

## BULLETIN 2022 | #4

### The economic contribution of migrants to host countries

Many States in different parts of the world perceive or just present migrants and refugees as a problem or even an economic burden for the host country. In addition, integration requirements are often applied so as to select those expected to integrate smoothly, while denying entry or the possibility of staying to those considered unlikely to fit in the host society.

Nevertheless, while migrants and refugees, in the short term, rely on government assistance and represent a cost, in the long term they generate demand for goods, create jobs, and pay taxes. Studies demonstrate that this results in a net gain for the economy.

For countries to receive these economic benefits, they obviously need to make sure that migrants are accepted, welcomed, and integrated. A real integration in the economic system of a country is unthinkable without cultural integration, which means equal rights, the emancipation of women, access to basic services like education, diploma recognition, etc...

By fulfilling their potential and sharing their talents, migrants and refugees fully contribute to the growth, strength, and stability of communities and offer the best response to the common preconception that they are a burden on host communities. This Bulletin offers some examples of positive initiatives and good practices directed at promoting the development of the skills of migrants and refugees and consequently of host country's economy.

### Analysing and advocating for the integration of migrant workers

Already in 1967, Paul VI, in the Encyclical *[Populorum progressio](#)*, spoke of "integral development" as aiming to "promote the good of every man and of the whole man", which is an inherent value of the Christian vocation. With the Encyclical *[Caritas in veritate](#)*, Benedict XVI paid tribute to Pope Paul VI, revisiting his teachings on integral



human development in the light of the situation occurring during his Magisterium. Speaking about integral development and migration (n. 62), the Pope Emeritus affirmed the migrant's right to be treated as a human person and not as a commodity or a mere part of the workforce. He also recognised that: "foreign workers, despite any difficulties concerning integration, make a significant contribution to the economic development of the host country through their labour, besides that which they make to their country of origin through the money they send home."

In his latest Encyclical, [\*Fratelli tutti\*](#), Pope Francis states that "in a genuinely developed society, work is an essential dimension of social life". For this reason, a primary goal of the political system should be guaranteeing that "everyone has a chance to contribute his or her own talents and efforts." In point 235, the Holy Father returns to the need to start over "from the least of our brothers and sisters". A society can't afford to leave a part of itself on the fringe. Therefore, he explains, "inequality and lack of integral human development make peace impossible".

On the occasion of a seminar within the project "The Future of work: labour after *Laudato si'*", Cardinal Michael Czerny, in his former role as Undersecretary of the Migrants and Refugees Section, presented some [\*Points on jobs, demography and migration\*](#). Focusing on the economic aspect of the issue, he remarked on Pope Francis' vision in *Laudato si'* of an economy that "must facilitate the pursuit of the common good". Whereas Cardinal Czerny spotlights the contradiction of the Global North, which wants to officially eradicate irregular migration, but at the same time "depends on irregular migration to staff the informal economy which supports the formal one." He also stressed the "risk of relegating migrants to a few restricted labour sectors (normally unskilled sectors), without any possibility of social mobility." This also depends on their inability to have a voice. Cardinal Czerny identifies the possible solution in being represented by a union.

Caritas Europa co-signed an [\*open letter\*](#) with ACT Alliance EU calling for migration to be prioritised as a force for development. In this joint open letter, Caritas Europa and ACT Alliance EU urge EU leaders to envision a new partnership that is guided by the understanding of migration as a natural part of life, as a right, and as a powerful tool for development. This should entail prioritising, rather than neglecting, important areas of cooperation put forward by African and European civil society organisations, such as reducing remittance costs, promoting diaspora engagement, and implementing the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

On 25 June 2019, ICMC Europe and the SHARE Network co-organized [a seminar on the integration of migrants and refugees](#) as a factor in local development in small European communities. The seminar was part of the European Committee of Regions' new platform, Cities and Regions for Integration Initiative, a network through which mayors and regional leaders can showcase positive examples of integration of migrants and refugees, share relevant information and promote diversity. Based on migration research and experience, panellists discussed the advantages and challenges faced by migrants and refugees who settle into smaller communities in Europe.

### Good practices by Catholic actors

Catholic actors carry on the priceless work of promoting migrants and refugees within the host society. Not only do they provide them with necessary skills to be a fit for work, but they also cooperate with civil society and enterprises to facilitate access to the labour market for migrants and refugees.

[Pathfinder - The Refugee Career Incubator](#) is a JRS programme that assists refugees and their hosts in planning and beginning their careers after basic schooling, through training and linking to jobs. Its targets are refugees and host community members who may or may not have completed secondary school, nor qualify for tertiary entrance, but nevertheless need to develop their skills to embark on a fulfilling career. To achieve its objectives, JRS-Pathfinder unites the traditionally distinct sectors of education and livelihoods, creating a bridge from academic and vocational education to jobs, business, and community involvement. To this end, JRS conducts a market systems analysis of the local area to identify the market sectors showing the most potential to include and provide growth opportunities for refugees.

[The first major step towards independence is finding work](#) (PT). The Allamano Foundation of the Consolata Missionaries, located in Águas Santas (Maia), Portugal, acts for the social development of displaced foreign students, so that they can become self-reliant. During the pandemic, missionaries helped refugee residents learn the Portuguese language. In the meantime, the Foundation spoke with some local work entities and companies to start work integration programmes through internships. Some residents have, thus, started working in a multinational corporation in the areas of catering, logistics, orders, and installations. Two other refugees have been hired by a construction company. Once financial autonomy has been reached, the mission can be considered accomplished.

The educational teams of the "Apartments for Emancipation - Magone" of the Salesian Social Platform "Ángel Tomás Solidarity Initiative Foundation" (FISAT) and of the "Don Bosco" Day Centre of the Salesian community of "St Antonio Abate" in Valencia have created a collaboration that facilitates the socio-working integration of young people who find themselves excluded from protection measures in reception centres once they reach the age of majority. An example of this collaboration is [the hotel workshop](#). For those who consider the hotel and restaurant sector as an option for the future, the Salesian's Day Centre proposes a socio-work placement itinerary as a "Cook's assistant and waiter" through which they acquire professional skills and training for personal autonomy.

The Pope John XXIII Community Association and the CISL union of Emilia-Romagna (Italian region) have signed an agreement entitled ["Get out of violence, start from work"](#) (IT). With this agreement, the union makes its network of Employment Counters available to promote the reintegration of women victims of trafficking and violence into employment. The 11 offices in the region offer an accompanying service to work through paths of advice, job search, promotion of internships, and training aimed at employment. The project thus welcomes the need to ensure occupational inclusion for women who are victims of exploitation.

## Testimonies and Papers

[An article by ICMC](#) reviews some evidence and scientific studies on the cost of receiving refugees in order to determine whether refugees are bad or good for the economy. Not only does the evidence show that refugees don't steal jobs, but "they are more likely to create jobs than other migrant groups or native-born citizens." Indeed, "countries that have accepted refugees have seen increases in median income and gross domestic product due to refugees' ability to start new businesses." Moreover, accepting refugees can fix the problem of the ageing population of a large percentage of high-income countries. They can respond to increased demand for social services and fill the jobs vacated by older native workers. In conclusion, although taking in refugees is often costly at first, research shows that it finally results in a net gain to the economy.

The Economics and Work Sector of the ISMU Foundation has conducted a study and discussion with various stakeholders, aimed at collecting analyses and proposals for the redesign of the governance schemes of economic migration and procedures for the meeting of foreign job supply and demand in Italy. This path resulted in the drafting of the [Green Paper on the governance of economic migration](#). The volume represents a

reasoned synthesis of what emerged from the analysis of the literature and from the comparison with experts and stakeholders. This Green Paper aims to provide an initial platform for discussion, with the aim of elaborating a White Paper on the proposals to amend the existing legislative framework and on the identification of priorities in the field of government and labour market governance.

In the book *Driven by the Depth of Love*, by ICMC, the photojournalist Christian Tasso presents numerous stories of migrant workers from four different parts of the globe. Among them, he analyses [the labour migration issue in Ivory Coast](#), with particular attention to the work of the Jesuit-run Centre for Research and Action for Peace (CERAP) in assisting migrants. The organisation's "Social Action in Urban Areas" offers professional training for youth, particularly migrants, living in poverty in Abidjan. "As well as learning a trade, program graduates hone life skills [...] and improve French literacy. By involving local businesses in the apprenticeship, CERAP strengthens inclusive community development." Several testimonies and stories of migrant workers, the majority from Burkina Faso, narrate how the Catholic organisation helped them find a stable job and a role in Ivorian society.

For earlier issues of this Bulletin, please visit: [migrants-refugees.va/en/c-19-bulletin](https://migrants-refugees.va/en/c-19-bulletin)

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