

■ Data

As can be seen in the table below, in the last year a strong increase (+39,3%) of the presence of Senegalese citizens in Italy has been recorded and this trend is confirmed for the following years. The official calculation of the amount of remittances comprises the flows of the banks, the mail and money transfers. If we consider the sums directly moved to the home land – by the immigrants or through friends - it would have arrived at the doubling of approximately one hundred billion dollars. The calculation, made on a world-wide basis, can be used also for Italy. Beyond the remittances of money, objects (car, other machinery and assets) have to be considered. Caritas and Migrantes observe that “both in Italy and on a world-wide level, the tendency of the money remittances is on the up and up and, especially, this flow is less volatile than the direct investments and more considerable when compared to international development aids. All this leads us to consider migrations as a propeller, which may not be neglected, of economic exchanges between rich and other countries”. The data of 2004, therefore, have to be commented with various subtle distinctions. It is true that the increasing insertion of foreign people into Italy constitutes a local drain of the savings of immigrants, which are withheld to pay rent, the purchase of furniture and tools, cars, education of the children and, in an increasing way, a loan for the house. On the other hand it is also true that the first generation of immigrants is inclined to maintain a strong link with their native land and their loved ones, making them participate in their family's access to wealth through money transfer.

ITALY. THE FIRST GROUPS OF IMMIGRANTS BEFORE AND AFTER REGULARIZATION (1.1.2003)

Source: Statistical Dossier Caritas/ Migrantes Immigration. Processing of data from the Ministry of the Interior

Country of origin	Application of regularization	Living at 31.12.2002	* Total applications + living	Increasing % after the regularization	* New ranking after the regularization (Living + applications)
1. Rumania	143,947	95,834	239,781	150.2	1. Rumania 239,781
2. Ukraine	106,921	14,035	120,956	761.8	2. Morocco 227,055
3. Albania	55,038	168,963	224,001	32.6	3. Albania 224,001
4. Morocco	54,221	172,834	227,055	31.4	4. Ukraine 120,956
5. Ecuador	36,673	12,108	48,781	302.9	5. P.R. China 97,757
6. Republic of China	35,443	62,314	97,757	56.9	6. Philippines 74,030
7. Poland	34,241	35,077	69,318	97.6	7. Poland 69,318
8. Moldavia	31,217	6,861	38,078	455.0	8. Tunisia 61,041
9. Peru	17,471	31,115	48,586	56.1	9. Senegal 50,594
10. Egypt	16,010	29,861	45,871	53.6	10. Ecuador 48,781
11. India	14.360	34,080	48,440	42.1	11. Peru 48,586
12. Senegal	14,284	36,310	50,594	39.3	12. India 48,440



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The last ten years, taken over all, emphasize the entity of the sums sent. Altogether euro1,895 million have gone to the Philippines, 521 million to China, 193 million to Morocco, 60 million to Senegal, 41 million to Rumania, 30 million to Peru, Ecuador, Brazil and Egypt, 16 million to Venezuela, India and Argentina, 10 million to Turkey, Albania, Bangladesh and Ukraine. Moreover, Italy represents only a trickle: in the United States the amount of remittances is fifteen times more than our country, that it is however placed among the first ten in the world. Also according to Caritas and Migrantes the amount of remittances is really important and more substantial than may appear, as also the relative benefits are of primary importance for many countries and often constitute a self-managed glimmer of hope for poor countries.



Gothenburg 2003



Boston 2003



Calcutta 2000

Photo> FRANCESCO GALLI

In the year two thousand and four a little more than 60% of remittances was sent from the Lazio Region, or to be more exact, from the Province of Rome: in the past this area was always in the lead, representing more than 40% of the total. Another third comes from northern Italy, of which a little less than 20% comes from the Lombardy Region (more precisely from the Province of Milan). The last 10% comes from the Veneto Region (the vast majority from the Province of Verona). Rome and Milan are, without doubt, two areas of great polarization, also in that a significant number of foreign citizens, that come from high-income countries, lives there.





■ The basis, the project

a) Diversity as value and residence as mutual enrichment

The physical distances are by now reduced. Every place on Earth can be reached in few hours, while the economy is also organized on a planetary scale. Multicultural life characterizes all our societies and therefore also the Italian one, which is becoming in these last years a point of arrival for immigrants arriving from every part of the world. Reaching Italy, every immigrant brings a personal patrimony of culture and humanity with him that is rarely adequately valued. Indeed, often the diversity is lived as a disvalue. In this way, the most important contribution that an immigrant can give to the society in which he lives is lost: his different cultural connotation, his ethical values, his roots, his vision of life.

Sinapsys starts from the assumption that multiculturalism is the most vital of resources: cultural biodiversity can enrich the social and economic fabric which exists in our country. For this reason, the plan proposes to reduce cultural distances and to favour a constructive approach towards the different, eliminating mutual distrust that is born from ignorance and from ethnic or religious prejudice. The need for mutual acknowledgment based on universal recognized values represents the first step towards a fruitful cohabitation as well as towards an equal dignity among different cultures living within the same territory.

It is necessary to take cognizance of the progressive change endured by the relationships between immigrants and their native land: above all, in the second generation of children born in Italy and those children born into mixed marriages the link with the land of origin tends to disappear. The second generation are suspended between two cultural models of reference and often they do not have suitable instruments open to them, in order to formulate a synthesis, which contains the two various roots of origin, so as to be able to make these hereditary characteristics a point of personal enrichment. Belonging to an ethnic group, the use of their own mother tongue, the acquaintance with customs, with music, with art and – why not – native cooking does not have to be considered an obstacle to integration in the host country. It is for this reason that Sinapsys wants to promote activities that are able to stimulate curiosity towards the country of origin, desire to reinforce ties and pride in belonging. In such a way the personality of the immigrant will be more rich and aware of its values and its contribution to society will be stronger and more aware.

Sinapsys means to search for innovative solutions in order to improve the quality of life of immigrants in Italy, to favour their full and aware insertion into Italian society and, at the same time, to favour maintenance and development of ties with the country of origin, also as a new occasion of development for favourable entrepreneurial activities for both countries. The living quarters issue represents the most important problem to overcome even compared with looking for a job for many Senegalese-Italians. The unstoppable increase in the real estate market price, the growing tension in living space, specially in metropolitan areas, the indisposition of the small house owners to rent rooms to immigrants make the search for a decorous flat at an acceptable price, one of the most pressing problems in the Italian panorama.

Indeed, many Senegalese people cannot bring their family reunion to fruition just because of the difficulty of maintaining adequate and decorous accommodation. Sinapsys can promote a series of innovative initiatives in the field of self-construction and organize the establishing of Italian-Senegalese mixed cooperatives for the construction of low-cost houses which are both economically and socially sustainable. Sinapsys can promote in Municipal, Provincial and Regional fields, innovative initiatives, as regards project-financing, favouring the construction of low-cost housing programmes, but realized with constructive systems and such technologies as to produce low environmental impact throughout the territory, according to the parameters of sustainable architecture and of bioarchitecture standards.

Multiculturalism is expressed in the shape of direct and active participation to all levels and stages of all different subjects relating to the project. The creation of mixed structures of persons belonging to several cultures, nations, religions, will favour exchange and mutual acquaintance.



Photo- FRANCESCO GALLI

b) Dialogue with the new requests, Listening to the new market

Sinapsys means to operate in parallel on the cultural, social and economic levels. Only working in all three fields at the same time it is possible to produce an effective improvement of the quality of life of immigrants, a better integration (avoiding the loss of one's own identity and searching for an improbable surface homologation), a greater knowledge of their right/ duty of their own presence and citizenship in Italy.

The presence of new inhabitants throughout the territory brings with them new needs, new requests which are to be faced, but also new economic and production potential that most times remains unexpressed.

Such potential often remains isolated from the social and production net and they are not adequately used:



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Sinapsys proposes to activate new channels of connections and links of knowledge so that these latent powers may be completely expressed, starting from projects oriented towards improving everyday life of the same immigrants, to satisfy their priority needs with actions that at the same time aim to favour their introduction into the existing social context. We want therefore to face the living issue, the education of the children and their relationship with scholastic institutions, the recovery of the roots of the language and the culture of origin (especially for the later generations who were born in Italy).

Within this framework, the involvement of Sinapsys almost turns out to be consequential as it acts as a "front desk" and institutional interface for all activities, project and collaboration that the countries of origin can propose, in the action framework aimed at the improvement of living conditions of their own compatriots in Italy. In this way, the immigrants in Italy become the first promoters of business opportunities and new activities in their countries of origin. Sinapsys' purpose is to create a single network of knowledge, of companies that can be activated, based on the various requirements and competences that the project needs.

Every purposed activity will have a different structure of research and study, human contributions, professional and will be equipped with adequate financial structures.

Confrontation and dialogue are essential parts of a sharing process: discovery of common values and different logical approaches to problem solving will bring a cultural and human enrichment of all participants to the project, besides satisfying the real need from which the project was born. As regards the philosophy of Sinapsys, the impossibility of conjugating ethic operations of important social value with business disappears. The concept of Fair Trade finds numerous supporters at this point and more and more companies organize their activities according to the Ethical Enterprise model.

The internationalization of the economy and entrepreneurial activities represents one of a few ways to escape that which the present world economic situation offers us.



To activate human and planning foreign energies and resources, that already exist in our country like privileged actors of projects elaborated together in Italy, is a path that we think is the right one to follow. To propose today new models of sustainable business with important ethical contents is not only desirable, but also strategically winning.

Within a framework of good relationship between Senegal and Lombardy, it is possible to let many activities linked to the collaboration among the small- to medium-sized businesses of the two countries be born and grow. The presence in Lombardy of an industrious Senegalese community (only in the City of Milan there are approximately 3,000 residents) represents an optimal starting point and offers a good critical mass of people

that should be able to put interesting new business programmes into action. A framework of bilateral collaboration protocols facilitates the start-up of joint operations much more. What we think is still lacking is a permanent meeting point in Milan, where all the different subjects interested in cooperation can be identified and confronted (privately-owned companies, public institutions, research and education centres).

Sinapsys proposes to organize a network of knowledge and energies, coming from the world of science and technological research, private enterprises, social and cultural operators, available to form working groups in order to search - together with the Senegalese partners - for the best project solutions to the problems proposed, following a standard of evaluation that answers the following requirements:

- Economic sustainability
- Minimum environmental impact
- Social promotion
- Use of appropriate technologies
- Evolution and development of the project throughout time
- Involvement of local intellectual and entrepreneurial resources



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This structure that takes shape in various ways and with different partners, based on scientific, technological competences and operating demands, allows us to keep operating a network that is in continuous expansion in terms of persons, structures and means, and which is in a position to go into operation only when necessary.

Sinapsys wants to act as a hinge between public institutions of the two countries and the world of enterprise, stimulating operations following market rules and that are, at the same time, able to develop the collaboration among the several actors of the two countries.

The Senegalese residents in Italy are the best promoters of business for Italian small- to medium-sized businesses that want to invest in Senegal. The Entrepreneurial Initiative overseas is often impeded or delayed because a single person has trouble in finding interlocutors in Senegal who are able to interface and verify the feasibility of the proposed business, to find (European, National or Local) financing, which often exists and is hardly ever used, and which is destined to technology transfer from Developed to Developing Countries.

Sinapsys works as single reference desk for Italian and Senegalese businesses, supplying reliability assessments of the various partners, finding the right companies and Italian research structures for operations, searching for possible co-financing options or facilities useful for the promotion of the entrepreneurial initiative. Senegalese people in Italy would therefore have a single project partner who is in a position to act as recognized referent from Italian institutions and who is consequently in a position to carry out the on-going activity more authoritatively.

■ Sinapsys and its guidelines

1. One structure for every project (multidisciplinarity-interdisciplinarity)
Every project has an organigram of persons and resources independent and referenced to a project manager that reports the state of works of the jobs to Sinapsys. The participating companies and research institutes establish the method of participation, in this way producing an independent structure which is able to self-manage the developments of the operation.
2. Research, Training and Education, Planning, Production, Monitoring
Every activity has a phase of Research, Training and Education of human resources, Planning, Production and Monitoring of the entire operation. In this way every Operation is inserted into a constantly updated file that can be consulted by everyone: it will be possible moreover to estimate, in cost/ benefit terms, single initiatives and to be able to gain advantage for future projects.
3. Weak issues people become issues of energy
With an approach of this type it is quite possible that the initial weak issues can be transformed into issues of force and characterize the entire project. The use of innovation technologies and approaches will bring interesting and profitable activities.
4. New financial architectures
Using financial architectures that work with different mental approaches from those usual ones, the entrepreneurial approach which is not exclusively focused on maximum obtainable profit, but on ethics, can create new models of unusual business which are however sustainable.
5. Short-, medium - and long-term plans
Thinking of the projects as systems that have a growth horizon and development over time, of continuing to maintain relationships formed and collaboration with the partner even after the end of the project, so as to forever upgrade the potential synergies of the Sinapsys network.



A single desk to meet supply and demand

Sinapsys as a privileged meeting place between the demand coming from Senegal and the supply offered by Italy. Promotion and organization of activities, links with the Italian productive and economic fabric, promotion of joint-ventures targeted towards a technology-transferring process.

Promotion of activities for the improvement of the quality of life and for the integration process of and by the Senegalese population in Italy.

Use of ICT on the new business models, job organization, technology transferring and e-education.

The development of all ICT is moving towards an authentic revolution in job organization and in design of new business concepts that, until a few years ago, were unthinkable. This revolution that is permeating the entire production and services world is equivalent to the advent of electricity during the steam age. We need a general re-consideration of the philosophies of the problem-solving approach, since the old models are outdated when compared to the new options that we have at our disposal. As an example, the services we can obtain via broadband and wireless connection (W i-Fi and W i-Max) are often narrow due to our planning uninventiveness and the fields of application are almost unlimited: from healthcare to e-government, from e-education to virtual fairs, from controlled distance building sites to environmental monitoring.

The use of these technologies can really shorten the distances and create a “bottom-up connection” among people belonging to different worlds, creating new solidarities and human economic links which are able to propose new innovative and revolutionary business models.

The approach to this new way of social and human relationship on a planetary scale is not an option between possible choices. Today these technologies are already here and are spreading day by day, faster and faster: we have only to decide whether we participate in this revolution or be cut off from it altogether.

The photographs of Francesco Galli, chosen to illustrate this article, are taken from a broader and well-articulated research project entitled “Luoghi e città”.

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