

O1 – A1 National report on Intercultural Mediation

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1. Intercultural Mediation in Italy

At the end of 2013, in Italy, foreign residents numbered 4,922,085 out of a population of 60,782,668, with an incidence of 8.1%. The level of education is high: 10.3% have a bachelor's degree and 32.4% a secondary school diploma (data from the 2011 Census). Women rank at 52.7% of the total population, and minors are during the academic year 2013-2014 (incidence of 9.0% on the total school population) 11,470 Roma. In Italy the immigrants mostly come from: Romania (933 thousands), Morocco (525 thousands), Albania (503 thousands), China (321 thousands), Ukraine (234 thousands), Philippines (166 thousands), Poland (89 thousands), and Bulgaria (48 thousands). A fourth of the foreign population resides in four provinces (Rome, Milan, Turin and Brescia). (UNAR – IDOS, 2014).

In Lombardy region, the foreign residents (over 1 million) represent 22.9% of the total national presence whereas in the province of Rome (over half a million) they represent the 10.3%. In Italy the foreign workers are 2,4 millions, the 87,1% have a paid work, they are especially employ in the services (63,6%) and in the industry (31,7%). At the end of 2013 there were about 3 millions of unemployed, of these 493 thousands were foreigners. Between foreign citizens the unemployment rate increased at 17,3% in 2013 and as a consequence occupation tax decreased at 58,1%. Between foreign citizens the unemployment rate increased at 17,3% in 2013 and as a consequence occupation tax decreased at 58,1% (UNAR – IDOS, 2014).

Currently in Italy we observe a steady increase in migratory flows, which have changed our society at social and economic level, characterized by an rising ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious pluralism.

In this contest the intercultural mediation becomes an essential tool in order to support virtuous procedure of social cohesiveness, and integration and to protect equal opportunities (UNAR – IDOS, 2013).

2. What is intercultural mediation in Italy?

In Italy there are around 4.000/4.500 intercultural mediators, 200/250 in each region. The majority of intercultural mediators are women (70%) aged over 30 years old.

The intercultural mediator is a social operator that simplify communication between person, family and community in range of actions direct to promote the integration of foreign citizens. The mediator carries out information and mediation activities, between immigrants and host society supporting the repression of cultural and linguistic obstructions, the esteem of origin's culture, promoting the host's culture, socio-economic integration and the fruition of rights and the respect of citizenship duties (*Guidelines for the recognition of the Intercultural Mediator profile, 2009*).

3. Different terms used

The words used, in jurisprudence and in praxis, to indicate an intercultural mediator are: social interpreter, communication's facilitator, linguistic mediator, technician of linguistic mediation for immigrants, linguistic and cultural mediator, social mediator, intercultural operator (*Guidelines for the recognition of the Intercultural Mediator profile, 2009*).

4. What does it mean to work as “intercultural mediator”?

Mediators usually assume three roles: the support, the governance and the one they play as actors of change. They take on complex roles referring to different situations and contexts: communication, information/ orientation, management of conflicts, assistance, professional training, counselling and planning, researches (*Mediation and intercultural mediators: operative directions, 2009*).

In these macro areas they must pursue the following objectives:

- To mediate between the origin culture and the host nation culture;
- To facilitate migrants integration processes;
- To tackle racism and xenophobia phenomena;
- To value differences and similarities;
- To facilitate equal opportunities;
- To facilitate communication between locals and migrants.

Being a cultural mediator means:

1. *To conduct a linguistic mediation*

- Interpreting verbal and non- verbal language;
- Deciphering communication codes and cultural implications;
- Realizing individual paths of assistance;
- Supporting orientation and assistance activities;
- Providing information;
- Promoting behaviors aimed at pursuing the beneficiaries' autonomy;
- Collaborating in activating problem solving strategies (*Intercultural mediator profile: information about the recognition in the future national qualifications framework, 2014*).

2. *To facilitate exchanges between the migrant citizen and social workers/ services/ institutions/ local firms*

- Re-elaborating news, messages, materials;
- Updating the services workers and stranger customers on respective customs and traditions, cultural codes.
- To inform on duties, procedures and opportunities on access and use of services;
- To support equal opportunities in the access of services;
- To mediate in conflicts of discriminatory character;

3. *To conduct an intercultural mediation among the migrants' community*

- Spreading information on programs in favour of inclusion and cooperation;
- To promote gender equality and equal opportunities culture;
- To guide and promote second and third generations (*Guidelines for the recognition of the Intercultural Mediator profile, 2009*).

Tasks, capabilities and knowledge of intercultural mediator

Tasks	Capabilities	Knowledge
mediation, orientation, interpreting, treatment	listening, comprehension, communication	Migration phenomenon, subjects socio-humanistic
Planning of cultural and	Scheduling of mediation	Cultural interpreting and

social integration initiatives	course in the field of social inclusion to promote the fight against discrimination	mediation
Planning of training addressing social professionals	Management and resolution of conflicts	Legislation concerning immigration, social research, planning's techniques

5. Italian's legislation

The Italian legislation, concerning immigration, defines the position of intercultural mediator in the 'Testo Unico sull'Immigrazione' (Immigration's code), in which *'the mediator is identified as a worker that works in educational contexts within social integration, with the aim to increase the measure provided for migrant's integration, such as inclusion, interaction and exchange, and not as cohabitation between divided communities'*. (Ministry of Interior, Immigration's code, 1998).

In Italy every region has identified a professional profile and a specific training standard for the intercultural mediator, this means that certifications and certificates of attendance are valid only in the specific regional context and they are not usable in all the Italian areas.

In 2006 the Public Registry of Intercultural Mediators was created by the City of Rome with the City Council Resolution no. 160 of 18 July 2005 and is composed by Intercultural mediators that work in Rome. The access to the Registry is addressed at foreign nationals with regular documents of staying (*Informative note of the Public Registry of Intercultural Mediators of the City of Rome, 2014*).

The Registry is composed by 750 Intercultural Mediators from more than 90 countries.

Programma integra manages the Secretariat of Registry and supports the activities carried out by the Public Registry with the creation and dissemination of training / information activities aimed at intercultural mediators.

In 8 years of activities it's possible to underline these elements:

1. inscription's request: 750 (at 10 October 2014);
2. enrolled: 520;
3. mediators that it's not possible to enroll: 217;
4. suspended's inscription: 13;
5. women: 601;

6. the mean age of mediators is around 42 years and the mid period of stay in Italy is 14 years;

7. 409 mediators are graduates;

8. the mediators mostly come from: Romania, Perù, Poland, Albania, Ukraine, Morocco, Moldavia.

The requirements to accede to the Public Registry of Intercultural Mediators are:

- a) Foreign citizenship or Italian citizenship obtained by foreigner citizens;
- b) Ownership of regular permit of stay;
- c) Residence in Lazio Region;
- d) Control, for direct practice, of one mother language and one mother culture different by Italian language, and it must be certified by adequate certification (example: educational qualification achieved in the origin's country);
- e) Certificate of attendance issued by public authority or private society that works in the field of immigration and intercultural mediation; certificate of attendance issued by authorities or cultural international institute in Italy; declarations issued by responsible of foreign communities in Italy;
- f) Certified knowledge of Italian language (certificate of attendance of Italian language courses with final exam; educational qualification achieved in an Italian educational institute);
- g) Regular attendance of training courses held by the Region or University, or the possession of degree or post degree in subjects related to the preparation of professional intercultural mediators (*Informative note of the Public Registry of Intercultural Mediators of the City of Rome, 2014*).

6. Evaluation and profile recognition

At the end of 2011 the professional figure of intercultural mediator was included in the Professional Categorisation as a career belonging to Professional unit 3.4.5.2.0 'Tecnici del reinserimento e dell'integrazione sociale' (Technician of rehabilitation and social integration).

The professional units belonging to the group of social professions are included in the international categorization ISCO 08 (-3412 Social work associate professionals – Social work associate professionals administer and implement social assistance programs and

community services and assist clients to deal with personal and social problems).

The addition of the figure of intercultural mediators in the international categorization ISCO 08 guarantee the profession's directness both in quality and quantitative terms, research on vocational needs and competences (*Intercultural mediator profile: information about the recognition in the future national qualifications framework, 2014*).

7. Trainings planned and provided

In Italy educational experiences concerning intercultural mediation are different and consider 2 types of courses: base and advanced level.

A basic vocational course considers a mid duration of 400 hours, an internship composed by 140 hours. The requirements to access are: to have age of consent, and high education, mother language - C level linguistic competences, linguistic competences in at least one vehicular language, Italian language - B level linguistic competences, work experiences in the migration field. These basic vocational courses can be supplied by: university, mediation agencies and public authorities (*Intercultural mediator profile: information about the recognition in the future national qualifications framework, 2014*).

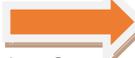
A specialized vocational course instead considers: an in-depth analysis in the field of intervention, a smallest duration of 40 hours and a maximum duration of 200 hours, a traineeship, a fundamental requirement is to have obtained the basic competences. These basic vocational courses can be supplied by: university, mediation agencies and public authorities (*Intercultural mediator profile: information about the recognition in the future national qualifications framework, 2014*).

In the field of Italian university education there are a lot of bachelor's courses, in which the main topics are related to linguistic knowledge. Whereas, concerning master's courses, the focus is on socio-humanistic subjects (cultural anthropology, psychology, sociology) and it is expected an internship. The post-graduate course follows the lines of master's degree with a prevalence of subjects aimed at the fieldwork and internship of about 1/3 or less of the total duration of the course (*Mediation and intercultural mediators: operative directions, 2009*).

8. Employment opportunities

The employment sectors of intercultural mediators are: school, healthcare, justice, public administration, immigration's emergency, social services, work and employment, each one of these consider different mediation' activities (*The intercultural mediator in six European countries, 2009*).

School  **Objectives:** support at educators in the procedure of student's treatment, facilitation in the dialogue school/family, assistance in the intercultural pedagogy, professional partnership in the training of Italian language, orientation for students and students families (*Guidelines for the recognition of the Intercultural Mediator profile*, 2009).

Healthcare  **Objectives:** treatment of foreigners patients in the hospitals, awareness and information in the illnesses prevention, intercultural training of healthcare staff (Claudio Baraldi, Viola Barbieri, Guido Giarelli, 2008).

Justice  **Objectives:** support in the dialogue detainee / prison staff, support in the training activities, promotion of intercultural dialogue.

Public administration  **Objectives:** information and orientation for foreigners citizens, intercultural communication, support in the procedures of citizenship, assistance in training and refresh courses addressing to social operators, assistance in the compiling and comprehension of a set of forms, translation of public documents.

Immigration's Emergency  **Objectives:** support and assistance during the identification's procedure, support in the comprehension of guests needs in the homeless shelter, information and orientation about services supplied in the treatment's system.

Social services  **Objectives:** information and orientation at social services, intercultural and linguistic mediation, conflict mediation.

Work and employment  **Objectives:** job orientation and insertion, vocational and qualification training (*Guidelines for the recognition of the Intercultural Mediator profile*, 2009).

9. Intercultural mediation's projects in Italy

***'SITI - Servizi Integrati e Tecnologie dell'Incontro'*(Integrated services and interaction through technology)**

The project, funded by European Commission and Italian Minister of Interior under the European fund for the Integration of third-country nationals, was managed by the Department of Social services of the City of Rome in partnership with Programma integra and Fondazione Roma Solidale. The project aimed at support public offices and hospitals in their interventions addressing migrants living in Rome. The main tool used by the project team of intercultural mediators was the video calling technology (Skype) in order to give an 'in time' intervention to the requests of the offices.

"MediaTo"

MediaTo is an initiative funded by Compagnia di San Paolo, promoted by Immigration's observatory of Piemonte Region, Ires Piemonte, ASGI, A.M.M.I. (Multiethnic association Intercultural Mediators) e CCM (Comitato Collaborazione Medica – Committee Mediacal Partnership). The project aim is the improvement of accessibility in the information addressing to foreigners and social operators. The project is focused on giuridical training and the refresher of intercultural mediators in the Province of Turin, and to promote the creation of a community able to use new technology for the information's exchange oriented to foreign citizens.

'Mediare.com'

The project, funded by European Commission and Italian Minister of Interior under the European fund for the Integration of third-country nationals, was managed by the Municipality of Venice, in partnership with IUAV University of Venice – UNESCO SSIIM Social and Spatial Inclusion of International Migrants, Municipality of Padova – Project units Reception and Immigration, 'Il Sestante onlus' social cooperative, 'Il Villaggio Globale' social cooperative, 'Novamedia' social cooperative, 'MagVenezia' social cooperative.

The project aims to identify and support local contexts at strong social criticality, through a participatory research and a networking activity with citizens and institutions in order to make cross-cutting and integrate the assistance delivered by the local subjects and promote intercultural dialogue and to promote a community able to collaborate and tackle conflict situations (collective empowerment) and, at the same time, enhancing the ability of individuals to understand and deal with crisis situations in order to reduce the chances of conflict (individual empowerment).

The project activities were:

- Research on critical urban areas;
- Training and testing of new types of mediation professionals;
- Housing mediation actions;
- Community mediation and cultural promotion actions;
- Construction of self-help groups and of active citizenship;
- Creation and strengthening of local networks;
- Information, guidance and training on credit instruments.

ACUME - Advancing Cross Cultural Mediation

The project, funded by the European Commission – Lifelong Learning Programme, was managed by: Università per stranieri di Siena (coordinator) - IT; Associazione CREa - Centro

Ricerche e Attività a Palestrina - IT; Dida Network – IT; International Consulting and Mobility Agency – ES; Junta de Andalucia – ES; FH JOANNEUM - University of Applied Sciences - AT.

The project intends to import and enrich a training course from Spain (organized into theoretical modules and an apprenticeship), which is intended to provide a theoretical and practical training to the linguistic-cultural mediators (LCM), which promotes access to the labor market and the mobility of immigrants.

Advancing Cross Cultural Mediation (ACUME), aims to adapt, to integrate and to transfer a training program for Intercultural Mediators, that focuses on some specific areas of skills of this professional, as: communicative-relational language and teamwork.

The course will also be enriched with blended learning (e-learning modules and lectures) for the strengthening of skills in written Italian as a second language (L2).

‘Mediation device: Bridge between Center and Suburb’

The project, funded by European Commission and Italian Minister of Interior under the European fund for the Integration of third-country nationals, is managed by CIES Onlus-Centro Informazione e Educazione allo Sviluppo (IT), in partnership with the Department of Medical and Surgical Sciences and Translational Medicine, Medicine and Psychology Faculty - 'La Sapienza' University of Rome, CREIFOS - Research Centre on Intercultural Education and Training for Development - Education Department, 'Roma Tre' University of Rome and FOCUS - House of Social Rights. The project aims to optimize the integration policies in an interdisciplinary and territorial perspective.

The specific objectives of the project are:

- to increase and to improve the fruition of services, in the field of health care, education and administration addressing to foreign citizens, in particular women;
- to create a model of territorial intervention focused on the mediation device that could supports the Public Administration with an interdisciplinary and integrated approach, able to increases organizational efficiency, coordination and integration of services;
- to promote mediation services in urban areas, optimizing and transferring good practices of integration, strengthened in the historic center of Rome, in suburbs with a high concentration of foreigners.

10. Conclusion

In Italy there is an growing need to define the qualification/status of the intercultural mediator and strengthen procedures shared by all the Italian regions, these are the elements needed to make this professional figure officially identified and based on common needs.

The professionals that aspire to become intercultural mediators are more and more, therefore public authorities should be provided with and in charge of the validation procedures of intercultural mediators' careers.

The ultimate regulation of intercultural mediator's role and of the procedure for a career's certification should be a comparison's subject for the recognition of this important professional figure during integration procedure at European level.

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