportion of migrants at 20% at the beginning of the 2010s.

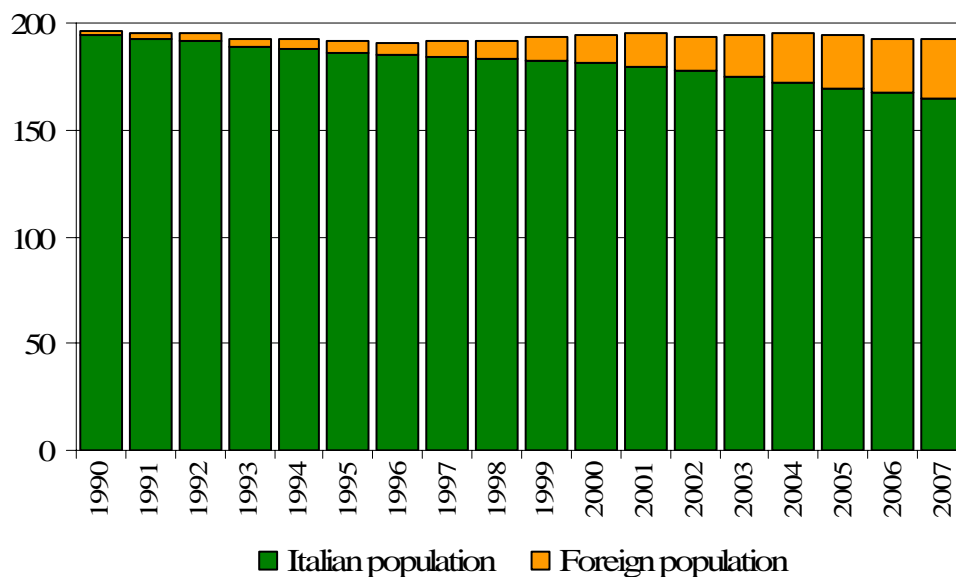
In terms of countries of origin, the largest migrant communities in 2006 were from Pakistan (2,621), Egypt (2,061), China (1,899), Albania (1,774), Ukraine (1,641), Bangladesh (1,471), Ghana (1,236), Indian Sikhs (1,207), Sri Lanka (1,205), and Romania (1,166). As in the rest of the country, in the past few years there has been a significant increase especially of some Central and Eastern European communities –Ukrainians, Moldavians and Romanians.

As far as the gender distribution is concerned, men are still the majority (54%) in the foreign population. This contrasts with the gender structure of the Italian population where women are 53%. However, the proportion of female migrants is rapidly increasing – from 38% in 2000 to 46% in 2007. The foreign population is substantially younger than the Italian population – mean ages are 29 and 47 years respectively.

² Source: <http://demo.istat.it>

³Information to be found at http://www.comune.brescia.it/NR/rdonlyres/8D1FFFD3-7929-4E63-9439-E0FED2E38E6F/0/PROGETTOSICUREZZAGENNAIO2007_Online.pdf, *Progetto Sicurezza Urbana, Assessorato alla Sicurezza*, 2007: 25

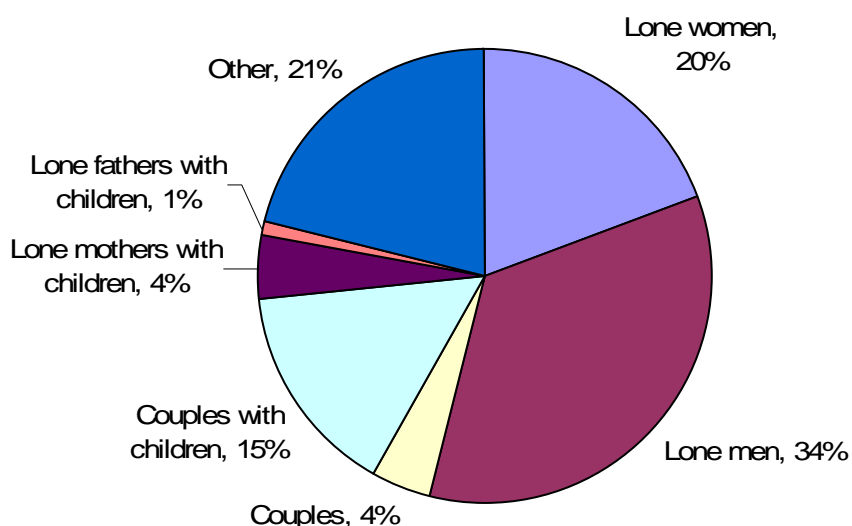
Figure 1. Italian and foreign population in Brescia, 1990-2007



Source: Statistics Office, Brescia City Council

The distribution of migrant households by family type is also very different in comparison to the Italian population (fig. 2), with a much higher proportion of lone men (decreasing) and lone women (increasing). However, migrant couples with children are rapidly increasing. Consistent with this trend, the number and share of minors is also rapidly growing (7,151 in 2007, one quarter of the total foreign population).

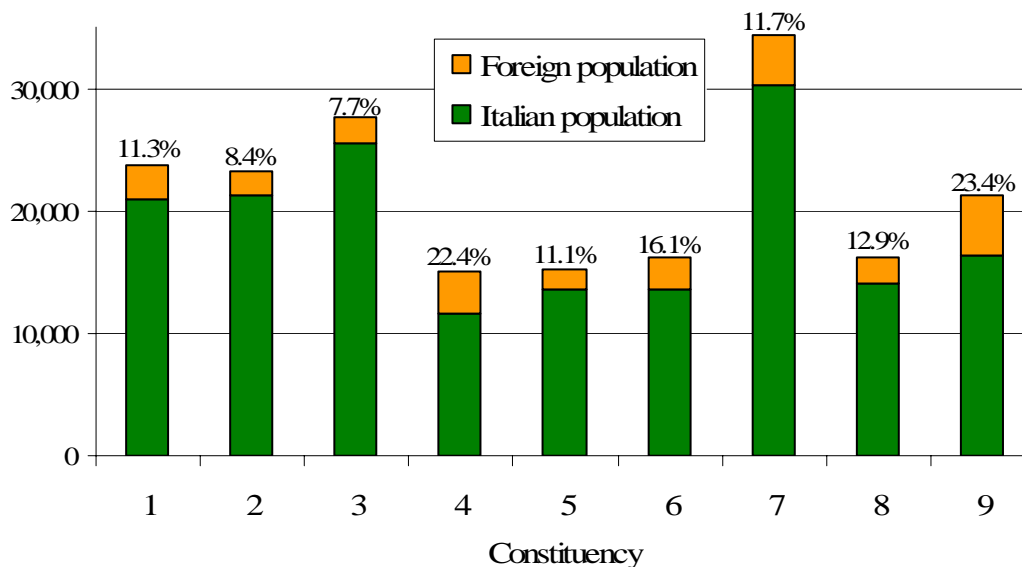
Figure 2. Foreign households in Brescia by family type, 2006



Source: Statistics Office, Brescia City Council

The territorial distribution across the municipality shows that the migrant population is fairly evenly distributed, although some areas experience a higher concentration of foreign residents (see fig. 3 and the Appendix for a map of the city). The largest number of foreigners (approximately 20% of the total foreign population) reside in the 9th constituency (*circostrizione*), where the proportion of foreigners in the population is 23.4% – the highest among the nine constituencies of the city. *Centro Storico Nord*, a borough of the 9th constituency, houses alone more than 50% of the constituency’s foreign population: here over 30% of the total population is made up by foreign nationals. The proportion of foreign residents is also very high in the 4th constituency (22.4%). The 5th constituency, on the contrary, hosts the smallest number of foreigners, while the 2nd and 3rd constituencies shows the smallest relative incidence (8%).

Figure 3. Italian and foreign population in Brescia by constituency, 2007

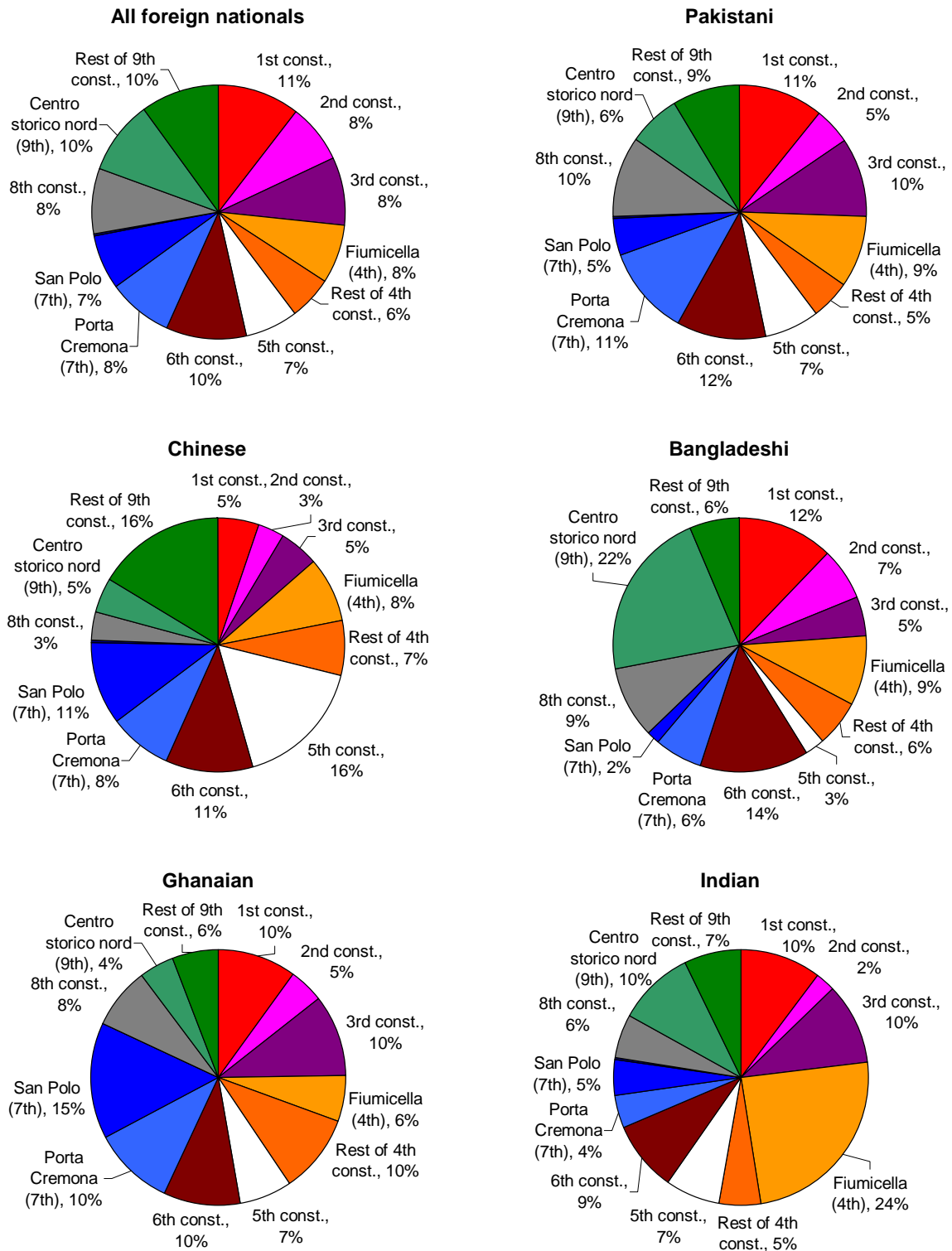


Source: Statistics Office, Brescia City Council

Another way to look at the geography of the migrant settlement in the Municipality is to consider the percentage distribution of the foreign population across the constituencies and the major quarters where migrants have settled (fig. 4). Again, it is clear that the immigrant population is rather distributed across the city, although some quarters – Centro storico nord, San Polo, Porta Cremona, Fiumicella – have been particularly attractive for the newcomers. However, not all migrant communities share this general pattern of residential distribution. The Pakistani community is more evenly distributed across the municipality than other major migrant groups. Egyptians are especially concentrated in the areas hosting a high proportion of immigrant residents (4th, 7th and 9th constituencies, particularly in the northern part of the historical centre).

Chinese migrants reside especially in the southern part of the historical centre (9th), in San Polo (7th) and in the 5th constituency (Chiesanuova, Villaggio Sereno). A significant part of the Bangladeshi community has settled in the southern part of the historical centre (9th) and in the 6th constituency. Ghanaians are more concentrated than other groups in San Polo (7th), Indians in Fiumicella (4th) and Sri Lankans in Porta Venezia (8th).

Figure 4. Territorial distribution of foreign nationals (total and selected groups) across Brescia's constituencies and major quarters, 2006



Source: elaboration on data from the Statistics office of the Municipality

2.3 The city authority: tier of government, responsibilities and structure

Italy is a democratic republic subdivided into 20 regions. It is further divided into 109 provinces (*province*) and 8,101 municipalities (*comuni*). Competencies are shared among the various tiers of governments.

The City Council is the tier of government closest to the individual, providing the basic civil functions (e.g. registry of births, marriages, deaths, registry of deeds, etc.) and covering the collective needs of the inhabitants (e.g. public works, social services, public order, housing, education, etc.). The communes have also to implement policies of higher authorities. The City Council is headed by a mayor (*sindaco*) who is elected directly by the residents and occupies his/her position for a period of five years. The mayor is assisted by a Council of Aldermen (*Consiglio Comunale*) and by a Town Committee (*Giunta Comunale*).

At present, Brescia City Council provides a wide range of services for the city's residents, including those with a migrant background. At a political-administrative level, Brescia, has been governed by a central-left city council since 1992. Its mayor, Paolo Corsini, has taken personal interest in the area of immigration and integration.

Within the Council, the *Office of Integration and Citizenship* is in charge of receiving and orienting migrants and promoting their economic and social integration and participation in public life. There are 20 operators in charge of these services. Of those, four are City Council employees. There is 1 lawyer, 1 psychologist, 1 social worker, 1 trade unionist, 10 cultural operators (2 Moroccans, 1 Lebanese, 1 Algerian, 1 Ghanaian, 1 Chinese, 1 Pakistani, 1 Serbian, 1 Albanian, 1 Argentinean) and 2 specialists in intercultural relations (Valenti, 2006).

3 The city's approach to diversity

3.1 Historical background and objectives of the policy approach

Since 1989, Brescia's local administration has developed and activated welcoming and integration policies for migrants. A "Foreigners' Office" initially providing information and orientation for immigrants on housing and labour market issues was created by the municipality. Subsequently, the office started to offer a number of services useful for the effective integration of immigrant residents – and indeed has been renamed as "Service for Integration and Citizenship".

The creation of this office was a first step towards the development of the city's vision towards its foreign population. This vision, characterised by the continuity and coherence of its interventions in the last 20 years and inherent in its Area Social Plan 2006-2008, is to develop a process of *shared citizenship*. This approach sees both Italian citizens and citizens of foreign origins as active subjects, having the same rights within the city and therefore equally benefiting from the social policies and services provided by the local administration. Therefore, social policies highlighted within the current Area Social Plan aim to the implementation of local and community services based on the promotion of the citizenship right and of the horizontal support.

Therefore, it can be said that the overall discourse informing the city's approach towards immigration is very much oriented towards a holistic view of migrants socio-economic integration within the local 'social fabric'. The underlying motif is the convinced adhesion to the fundamental values of the Constitution and therefore a mutual interest into a constructive living together of all citizens despite their ethnic origins. This principle that inspires the municipal policy and which sees intercultural relations at the core of its implementation, wishes to be put in place starting from the very places in which migrants and locals find themselves living next to each other – their neighbourhoods, their constituency, their city.

In order to implement this vision, the municipality of Brescia have developed the concept of 'proximity citizenship' (*cittadinanza di prossimità*). What this theoretical and political concept means is that the integration process has to be developed and continued starting from, and together with, the concept of citizenship. Such vision is based on a philosophy which sees universalistic services supported by specific interventions needed in a city which is becoming a multiethnic and multicultural city.

At the operational level, the municipal policy seeks to focus first of all on creating the possibility of an easy, constructive, and equal access to the labour and housing markets, as well as on facilitating access to public services. The idea behind this is that migrants should have the opportunity to access adequate working levels and conditions and should be able to use public services in the same way as Italian citizens⁴.

In terms of equality and anti-discrimination policies, Brescia's approach follows the overall national policy framework introduced by the above mentioned 1998/286 Consolidated Law on Immigration (*Decreto Legislativo 25 luglio 1998, n. 286: Testo Unico*). In Brescia an Equal opportunities Committee has been created following the same objectives and therefore with the task to watch over every kind of discrimination in the working place and to support equal opportunities within the municipal administration. As far as this last aspect is concerned, and in line with the idea of implementation of citizenship rights, the city does not collect data regarding ethnicity or religious orientation of its employees. These elements, highlighting the diversity of its personnel, are considered as stigmatizing.

According to the local authority, there is an overall positive attitude towards immigration in the city, and the local authority plays an important role in facilitating this attitude. The Office of Integration and Citizenship, together with the Brescia's Catholic Diocese, organises events which are open to all citizens and where the discussion is centred around the possibilities for the creation of positive dynamics of cohabitation. The aim of these events is to contend with xenophobia and discrimination.

The local media also plays a role in providing a better understanding of the migratory phenomenon among the native population. Overall the two local newspapers *Il Giornale di Brescia* and *Brescia Oggi* tend to approach this issue in a critical and objective manner. They contribute to the creation of an image of the city of Brescia as a multicultural city, highlighting resources and opportunities rather than problems. However, even is sporadically, local media report also statements of particular political parties which are based on stereotypical assumptions and aim at reinforcing a negative public opinion towards migrants.

⁴ From the speech of Prof. Mario Corsini, Mayor of the City of Brescia (see www.comune.brescia.it)

3.2 Responsibility: Elected representatives and officials

Within Brescia's local administration, the *Office of Integration and Citizenship*, directed since 1989 by Giovanni Valenti, is in charge of the integration and diversity matters. As mentioned above, this unit deals also with developing a strategic policy and specific services aiming to facilitate the process of settlement and participation to the city's life of the new city dwellers. It also provides recommendations and support to the other offices as far as immigration issues are concerned.

However there is no explicit appointee for diversity-related matters within this body, while the responsibility for the implementation of the diversity or equal-opportunities policy in service provision lies with the respective offices.

3.3 Collaboration with social partners and NGOs

Cooperation with social partners and non governmental organisations is one of the fundamental characteristics of the implementation of immigration policies by the city of Brescia. Answers to the needs, demands and emergencies are given in partnership with these actors.

An important role in this collaboration is played by the third sector and especially by Catholic voluntary organisations. In line with the national trend the non-profit third sector is still the main provider of assistance for immigrants. The most important associations and facilities have links with the Catholic Church which often provides important resources such as large volunteer staff and clerical personnel experienced in basic reception services and spaces often located in the city centres and well-equipped for reception.

In the last 10 years the administration has implemented a strategy which aims at working together with a number of co-operatives and association, and religious organisations/institutions. While the Council retains responsibility for strategy and policy on service provision, much of the delivery of services (e.g. some social care services; housing⁵) is contracted out to independent providers (from the private and voluntary sectors). This includes the contracting of voluntary organisations to provide some specialist services for people with a migration background.

- The *Congrega della Carità Apostolica*, which owns a significant estate in the city and its surroundings, is a relevant actor to be taken into consideration as far as accessibility to the housing market for people with migrant background is concerned. The congregation has often worked together with the local administration and, although its work is not directly targeted to the housing inclusion of migrants but more generally towards families with economic difficulties, the *Congrega* is often helping migrant families.
- The *Centro Migranti Scalabrini Bonomelli* was created by the diocese of Brescia to give social assistance. The association collaborates with municipal social services or with other third sector or religious organisations (e.g. the *Congrega*). Their intervention, which follows a long-term approach, consists mainly in acting as guarantors on migrants'

⁵ For further information on the Brescia's housing policy and housing-related services for migrants see the case study of the first CLIP module (Torre and Cangiano 2007).

behalf on the housing market, but also in buying, with funds from charity, buildings, renovating them, and putting them at migrant families' disposal.

- The Association *Il Tetto* works closely with local social services and with the Immigration and Integration Office of the City Council in providing temporary accommodation for migrants at a moderated monthly rent.
- The Cooperative *Accoglienza Migranti don Renato Monolo* is active since 1991 and aims at promoting migrants' integration into the local community. It manages several offices (*sportelli*) offering services as translation of documents and help in dealing with Italian bureaucracy; information on language courses, trainings and access to public services; assistance in meeting some basic needs as accommodation and work. These offices are opened in 16 cities of the Province⁶ and have helped more than 2000 people.
- The Cooperative *La Famiglia* has been involved in building neighbourhoods for workers and has created 6,980 apartments in the city of Brescia. Most of the beneficiaries are Italian families but the cooperative is working towards the creation of a social boarding house (*pensionato sociale*) of 80 bed sits for foreign and Italian workers. At this project, *La Famiglia* is working together with Brescia's City Council which has supplied the land at a moderate price.
- *The Embassy of the Local Democracies (Ambasciata delle Democrazie Locali, ADL)*, manages, on behalf of the municipality, the reception for asylum seekers and refugees.
- The Consortium of Study and Services for Immigration (Consortio Studi e Servizi per l'Immigrazione, *CSSI*), is an alliance of four cooperatives operating in the field of immigration. The four cooperatives are: *Accoglienza Migranti don Renato Monolo*, *Tempo Libero*, *Scalabrini Bonomelli* and *Poly-service*. The consortium promotes services related to migrants' needs (e.g. training courses) and provides advice for access to public and private funding. It supports the implementation of national and international projects aiming at improving the quality of services and activities for foreign citizens and the participation of migrants to the social and civil life of the community and their access to citizenship rights.
- Trade Unions (CGIL, CISL e UIL) have specific offices for the immigrant population residing in the city, and they provide information and help as far as bureaucracy, discrimination issues, and other barriers to access the labour market are concerned. Staff of CGIL and CISL also collaborate with the city in providing information and orientation for refugees and care-workers.

3.4 Policy and practice on monitoring progress

Monitoring of the city's strategies and policies is done by external agencies but also by the local university throughout doctoral researches. As far as service provision for migrants is concerned, monitoring is provided by some university department, especially from the Universities of Padua and Milan 'Bocconi'. These monitoring initiatives have been activated by the Office of Integration and Citizenship.

⁶ The counters managed by the cooperative are those of Gussago, Castegnato, Ospitaletto, Passirano, Rovato, Coccaglio, Castelvovati, Rudiano, Urigo d'Oglio, Cazzago S. Martino, Orzinuovi, Dello, Quinzano, Pontoglio, Cologno e Brescia.

Another instrument for monitoring is the “Area Social Plan” (*Piano Sociale di Zona*), which plans and implements social interventions and services. The Area Social Plan focuses mainly on elderly and immigrant population in four key areas – education, employment, housing and health. Monitoring of the population needs and the quality of services is carried out in order to provide adequate answers to those needs and inform the planning of future interventions.

3.5 Key challenges faced in implementation and broad lessons learnt

In the city of Brescia the problems that migrants face are often related to an insufficient development of the intercultural integration which still persists among different strata of the population and among various institutions that migrants have to enter in contact with. As mentioned by Giovanni Valenti during our visit to Brescia, a significant challenge for the city would be the actuation of a process of “social pedagogy” involving the local population as well as the residents with migratory background. The final goal of this process should be the creation of a perception of shared belonging without renouncing at the individual cultural and religious identities.

Another main critical issue faced by the city when dealing with integration and diversity policy for its migrant population is the demagoguery of some members of right-wing political parties such as the Northern League (Lega Nord). Resentment against the migrant population, if not even racial hatred, is sometimes fomented by politicians in many municipalities – especially of the North-Eastern regions. These voices may be spread by the local media, thus having significant impact on the public opinion.

3.6 Potential future policy development

Currently the City is working towards the implementation of an effective capacity of participation of all its citizens in a context of “proximity citizenship”. Substantial work is being done at a neighbourhood level. In the future, the aim is that immigrants as well as naturalized citizens should become part of all the services provided by the city.

Political participation is also seen as necessary in the process of migrant integration into the local framework and their participation to the public life of the city. The aim of the municipal policy is that of creating the necessary conditions for a co-participation of Italian and foreign residents. In order to reach a more stable and inclusive participation of the city’s residents with a migratory background, the City plans a number of interventions in favour of migrant organisations aiming at involving migrants in the development of policies and initiatives concerning their needs and their potential participation in the administrative vote.

A concrete example of the city’s commitment towards this end is the creation of the civic network: ‘*Brescia città aperta e solidale*’ (Brescia open and solidary city). The local authority is working at the neighbourhood level together with representatives of the migrant communities as well as the native population in the attempt to create and spread the idea of ‘proximity citizenship’. The ultimate goal of the network is the creation of a council of migrants in Brescia. This council will be elected by both Italian and migrant members of the network and will aim at promoting a more active participation in the administrative elections of foreign citizens residing in the city for more than 5 years.

In addition, the City is planning the creation of an Observatory against discrimination. Indeed, for an effective defence of citizenship rights, it is necessary to have a monitoring system contending discrimination and racism.

4 Employment policy, practice and outcomes

4.1 Profile of city employees: data

Brescia, among other Italian cities, is an example of strong migrants' economic integration. Within the small and medium industry is concerned, one out of five open-ended contracts in 2005 was for a foreign employee (Pugliese, 2007). Businesses managed by migrants are also growing and represent an important section of the city's economy, especially in retail, clothing and building industries.

However, despite the importance migrants may have for the economic development of the city, and despite the fairly encouraging picture concerning their employment within the local industry, the same can not be said when talking about people with a migratory background employed by the City. Out of 2,000 employees within the city's administration, the only employees with a migratory background are those employed as intercultural mediators by the Office of Integration and Citizenship – 2 Moroccans, 1 Lebanese, 1 Algerian, 1 Ghanaian, 1 Chinese, 1 Pakistani, 1 Serbian, 1 Albanian, 1 Argentinean, 1 Turkish.

Other intercultural mediators working mainly within schools, police departments, health centres, hospitals, registrar offices and social services are not directly employed by the city. They work with short contracts and are employed as external collaborators or consultants for specific projects⁷. This is also the case for other foreign residents who work for companies which are contracted out by the city to provide some services – e.g. cleaning.

4.2 Employment diversity policy and challenges in the development and implementation of this policy

Following a national approach, the city of Brescia aims to guarantee all foreign workers and their families, if legally resident on Italian territory, equal treatment and full equality of rights as Italian workers. The reasons why the total number of foreigners employed by the local authority is very low have to be found primarily in a number of national regulations impeding their access to these positions.

A major barrier to access public employments is the requirement that applicants must have the Italian or an EU citizenship. This is the case for the vast majority of the positions in the city's administration, and in general for all jobs which are directly related to the execution of public authority or activities which have to protect the general interests of the government. This statutory requirement, jointly with a restrictive law regulating the acquisition of the Italian nationality, virtually exclude non-EU migrants from jobs in the public sector for about ten years since their arrival.

There is also a concomitant factor which is responsible for the complete exclusion of migrants – even naturalised citizens – from employments in the public administration, As a matter of fact, in Italy the public employment has been used for many decades as a social security cushion, that is there was the explicit political intention to hire unemployed and disadvantaged people in the public institutions instead of subsidising them through the benefit

⁷ Recently some of these mediators organised themselves in the association “*Brescia mediatori*”. Their aim is to present themselves directly to the public bodies and services and avoid the mediation of contractors.

system. This led to an over-sized public sector workforce. Since the 1980s, with a public sector employing nearly 30% of the workforce, the State had to reduce significantly the recruitment of new personnel – and at that time very few migrants had entered the country. Furthermore, since 2001, the complete stoppage of the employment of permanent personnel in the public administration has been introduced (see Article 19 of the 448/2001 Law) and new forms of temporary employment contracts have been encouraged. This stoppage concerns the recruitment of Italian and foreign staff in the same manner.

A way for the local authority to avoid these obstacles, and to have among its personnel also people of immigrant origins, is to appeal to contracted providers. Therefore, staff recruitment for a wider range of vacancies in service provision is often the responsibility of contracted providers. For contractual recruitments there are no nationality requirements. All foreign nationals who have their legal residence in Italy can access these jobs, the only exceptions being jobs related to the public authority and the protection of the interests of the local government. However these positions are temporary, this is to say that contracts are of definite duration instead of a contract of indefinite duration. This is the way in which intercultural mediators are employed. Intercultural mediators are to be found in schools, local health centres, hospitals, law courts etc., and these are the position where most of the foreigners in the public administration are found.

4.3 Recruitment, promotion and training

Given the stoppage of the employment of permanent personnel in the public administration there are no recruitments at the moment. If there are specific needs, there could be sporadic employments as in the health services or schools.

4.4 Equal pay and working conditions

Equal working conditions are principally guaranteed for all City's employees, irrespective of their nationality or ethnic background.

4.5 Harassment, discrimination and complaints

The City follows the national anti-discrimination and equal treatment law. However, perhaps because of the extremely limited number of people with a migratory background actually working in the local administration, no pertinent seminars, or training courses are organised in order to directly inform the municipal employees about anti-discrimination practices, the current legislation and its impact.

4.6 Accommodation of cultural and religious needs

There are very few specific initiatives within the local authority as far as accommodation of cultural and religious needs are concerned. One of them concerns different working hours in respect of the praying time of Muslim employees.

There is no dress coding in the local authority and therefore the veil does not constitute an issue at the city level.

4.7 Health and safety

No initiatives related to specific health and safety procedures for migrant employees are reported by the city.

4.8 Recognition of qualifications

Another requirement that often constitutes a significant barrier for employment in the public administration is the equivalency of qualification. Often, qualifications recognised by the Italian State and a number of years of work experience are required. This may exclude migrants who have completed their education abroad, as the process to get the equivalence of foreign diplomas is long and hard, for especially those who do not have transferable qualifications. In fact, the bureaucratic process which the aspiring employee has to face is very complicated and time consuming and in many cases titles are not recognised. The level of Italian language proficiency also needs to be quite high. As a consequence, the influx to jobs with qualifications requirements is more difficult while the influx tends to be larger for unskilled jobs where there is no diploma requirements (i.e. cleaners, porters, street sweepers and so on).

4.9 Special Initiatives

Brescia is a member of the European Programme Equal (phase 2) which aims, according to the European Strategy for Employment, to promote innovative policies and practices to contrast discrimination and disparity of immigrants within the labour market. The programme, therefore, wants to be the *locus* for experimenting and sharing new initiatives on transnational bases.

Within this framework the city has developed two projects:

1. 'KOINE', Immigrants' integration in the local society and enterprise
2. "QUALIFI-CARE"

The first project, which started on the 1st of July 2005, sees the co-participation of the Brescia's local administration, Unioncamere of Lombardy, Milan's City Council, Cremona Province, and the Province of Lecco and plans to monitor and manage diversity in an area of the city with a large immigrant presence, the Carmine neighbourhood. Furthermore, the project includes two other initiatives: courses of professional advice for immigrants and a campaign for better integration of migrants in the Brescia's labour market.

The second project, "QUALIFI-CARE", is directed towards immigrants, mainly women, working in the care sector. The final goal of the project, based on a number of language and vocational courses, is that of improving the skills of workers in the private care sector. Another Italian city, Sesto San Giovanni, is involved in this project together with Brescia. At European level, other partners of in this project are: Toledo, Belfast and Dublin.

At a more local level, the experience of *CSSI* – the Consortium of Study and Services for Immigration, an alliance of four cooperatives operating in the field of immigration (see par. 3.3) – involves 37 municipalities (*comuni*) of the Province of Brescia and a number of districts. The main objectives of the consortium are: to promote services related to migrants' needs; to promote training courses, research and access to public and private funding; to support the implementation of national and international projects aiming at improving the quality of services and activities for foreign citizens; to improve life quality for an easier and better integration and participation of foreign migrants to the social and civil life of the community, and to achieve citizenship rights.

4.10 Impact of policy and lessons learnt

Although Brescia is considered among the best examples of migrant social and economic integration in Italy, this integration still concerns mainly the low sectors of the labour market. The presence of people with a migratory background employed by the city remains extremely low, also because of the limits due to the national legislation and to the halt in recruitment. Consistent with this, no particular emphasis seems to be put by the city in strengthening the cultural competence of the staff through intercultural training.

5 Diversity in the provision of services

5.1 Services provided and contracted out

In Brescia migrants' demand of social services is concentrated in four areas: first reception, housing, family, and work. The City Council is responsible for a range of different services and aims to promote equal access of migrants to universalistic services, without disregarding their specific needs.

5.1.1 Targeted services for migrants and refugees

Brescia has provided migrants targeted services since the beginning of the 1990s, a period in which immigration was still a new phenomenon characterised mainly by male adult migrants coming alone to work in the local industries. At the time Brescia City Council has established a specific Office for Foreigners and Nomads. Recently this Office changed its name into *Office of Integration and Citizenship* (reasons for this change have been explained in previous sections), and its services are directed towards regular migrants but also towards people who, because of their legal/employment status, are not allowed access to the mainstream local welfare.

The *Office of Integration and Citizenship* is the operating arm of the City Council in the area of immigration and operates within the Social Services department. The aims of this Office are:

- To receive and orient immigrant citizens who found themselves in the city;
- To be a resource for the municipal administration in the management and governance of problems inherent/related to the immigrant population;
- To promote processes of integration;
- To promote the process of citizenship in view of rights and duties;
- To develop projects for the reception of asylum seekers;
- To seek means of socio-economic emancipation of new city dwellers;
- To sustain the participation in public life of new city dwellers.

Continuity and coherence of the Office's activities has been granted in time by the presence of the same executive director, Giovanni Valenti, who has been managing the Office since

the beginning of the '90s. As he emphasised during interviews, in the last almost twenty years, the activities of the Office had to be reshaped according to the changes in context. This means that while at the beginning of the '90 most of the Office's projects were targeting problems and needs of the Romani refugees from the former Yugoslavia, from 2000 onwards, the growing arrival of mainly so-called economic migrants from different areas of the world meant that a rethinking of the projects and services according to new needs had to be put in place.

An important area of intervention of the Office is housing. The Office for Integration and Citizenship offers a service called "Accommodation Research" which provides advice for migrants looking for an accommodation to rent or for buying house. The project, which is still in progress, is coordinated by *Servizio Casa* and ALER, while the evaluation of the project is done by the Lombardy Region, Brescia Local Administration and ALER. This is a complementary project which needs to run side by side with other projects aiming at facilitating access for migrants on the housing market in the city.

In 2005, 3,385 migrants turned to this office in search of advice. However, what is evident from this experience is that the existing resources are not adequate enough for the growing difficulties that both migrant and Italian families face in this area. There is a need of more resources that could increase the possibility for families with low income or other difficulties, including migrants, to access affordable housing⁸.

The Brescia City Council has 5 reception centres⁹ for single men and single women with children. In the city there are other similar accommodation managed by third sector organisations or religious institutions which in total offer 544 bed sits. First reception¹⁰ is provided by dormitories – there are 4 dormitories for a total of 101 bed sits. Of these, only 69 are for foreign citizens.

Since July 2001, the Office of Integration and Citizenship opened also its Front Office (information desk), *Punto Incontro* which aims at responding to the needs of all the users (Italian and foreigners) on issues of immigration. Here it is possible to meet cultural mediators and experts in the field, able to give a detailed overview of Italian laws and services, above all at local level.

The Counters of the Front Office deal with five main areas of interest.

1. *Legal issues* (727 users in 2006) – The counter provides:

- information service (to diffuse better knowledge of Italian Law);
- guideline's service (to reduce the risks of illicit and illegal behaviours);
- advising service (to facilitate the integration process).

⁸ In the second half of 2005 there were 100 applications for public housing on behalf of foreign citizens. Of those, at the end of 2005, only 5 were successful. Currently the percentage of public houses assigned to migrant families is only 7% of the total, but the percentage of applications for public housing on behalf of foreign citizens is around 50%. This figures emphasise the high and increasing size of the demand, but also the existing difficulties that public institutions face in trying to respond to this demand.

⁹ Here people can stay from 5 months to more than a year.

¹⁰ Here usually people can stay for no more than 12 months.

2. Acceptance and integration – The counter provides:
 - acceptance (put the customers in comfort situation, listen to their requests, be emphatic and build the confidence);
 - introductory talk (evaluation of need with cultural mediator and experts in Law and Psychology);
 - attempts of problem resolution;
 - contact with concerned institutions;
 - reference to the proper local services.
3. *Bureaucratic assistance* – Personnel at this counter provide help to fill various forms (e.g. the issue or renewal of the residence permit, the registration with the municipality and with the INPS).
4. *Entrepreneurial advice* (320 users in 2006) – The Immigrant Business Information Desk of the Brescia Municipal Council was developed within the framework of the Project “Equal” co-funded by the European Social Fund. It provides support to aspiring foreign entrepreneurs with these objectives:
 - To assist in the evaluation of opportunities and the available resources for the start the enterprise;
 - To provide support in the choice of the type of enterprise;
 - To inform and assist on financial opportunities and completion of forms for the start own business activity;
 - To orientate aspiring entrepreneurs towards the associations of category;
 - To connect those interested to the network of services of the territory provided by the Province, Region and the Municipal Council.
5. *Refugees issues (Sportello Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati “Guido Puletti”*, 600 users in 2006) – This office aims to facilitate the reception and the integration of political refugees, asylum seekers or migrants holding permits of stay on humanitarian grounds. The office also collaborates with organizations and institutions operating within the area of asylum. The Office provides:
 - Information and orientation on the legislation and procedures in force regarding the Right of Asylum;
 - Consultancy in application for political asylum;
 - Support in accelerating the different requests to be presented in Questura (Police headquarters) and the Prefecture Forms;
 - Consultancy and orientation for the purpose of convocation at the Central Commission for the Recognition Refugee Status;
 - Legal consultancy in case of necessity;

- Orientation on the territorial services (sanitary assistance, demographic office, fax offices, agencies for the employment, accommodation office, and other public and private authorities);
- Collection of documentation on this subject.

5.1.2 Universal services

- Legal foreign residents have also access to a range of different services provided to the whole population of the city. The Department of Social Services (*Servizi Sociali*) is in charge of social inclusion and participation of all members of the local community and focuses in particular on major disadvantaged groups (older people, minors, lone-mothers, disabled).

Other departments of service provision within the municipal government responsible for service provision are:

- Council for Housing (*Assessorato alla casa*), which acts in the area of housing and is in charge of the public housing estate and of its distribution;
- Council for Public Education (*Servizio per il Diritto allo Studio*), which runs activities aiming at school integration and literacy of foreign minors (i.e. the project “*A come Accoglienza*”) and provides support for territorial centres for permanent education – where courses of Italian language for foreign adults are held.
- The Office for School Integration, which coordinates, within the “Right to study” deal, initiatives and projects aiming at social and school integration of nomads and foreign minors. It also guarantees their access to services providing schooling aid.

All as far as work related services are concerned, the demand is mainly related to job-search support and, in these cases, city’s social services divert requests to the job centres or to the city’s specific job-searching counters.

Worth a mention is also that the Municipality manages also a *Centre of Severe Marginalisation* which provides shower service (7,324 users in 2006), aid in finding dormitories and refectories, and monitoring of the foreigner population of this part of the city.

5.2 Diversity policy in services

At the local level there are not significant differences with the regional and national normative. The criteria for accessing most municipal services are the same for all citizens residing in the city, including foreign nationals. This means that the local authority has based social policies on the equality of treatment and rights among different categories of citizens. The only formal requirement, therefore, for accessing services and welfare benefits is to be registered at the local registry office, i.e. to be a resident.

Such a vision is based on a philosophy which sees universalistic services supported by specific interventions needed in a city which is becoming a multiethnic and multicultural city. Furthermore, according to the Alderman of the Social Services Department, Fabio Capra, the approach underlying this policy area is to devise active policies rather than providing charitable support. From this perspective, migrants, but also other residents with special

needs, are considered as a resource for the community and not as passive receptors of services and help.

At local level, the so called “Area Social Plan” (*Piano di Zona Sociale*) implements the integrated system of social interventions and services offered by the city and includes some elements which could be related to diversity policy. In fact, the role of this instrument is to identify priority needs of the people and local communities and to programme adequate answers to those needs.

5.3 Employment profile of service providers

Within the Office for Integration and Citizenship most employees are people with migratory background – especially those working at its front office (*Punto Incontro*) and having daily contact with migrant clients. As mentioned above, all of them are contract workers as they could not be hired in permanent positions – either because they are not EU nationals or because recruitment with indefinite contracts has been stopped (see par. 4.2).

In contrast, all other staff employed in the Department for social services have an Italian background. This personnel has been hired in a period when there was not a large number of migrants in the city – and the migrant population was also less diverse. This fact was identified as a possible problem for the access of migrant clients to the mainstream services (see par. 5.5).

5.4 Access to services and monitoring

In Brescia the spread of information among migrants, especially those in greater need, constitutes a problematic issue as far as the procedure for accessing different services (i.e. assignment of public housing) is concerned. This information very often is available only in Italian and, despite the intervention of the various third sector organisations, creates problems in understanding and therefore making correct use of the available procedure. This inefficient circulation of information is a major hindrance as it affects migrants’ awareness of their rights and their actual possibility to benefit from these rights.

The Office for Integration and Citizenship is at the moment developing its own website in three languages so that information can reach a broader public. They are also considering making basic information, especially as far as public housing is concerned, available in the languages of the most representative migrant communities of Brescia. Moreover, at the *Punto Incontro*, people can show up in person and ask for information or help. They can also make telephonic reservations, and on-line booking is available in order to ensure better access. The Office for Integration and Citizenship monitors access to the services provided by its units. In 2006 a total of 13,501 people turned to the *Punto Incontro*, 2,610 of whom made an on-line booking¹¹. This high number of users shows that the service was successful in reaching a substantive part of the migrant population in need of support. However, no in-depth evaluation of the quality of services (e.g. surveys of users’ satisfaction) are available so far.

¹¹ The data are drawn from the *Punto Incontro* Annual Report available on the Brescia’s website (www.comune.brescia.it)

5.5 Cultural awareness of staff

According to the Alderman for Social Services, the staff employed in the delivery of universal social services to the whole population is not always equipped with the knowledge and cultural awareness needed for dealing with some specific needs of migrant users (e.g. language barriers). Currently there are no training courses aiming at improving cultural awareness of the local administration staff.

5.6 Discrimination against service users

Although the overall discourse informing the Municipality service provision for migrants aims at offering the same services and benefits to Italian citizens and citizens of migratory background, this is not always the case. For instance, as far as public housing is concerned, migrant families are in fact discriminated against. Reasons for this are to be found in the assignation mechanisms applied by the City of Brescia which are decided at Regional level. Since 2004, the Lombardy Regional Regulation has indeed added the length of residency in the region – which has to be at least of five years – among the criteria for the evaluation of the socio-economic situation of the applicants. This criterion, by giving a higher score according to a longer period of residency in the city, explicitly gives priority to older residents discriminating against many migrants and especially new-migrants who are automatically disadvantaged, or even excluded from accessing public housing¹². Furthermore, to be part of a migrant family is not one of the indicators defining housing needs. As a result, currently the percentage of social housing assigned to migrant families is only 7% of the total, although the percentage of applications on behalf of foreign citizens is around 50%. This figures emphasise the high and increasing size of the demand, but also the existing difficulties that public institutions face in trying to respond to this demand.

5.7 Impact of policy on access to and quality of services and lessons learnt

Since 1989, Brescia's local administration has developed its policy for the city's immigrant population aiming to create the conditions for a migrant integration process which has to be developed and continued together with the concept of citizenship. The city's policy resulted in providing and implementing the same services to all residents, without activating specific measures targeting specific groups – with the exception of temporary receiving services, specific measures for the management of emergency situations, and the camps for the Roma and Sinti population. Thanks also to the extensive collaboration with different social partners, the access of migrants to services is overall widespread. However, a number of challenges are related to the limited resources – in comparison to the growing demand – and the increasing diversity of new migrants coming to the city.

- In recent years, and especially since the beginning of 2007, the City of Brescia, as many other cities in Italy, has experienced the arrival of new migrant groups, in particular new EU nationals (i.e. Romanians and Bulgarians), including refugees. Their immigration status and entitlement to access services and employment varies and often service providers have not been updated on the needs and rights of newcomers. There is also limited information offered to these migrants. The City Council website have set up a webpage which gather some of this information regarding new EU nationals but better

¹² Regional Regulation 2/04/2003 n.4 “General Criteria for the Assignment and Management of the Public Housing Estate”.

information may be required to assist the Council employees. More in general, the city needs to improve also the system through which this information is spread to reach its addressees.

- The city does not have enough personnel to meet the increasing demand for services. This issue does not concern only migrant families – e.g. demand of services from the older population is also increasing – but there are also additional competences that would be necessary to overcome language and other possible cultural barriers. Difficulties in delivering an adequate service have been sometime encountered because of the inadequate training of the staff.
- Interviews with non-municipal actors such as churches, migrant organisations and other NGOs in the city of Brescia carried out within the former module of the CLIP project also revealed that many initiatives for migrants' integration are still implemented in a fragmented way and very often delegated to third sector and religious organisations (Torre and Cangiano, 2007).

6 Conclusion: Key challenges, lessons and learning for CLIP

Because of its flourishing economy, Brescia is one of the Italian cities which has attracted a large number of migrants especially in the last decade. As often the case, labour migration has been followed by the settlement of migrant families, and the migrant population has developed significant needs in all spheres of the economic and social life – housing, legal advice, employment, education, health. The lack of a comprehensive national policy for the integration of migrants in the Italian society implied that Brescia, as many other Italian cities, has engaged in the planning and implementation of many initiatives and practices aimed at fostering the process of migrant integration in the local reality. Thanks to the efforts of the Office of Integration and Citizenship, Brescia shows a high commitment to receiving newcomers and favouring the access to national and local welfare systems of its increasingly heterogeneous population.

The results of this study in relation to the two major subjects which it addresses – the local policies for the access of migrants to public services and to jobs in the local administration – have to be understood within this context.

In the field of employment, people with a migration background are employed by the city only within the office providing services to the migrant population – the Office for the Integration and Citizenship. Furthermore, no specific policy is devised to improve the access of people with a migration background to jobs in the local administration. The issue is not even present in the public discourse, giving the impression that the employment of migrants in the local authority is not considered as a feasible strategy to improve migrant integration and access to citizenship rights. However, for a number of reasons it is not surprising that such a policy option has not yet emerged in the city of Brescia. The most obvious is that diversity policies in the personnel of the public administration aiming at employment equity of immigrants typically originate in countries and cities with a very long immigration experience, which is not the case for Italian cities where immigration is a comparatively young phenomenon. Other major factors responsible for the low participation of people with

a migration background in public sector workforce are the requirement of holding an EU passport – which implies that non-EU migrants have first to go through the naturalisation process – and the traditionally over-sized workforce in the sector – which implied the stop of recruitment for permanent positions introduced when very few migrants had entered the country.

In terms of personnel policies for the staff already employed within the local administration, two issues have emerged as possible barriers for the provision of effective service to the increasing number of migrant users. The first is that no particular training is provided to improve the intercultural competence of the municipality's staff. Usually the municipality has to rely on the competences of the intercultural mediators only. The second is that the contractual precariousness of the employees with a migration background does not help the implementation of long-term projects and may have an impact on the quality of the services offered.

This leads to the other area of interest of this report, i.e. the provision of services to the migrant population. In this respect, the city follows a strategy which on the one side aims at offering services accessible for every citizen, whether with a migration background or without, and on the other at providing a range of migrant-specific services – some of them targeting specific groups such as refugees or Roma people. This is consistent with the city's underlying policy framework based on the 'shared citizenship', which sees both Italian and foreign citizens as active subjects, having the same rights within the city and therefore equally benefiting from the social welfare system.

The high number of users of the services provided shows that the city was successful in reaching a large part of the migrant population in need of support. Despite this, budget constraints were mentioned as a limit to the action of the local administration and the scope of service provision. Also, no in-depth evaluation of the quality of services (e.g. surveys of users' satisfaction) are available so far.

Finally, it is worth emphasising the role of inter-city activities or networks such as the CLIP project as an incentive towards connecting the city and its experience with migrants with other cities in Italy and Europe. This experience, as members of the City council have emphasised during our discussions, is seen as a useful learning process for the development of a more constructive policy and, at the same time, as an opportunity for the city to present and share its achievements in the policies for migrant integration.

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Interviewed experts

(Dates of field visit: 12th-14th July 2007)

Giovanni Valenti (Head of the Office of Integration and Citizenship)

Punto Incontro: Round Table with persons in charge of the Front Offices

Maria Maiorana (Opera Nomadi) + visit to the Roma Camp

Eduam Kow Aloysius (Ufficio Stranieri and Ghana Association)

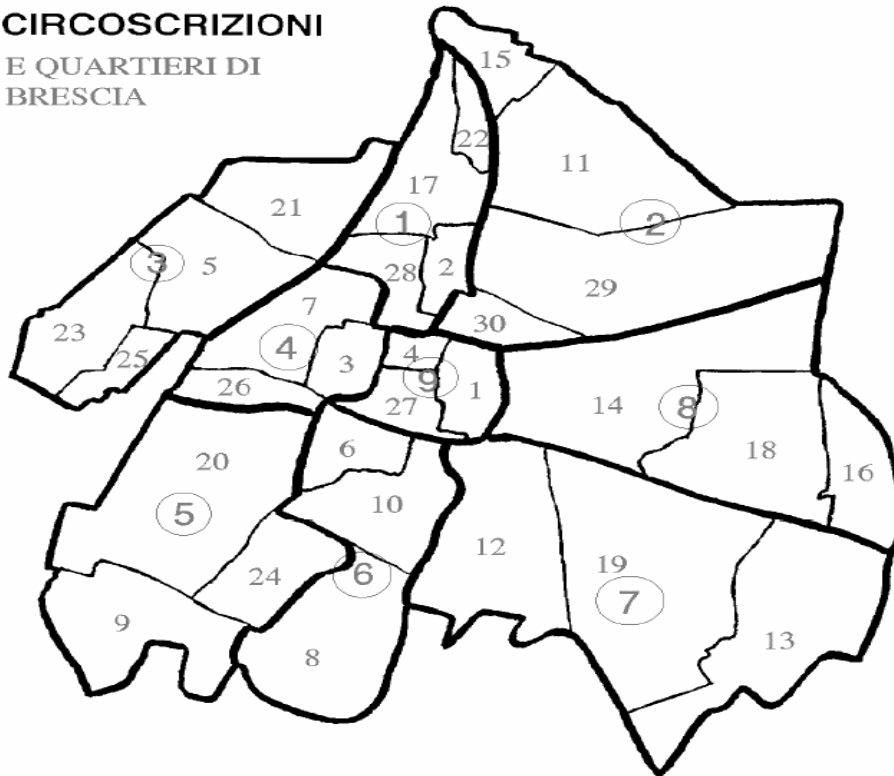
Sportello richiedenti asilo e rifugiati "Guido Puletti"

Fabio Capra (Alderman for the Social Services)

Luigi Gaffurini (vice-mayor and Alderman for the Personnel Policy)

Appendix - Map of the city of Brescia subdivided by constituencies (*circoscrizioni*) and borrows (*quartieri*)

CIRCOSCRIZIONI E QUARTIERI DI BRESCIA



Constituency 1

2: Borgo Trento

22: Casazza

17: S. Bartolomeo

28: S. Eustacchio

Constituency 2

30: Crocifissa di Rosa

11: Mompiano

29: S. Rocchino

16: Villaggio Prealpino

Constituency 3

6: Chiusure

21: Urago

23: Villaggio Badia

25: Villaggio Violino

Constituency 4

7: Fiumicello

3: Porta Milano

26: Primo Maggio

Constituency 5

20: Chiesa Nuova

9: Fornaci

24: Villaggio Sereno

Constituency 6

6: Don Bosco

8: Folzano

10: La Marmora

Constituency 7

12: Porta Cremona

13: Buffalora

19: San Polo

Constituency 8

14: Porta Venezia

16: Caionvico

18: Sant'Eufemia

Constituency 9

1: Brescia Antica

4: Centro St. Nord

27: Centro Storico Sud