WP 3

STUDY ON THE LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRATION / INTRODUCTION COURSES FOR NEWCOMERS
CASE STUDY AOSTA VALLEY / ITALY

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September 2011
About the Project

While integration policies as such are not new, and in some countries date back to the 1980s and beyond, there have been important shifts in the debates on integration and in related re-configurations of integration policymaking in the past decade or so. One of the main recent trends is the linkage of integration policy with admission policy and the related focus on recent immigrants. A second trend is the increasing use of obligatory integration measures and integration conditions in admission policy, and third, integration policymaking is increasingly influenced by European developments, both through vertical (more or less binding regulations, directives etc.) and through horizontal processes (policy learning between states) of policy convergence.

An increasing number of EU Member States have, in fact, adopted integration related measures as part of their admission policy, while the impact of such measures on integration processes of immigrants is far less clear. In addition, Member States’ policies follow different, partly contradictory logics, in integration policy shifts by conceptualising (1) integration as rights based inclusion, (2) as a prerequisite for admission residence rights, with rights interpreted as conditional, and (3) integration as commitment to values and certain cultural traits of the host society.

The objective of PROSINT is to evaluate the impact of admission related integration policies on the integration of newcomers, to analyse the different logics underlying integration policymaking and to investigate the main target groups of compulsory and voluntary integration measures.

The project investigated different aspects of these questions along five distinct workpackages. These analysed (1) the European policy framework on migrant integration (WP1), (2) the different national policy frameworks for the integration of newcomers in the 9 countries covered by the research (WP2), the admission-integration nexus at the local level in studied in 13 localities across the 9 countries covered by the research (WP3), the perception and impacts of mandatory pre-arrival measures in four of the nine countries covered (WP4) and a methodologically oriented study of the impact of admission related integration measures (WP5).

The countries covered by the project were Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Apart from individual cases project reports generally cover the period until end of 2010.

For more information about the project visit http://research.icmpd.org/1429.html.
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I Local Migration-Integration Policy Frames - An Overview

I.1 Migration / Integration

The integration issue at the local level seems to be characterised by an effective commitment of the Valle d’Aosta regional government, which, also thanks to a special autonomous status\textsuperscript{1}, is the most prominent political actor on the migration issue. Nevertheless, the actors who take part in the implementation of integration/introduction courses agree that the local integration policymaking displays a lack of coordination between the different political and administrative spheres involved. In particular, interview partners point out the need for a single board in order to plan and coordinate the policies dealing with the migration issue. Furthermore the integration policy is the sum of different policies, which have not been framed especially for migrants but targeting all citizens.

The integration dimensions emphasised in Aosta are, on the one hand, cultural issues and, on the other hand, socio-economic issues. According to all interview partners the cultural issues have been framed along a long term integration project and consequently have been successfully implemented. Nowadays, in some Aosta schools, for example, there are integration courses also in classes where migrants are not enrolled. In order to avoid possible negative effects of the debate on the national level, which is dominated by security issues, the cultural issue of immigration has been dealt with in specific educational programs. The Centro Territoriale Permanente (onwards quoted as CTP), which belongs to the National Education System, provides language/integration courses for immigrants and, according to our interview partners, is able to increase the courses thanks to regional projects’ grants. Nevertheless, according to NGOs actors the commitment of the public authorities in the cultural side of migration issue has to be improved, since within the local public debate sometimes migrants are perceived as having duties but no rights and as the major welfare users. Anyway, according to stakeholders’ opinion, immigrants living in Aosta enjoy a quite positive climate, since the main immigrants’ problems are isolated and episodes of hostility are very rare.

Referring to the socio-economic issues, Aosta has recently witnessed a deterioration of immigrants’ condition. The general economic crisis has brought about a higher degree of precariousness, which still is a limited trend that cannot be compared to what exists in other regions. Before the economic crisis job opportunities for immigrants were easily available supply and demand naturally met in the labour market, to-day public authorities intervene in labour policies in order to increase immigrants’ job opportunities. Furthermore the “Direzione Agenzia Regionale del Lavoro” (the regional department entitled of labour policies, onwards quoted as DARL) has recently implemented Italian courses for immigrants which are structured along the labour market necessities. There are, for example, courses framed especially for the tourist sector, the care sector, etc. At the same time, DARL has modified the financial support to the language courses for immigrants in order to increase the opportunities. While before DARL used to finance 100% of the cost, nowadays it covers only 70% but the

\textsuperscript{1} The Valle d’Aosta region, as four other Italian regions, enjoys a special status constitutionally granted. This status gives the regional administration greater levels of autonomy in matters of legislation, administration and finance. The region, 120,000 inhabitants counts about 6% immigrants.
number of courses financed has increased and new organisations are involved in the implementation of such courses. Finally, some interview partners point out the need for a gender oriented policy in order to cope with specific women’s needs.

According to the majority of our interview partners, the main integration needs of immigrants are linked to primary needs such as accommodation and job opportunities. The daily life necessities are still very important: immigrants need public policies able to improve their work opportunity and work conditions, accommodation, health care and education. Knowledge of the Italian language is pointed out as fundamental for daily life needs. Actors involved in the integration courses point out that immigrants enrol the language course especially in order to find a job or to improve their working conditions. On the other hand, the local host society integration needs are perceived as heavily influenced by an inadequate knowledge of immigrants. According to the majority of our interview partners, in particular, the host society needs a better knowledge of immigrants also in order to facilitate a higher degree of integration between immigrants and Italians. The last point, could satisfy the need for recognition of the immigrants which they often express in an indirect manner, according to the interview partners.

The local integration policymaking is perceived by all the actors as not restrictive and quite effective. At the local level the policymaking displays a genuine commitment to migrant’s social inclusion and integration. The aims stressed, in the opinion of the actors, cover aspects dealing especially with integration courses and, recently, job opportunities. All of them recognise that at the local level the political actors are concretely involved in creating possibilities of integration. According to our interview partners, for example, the regional government recognises the importance of the language/integration courses and makes available funds in order to create new learning opportunities. However they point out that the fact that NGOs’ and the “Agenzie Formative” (private organisations offering public funded language/integration courses for immigrants, onwards quoted as AF) activities are in most cases financed on the basis of projects’ grants, implies that NGOs and AFs must present a new project each year. In their opinion it would be more efficient to structure their activity in a long term project.

I.2 Local Integration / Introduction Courses

Since the mid-2000s a plethora of integration/introduction courses and programmes have been created and developed in Aosta. In 2005 the existing courses provided by the National Education System have been structured within the CTP, which has started to focus on immigrants’ needs. CTP is involved in providing courses of basic Italian, in particular for newcomers, but it also provides the opportunity to take on advanced Italian courses. Since the mid-2000s, DARL has begun to focus on basic Italian language courses and afterwards on advanced Italian courses for workers. In the second phase, courses have been thought for persons who have already worked, for example in the tourist sector, and need a better knowledge of the language. While CTP is financed by the national and regional government, DARL is entitled to allocate two different types of funds to NGOs and AFs in order to provide a wider range of language courses. The two financial sources are on one side the European Social Fund (onwards quoted as ESF), administrated by DARL, and on the other side the projects’ grants financed by the Minister of Labour and Social Policies (onwards quoted as MLSP), administrated by the regional health councillorship. Both these funds focus on third country nationals.
excluding, for example, Bulgarian and Romanian nationals. Attendance of the courses financed by ESF is strictly limited to TNC, courses financed by MLSP offer sometimes the opportunity to enrol some communitarian citizens. An interview partner, for example, pointed out that, while bureaucratic procedures linked to ESF funds makes managing the courses by NGOs and AFs more difficult, MLSP funds are easier to administrate. Another difference between these two funders is that ESF focus on migrants actually involved in the labour market, while courses financed by MLSP include also women and under age migrants.

All the actors involved in providing integration/introduction courses highlight the importance of language for immigrants’ integration into the host society, not only for newly arrived foreign citizens, who do not know the language at all, but also for those longstayers who wish to improve their economic and social condition. According to some interview partners one of the immigrants’ biggest problem is that most of them think that a basic knowledge of Italian would be sufficient in order to live in Italy. Nevertheless, interview partners point out the necessity of a medium-high degree of language knowledge in order to achieve fully social and economic integration. The knowledge of the Italian language is described as a fundamental tool for integration: expression such as “prerequisite” and “basic element” are used while underling the importance of these courses. The necessity to learn an acceptable level of Italian, spoken and written, is stressed for all immigrants, newcomers and longstayers, in order to improve their economic situation and also to fully participate in the social and cultural life of the region. Another aspect which has been very often underlined by the actors involved is the positive collateral effect of attending these courses for immigrant women: for many of them it represents the only possibility to enjoy some sort of “spare time”. Moreover, in Aosta there are some NGOs that within the language course offer an empowerment formation in order to cope with the gender specific problems that these women have to face during the integration process.

I.3 Actors and venues

The network composed of CTP and some NGOs and AFs, plays the major role in providing integration/introduction courses at the local level. All of them believe that their activity is crucial for the immigrants’ integration, not only from a linguistic point of view but also in order to promote the immigrants’ participation in the social and cultural life of the city. Stakeholders share the opinion that attending these courses gives immigrants a better knowledge of the public services, a better understanding of the Italian way of life and a clearer comprehension of rights and duties. While NGOs display an higher degree of flexibility, CTP and AFs follow attendance rules which are stricter. Since immigrants living in Aosta usually enjoy a quite stable life conditions, courses can be organised relying on the regular immigrants’ attending.

The opinion that local policy makers recognise their role in increasing the level of integration is shared by almost all the actors, furthermore they also think that this recognition is translated in an adequate financial support on the part of local policymakers. The regional government, for example, is quite active in financing language/integration courses and in providing a constant supply of different courses. The decision of the regional government to reduce the amount financed for every project in order to increase the number of organizations involved in this issue and the available courses has been considered by our interview partners as an effective
strategy. The integration/introduction courses are the product of a spontaneous action by NGOs and of a structured commitment by regional policymakers.

I.4 Contextual and process factors

The actors involved in the integration/introduction courses share the opinion that since a national integration policy is missing, at the local level these initiatives are the result of the local authorities’ engagement due to a favourable background. The local context enjoys a more sustainable policy in the matter of integration thanks to many factors: the role played by the regional government, the voluntary and private organizations, the initiative of CTP to provide an institutionalised educational opportunity for immigrants and a particular historical tradition of integration. The Valle d’Aosta Region, after being a region of emigration, has witnessed a migration wave when people from the south of Italy were moving to the north, this historical background provides the local administration with an example of integration which could be useful in framing new integration policies. The negative effects of the lack of a national strategy has been neutralized by an effective policymaking at the local level where public authorities can frame the integration policy along sustainable guidelines.
II The local Integration Landscape. A mapping of Integration / Introduction Courses

II.1 Integration courses at the local level

The landscape of integration courses offered in the city of Aosta is characterised by three categories of courses, depending on the actor promoting the initiative and on the funding source. On one side, we find the **CTP courses**, which offer an institutionalised framework and consequently the possibility to obtain a certificate which is legally recognised. On the other side, there are **NGOs and AFs** which offer courses organised in order to offer a basic Italian for newcomers who need to learn the language as soon as possible in order to cope with their daily life needs and also more advanced integration/language courses for immigrants who need a better knowledge of the language. When NGOs and AFs courses are funded by FSE or MLSP usually there is the possibility for immigrants to take an exam at the end of the course in order to obtain a CISL certificate. The CISL certificate is a language certificate legally recognised and held at the Università per Stranieri di Siena. Finally, in order to enrol in any course, immigrants have at least to provide the official receipt showing that they have applied for the residence permit.

II.1.1 How the courses were set up, when, with which goals and who took the initiative?

The **CTP** was formally set up in 2005, but before the “Centro educazione per gli adulti” (onwards quoted as CEA) used to be involved in the education of adults. In 1999 in a neighbourhood of Aosta a group of elderly people asked to be enrolled in the primary school in order to avoid the closure of this school since there were not enough children. When the authorities did open the enrolment, none of the elderly people who had asked for this opportunity, actually enrolled, but 30 immigrants did. Since then the CEA first and, from 2005, the CTP provide different courses for immigrants. The teachers themselves, despite the absence of any ministerial programme, started a process of requalification. The teachers working in CTP set up their activity on the basis of the growing requests coming from immigrants in the matter of knowledge of the Italian language. The stakeholders agree that at the beginning it was a process of learning by experience, since they were not prepared to teach Italian as a foreign language. Sometimes, the “students” were not even familiar with the Latin alphabet. While in the first years immigrants enrolled in courses providing the Italian primary school certificate (a certificate which does not exist anymore), where they were taught basic Italian, nowadays immigrants enrol often within the secondary school second level courses which, once the final exam passed, it gives them a certificate which is legally recognised in Italy.

**NGOs and AFs courses** play an important role in the matter of integration. The NGOs/AFs courses started to flourish in the mid-2000s in response to a growing demand of Italian courses on the part of immigrants. In NGOs’ courses some of the teachers are volunteers but some are professional, while in AFs courses the teachers are all professional. The DARL and the regional health councillorship play a very important role in the matter of fund raising and of redistribution of financial resources to different actors. Since the courses are funded by MLPS, in the case of NGOs, and by
FSE, in the case of AFs, they offer the possibility to pass the CISL exam in order to get a certificate of knowledge of the Italian language which is legally recognised.

II.1.2 **What are the learning aims of the courses considered?**

The **CTP courses learning aims** deal with the improvement of the knowledge of the Italian language for newcomers who sometimes are also illiterate, but especially with the achievement of the secondary school first level certificate. Usually it takes a one year course in order to get this certificate but in the case of immigrants, depending on their previous schooling, it may take more time: if an immigrant has got a good level of education and speaks already another foreign language, only a few hours of Italian can be sufficient, otherwise it may take up to four years depending on the immigrant's attendance. CTP offer basic Italian language courses and at the end of the course there is also the possibility to pass the CISL exam, which takes place in the same structure. Our interview partners, nevertheless, pointed out that the majority of immigrants who pass this exam do not try to achieve the A2 level, which is the one required by the law for a long-standing residence permit, but for more advanced level such as, for example, B2 and C1. Finally, CTP workers also point out that they link the learning of Italian language to a wider cultural learning: they provide information about the welfare state, the organisation of the public administration, the new legislative acts dealing with the immigration issue and so on.

The **learning aim of NGOs and AFs courses** in a first phase was to develop the skills for speaking and understanding the Italian language as soon as possible. Immigrants, since most of them were newcomers, needed the language as a survival tool in order to find a job and start their integration trajectory. In a second phase, AFs courses have been developed in order to offer a language course specifically organised for those who already have a working experience and need to improve their language skills. Someone who has already worked as a “badante” can then enrol in the course which has been developed for this kind of work, but not, for example, in the one for the tourist sector. NGOs which are involved in specific projects of integration, as Uniendo Raíces and Pace, Solidarietà e Sviluppo that work only with women, have recently begun to use an empowerment approach in order to deal with women not as a mothers but as workers. During their courses, moreover, these NGOs provide a baby-sitting service in order to facilitate women's attendance.

II.1.3 **Funding sources (since the beginning of the initiative until today)**

The financial support of the Minister of Education is the main source of funding for CTP courses, being a part of the national education system the CTP teachers’ remuneration, which is the most expensive budget entry, is almost entirely covered by national government funds. Regional government play also an important role since, from 2007, many projects have been funded thanks to the regional funds. The regional government financial aid has permitted to increase the number of courses offered and also, for example, to provide a language course for immigrants in the Aosta prison or an

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2 The Italian educational system is divided into primary school, secondary school first level and secondary school second level. Respectively covering the age between: 6-10; 11-13; 14-18.
introduction course for young people who enrol in the second level secondary school. Private banks foundations do not play a role in funding CTP activities.

The teaching activities of some NGOs courses are made on a voluntary basis, while others employ professional teachers. Both are financed by MLPS funds. AFs activities are financed by the FSE. The regional and local governments usually finance on the basis of single projects' grants.

II.1.4 The network of actors involved in the implementation of the courses

With a particular attention to the institution / organisation/s in charge of delivering the service (national / regional / local level institutions, NGOs, immigrants organisations etc.):

The network of actors involved in the implementation of the courses in the city of Aosta is composed by the CTP, AFs and NGOs, which deal in a direct way with immigrants, and local authorities, which do not only fund their activities but are also involved into specific projects. All the interviewed partners point out that, even if there is no official board of coordination, there is an informal coordination between all the actors working on the issue. In 2005 the regional government fund, for example, the “Gruppo Cavanh”, which was a think tank set up in order to produce the guidelines of a sustainable integration policy involving all the actors working in this field. This experience has been very useful in order to think about the cultural issues of immigration and the fact that this part of the integration policy is considered by all actors a successful one means that the coordination has played a very important role. Moreover, all our interview partners stress the effectiveness of the network that has been informally created between all the actors involved within the integration process. Thanks to this informal network, CTP, AFs and NGOs do not only share their experience but they do also participate in project grant’s selection together in order to increase their possibility of succeeding. Interviewed partners agree that the regional government is playing a major role in framing a better performing integration-makers network.

II.1.5 Target groups and / or groups explicitly exempted

What immigrant groups are targeted (family migrants, labour migrants, seasonal workers, co-ethnics nationals)?

**CTP** enrol all kind of immigrants, also EU nationals, except for those who do not have a residence permit or at least the official receipt that proves that they have applied for it and the immigrants who are under 16, within the first level of secondary school, and under 15 for the basic Italian course language.

**NGOs and AFs** do not exclude any specific group. However, the communitarian citizens cannot enrol in courses funded by FSE and MLPS. In the case of MLPS, some derogation can be granted in special cases. Some NGOs do not ask for the residence permit in order to enrol immigrants in their courses, but since most of them are funded by public authorities illegal immigrants do not even try to enrol. Many associations work only with women because the MLPS funds are allocated at this condition. The necessity to reserve specific courses to women is due to many factors, some of them are linked to practical reasons, others are related to cultural issues. According to our interview
partners a not mixed class means a higher attendance of women coming from countries such as Morocco for example.

II.1.6 Distribution of information on the courses

How are they informed about the courses? How are they informed about rights and duties attributed to the courses? Who is de facto attending the local integration programmes?

CTP advertises its activities on regional newspapers but interviewed partners agreed that immigrants are very aware of the learning possibilities offered by CTP thanks to the fact that immigrants who have attended the courses spread the word among their community. During the registration process immigrants are informed about the attendance rules of the courses and have to undergo a test or have a simple talk with teachers in order to determine their level of language knowledge. Registration for the first level of secondary school is open from September until January; the basic Italian language courses admissions are possible almost at any time. The majority of students are workers between 25 and 35 years old, but recently people in search for a job, have increased. The number of enrolled women has increased constantly in the last years and nowadays they are the majority. Moreover women often work as a “badante” who is the person that looks after the elderly or disabled. The main countries of origin are Morocco and Romania. This year the number of immigrants enrolled in CTP courses is around 400.

NGOs and AFs language courses financed by public funds are advertised in newspapers and in posters put in public places. Anyway the advertising of these courses does not seem to be essential since informal immigrants’ networks spread the word about their activity. When enrolling, immigrants are informed about the attendance rules of the courses and pass a test or have a simple talk with teachers in order to determine their level of language knowledge. The majority of students are young and adult people between 20 and 50 years old and most of them work even if recently the number of unemployed persons has increased. In the case of courses for women, they are quite young, 30-35 years old and few of them work, moreover as soon as they find a job usually they leave the course. The main countries of origin are: Morocco and Romania, Latin-Americans are also present in an appreciable number.

II.1.7 Target groups and / or groups explicitly exempted

What categories are formally exempted (e.g. illiterate, national groups, duration of stay)?

CTP courses: None.

NGOs/AFs courses: Courses funded by FSE are reserved to extra-communitarians, meaning that Romanian and Bulgarian nationals are formally exempted.

II.1.8 Obligations (voluntary / compulsory)

Incl. sanctions eventually attributed to them (negative sanction vs. positive incentives), or kind of incentives provided for increasing voluntary participation.
What happens if a migrant does not attend/pass the course (sanctions)? What happens if a migrant passes the course in terms of benefits (incentives)? What kind of incentives is provided for increasing voluntary participation (where applicable)?

The participation in CTP courses is voluntary and the attendance depends on various elements. Normally, immigrants must attend at least 70% of the course in order to get the final attendance certificate, but in the case of an immigrant who has already a good level of education the attendance may be reduced with acknowledgement of the established abilities. Immigrants are not sanctioned if they decide to leave the course, on the contrary CTP -in the case of those who decide to enrol again- acknowledges the hours they had previously attended.

The participation in NGOs/AFs courses is voluntary and the courses providing a certificate witness a greater attendance.

II.1.9 Duration (total hours, immediate / long term)

The CTP first level secondary school courses follow the national school schedule, from September to June. The basic Italian language courses last from October to June. The CISL courses last 80 hours but for workers there is the possibility to attend only two hours each fifteen days and study at home.

NGOs/AFs course is made of 60 hours The NGOs courses do not all follow the national school schedule, some of them do but others offer courses which last few months. AFs courses are structured in order to make the best of a short attendance period and they are made of 100 hours.

II.1.10 Costs (figures, self-payment, sponsorship)

The CTP language courses and the secondary school certificate courses are free, immigrants are asked to contribute to buy the teaching book in the very first level of language course if they can, but this cost is 3 euros. Immigrants who want to pass the CISL exam have to pay 50% of the cost of the exam which depends on the level and vary between 15 and 45 euros.

The NGOs and AFs courses are free, immigrants are asked to contribute for the 50% of the cost of CISL exam, which can go from 20 to 45 euros depending on the level of language to certify.

II.1.11 Certificates delivered (legal value, level of appreciation / recognition in the labour market etc.)

CTP first level secondary school courses, once the exam passed, deliver a certificate which has a legal value and it is compulsory when immigrants wish to enrol in other professional courses. CTP can deliver certificates which are legally recognised about the knowledge of the Italian language but usually immigrants do not ask for it unless they have already a good level of Italian. The CISL courses, once the exam passed, deliver also a certificate of knowledge of the Italian language. Interviewed partners believe that the
level of appreciation is quite high since in order to find a job, for example, a certificate delivered by an official institution as CTP may increase the possibilities of success. 

**NGOs/AFs** do not deliver certificates which enjoy a legal value.

II.1.12 Evaluation

*How is attendance monitored? How are learning outcomes evaluated?*

The attendance in **CTP courses** is monitored thanks to a class register. Learning outcomes are evaluated in an informal way except for the secondary school certificate for which immigrants have to pass an official exam and CISL courses.

In **NGOs courses** the attendance is monitored thanks to a class register and learning results are evaluated in an informal way except for CISL courses. AFs courses monitor the attendance thanks to a class register and learning results are evaluated in a formal way: test or CISL exam.
III The (perceived) Impact of Integration / Introduction Courses on Immigrants Integration Trajectories

The perceived impact of the integration/introduction courses offered at a local level on the integration trajectories of immigrants seems to be characterised by a great appreciation. The interview partners point out that the impact of integration/introduction courses cannot be denied. They distinguish two kinds of impact: a short-term impact and a medium/long term impact. In the short term integration/introduction courses offer the possibility for immigrants to become familiar with the local context in a friendly environment. During this first phase immigrants are made aware of the public services that the local context offers and also they can get a better understanding of the Italian way of life and a clearer comprehension of their rights and duties.

In the medium/long term immigrant’s social and economic integration is endorsed by a better knowledge of the language and by a better degree of awareness about the context in which they live. Stakeholders do not always draw a clear link between the immigrants’ attendance of integration/introduction courses and their employment situation, but, on the other hand, they do stress the importance of the knowledge of the Italian language in order to find a job and, especially, in order to get a better one. Furthermore, many interview partners have highlighted the importance of a good level of language knowledge in order to avoid misunderstandings that can harm labour relations.

Interview partners all agree that voluntary integration courses produce the desired effect of facilitating the immigrants’ integration. The importance of this kind of courses is more evident when they are not available: immigrants do ask for this kind of courses showing that they do consider the knowledge of the Italian language as one of their priorities. Stakeholders do consider that this kind of courses reach the target groups in a satisfactory way, but some of them point out that the quality of the courses can be improved. In the case of women, for example, it would be better to avoid the gender-blindness that often characterized the integration policies. Anyway, the impact of integration/introduction courses offered at a local level on the host society overall level of social cohesion is pointed out as another positive effect. Immigrants who enjoy a better level of knowledge of the Italian language are more keen to participate in public social events as, for example, the activities promoted by their children’s school or the village festivals which are very common in the region.

Interview partners consider that much more has to be done in order to achieve positive effects of integration courses on the social, economic and cultural environment of the regional/local community. They do stress the importance of involving the host community in the process of integration, according to our interview partners, as most Italians only know the immigrant communities through stereotypes. It must be however stresses that in Aosta nobody thinks that there is a social conflict due to the presence of immigrants. The city does not know the negative effects of the immigration issue; on the contrary many immigrants are well integrated in the host society. The costs, time management and quality standards of integration/introduction courses are perceived as suitable to reach the desired integration aims.

Stakeholders agree that the immigrant category that is more likely to benefit from such courses is composed by immigrants who enjoy a previous schooling experience.
Referring to this point, for example, immigrants coming from Eastern Europe are generally keener to attend integration / introduction courses because they have usually a high level of schooling achieved in their countries of origin. The second generation is also another group target which attracts greater attention in order to facilitate their integration within the national education system. Finally, many stakeholders point out the necessity to invest more on the women integration in order to improve not only their conditions but also their children’s opportunities.

IV Conclusions

The characterising feature of the local system of integration courses is sustainability. Nevertheless the economic crisis could be potentially harmful in the long term period for this approach, since it can change the composition of immigrant population in the city. Before the economic crisis, Aosta witnessed an immigrant population that displays a stable living conditions and consequently was keen to act within a long strategy attitude, nowadays some immigrants who have lost their job have already left the city. Even if this is only a small percentage of the immigrant population that has suffered from the economic crisis consequences, this trend should not be underestimated. In a context where the employment situation changes abruptly the labour market won’t stop to attract immigrant workers but it would probably appeal to people who do not wish to spend their resources, both material and cultural, within the local context.

Stakeholders do also stress the negative consequences that a constantly changing national legislation in the matter of immigration plays at the local level. Furthermore the element which is highlighted by almost all the interview partners is that CTP is the only one that can insure the continuity of integration/introduction courses, while the other actors depend on the available funds. Until now the regional government has been able to function as a mediator between the FSE and MLPS funds and the actors providing such courses, also insuring financial aid when these funds are not available, but this approach does not permit a long term strategy. In order to be entitled to the project grants the different actors have to present each year an innovative project, but sometimes it would be more useful to implement the same project for at least two or three years time in order to carefully evaluate the positive effects of it and the aspects which need to be changed as well. Aosta can be considered an exception within the Italian context, since according to our interview partners, changes on the national level take years to reach the region.