



Project No.: 511016-LLP-1-2010-1-AT-GRUNDTVIG-GMP
Project Title: Meet the Need. Vocational Teaching Material Supporting the
Integration of Migrants into the Labour Market
Project Acronym: Meet the Need
Deliverable No.: 5

Exploration report

**Title: Linguistic challenges of staff with migration background
in the Food and beverage service activities**

ASEV (Agenzia per lo Sviluppo Empolese Valdelsa, Italy)

Claudia Manetti

Ecaterina Constantinova

December 2011

This project is funded with support from the European Commission within the Lifelong Learning Programme, Grundtvig. Coordinated by Research Institute of the Red Cross, Austria.



1	Introduction	3
2	Rationale	5
3	Methods used	8
3.1	Description of the sample	8
3.1.1	<i>Overview of the sample</i>	8
3.1.2	<i>Interviews with employers</i>	8
3.1.3	<i>Interviews with migrants</i>	9
3.1.4	<i>Interviews with teachers</i>	9
4	Results workforce	11
4.1	Recruitment process	11
4.2	Operations and language competences	11
4.2.1	<i>(Daily) Operations</i>	11
4.2.2	<i>Language competences needed in daily operations</i>	12
4.2.3	<i>Challenging situations and dealing with them</i>	13
4.3	Supportive activities	14
4.4	Value and use of different language of employees	15
4.5	Experience with language courses	15
4.5.1	<i>Experiences of employers</i>	15
4.5.2	<i>Experiences of migrants</i>	16
4.6	Success stories and suggestions	166
5	Results language teaching	16
5.1.	Challenges in teaching and learning vocation related language	16
5.2.	Concrete material related aspects	17
5.3.	Availability of teaching material	18
5.4.	Practical teaching experience and suggestions	18
6	Literature	19

1 Introduction

The project Meet the Need aims at developing specific vocational teaching material supporting the integration of migrants into the labour market. The Project started in January 2011 and runs until December 2012. It is funded with support of the European Commission within the Lifelong Learning Programme, Grundtvig, and coordinated by the Research Institute of the Red Cross, Austria. The Consortium of the Project Partners is represented by eight institutions from seven European countries, namely: queraum kultur- und sozialforschung, Austria; Research Institute of the Red Cross, Austria; Asociatia pentru Educatie si Dezvoltare Durabila, Romania; Mhtconsult, Denmark; Anniesland Research, Consultancy Limited, United Kingdom; Thüringer Volkshochschulverband e.V., Germany; Die Wiener Volkshochschulen GmbH, Austria and Agenzia per lo Sviluppo Empolese Valdelsa, Italy.

Language knowledge is one key competence for migrants' vocational integration in the host country: Not being able to speak the language without mistakes is often estimated as being incompetent; thus finding adequate and qualified employment is a big challenge for most migrants. In this regard, teachers of 'second language courses' point out that differentiated knowledge of terms, phrases, or codes of conduct required in working life would contribute to enhancing migrant's labour market opportunities; for this purpose suitable teaching material is needed. Likewise gaining knowledge about employers' perspectives and demands would contribute to trainer's work.

At time, vocation related teaching material which provides specifically needed terms, demands, or explaining expectations to employees in the particular vocation is lacking for most of professions. The project „Meet the Need“ aims at closing this gap and therefore develops a Compendium with required vocation related teaching material in cooperation with vocational experts as well as language teachers. The Compendium will be elaborated for the second language teachers and is meant as resource for general second language trainings. Moreover the Compendium will also include self study material for migrants. It is important to emphasise that the material contains no specific course curricula but is intended to be flexibly applicable vocation related teaching material for “general” second language classes.

The process of work for the Project previews the following phases:

Step 1: Analysis of teaching material and identification of quality criteria for useful second language teaching material

Step 2: Interviews with migrants, teachers and employers in order to explore their perspectives on hindering and supporting factors in gaining vocation related language knowledge.

Step 3: Collection of vocation related vocabulary, phrases and codes for particular sectors.

Step 4: Compilation of all material to one Compendium by using different media and dissemination ways.

The present report describes the implementation and the results of the first two phases of the Project, which were completed as planned by the end of the first project year.

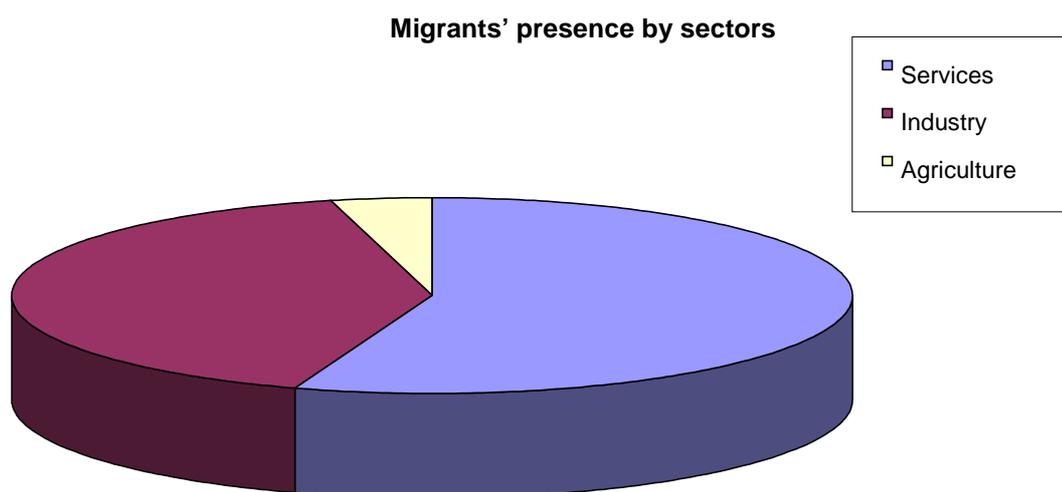
2 Rationale

The project started with an exploration of migrants' distribution on the labour market and an appraisal of available courses and teaching material.

The results of the Italian desk top research fulfilled under the expressly developed criteria are represented below.

Average number of immigrants in Italy amounts at about 4.968.000 people (Caritas 2011).

The general distribution of the migrants' presence on the labour market in Italy can be shown in the following graphic:



Talking about socio-demographic data, we can notice the prevalence of males in Manufacturing/Industry (with an only exception for Textile Industry) and Agriculture and dominance of females in Services, especially in the Services to families.

As to the countries of origin, the main part of the migrants-workers is from: Romania, Albania, Morocco, Ukraine, and China.

The detailed distribution of the migrants by occupational field is reassumed in the table below.

55,2% Services
Services to families 18,7%:
Domestic help (16% of all workers)
Commerce/ Trading 9,6%
Shop assistants (2,0% of all workers)
Food and beverage, restaurant and hotel services 9,0%
Chefs in hotels and restaurants (3% of all workers)
Cleaning, chambermaid (2,8%)
Waitress (2,2% of all workers)
Services to enterprises 7,0%
Education, health and care 4,6%
Transport e communications 4,1%
Other services 2%
40,9% Manufacturing/Industry
strict sense 23,7%
Construction 17,2%
Bricklayers, masons (9,5% of all occ.)
3,9% Agriculture
(There are both seasonal type of workers and not)
Farm labourers (2,4%)

It should be underlined that nevertheless in generally foreigners represent high number of industrial workers, there are so many professions in industry, that it's almost impossible to choose one profession in particular to create material for it.

An analysis made on the base of available information and statistic data showed that the main future needs will be concentrated in area of Domestic help; Shop assistance; Food services (waitresses) and Farm labours. However, it should be clear that trying to give an evaluation of the future needs on labour market, one should take into account a lot of different factors. On the one hand, those that influence the **request** on job market, such as: economical cycle, productivity, indirect costs; on the other hand, the factors that influence the **offer** on job market, namely: legislation; social factor, demographical factor and economical factor. Therefore the obtained results shouldn't be considered complete and absolute.

Each partner presented the results of the research on labour market issues/relevancies. Based on these results, the most relevant occupational fields had been defined and compiled. Concretely 4 specific working fields, uniting professions with present and future needs, had been chosen for the elaboration of vocational teaching material, namely:

- Wholesale and Retail Trade,
- Accommodation and Food service activities,
- Care,
- Construction and Welding.

The sectors' definitions are based on EUROSTAT data, NACE-CODE.

These 4 sectors were distributed among partners, who from that moment have worked upon these specific sectors further on in the research. The exploration has been carried out on the one hand on teachers' requirements and on their assessment of the major communication needs, challenges and difficulties migrants face in the process of job application and on the labour market. On the other hand employers' requirements have been explored as well. Partners developed criteria and frames, along which results would have to be documented in order to collect the information in a comparable manner.

ASEV (Italy) fulfilled the research for Food and beverage service activities by mean of the specially prepared questionnaires, which were distributed in order to interview 3 target groups: L2 teachers, migrant-workers and employers.

3 Methods used

3.1 Description of the sample

3.1.1 Overview of the sample

Method	Employers	m	f	Migrants	m	f	Teachers	m	f
Face to face interviews	5	4	1	5		5	10	2	8
Telephone interviews	0			0			0		
Focus group	0			0			0		
Online survey	0			0			0		
others [please name]	0			0			0		
TOTAL each group	5	4	1	5		5	10	2	8
TOTAL all									

Table 1: Overview on the sample

3.1.2 Interviews with employers

We carried out 5 face-to-face interviews, interviewing 5 employers on their workplaces. 4 of them were men and one was a woman. 3 of them run a restaurant/pizzeria; one runs catering and one runs a patisserie/bar. We went directly to the workplace to interview them. We arranged a meeting by phone to find the most suitable moment for them: some of them were interviewed in their break from work; others took a break to be interviewed. They all are both the employers and owners of their restaurants and bar/patisserie. All these businesses are run by families or by a small number of people. None of the 5 places is a big chain since in Italy chains are more common in the very big cities (Milan, Rome, etc) but they are not so widespread and the most common reality is a small business run by families or a few people. The interviewed lasted about 20-25 minutes.

Description of the interviewed partners:

E1: He runs his own catering service and works for weddings and ceremonies. Their employees prepare food and beverage, and serve at the ceremonies. He has less than 10 employees, most of them belong to the same family. 70% are male, 30% female. 80% of their employees are speakers of Italian as L2.

E2: He has his own small and elegant restaurant with typical Tuscan food. He has less than 10 employees: 80% male and 20% female. 70% of them speak Italian as L2. Usually, waiters

or waitresses are all native or near-native speakers of Italian; that means that they have spent a very long time in Italy (around 10- 15 years).

E3: He runs a bar/patisserie and a restaurant. He has less than 10 employees, half of them are male. He has 20% of speakers of Italian L2, working in the kitchen or serving at the table.

E4: He has a restaurant/pizzeria/bar. This is mainly a family business but they also hire external employees for serving at table. 60% are male. Only a 30% of his employers is second language speaker of Italian.

E5: She runs a small restaurant with typical Tuscan food. She has 5 employees and during summer she usually hires other people. She has just one second language speaker working in the kitchen.

3.1.3 Interviews with migrants

We interviewed five migrants. All of them were female. The important point for us was to find the migrants from different countries, what could permit us to understand better all the variety of linguistic difficulties and to enlarge the spectrum of the problems that other migrants on their work places might have. The nationalities of interviewed migrants were the following: Chinese, Romanian, Albanian, Moroccan and Byelorussian. The job functions also were different, namely: one of the interviews worked as a chef's assistant in the kitchen of one restaurant, another one worked as a waitress in a pizza house, and the rest three respondents worked as barwomen. Before interviewing them the preliminary accepts were received and the precise dates suitable for them were fixed. All five interviews were done at ASEV's locations. We voted for face-to-face interviews supposing that not all the questions could be easily explained by phone and also that the visual communication could help us to create more confident, trustful and friendly atmosphere during the interviews, so to let the migrants express their replies better and in more natural way. At the beginning of every interview the aims of the project in general and the score of the questions to migrants-workers in particular were explained and clarified. The fact that the interviews would be anonymous was also underlined. Every interview lasted for about 30 minutes.

3.1.4 Interviews with teachers

We interviewed 10 teachers, 8 women and 2 men. All of them were interviewed in Empoli at the ASEV. The teachers were contacted by phone in order to arrange a face-to-face meeting. We used face-to-face interviews since we believed that it would be the best way to explain

the questions and the project. The interviews lasted from 15 to 30 minutes. All the teachers have been teaching in a variety of L2 courses (adults migrants, children, teenagers) and 2 of them have worked in a private school in Florence. Some of them have a long experience in teaching Italian as a Second Language, about 10 years; others have 3 to 4-year experience.

Description of the interviewed teachers:

T1: She has been working for 7 years as a teacher of Italian L2, mainly for groups of adult migrants in afternoon or evening courses. Some experience with vocational course or material.

T2: She has been working for 4 years as a teacher of Italian L2, mainly for groups of adult migrants in afternoon or evening courses. No experience with vocational course or material.

T3: He has been working for 2 years as a teacher of Italian L2, mainly for groups of adult migrants in afternoon or evening courses. No experience with vocational course or material.

T4: She has been working for 5 years as a teacher of Italian L2, both for groups of adult migrants in afternoon or evening courses, and for groups of children in state school. No experience with vocational course or material.

T5: She has been working for 15 years as a teacher of Italian L2. She has a long experience in teaching a second language and also in Applied Linguistics. She gave a course of Italian L2 for finding a job.

T6: He has 5 years of experience in L2 teaching. He works and researches in Applied Linguistics. He has experience with a vocational course for fashion designers.

T7: She has 8 years experience in teaching adult migrants and in a private school in Florence. She taught vocational Italian for tourist guides.

T8: She has been working for 2 years as a teacher of Italian L2, she mainly taught groups of adult migrants in afternoon or evening courses. No experience with vocational course or material.

T9: She has a long experience in Second Language Teaching, about 10 years. She taught adults and children. She has had some experience with vocational language teaching, but she mainly taught heterogeneous groups in general language course.

T10: She has a long experience in Second Language Teaching, more than 10 years. She had some experience with vocational teaching, namely she taught Italian (language of the construction field) to a group of builders who at the moment were taking part in an internship program.

4 Results workforce

4.1 Recruitment process

Migrants:

The interviews evidenced that migrants use diverse ways in searching for work in Italy. In some cases there were friends to introduce our respondents-migrants to their future employers, owners of restaurants or bars. In other cases, migrants had found a job thanks to local recruitment agencies; or thanks to their individual initiative to visit all possible places personally, one by one, where potentially they could get a job, just knocking on the door of every bar and restaurant, leaving their CV or asking about the vacancies. One of our respondents did not search for a job at all and it was an employer who offered her a job in his own bar. It became possible just because both of them were living in a small village and knew each other by sight.

Employers:

Almost all employers pointed out that they rarely recruited their employees through a recruitment agency. They usually use other methods such as asking their employees if they know someone who is looking for a job or alternatively they wait for people going directly over the work place, asking for a job or handing out their CVs. One of the employers recruited a whole family since he appreciates very much the way they work and their loyalty. Another one, who runs a restaurant, said that it's quite hard to find people willing to work during the weekend or in the night time, so that's why he usually relies on people he knows or his employees know, since this makes the process easier and faster.

4.2 Operations and language competences

4.2.1 (Daily) Operations

All the respondents who work in the restaurants and/or bars evidenced the following order of their everyday activity:

1. ***Before the opening to public:*** to wash the dishes left from the previous evening and to do a general cleaning of the working place (*Migrants*).

Before the opening to public: in the restaurant, they have to prepare the food and raw products in order to be cooked by the chef later (e.g. chopping vegetables) (Employers).

2. To put in order the assortment for sealing in the bar window.
3. **During the breakfast time (in bars):** to serve on the counter, to take the orders of the clients and to execute them.
4. To calculate the amount that should be paid and take the payment.
5. To wash everything that should be washed (cups, dishes...)
6. **During the day (in bars):** to distribute lottery cards, cigarettes, cigarette lighters, and other products.
7. **During the lunch time:** to serve on the counter and on the tables, namely: to greet, to let know the assortment, to take the orders, to precise the quantity, to ask if the order will be consumed at place or should be packed and taken away, to ask if a client would like something else, to bring the ordered products, to calculate the amount that should be paid and take the payment, to greet. In the kitchen of restaurants also: to help the chef to wash, to peel, to cut vegetables, to fill in the casserole for pasta with water, to change oil in the fryer; to grate the cheese.
8. To take and to carry out the orders arriving by phone.
9. To wash everything that should be washed (in a bar: cutlery, cups, dishes...) (Migrants).
To clean the restaurant room (Employers).
10. "To close" the cash desk.

4.2.2 Language competences needed in daily operations

Operation	Language Requests	S	L	W	R
To take orders face to face; communication with a client	1. To understand what exactly the client orders. To know the assortment of the products. To be able to memorise the order at once and to distinguish the numbers very well.		X		
	2. To use "politically correct" expressions (in it. also: dare del Lei) and neutral phrases, to not use rude replies, to know and to use polite forms of the questions (would you, could you...). To be able to understand diverse kinds of	X			

	language expressions, for example: jokes, when one is kidding talking to you...				
To take orders by phone	1. To understand what exactly the client orders. To know the assortment of the products. To be able to memorise the order at once and to distinguish the numbers very well.		X		
	2. To explain the particularities of quantity (for example: slicing/ cutting of pizza).	X			
Everyday process of cleaning	To know the names of diverse types of mechanisms that should be assembled and disassembled during the cleaning. To know the names of diverse types of detergents and cleaning equipment.	X	X		
Cash desk					X
Taking orders during the lunch	To be able to take a note of the ordered products	X	X	X	
Payment	To know the numbers	X			
In the kitchen (helping to a chef)	1. To understand the chef's orders; to know the names of kitchen equipment		X		
	2. Interpersonal communication	X			
	3. To understand the orders that arrive from the waiters in written form				X

Table 2: Language competence needed in challenging situations in work

4.2.3 Challenging situations and dealing with them

Migrants:

The main difficulties regard:

- The dialects.
- Communication with senior clients. It's not easy to find a gentle way to close a long conversation, which they usually try to undertake.
- Communication with young generation. It's not always possible to understand their slang and jokes.

In general, the migrants don't talk about great linguistic difficulties and consider the most difficult task the necessity to memorise a huge number of articles in the first days at a new working place.

From the migrants' point of view, the employers give more importance to employees' attitude to work, discipline, carefulness, availability than to their language abilities.

Employers:

Employers sometimes find difficulties in communicating with migrants if they have just arrived. They have to learn a rich inventory of words (food, tools..). So it's quite challenging even working in the kitchen to wash or prepare food. This gets easier with the practice or, as one employer told us, employees are supported by a sort of tutor through the first period at work. As regards the service in the restaurant, employees are required a very high linguistic proficiency. The main reason is that they have to be good at pragmatic competence in order to understand jokes, idiomatic expressions and in turn answering politely as the customers expect. Those employees who are recruited as waiter or waitress are highly proficient in L2 (near-native). Nevertheless, they often prefer to hire Italian L1 speakers to serve customers.

They all answered "attitude and willingness". That's what they refer to as support to linguistic challenges.

4.3 Supportive activities

Migrants:

In order to overpass the difficulties, the following steps can be useful:

- to listen to persons and to ask, to make questions every time when you don't understand something; because usually both the clients and the employers are very available to explain and to repeat their requests and they help you willingly.
- To be attentive.
- To learn lessons from your own experience.

Employers:

The most important qualities that employers appreciate in employees are patience, loyalty and self-discipline. They never found huge problems, even when the language competence was basic, if employees were keen to learn, practice and commit themselves to the job. As additional support, they sometimes provide a tutor to help their new employees. The tutor is a person who's been working there for a long time.

4.4 Value and use of different language of employees

Migrants:

Yes, the different languages of employees can be considered a positive point for the whole company, as all the respondents-employees replied that they had and have some opportunities to talk their mother tongue at work place with clients of their nationality.

The ability to speak English language at L2 was also underlined, as this language is used sometimes as a language of communication at work place between an employee and a client (especially when the client is a foreign tourist).

Employers:

They never use employees' languages at work. What they find useful is that some of them speak English, which is the only other language used in the work place, apart from Italian.

4.5 Experience with language courses

4.5.1 Experiences of employers

Employers:

There have been no Italian courses offered by the companies. The language learning process learned is through practice and everyday life. So we report no formal teaching at the work place.

4.5.2 Experiences of migrants

Just two people affirmed to attend the course.

The abilities that the migrants-respondents would like to improve are: writing and reading.

The main part of the migrants has learned Italian language speaking and listening without frequenting any language course.

Even if they confirm to have a wish to improve their language level, they underline that they need it not to have more opportunities at present working place, but mainly in order to change the work to a more interesting one.

4.6 Success stories and suggestions

Employers:

One of the employers told us that his company has grown up thanks to the Philippine family that has been working for him for more than 10 years. The most important aspect has been their loyalty, discipline, precision and also that they were fine at working during the weekend, which is quite a problem for many Italians (he said).

All employers said that a specific language course could be useful for employees, especially to learn the specific vocabulary and also the linguistic expressions used at the restaurant/bar. But they all stress the importance of everyday practice and positive attitude to learn new skills and the vocational language.

5 Results language teaching

5.1. Challenges in teaching and learning vocation related language

Most of the teachers we interviewed did not have so much experience with vocational language teaching. The reason is that most of the courses are organized for beginners and so learners have had different needs, in fact they first aimed at mastering the language.

Only three of them taught vocational Italian specifically, one instructed a group of builders who were trained to work in the construction field; one taught a group of fashion designers in Florence who were attending a private school (Polimoda); one taught the Italian of Art and Culture to a group of tourist guides. Another teacher gave a general language course for a group of people who were looking for a job. They all agreed on the difficulty in finding the appropriate specific material and they explicitly said that it was quite demanding and time-consuming collecting it. They also raised the issue that it is not straightforward to find an homogenous situation where all learners have the same needs and requests. They wondered how they could give a lecture about “construction” during a general language course, if this need is not shared among all learners. They also portrayed a challenging situation in which treating a specific professional subject during a general course could be seen and perceived as unfair by those who are unemployed.

They reported that their learners were all concerned about the specific vocabulary to use at work and also how to speak to costumers.

5.2. Concrete material related aspects

Most of the teachers suggested that the material should be focusing on intermediate levels (from B1 and on), and not on beginner levels. The reason is that they all think that beginners first need to manage the language for communicating in everyday life, so to them it seems quite useless for them to learn specific vocabulary or expressions given that they lack the basics of the language.

Teachers' request is due to their lack of specific knowledge in any vocational field. So they would like to have access to specific vocational materials (vocabulary, expressions, idioms...), which they can then use and shape during a lesson, according to learners' particular needs.

None of them asked for a detailed and rigid set of activities, but they rather express their clear preference for flexible and adaptable materials. One of them suggested providing materials which can mainly trigger discussions and brainstorming of ideas, opinions and perspectives. They all would like various materials (video, pictures, audio, written and oral language, authentic and not). About videos, one of them said that she usually prefers short videos (2 o 3 minutes) that can be easily adaptable in any teaching situation.

Another teacher claimed that it would be useful to make the material as much practical and as close to the real world as possible (she told us that she actually brought her learners to shops or make them call phone numbers, leaving messages at the answering machines).

5.3. Availability of teaching material

All teachers use the internet as a primary source for finding teaching materials. They also create their own material, mixing up any possible source such as books, ads, TV programmes, teaching books (actually they are quite discarded), magazines, and so on. Most of them usually choose authentic materials and they adapt it to the specific learning needs. None of them uses just one L2 teaching book.

Consequently, they all suggested that the best way to disseminate and share the material is the internet.

5.4. Practical teaching experience and suggestions

The teachers found it difficult to meet individual needs, for example when some learners have made a very specific request (e.g. learning how to start up and run a farm), which interested very few people or just even one. What they did sometimes was giving them some advice or suggestion after the lesson. The main problem is that general language courses are usually not homogenous and the short timing and the scarce resources do not help at all.

They all reported successful teaching situations in which learners were fully involved and interested in learning that particular terminology. And also they had the impression that the more homogenous the level is the better they get involved and then learn.

They often used authentic material or authentic experiences (job requests, forms to fill up, going directly to the workplace to see how it works, making phone calls...), and also non-authentic ones such as play roles or simulations of real working situations.

6 Literature

1. *Ministry of labour- Report 2011:*

http://www.lavoro.gov.it/NR/rdonlyres/0D437786-9790-4B93-8625-E2BAD6A67FEE/0/Rapporto_immigrazione_sintesi_250211.pdf

2. *CARITAS:*

<http://www.caritas.it/Documents/11/4753.pdf>

3. *CARITAS – MIGRANTI. Newsletter Immigrazione n. 57 - March 2011:*

<http://www.migrantitorino.it/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/NL-56-febbraio-2011-1.pdf>

4. *Ministry of internal affairs – Report about immigrants in Italy:*

http://www.interno.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/15/0673_Rapporto_immigrazione_BARBAGLI.pdf

5. *Foreigner workers:*

<http://portale.unibocconi.it/wps/wcm/connect/resources/file/ebfc3002b2ed75b/Presentazione%20Cuomo.pdf>

6. *Information sistem “Lavoratori immigrati”:*

http://excelsior.unioncamere.net/web/Excelsior_2010_Lavoratori_immigrati.pdf

7. *Integration of immigrants in Italy:*

<http://fondazione.ismu.org/integrazionesud/Documenti/Vol%20III%20Capitolo%206.pdf>

8. *Information of ISTAT and Region of Piemonte*

http://extranet.regione.piemonte.it/fp-lavoro/centrorisorse/studi_statisti/istat/2008.htm

9. <http://affaritaliani.libero.it/cronache/inchiesta-immigrati-sud290410.html>

10. *Censis:*

http://www.adnkronos.com/IGN/Lavoro/Dati/Censis-collaboratore-domestico-e-giovane-donna-e-immigrata_673118646.html

11. *immigrazione.aduc.it:*

<http://www.migrantitorino.it/?p=4794>

12. <http://www.businessonline.it/3/LavoroeFisco/1856/lavoro-immigrati-italia-istruzione-retribuzioni.html>

13. <http://news.biancolavoro.it/component/content/698.html?task=view>

14. http://www.irpet.it/index.php?page=dimmi_lavoroeconomia&topmenu=6