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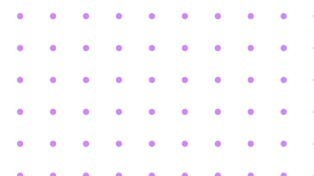
FROM STORY TO SKILL: IMPROVING MIGRANT INTEGRATION THROUGH NARRATIVE-BASED VET

developed as part of the project:

STORY-TELLING METHOD IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY AND REFUGEES



STMinVET
Story-Telling Method in Vocational Education





FINAL DESK RESEARCH REPORT

within the project „Story-Telling Method in Vocational Education for Local Community and Refugees”

Language version: English



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Executive Summary

This report presents the outcomes of the STMinVET project, a collaborative initiative between Fundacja „Fundusz Inicjatyw” (Poland) and Aura Formazione Srl (Italy), exploring the integration of the Storytelling Method (STM) in vocational education and training (VET) for migrants and refugees. Rooted in a mixed-method research approach, the project examined the effectiveness of narrative-based learning tools to enhance language skills, build socio-emotional resilience, and facilitate professional integration in new cultural environments.

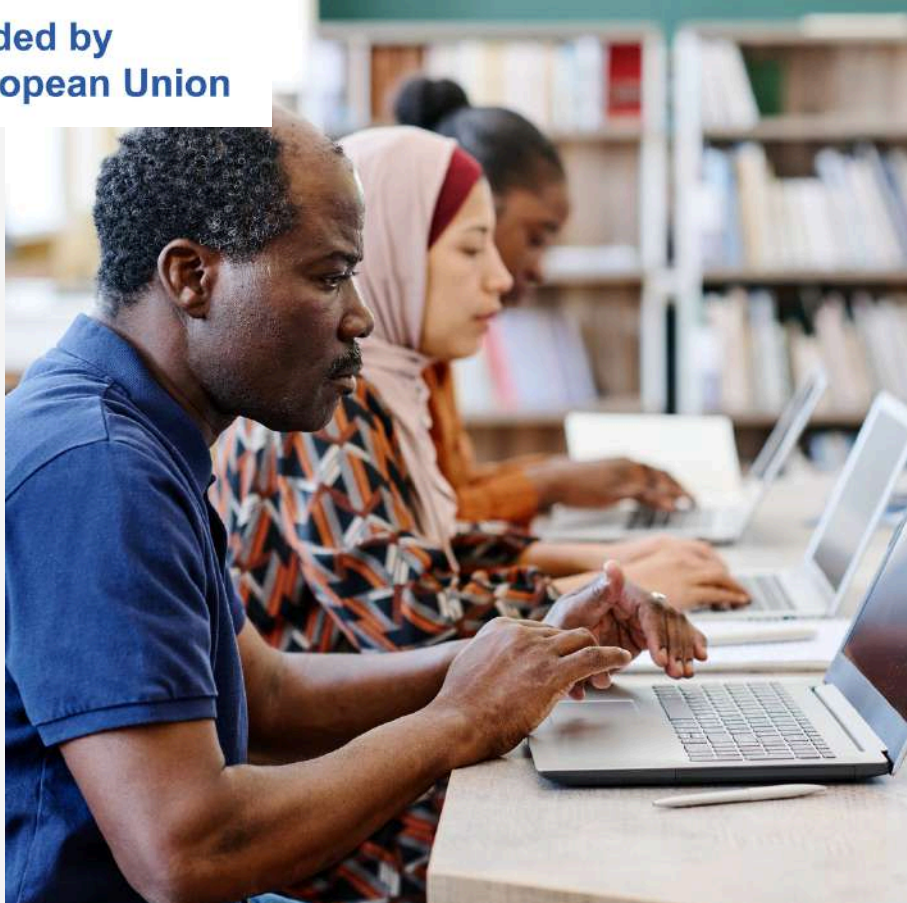
The STM offers a learner-centered educational approach that aligns well with the complex needs of migrants and refugees, who often experience language barriers, disrupted education, and psychological trauma. Storytelling emerges as a holistic pedagogical method—connecting cognitive, emotional, and cultural dimensions of learning—by allowing learners to contextualize vocational training through personal and relatable narratives.

The project conducted national-level research in Poland and Italy, including desk research, case studies, and surveys with educators and learners. These findings were synthesized into a unified methodological framework aimed at integrating storytelling into VET programs. The analysis confirms that storytelling fosters empathy, improves communication and critical thinking, and enhances the relevance and retention of vocational content. Moreover, digital storytelling emerged as an especially impactful format for engaging younger learners and transcending linguistic limitations.

Key recommendations emphasize adapting curricula to include storytelling, training teachers in narrative pedagogy, and promoting the inclusion of storytelling as a community-building practice. The report also identifies structural gaps in current VET systems and proposes policy and institutional changes to promote equity, diversity, and social cohesion through education.



The STMinVET project contributes not only to the pedagogical discourse but also to the wider European objective of inclusive education and integration of migrants. It advocates for VET institutions to become spaces of intercultural dialogue, emotional expression, and transformative learning—where all individuals can develop professionally while affirming their identities and experiences.



Introduction

The integration of migrants and refugees into vocational education and training (VET) systems poses one of the most pressing educational and social challenges in contemporary Europe. As global conflicts, economic disparities, and climate-induced displacements intensify, European countries – particularly Poland and Italy – have experienced rising migration flows, including a significant number of refugees seeking safety and stability. Within this dynamic context, vocational education is emerging as a critical mechanism for fostering inclusion, improving employability, and facilitating the long-term integration of these populations.

However, vocational education systems often struggle to meet the complex needs of migrant and refugee learners. Language barriers, limited recognition of previous qualifications, cultural differences, and psychological trauma create a set of obstacles that conventional pedagogical approaches are not always equipped to address. Many migrants and refugees also lack access to formal education pathways, face socio-economic vulnerabilities, and experience exclusion from mainstream society. These realities underscore the urgent need for inclusive and adaptive educational strategies.



The Storytelling Method in Vocational Education for Local Community and Refugees (STMinVET) project responds directly to these challenges. Its core objective is to explore the potential of storytelling as an innovative pedagogical approach that can enhance the effectiveness of vocational education for migrant and refugee learners. Storytelling, understood as both a cognitive and emotional learning tool, enables students to connect their personal experiences with educational content, develop language and communication skills, and foster a deeper sense of identity and belonging. This approach is particularly beneficial for learners from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, as it allows them to engage in reflective, expressive, and socially meaningful learning.

Storytelling also has a unique ability to create emotionally safe learning environments. Through narrative sharing, learners can articulate their journeys, aspirations, and challenges—making the learning process not only more relatable but also more empowering. By emphasizing individual voice and lived experience, storytelling fosters empathy, strengthens group cohesion, and supports the development of soft skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence—all of which are essential for success in the workplace and society at large.

This report presents the findings of a collaborative research initiative between partners in Poland and Italy. It includes national analyses of the current state of vocational education for migrants and refugees, theoretical and empirical insights into the benefits of storytelling, and concrete case studies showcasing the implementation of narrative-based approaches in educational settings. Special attention is given to how storytelling can support both language acquisition and professional development, thus acting as a bridge between cultural adaptation and career readiness.



The report also addresses the policy context and institutional frameworks that shape vocational education in both countries, identifying areas where storytelling can be integrated into curricula, teacher training, and community engagement. The intention is to offer not only a conceptual model for inclusive VET practices but also practical recommendations for educators, trainers, and policymakers.

In an increasingly multicultural and multilingual Europe, the STMinVET project advocates for a shift toward educational practices that are more human-centered, culturally responsive, and socially impactful. By placing storytelling at the heart of vocational education, this initiative contributes to the broader goal of building inclusive learning environments where all individuals—regardless of background—can access opportunities, express their identities, and build pathways toward meaningful employment and social participation.



Research background

The integration of migrants and refugees into vocational education systems is a multifaceted issue that intersects with broader social, political, and economic dynamics across Europe. In recent years, countries such as Poland and Italy have witnessed a growing influx of individuals fleeing conflict, economic instability, or environmental degradation. This migration trend presents both opportunities and challenges for host societies, particularly in the realm of education and training.

Vocational education plays a vital role in equipping individuals with practical skills that are directly applicable to the labor market. For migrants and refugees—many of whom are entering unfamiliar systems with different cultural norms and institutional structures—vocational training can serve as a crucial gateway to employment, financial independence, and social integration. Yet the pathways into VET for these groups are often fraught with barriers.

A substantial body of international and national research highlights several recurring challenges faced by migrants and refugees in accessing and succeeding in vocational education. These include:



- **Language Barriers:** Proficiency in the host country's language is essential for participation in training and employment. However, many migrants and refugees arrive with limited or no language skills, which hinders both their ability to understand vocational instruction and to integrate socially.
- **Recognition of Prior Learning and Qualifications:** Migrants often bring with them prior educational and professional experiences that are not formally recognized by host institutions. The absence of mechanisms to validate and build upon these competences leads to skill underutilization and professional downgrading.
- **Cultural Differences and Discrimination:** Differences in communication styles, educational expectations, and workplace norms may create misunderstandings or conflicts. Furthermore, experiences of xenophobia and exclusion can diminish learners' confidence and participation in educational settings.
- **Psychosocial and Economic Stress:** Many refugees and migrants are affected by trauma, family separation, housing instability, or legal uncertainties—all of which negatively impact their ability to focus on education. Without appropriate support structures, these stressors can lead to early dropout or underperformance.



While these challenges are well-documented, there is still a limited understanding of how pedagogical methods can be adapted to address them effectively. Traditional, lecture-based approaches often fail to engage learners with diverse backgrounds and complex life experiences. In this context, there is growing interest in methodologies that are not only informative but also empowering, participatory, and responsive to learners' lived realities.

One such approach is the Storytelling Method (STM). Rooted in educational psychology, narrative theory, and intercultural pedagogy, storytelling has gained traction as a holistic learning tool capable of bridging cognitive, linguistic, and emotional gaps. The work of scholars like Jerome Bruner emphasizes the fundamental role of narrative in human cognition—how we use stories to make sense of the world, construct identity, and communicate meaning. Building on this foundation, educators have begun to experiment with storytelling in classrooms to promote inclusion, empathy, and active learning.

In vocational education specifically, storytelling can facilitate the acquisition of both hard and soft skills. Narratives grounded in real-life professional experiences help students understand technical content in context. At the same time, storytelling enhances communication, critical thinking, and teamwork—skills that are increasingly valued in modern labor markets. It is particularly effective with learners who may struggle with abstract or decontextualized instruction, as it offers a personalized and emotionally resonant way to engage with educational material.

Moreover, storytelling provides a platform for migrant and refugee learners to voice their identities, histories, and aspirations. This act of self-expression is not only therapeutic but also instrumental in building a sense of agency and belonging. When learners see their experiences reflected in educational content—or when they are invited to contribute their own narratives—they are more likely to participate actively and to persist in their educational journeys.



Despite the theoretical promise of storytelling, empirical studies on its application in VET—especially for adult migrant populations—remain relatively scarce. Most existing research focuses on its use with children or in language learning contexts. This gap in the literature highlights the relevance and innovation of the STMinVET project, which aims to systematically explore how narrative methods can enhance vocational education outcomes for migrants and refugees in real-world training environments.

The project's research background is therefore situated at the intersection of several critical fields: migration studies, educational innovation, adult learning, and social inclusion. By combining desk research, fieldwork, and cross-country collaboration, the initiative seeks to develop a robust methodology that can inform both policy and practice. It also aspires to contribute to a broader rethinking of vocational education—not merely as a site for skills training, but as a space for human development, intercultural dialogue, and empowerment through story.





Methodology

The study adopted a mixed-method approach combining qualitative desk research, case study analysis, and surveys across Italy and Poland. The methodology includes:

- **Desk Research:** Analysis of statistical data, policy documents, and existing literature on vocational education, migration trends, and narrative pedagogy in both countries.
- **National Reports:** Context-specific evaluations were produced, detailing demographic trends, institutional challenges, and educational frameworks.
- **Case Studies:** Documentation of two pilot initiatives—one in Poland and one in Italy—that implemented STM in vocational settings. These cases illustrate how storytelling was integrated into teaching practices and its effect on learners.
- **Surveys:** Administered to educators, trainers, and learners involved in VET, these surveys collected data on perceptions of STM's usefulness and barriers to its adoption.

The findings were analyzed using thematic content analysis to identify recurring patterns, challenges, and success factors in the implementation of STM in vocational education for migrants and refugees.



Conclusion

The STMinVET project demonstrates that storytelling is a powerful and versatile educational method that can meaningfully support the integration of migrants and refugees into vocational education systems. By tapping into the human need for narrative, STM fosters a more inclusive, participatory, and emotionally resonant learning environment—an essential shift in educational paradigms, especially when working with vulnerable populations.

Research conducted in Poland and Italy confirms that storytelling improves learner engagement, enhances communication and language acquisition, and develops vital soft skills such as empathy, confidence, and adaptability. Moreover, it bridges cultural divides and strengthens social bonds among learners and between learners and educators. These effects are particularly pronounced when storytelling is implemented through digital tools, community events, and vocational simulations that reflect real-world experiences.

Despite differences in national contexts, the challenges faced by migrants in both countries are strikingly similar—language obstacles, unrecognized qualifications, cultural dislocation, and socio-economic marginalization. Traditional pedagogical methods often fail to address these layered difficulties. Storytelling, however, provides a platform for migrants and refugees to express their lived experiences, engage with new content meaningfully, and reimagine their future trajectories with dignity and purpose.

The necessity of institutional and policy-level changes to fully realize the potential of STM in VET. These include teacher training in narrative-based pedagogy, curricular revisions that incorporate themes of diversity and inclusion, and strategic support from local communities and decision-makers. Education systems must evolve beyond mere skills transmission to embrace a model that values identity, emotional intelligence, and intercultural understanding.



Chapter 1 – National Research of existing data in Poland



Executive summary

The aim of this report is to analyse the role of storytelling method (STM) in vocational education and training (VET) for migrants and refugees in Poland and Italy. The report aims to examine how STM can increase educational achievements, improve language proficiency and foster a sense of agency among migrant learners. Furthermore, the report examines the challenges that migrants and refugees encounter in vocational education, such as language barriers and recognition of previously acquired qualifications. By analysing the results of research conducted on the implementation of STM, the report aims to assess the actual impact of STM on learners and teachers. Another aim of the report is to provide recommendations to policy makers, educational institutions and practitioners on how to integrate storytelling techniques to improve access, engagement and the overall success of VET programmes.

Storytelling is an effective tool supporting the vocational education of migrants and refugees. It allows for the development of language and professional competences and promotes the progress of social integration and helps build a sense of identity and belonging. The use of narrative methods allows for the transfer of practical knowledge in an engaging and accessible way, as opposed to pure theory. This approach facilitates its absorption and encourages learning. Storytelling in education appears in various forms - from traditional stories, biographies and personal testimonies to modern digital methods. Examples include podcasts, films and interactive narratives. Stories about migrants and refugees who have overcome their difficulties help students identify with the characters in the narrative and motivate them to take action towards their chosen goal, e.g. finding employment on the labor market. Research results confirm the effectiveness of narrative methods used in vocational education. They promote more effective knowledge acquisition and the development of soft skills, such as self-confidence, communication skills or the ability to adapt to new conditions.



In the reality faced by migrants and refugees, this is particularly necessary, as they often find themselves in a new, unfamiliar professional environment, the difficulties of which they must overcome. Storytelling also supports the creation of an inclusive and empathetic educational environment, which is essential for the proper and effective work of migrants and refugees.

Storytelling can be well integrated into vocational education if the curricula themselves are adapted to include the themes of human rights, social justice, and cultural diversity. Storytelling fits in perfectly with these issues, because of the effectiveness of stories in helping students better understand different perspectives, emotions, and values. Stories based on the experiences of actual teachers, other students, or even fictional characters who managed to overcome adversity help create a dialogue on social diversity, which in turn would have a positive impact on understanding the situation of migrants and refugees.

Storytelling methods used by educational institutions should not be limited to imparting theoretical knowledge, but also to teaching practical skills. Career stories, showing challenges and successes in different industries, can help students better understand how theory works in practice. This type of approach builds their ability to cope with complex professional situations, and also improves the retention of key content through stories marked by strong emotions, in which the student engages.

Effective implementation of storytelling methods cannot take place without prior appropriate training of educational staff. It is essential that they receive appropriate preparation in the area of constructing and telling engaging stories that capture students' attention and encourage them to engage with them.



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Effective implementation of storytelling methods cannot take place without prior appropriate training of educational staff. It is essential that they receive appropriate preparation in the area of constructing and telling engaging stories that capture students' attention and encourage them to engage with them.



Storytelling can be an ideal tool to activate local communities to participate in the education process. Schools should organize events where teachers, students and their families can share their stories, which helps build social bonds and increases students' motivation to learn. Such initiatives can contribute to building a strong local community through cultural exchange, building empathy and understanding between different social groups, and also promote continuous education.





Introduction

Integrating migrants and refugees into vocational education and training (VET) systems is a significant challenge but also an opportunity in Europe. The increase in migration caused by factors such as conflicts, economic difficulties or climate change means that many countries are faced with the challenge of providing education that supports the integration of different social groups, especially in the context of vocational education. This report focuses on the role of Storytelling as a pedagogical method (STM) in vocational education for migrants and refugees in two European countries: Poland and Italy.

Vocational education and training (VET) plays a key role in integrating migrants and refugees into the social and economic fabric of host countries. Because these groups face unique challenges in accessing education and employment, vocational programmes are an important tool in building skills, increasing employability and supporting social integration. Migrants and refugees often face significant barriers, such as language difficulties, cultural differences or lack of recognition of prior qualifications. These challenges can hinder their success in vocational education, inhibiting their ability to fully integrate into the labour market.





One innovative approach that shows promising results in overcoming these barriers is the use of Storytelling Methods (STM). Storytelling is a powerful pedagogical tool that not only develops communication skills but also helps build intercultural bridges, allowing students to share personal experiences, explore different perspectives and develop a sense of belonging. Through storytelling, migrants and refugees can express their identities and experiences, which fosters greater engagement in the learning process. Storytelling as an educational method offers a powerful tool for engaging students, connecting personal experiences with educational content. For migrants and refugees, this method is particularly relevant because it helps overcome language barriers, develops empathy and creates a safe space for sharing personal experiences. It is a way to connect learning with cultural and emotional expression, supporting both cognitive and emotional development.

The aim of this report is to examine the application of STM in vocational education programmes for migrants and refugees in Poland. Focusing on the integration of storytelling techniques in VET, the report will analyse how this method can improve educational outcomes, increase language proficiency and support a sense of empowerment among migrants. Additionally, the report will provide an analysis of the national context, highlighting the specific challenges faced by migrants and refugees in the vocational education system and the potential benefits of using STM as an inclusive teaching strategy.

The study also analyses relevant case studies where STMs have been successfully implemented, assessing the outcomes and impact on learners and teachers. In this way, the report will provide a comprehensive overview of the current situation of VET for migrants and refugees and propose recommendations for policy makers, educational institutions and practitioners on how to incorporate storytelling techniques to improve access, engagement and success in VET programmes.

Through this research, we want to show that Storytelling Methods can be a transformative tool in vocational education, helping migrants and refugees not only overcome educational difficulties but also develop in a new environment.



Methodology

This study is based on the desk research method, i.e. analysis of available secondary data. This approach allows for the collection and processing of information from various credible publications without the need for field research. As part of this process, reports on vocational education, government publications, academic studies on migration and reports on the use of storytelling in education were analyzed.

The sources include both national and international studies, including statistics on the education of migrants and refugees, analyses of the challenges related to their integration into the labour market, and case studies illustrating the effectiveness of storytelling as a teaching method. Particular emphasis is placed on reports from educational institutions, non-governmental organisations and government bodies dealing with migration and education policy.

The study focuses on two key aspects: the use of storytelling as a tool supporting vocational education and the integration of migrants and refugees in this area. The aim was to show how a narrative approach can support the learning process, develop professional competences and facilitate the adaptation of migrants to new socio-professional conditions.

The methodological section does not include a detailed list of sources, as they will be presented in the final part of the report. Instead, the general research approach is described, indicating the types of materials analyzed and the methods used to process the data.



Data on migrants and refugees

Demographic data of migrants and refugees

In 2024, Poland recorded a significant increase in the number of applications for international protection. According to data from the Office for Foreigners, the number of applications amounted to 12.3 thousand, which means an 80% increase compared to 2023 (Money.pl, prepared by MZUG, 2024). This is the highest increase in the number of applications year-on-year since the migration crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border. The largest group of people applying for international protection were citizens of Ukraine, Belarus and Russia. The number of applications submitted by Ukrainian citizens more than doubled (from 1,662 to 5,912), the number of applications from Belarusian citizens remained at a similar level (3,506), while the number of applications submitted by Russian citizens decreased by half (from 1,527 to 797). The number of applications from citizens of Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia also increased significantly – by over 700%, and the number of applications from citizens of Sudan increased tenfold (Centrum Pomocy Prawnej im. Haliny Nieć, 2025b).

Meanwhile, 2024 saw significant changes in migration routes. Border Guard data indicate that the number of irregular crossings of the Polish-Belarusian border increased by 339% compared to 2023. In the first half of 2024, 1,581 such cases were recorded, compared to 360 a year earlier. The main nationalities among those detained were citizens of Syria, Somalia and Eritrea. At the same time, the so-called Slovak route, previously often used by citizens of Syria, has almost completely died out – the number of illegal crossings of the Polish-Slovak border has decreased by 84% (Centrum Pomocy Prawnej im. Haliny Nieć, 2025a, pp. 6-8).



According to data from the Office for Foreigners, since February 24, 2022, Poland has been experiencing a significant influx of Ukrainian citizens, who constitute about 80% of all foreigners settling in the country. Currently, 950,000 Ukrainian citizens benefit from temporary protection, and a total of 1.49 million foreigners have valid residence permits in Poland (Polska Agencja Prasowa, 2024). Among Ukrainians covered by temporary protection, 63% are women, and every second registered Ukrainian citizen is a child. The total number of immigrants in Poland is about 3.5-4 million, of which 60-75% are Ukrainians. Other significant groups of migrants come from Belarus, Georgia, India, and Moldova (Gazeta Prawna, 2023). Immigrants play a significant role in the Polish labor market, especially in sectors with a deficit of employees, although many of them work below their qualifications due to the language barrier (Bojanowicz, 2024).

Migration to Poland is seasonal – the largest number of applications for international protection falls in the period from April to September. In the spring of 2024, the number of migrants from the Horn of Africa and Sudan increased, while in the autumn and winter, a larger percentage were citizens of West and Central Africa (Centrum Pomocy Prawnej im. Haliny Nieć, 2025b). Poland faces challenges related to shaping migration policy. Currently, there is no comprehensive migration management strategy, and the lack of long-term solutions may result in a loss of competitiveness in recruiting employees compared to other European countries. Experts point to the need to implement mechanisms for selecting immigrants according to the needs of the labor market, develop educational programs, and support entrepreneurship among migrants (Gazeta Prawna, 2023). In light of the changing geopolitical situation and growing migration trends, monitoring these processes and flexible adjustment of state policy will be crucial for the future of migration in Poland.



Challenges of migrants and refugees in vocational education

Migrants and refugees in Poland face a number of difficulties in accessing vocational education, the most significant of which are language barriers, cultural differences, lack of recognition of professional qualifications and discrimination. These factors have a significant impact on the integration process of immigrants, as well as on their success in the educational and vocational system in Poland.

Language barriers are one of the main obstacles that migrants face. The Polish language, considered difficult to learn, can be a serious obstacle both in education and in everyday life. Although the number of people speaking English is growing in larger cities, migrants often encounter communication difficulties in smaller towns. Lack of knowledge of the language not only limits their ability to learn, but also makes it difficult to use available educational resources and professional training, which significantly complicates the process of adaptation to the Polish labor market (Zielona Linia, n.d.)



Cultural differences and integration problems also have a major impact on the vocational education process. Migrants often struggle to adapt to new social and professional norms, which can affect their engagement in the educational process. Differences in the perception of work, education, or even interactions with other people can lead to a sense of alienation. Moreover, prejudices and negative stereotypes against migrants, especially in smaller towns, can lead to social exclusion. Such barriers limit development opportunities and make it difficult to build relationships with other participants in vocational courses and teachers, which translates into a general sense of lack of support in the educational environment (Kubicki, 2024, pp. 9-11).

Another challenge that migrants often encounter is the lack of recognition of professional qualifications obtained abroad. In the case of unregulated professions, employers have the right, but not the obligation, to recognize foreign diplomas and qualifications. As a result, many migrants have to undergo additional training or courses, despite having the appropriate competences (Leśniak, 2022). For people who have completed regulated professions, the process of nostrification of diplomas or obtaining new professional qualifications is complicated and time-consuming. Such obstacles make it difficult for migrants to quickly enter the Polish labor market and fully use their skills. All these barriers also result in discrimination, which additionally makes it difficult for migrants to access vocational education. Negative attitudes towards foreigners, especially in smaller towns, can affect their chances of finding a job or integrating into the local community. Discrimination does not end on the labor market - also in educational institutions, migrants may encounter difficulties resulting from the perception of them by other course participants or teachers, which can lead to a sense of marginalization and lack of motivation to continue learning (Zielona Linia, n.d.)



In the context of Ukrainian refugees, the situation becomes even more complicated. More than 111 thousand Ukrainian children and youth do not attend Polish schools or do so irregularly. The lack of an effective student monitoring system and their frequent migration mean that many young Ukrainians choose online education instead of traditional school attendance, which limits their access to the formal education system. (CARE, 2024, pp. 22-23).

In order for migrants and refugees to have a better chance of success in the vocational education system in Poland, it is necessary to introduce more systematic actions to support their integration. In particular, it is important to increase access to language courses, simplify procedures for recognizing professional qualifications, and raise public awareness of the challenges faced by migrants. Such changes can help improve their educational and professional situation, and thus contribute to better integration of immigrants in Poland.

The Social and Economic Impact of Migrants and Refugees

The social and economic integration of refugees and migrants is a challenge but also an opportunity for host countries such as Poland. In 2023, refugees from Ukraine had a significant impact on the Polish economy, where their share in GDP ranged from 0.7 to 1.1%. One of the key factors for their successful integration was their inclusion in the labor market. According to research, many refugees from Ukraine quickly found employment, establishing companies, which contributed to the increase in public revenues and reduced dependence on humanitarian aid. It is estimated that 88% of refugees from Ukraine are economically active, which confirms the importance of economic inclusion in their integration process (UNHCR, 2024).



Despite this positive impact on the economy, many refugees do not fully utilize their professional competences. The majority of them are women and children, and many refugee households include people with chronic diseases or disabilities. This points to the need for support in education and vocational training that will allow refugees to participate more fully in the labor market in line with their qualifications. Supporting the professional competences of refugees, including through language courses and vocational training, is crucial for their long-term integration (Bryzek, 2023).

In the context of social integration, education plays an important role, especially in the area of learning Polish and improving professional qualifications. Data shows that many refugees do not work in positions corresponding to their education, which results from language barriers and insufficient access to specialist training. This approach can lead to the so-called "professional mismatch", where refugees take jobs below their qualifications, which reduces their professional efficiency and makes it difficult to fully engage in economic life. In addition, as experts note, it is crucial to enable refugees to develop professionally, which will significantly contribute to the further strengthening of the Polish economy (Bryzek, 2023).

The challenges of vocational education for migrants and refugees indicate the need for long-term educational strategies that are tailored to the specific needs of this group. Vocational education and language courses should be integrated with the social support system, enabling immigrants to acquire new competences and adapt to the changing labor market. The economic integration of migrants is not only crucial for their independence, but also for the economic development of the host country.



Conclusions

1. Vocational education and language courses are crucial for the full integration of refugees into the labour market.
2. It is necessary to create programmes that enable migrants and refugees to use their full professional competences.
3. Systematic support in the field of vocational training and linguistic integration should form the basis of the integration strategy.
4. The integration of refugees into the labour market benefits both them and the host society, and their economic activity contributes to economic growth.

Integrating migrants is a two-way process, in which both the state and the people coming to the country themselves must demonstrate commitment. Educational programs are key to this process, enabling migrants to actively participate in social and economic life, which in the long term contributes to greater social cohesion and economic growth.





Data on vocational education

Overview of the vocational education system

Poland, as a country accepting a large number of migrants and refugees, has created a system of vocational education that not only enables the acquisition of professional qualifications, but also supports the integration of these people into Polish society. A diverse educational offer available at different levels of education allows foreigners to engage in professional and social life, providing them with the necessary support in the adaptation process.

The Polish vocational education system includes various institutions that offer practical and theoretical education, enabling the acquisition of professional qualifications. The most important of these are vocational schools, technical schools, vocational schools and universities. Vocational schools offer curricula that end with vocational exams confirming acquired skills and qualifications. Technical schools, on the other hand, prepare young people for work in industries such as IT, electrical engineering or construction, and after graduating from these schools, students gain both secondary education and a profession. At the level of vocational schools, students can obtain vocational qualifications in various professions, and after graduating from second-degree vocational schools, they receive the title of technician.

For people migrating to Poland, however, programs supporting their integration with the education system play a special role. As part of such activities, preparatory classes are offered, which enable children of migrants to effectively adapt to the Polish education system.



These classes provide intensive Polish language instruction and also organize adaptation classes that help young foreigners integrate with the Polish school environment. Such classes can operate at both primary and secondary school levels, enabling migrants to start studying in Poland even during the school year (Starzyńska-Rosiecka, 2018). In addition, as part of language support, programs are organized that allow students from abroad to acquire the language skills necessary to participate in educational activities. These classes can be conducted both individually and in groups, and their goal is to enable migrants to master the Polish language at a level sufficient to fully participate in school life (Kuraś, 2018).

An important advantage of the Polish vocational education system is also the lack of the obligation to nostrify certificates for migrants who come to Poland. These people do not have to nostrify their foreign certificates, which shortens the time of adaptation to the Polish education system. This approach allows for a quicker start of education in Poland and adjustment to the requirements of the labor market (Ministry of National Education, n.d.).

Poland also provides comprehensive support for migrants and refugees at the level of vocational education. People with secondary education can take advantage of the offer of post-secondary schools, which offer various vocational programs. Participation in vocational courses allows a migrant to acquire specific professional skills in such industries as medicine, administration, cosmetology or technology. Vocational courses are a particularly important tool in the process of integrating migrants into the labor market, offering professional certificates recognized in Poland (Institute Of Migrant Rights, 2024).





Moving on to the issue of adaptation of foreigners in the Polish education system, it is worth noting that in Poland, people taking external exams, such as the Matura or the eighth-grade exam, have the right to adapt the conditions of conducting these exams. Foreigners who have difficulties with the Polish language can use translations or additional time during the exam. Such adaptations help foreign students cope with the language barrier and enable them to fully participate in the educational process, which helps to equalize educational and professional opportunities (Ministry of National Education, n.d.).

In turn, within the framework of local support activities, special attention is paid to intercultural assistant programs, which help migrants and refugees in the process of adaptation to the Polish education system. These programs are part of a broader migration strategy for 2025-2030, the aim of which is to facilitate the integration of foreigners into Polish society. Intercultural assistants play an important role in everyday work with migrant students, helping them to integrate not only at the educational level, but also socially. Such support allows migrants to better understand the Polish cultural context, which is of great importance for their long-term integration in Poland (Ceimer, 2024).

In summary, the Polish vocational education system effectively supports migrants and refugees by offering them a range of educational opportunities and support in their social and professional integration. Programs such as preparatory classes, language courses, adaptation of exam conditions and intercultural assistant programs are important elements that help foreigners adapt to the Polish education system. Thanks to this, migrants will not only gain new professional skills, but will also be able to effectively integrate into the labor market and society.



Assessment of the inclusion of migrants and refugees in vocational education

According to available data, about 70% of refugee students attending secondary schools attend technical or vocational schools. This is 15 percentage points more than other students (UNICEF, 2025). This trend indicates a growing motivation to acquire practical skills that can facilitate integration into the labor market.

Although the number of students from Ukraine is growing and secondary schools are responding to the growing demand, not all actions have been fully effective. According to the NIK (Supreme Audit Office) report, the audited schools experienced some problems in the organization of migrant education, including the quality of educational services. Cases of improper admission of foreign children, insufficient support in the integration process and improper application of procedures were identified. In some schools, there was a lack of appropriate consultations and individual assessments of students' knowledge levels, which affected the effectiveness of teaching (Supreme Audit Office, 2023, pp. 22-26). Moreover, despite the increase in the number of preparatory classes, not every institution managed to fully adapt educational offers to the specific needs of children and youth from Ukraine (Bankier.pl, 2024).

In turn, according to the report of the Intersectoral Round Table, actions are being taken in Poland to support the integration of migrants through vocational training, recognition of qualifications and language learning. These policies aim to improve the opportunities of migrants on the labour market, which promotes their long-term social and economic integration. (All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions, 2024).



However, the effectiveness of these policies depends on appropriate implementation at the local level and cooperation between state institutions and non-governmental organizations. An example of successful actions is supporting the integration of young people from Ukraine through Polish language courses and vocational training, which enable them to better adapt to the labour market (Marshal Office of the Lubelskie Voivodeship, n.d.).

Poland's educational and professional policy for migrants and refugees, despite improvements, still faces challenges. While the positive impact of these actions on educational and professional integration is noticeable, the effectiveness of the policies requires further refinement, especially in the area of organizing preparatory classes, supporting teachers, and recognizing qualifications. Proper implementation and monitoring of these policies can bring tangible economic and social benefits, contributing to better integration of migrants in Poland.

Storytelling Methods in Education

Theoretical foundations of the storytelling method

Storytelling, or the method of learning through storytelling, is of significant importance in education, including in the context of vocational education. This is associated with numerous benefits, both cognitive and educational, that support the process of acquiring new skills. One of the key aspects of storytelling is its impact on cognitive processes, especially memory and attention. Studies show that engaging stories activate various areas of the brain, including those related to emotions and memory, which makes "students remember new information better and are more motivated to learn" (Brighton Academy, 2024).



In turn, storytelling in learning foreign languages or other professional skills allows students to immerse themselves in a practical context, which makes it easier to learn terminology and skills in the context of real situations. Thanks to narratives, which are a naturally woven process in everyday life, students gain a better understanding of how to use new skills in professional practice. In vocational education, the use of stories gives students access to authentic examples from life, which are much more effective than dry facts or theoretical information (Brighton Academy, 2024).

The cognitive benefits of storytelling also include the development of listening and speaking skills. Students who engage in storytelling develop communication skills by learning the natural rhythm and intonation of the language. Additionally, through interactions and active listening, they become more open to sharing their thoughts and ideas, which in the context of vocational education promotes the creation of effective work teams and the development of interpersonal competences. An important element of storytelling is also its ability to activate emotions, which makes the learning process more engaging and satisfying (Bielecka, 2021, pp. 70-71)

In summary, storytelling is a method that can significantly enrich the process of vocational education. Thanks to it, students gain better listening, speaking and memorizing skills, as well as develop creative and analytical skills. Stories not only engage emotionally, but also allow for a better understanding of the practical application of knowledge in real professional situations. This makes storytelling an invaluable tool in education, especially in the context of vocational education.

Storytelling Method in Vocational Education

Storytelling in vocational education, especially in the context of migration and refugees, is becoming an increasingly popular method of engaging learners, especially those struggling with linguistic and emotional barriers.



An example of the use of storytelling in vocational education is the project "Stories about migrations", which involves using films and stories of migrants to arouse empathy and understand their experiences. These films, containing stories of people who have gone through difficult experiences related to migration, allow for building an emotional connection with the characters of the story, which is particularly important in work with refugees (Citizenship Education Center, 2021), which promotes integration and building social responsibility.

In the context of digital storytelling (DST), the use of technology in education allows for creative engagement in the learning process. Digital stories can include text, photos, sounds, and even video, creating an interactive, multimedia form that engages students on multiple levels. In vocational education, DST can be used to tell stories related to different professions, traditions, and life experiences. Learners can create stories about their family, ancestors, or migration, which helps them better understand their identity and group membership (Fundacja Ad Hoc, 2013, pp. 31-35). Such stories can also be used in foreign language learning, where students listen to stories and analyze the linguistic context, which significantly facilitates the acquisition of new words and grammatical structures (Dylak, n.d.; Hrycak-Krzyżanowska, 2020, pp. 107 & 114).

Thanks to the storytelling method, both in traditional oral and digital form, students have the opportunity to express themselves, get to know others and develop language competences. Using this method in vocational education is particularly important in working with migrants and refugees, because it not only teaches them language and professional skills, but also helps build social and emotional bonds, which is crucial for their integration and professional development in a new country.



The storytelling method has gained a lot of popularity in business in recent years...

...from marketing to presentations at board meetings. However, its role in training, especially internal training, is still underestimated. This method not only allows for better engagement of participants, but also makes it easier for them to acquire knowledge and convince them to adopt certain attitudes or procedures. In internal training, trainers can use real stories from the life of the company, which increases their authenticity and affects greater involvement of participants. A perfect example is the use of storytelling in occupational health and safety education – instead of traditional instructions, trainers can use short films showing both mistakes and correct behaviors. Thanks to this, the message is remembered for longer and affects the emotions of the recipients (Uliasz, 2021).

A well-constructed training story should be based on real-life situations that participants can easily relate to their work. The key elements of effective storytelling are surprising plot twists, engaging characters, and an emotional message. It is important that the story leads participants to draw their own conclusions – it is this interactivity that makes storytelling such an effective teaching tool. In the context of internal training, storytelling has additional value: trainers can draw from their own experiences, talking about real problems and challenges that are close to the participants (Uliasz, 2021).

The first example of using storytelling in vocational education is Mirosław Urban – an experienced trainer and expert in this field, who effectively uses narrative as an educational tool in the vocational education process. His approach is based on the assumption that a story has the power to attract, engage and build relationships and trust, which makes it an extremely effective tool in the process of teaching and transferring knowledge. The training program developed by Urban focuses on developing the ability to create coherent, emotional and convincing stories that can be used both in business communication and in the educational process. Participants in his workshops learn how to transform information into engaging narratives that not only attract the attention of recipients, but also help them better understand and remember the content conveyed.



A key element of his methodology is authenticity – Urban shows how to draw on your own experiences to create stories that resonate with recipients. His trainings are based on a practical approach and are tailored to the needs of participants, regardless of their professional role – whether in team management, sales, marketing, training or public speaking. By combining storytelling with elements of psychology and interpersonal communication, Mirosław Urban teaches not only how to tell stories, but also how to use them to build influence, motivate teams and transfer knowledge more effectively. In his approach, storytelling is not only a technique, but also a way to better understand yourself and others and more effectively achieve professional goals (Mirek Urban, n.d.).

The second example is the training program by Marcin Mańka, a psychologist, soft skills trainer and coach. The methodology of his own course is based on combining professional and psychological experience with a unique approach to learning narrative skills. The training focuses on the practical development of storytelling skills, teaching participants how to create engaging stories that have the power to convince, build trust and attract attention. By using authenticity and emotions in the narrative, the course allows for better communication in business and effective transfer of knowledge. The training program is designed with the practical implementation of acquired skills in mind, which is crucial in professional education. Participants of the course have the opportunity not only to learn storytelling techniques, but also to use their own life experiences, which they incorporate into creating unique and convincing narratives. In addition, the use of coaching tools allows for individual development of participants and adaptation of training to their needs. Using methods based on many years of professional experience, participants learn how to effectively manage emotions, create a coherent and engaging story, and use storytelling for inspiration, motivation, and effective leadership in the professional environment (Marcin Mańka, n.d.).



The use of stories is also practiced in education, where it engages students and supports their motivation to learn. An example is the use of stories about building disasters in air traffic safety classes in The e-Learning and Innovative Teaching Center, where stories about real tragedies help students to empathize with the role of building inspectors. Thanks to this, they better understand what factors lead to disasters and what mistakes should be avoided. This method translates into better memorization and development of analytical skills, because students themselves have to indicate the causes and effects of such events (Stąporek, n.d.).

Another example of the use of storytelling in education can be classes in the field of tourist guiding in the Geotourism major. Students, preparing their own trips, take on the role of guides and tell stories related to a given place. Thanks to this, they not only learn to engage tourists, but also develop their skills in preparing stories. After each trip, the leader analyzes the students' speeches, which allows them to reflect on the quality of the message and improve their communication skills. Such a process, combining theory with practice, facilitates the acquisition of knowledge in a more accessible and engaging way (Stąporek, n.d.).

Case study of using the storytelling method in vocational education and training

In Poland, there is still a lack of extensive research and statistics on the use of storytelling in training and vocational education of migrants and refugees. Moreover, although this method is widely used in various areas of education, its potential in the context of supporting people with migration experience remains largely untapped. Examples of the use of storytelling in work with children and young people can, however, be a valuable inspiration for the development of similar initiatives in adult education, especially in the context of vocational integration.



Case study 1

As part of an educational experiment conducted by Dorota Hrycak-Krzyżanowska, the use of storytelling and digital storytelling in foreign language teaching was investigated. This program focuses on engaging students, including migrants and refugees, through storytelling and the use of educational games. Activities based on narrative and storytelling not only develop students' language skills, but also engage them emotionally, which promotes deeper memorization of the material.

One of the interesting conclusions that the author drew was that students remembered stories better when they were told than when they had to read them. In one study, a group of students listened to Polish legends, and the other group read the same texts. After the classes, a board game was held to check the memory of details from the stories read and listened to. The team that listened to the legends turned out to be better prepared to answer questions about the plot and details of the story. In addition, students remembered new words and their meanings better, and also showed greater engagement during the domino game, which involved matching vocabulary and characters from the legends to illustrations (Hrycak-Krzyżanowska, 2020, p. 108).

The experiment also showed that storytelling introduces an element of emotional engagement, which allows students to better absorb the material. Children who listened to the stories had richer and more detailed stories during subsequent exercises, such as telling legends in the form of a narrative with gestures and a change in tone of voice. Additionally, students were eager to illustrate the stories they heard, which supported their creativity and memory. Using exercises such as "freeze frame", i.e. a frozen frame, allowed them to express emotions and details contained in the legends. Through active participation in such activities, students not only learned new words, but also practiced communication skills, which are essential in learning a foreign language (Hrycak-Krzyżanowska, 2020, p. 108).



Another important element of the program was the game “Story Cubes”, which involved throwing dice with illustrations and telling stories based on them. This game allowed students to develop narrative skills and supported their creativity by engaging their imagination. As part of the exercises, students worked in groups, which encouraged cooperation and the development of argumentation and discussion skills. Students who felt more confident in storytelling gradually developed their language skills, improving their fluency and the ability to build the structure of a story. This game also had additional value in a multicultural context, as students from different backgrounds could jointly create stories that were interesting to them, using elements of their culture and experiences (Hrycak-Krzyżanowska, 2020, pp. 108-109).

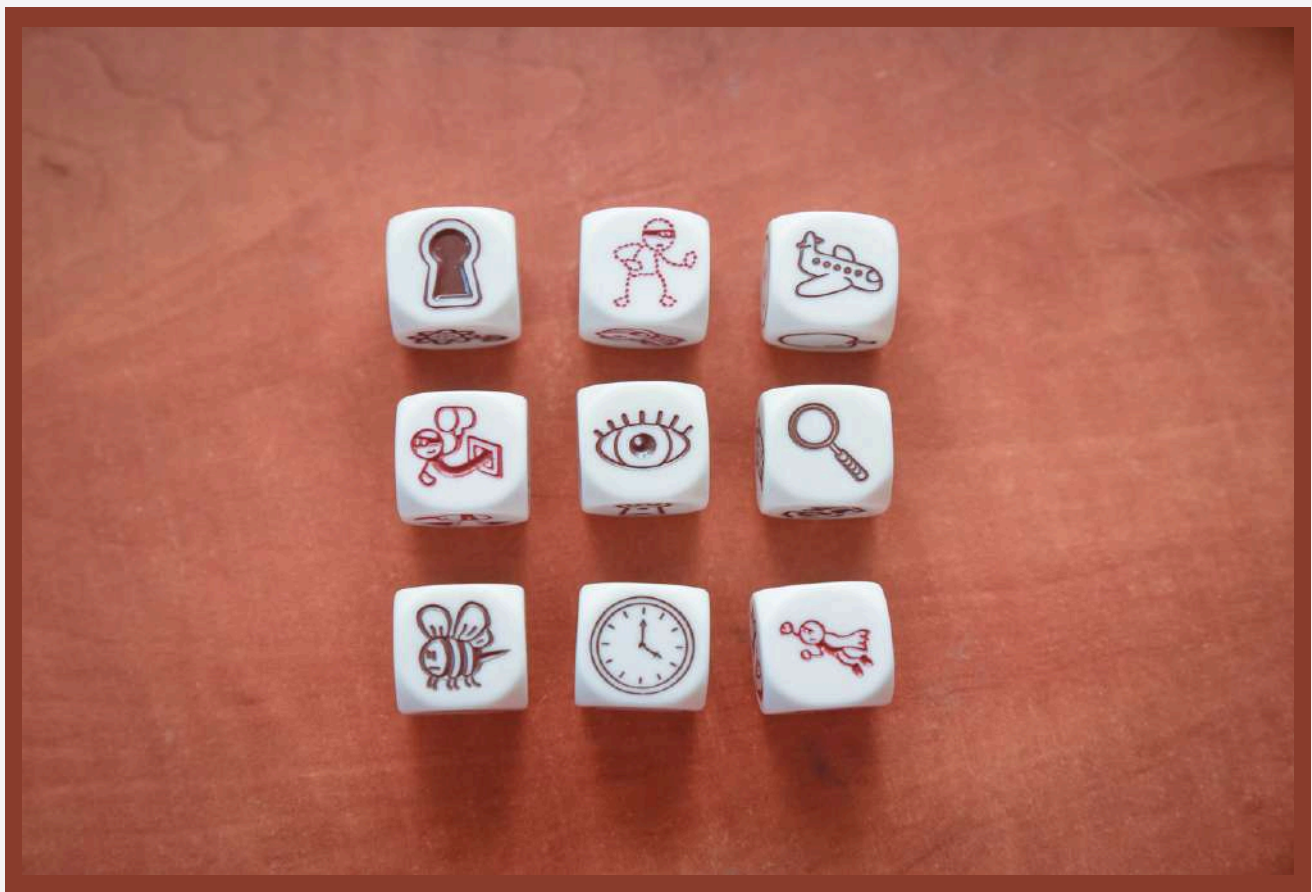
An important tool supporting language learning in this program were educational cards. The first set of cards presented eight scenes that students had to organize into a logical whole and create a story. In such an exercise, students developed skills related to creating a narrative and correctly arranging facts in a story. The second set of cards, more abstract, required students to think creatively and use associations to connect unrelated illustrations. Such exercises developed not only students' imagination, but also their communication and problem-solving skills. These cards were used in individual work, in pairs, and in smaller groups, which facilitated the exchange of ideas and the development of cooperation among students (Hrycak-Krzyżanowska, 2020, pp. 110-111).

Despite the positive results of the program, the author also noted some challenges that emerged during the implementation of the project. One of the main problems was the linguistic diversity in the groups of students, including migrants and refugees, which sometimes made communication difficult and made some tasks too difficult to complete. For this reason, it was necessary to adapt the teaching materials to the language level of the participants and introduce additional supporting activities, such as translating words or using pictures.



Despite this, the program turned out to be an effective tool that improved students' engagement and their language skills, allowing them to express themselves more fully and build bonds with others (Hrycak-Krzyżanowska, 2020, pp. 114).

The conclusions drawn from the experiment show that storytelling and digital storytelling can be extremely effective tools in working with students, including migrants and refugees. Storytelling programs promote better memorization of material, develop language skills, support creativity and emotionally engage students. In the context of multicultural education, such an approach helps integrate students from different backgrounds and allows them to better understand each other, as well as to learn new languages more easily.





Case study 2

The study conducted in the 2020/2021 school year in two British educational institutions – the Polish School at the Polish Embassy in London and Wellington College – is an example of successful implementation of digital technologies in teaching narrative writing. The program was aimed at students of Polish origin who spoke English as their main language of education, while Polish was their heritage language. The study involved 17 students from the Polish School and 5 students from Wellington College, which gave a total of 22 participants aged 16–17 (Hrycak-Krzyżanowska, 2023, p. 62).

The primary goal of the project was to test whether digital technologies, such as Web 2.0 applications and digital storytelling, can improve narrative writing skills in Polish, increase students' motivation to learn, and support their understanding of narrative structure. At the initial stage of the research, it was found that although most students declared their knowledge of the term "narration", their understanding was superficial, which indicated the need for a new didactic approach.

As part of the intervention, students worked with the Storybird, Blendspace and MIRO applications, which allowed them to create their own digital stories. The teaching process included several stages: from planning the narrative, through choosing the characters, the location and atmosphere of the story, to creating the final texts. They were supported in building the logical structure of the story, using correct linguistic means and developing creativity through interactive exercises. A key element of the methodology was the use of narrative cards, which facilitated the organization of the text and stimulated the students' imagination (Hrycak-Krzyżanowska, 2023, p. 64).

The results of the study showed that the use of digital tools significantly increased students' engagement in the learning process.



Thanks to the possibility of creating their own stories in an interactive environment, their motivation increased, as well as the level of language competence. Students demonstrated a better understanding of the concept of narrative and its structure, which was confirmed by their statements in the questionnaires and the qualitative analysis of the created works. In addition, the process of digital storytelling itself helped to break the barrier related to writing in Polish – students assessed the task as less stressful than traditional forms of learning.

An interesting aspect of the study was also the use of elements of cooperation – students could share their stories, give each other feedback and draw inspiration from peers from different backgrounds. This approach promoted integration and exchange of experiences between students with different levels of language proficiency (Hrycak-Krzyżanowska, 2023, pp. 63-65).

The most important effect of the project was a significant improvement in narrative writing skills. After completing the course, students indicated that creating narratives became easier and more intuitive for them. On a five-point scale, where 1 meant "too difficult" and 5 "very easy", the average rating of writing comfort increased after participating in the program. Additionally, all participants achieved high results in the GCSE Polish language exam, which proves the effectiveness of the method (Hrycak-Krzyżanowska, 2023, p. 66).

In conclusion, the implementation of digital technologies in heritage language teaching had a positive impact on the educational process of students of Polish origin in the UK. Modern didactic methods not only increased their motivation and engagement, but also contributed to the development of key linguistic and creative skills. This project can be an inspiration for implementing similar initiatives in the education of migrants and refugees, helping them to integrate linguistically and culturally more effectively.



Results and analysis

Due to the innovative nature of the project and the lack of widely available data on the use of storytelling in vocational education of migrants and refugees, it is worth reaching for examples of the use of this method in work with children and young people. Although the context of adult education differs from youth education, many mechanisms of learning through narrative remain universal. Therefore, the experiences of different educational sectors can be a valuable inspiration and reference point for further research and implementation of narrative methods in vocational education of migrants.

Storytelling and digital storytelling are proving to be effective tools in the education process of migrants and refugees, especially in the context of learning a foreign language and developing communicative competences. Research conducted by Dorota Hrycak-Krzyżanowska has shown that narrative teaching methods increase students' engagement and improve their ability to memorize material. An experiment conducted among migrant students has shown that listening to stories and actively replaying them promotes deeper acquisition of new vocabulary and language structures. The group that participated in narrative classes achieved better results in language tests than students who only read the same texts.





An important element of the methods used was the game "Story Cubes", which allowed students to develop narrative skills and creativity by constructing their own stories based on randomly selected images. Collaboration in groups supported the social integration of participants and helped to overcome language and cultural barriers. Similar benefits were brought by the use of narrative cards, which engaged students in creating stories on their own, thus developing their logical thinking and communication skills.

The second study, conducted in Great Britain among students of Polish origin learning their heritage language, confirmed the effectiveness of storytelling methods in educating migrants. Students using digital tools such as Storybird or Blendspace showed greater motivation to learn and achieved better results in creating narratives. Thanks to interactive forms of work, they broke the barrier of stress related to writing in Polish, and their language skills improved significantly. Moreover, the process of co-creating stories promoted integration and exchange of experiences, which was crucial in a multicultural context.

In conclusion, the use of storytelling methods in the education of migrants and refugees significantly facilitates language acquisition, increases motivation to learn and supports social integration. The narrative approach to teaching not only improves educational outcomes, but also allows students to better express themselves and build relationships in a new environment. In view of the challenges that migrants face in vocational education, storytelling is an effective tool to help them develop their skills and adapt to new living and working conditions.



Recommendations

In the context of contemporary education, especially in vocational education institutions, storytelling (a method of telling stories) is becoming an increasingly important tool. It is a method that allows for effective transfer of knowledge and development of social skills among students. Despite the lack of sufficient empirical data in Poland, it can be stated that storytelling has the potential to influence the teaching process in a creative and engaging way. This report presents recommendations that can help vocational schools integrate this method into their curricula.

The first step in using storytelling in vocational education is to modify the curriculum accordingly. Early school education, as well as vocational education, should include categories such as human rights, social justice and cultural diversity. Storytelling fits perfectly into this context, because the stories told can concern intercultural topics, which allows students to better understand themselves, their emotions and the values of others. Including stories from the lives of educators, students or even fictional characters who have experienced social and cultural challenges in teaching allows for the creation of a space for dialogue and reflection on social diversity.

It would be good if teachers in vocational education institutions used storytelling not only to impart theoretical knowledge, but also to impart practical skills. An example would be telling professional stories, which can show specific challenges and successes from different industries. By using storytelling, students can better understand how theory works in practice, as well as how to deal with difficult situations that may occur in their future careers. Storytelling, due to its power to engage emotions, also promotes memorization of information, which is crucial in the process of vocational education.



Another aspect is the professional development of teachers, who should be properly trained in the use of storytelling in education. Effective storytelling requires appropriate structure and credibility, but also the ability to create emotional engagement with the audience. A well-told story should have a clear structure, elements of surprise, and a conflict that engages the audience. Educators who want to use this method should receive appropriate training to learn how to prepare and tell stories that will engage students and develop their skills.

Storytelling can also be an effective method of engaging local communities in the educational process. The shared storytelling of teachers, students and their families can help build a sense of community and understanding among people from different backgrounds. It is worth it for educational institutions to organize events where participants can share their stories, which would allow for a better understanding of local traditions and values. Such activities can also lead to an increase in interest in education and increase students' motivation to learn.

Integrating storytelling into vocational education requires a well-considered approach that takes into account the specifics of vocational education, the needs of students, and the professional development of teachers. Proper implementation of this method can contribute to a more engaging and effective teaching process, in which students not only acquire knowledge, but also develop empathy, interpersonal and social skills.



Recommendations for the second stage of the project

The development of the methodology in the second stage of the project focuses on creating comprehensive didactic tools that will enable the effective use of storytelling in vocational education. A key element of this phase is the development of a methodological document that will contain detailed descriptions of the STM method, case studies and examples of its application in work with migrants and refugees. An important aspect of this process is the care for the transparency and reliability of sources - each piece of information must be properly documented and refer to proven research and educational practices.

However, providing educational staff with the right tools and skills to effectively use storytelling remains a major challenge. Therefore, the project methodology includes training and the development of structural guidelines for building engaging narratives. As research shows, effective stories should have a clear structure, emotional engagement, and elements that encourage reflection and dialogue. Including the local community in this process can further increase the effectiveness of storytelling, building a sense of community and motivating students to actively participate in education.

By using such a methodology, vocational education institutions can not only enrich their curricula, but also create a more engaging and inclusive learning environment.



Conclusions

Storytelling is an effective tool supporting the vocational education of migrants and refugees. It not only allows for the development of language and vocational competences, but also supports the process of social integration and building a sense of identity and belonging. Through narratives, practical knowledge can be conveyed in an engaging and accessible way, which facilitates its absorption and increases motivation to learn.

The use of storytelling in education includes various forms – from traditional stories, biographies and personal testimonies to modern digital methods such as podcasts, films or interactive narratives. Stories presenting the professional successes of migrants and refugees can inspire course participants, help them identify with the characters of the narrative and motivate them to take their own actions on the job market. Thanks to storytelling, the learning process becomes more engaging and adapted to the real needs of the recipients.

Research confirms that a narrative approach in vocational education promotes more effective knowledge acquisition and development of soft skills, such as self-confidence, communication skills and the ability to adapt to new conditions. This is especially important for migrants and refugees, who often have to find their way in a new, unfamiliar professional environment. Storytelling also supports the creation of an inclusive and empathetic educational environment that takes into account the unique experiences and needs of people from different cultures.

In summary, using storytelling methods in vocational education for migrants and refugees has many benefits – from facilitating language learning and acquiring professional knowledge, to strengthening motivation and self-esteem. Thanks to stories, both traditional and modern, the educational process becomes more accessible, engaging and adapted to the challenges faced by people changing their professional lives in a new country.



Chapter 2 – National Research of existing data in Italy



Executive Summary

The main objective of this report is to examine the role of the narrative method (STM) in vocational education and training (VET) for migrants and refugees in Italy and Poland. The report aims to explore how STM can boost academic performance, enhance language skills and encourage the autonomy of foreign learners. In addition, the impact of difficulties encountered by migrants and refugees in learning paths, such as language barriers and lack of recognition of previously obtained qualifications, is analysed. By analysing the results of the STM experiment, the report assesses the actual impact of this approach on students and trainers. Another objective is to provide practical suggestions to policy makers, educational institutions and practitioners on how to integrate narrative techniques to improve access, participation and overall outcomes of vocational training courses.

Storytelling is an effective means of supporting the vocational training of migrants and refugees. It promotes the development of language and professional skills, facilitates the process of social integration and contributes to the building of a personal identity and sense of belonging. The use of narrative approaches allows the transfer of practical knowledge in an engaging and easily understandable way, as opposed to purely theoretical teaching. This method facilitates understanding and stimulates motivation to learn. Narrative techniques can take many forms - from traditional fairy tales, biographies and personal stories to contemporary digital tools such as podcasts, videos or interactive storytelling. The experiences of migrants and refugees who have overcome concrete obstacles help students to identify with the protagonists of the stories, encouraging them to achieve their goals, such as entering the world of work. The data collected confirms that narrative methods promote more effective learning and the development of transversal skills, such as self-esteem, communication skills and adaptability. These qualities are particularly important for those facing a new work environment.



In addition, storytelling helps to create a welcoming and empathetic educational environment, which is essential for the success of learning paths for migrants and refugees.

In order to effectively integrate storytelling into vocational training, it is necessary that training programmes address issues related to human rights, social equity and cultural diversity. Stories are a powerful means of promoting the understanding of different perspectives, emotions and value systems. Stories based on real experiences of teachers, students or fictional characters who have overcome significant difficulties can stimulate a constructive dialogue about social diversity and foster greater awareness of the conditions experienced by migrants and refugees.

The narrative techniques adopted by educational institutions should not be limited to the transmission of theoretical notions, but also promote the learning of practical skills. Professional stories, describing challenges and successes in various fields of work, can help students understand the link between theory and practice. This approach strengthens the ability to deal with complex work situations and facilitates the memorization of key concepts through emotionally meaningful content.

To ensure the correct implementation of storytelling, it is essential that the teaching staff receive adequate preparation in the creation and presentation of effective stories, capable of involving students and stimulating their active participation.

Finally, storytelling can become a valuable tool for involving local communities in the educational process. Schools should promote events where teachers, pupils and families share their stories, strengthening social ties and increasing motivation to study. These initiatives foster the building of a cohesive community through intercultural exchange, empathy and mutual understanding, and promote lifelong learning.



Introduction

The integration of migrants and refugees within vocational education and training systems is a significant challenge and opportunity in Europe. With migration flows increasing due to factors such as wars, economic difficulties and climate change, many countries have the task of providing education that supports the inclusion of diverse populations, especially in the context of vocational education. This report focuses on the role of storytelling as a pedagogical method in the vocational training of migrants and refugees in two European countries: Poland and Italy. Education and vocational training play a crucial role in integrating migrants and refugees into the social and economic sphere of their host nations. As these populations face major challenges in accessing education and employment, vocational programmes are essential tools for skills development, improving employability and promoting social inclusion. However, migrants and refugees often face significant barriers, such as language difficulties, cultural differences and a lack of recognition of the qualifications already held. These factors can prevent their success in vocational education and hinder their ability to fully integrate into the world of work.

An innovative approach that has shown itself promising in breaking down these barriers is the use of the Storytelling method. It is a powerful pedagogical tool that not only enhances communication skills but also bridges those cultural differences, allowing learners to share their personal experiences, explore different perspectives and develop a sense of belonging. Through storytelling, migrants and refugees can express their identity and experiences, allowing for greater involvement in the learning process. For migrants and refugees, this method is of particular relevance as it helps to overcome language barriers, promotes empathy and creates a safe space for sharing personal experiences. It is a way to combine learning with cultural and emotional expression, simplifying both cognitive and emotional development.



This research aims to explore the use of the narrative method in vocational education programmes for migrants and refugees in Italy. Focusing on the integration of narrative techniques, the report will examine how this method manages to improve educational outcomes and language level and promote a sense of empowerment among migrant learners. In addition, the report will provide an analysis of the national context, highlighting the specific challenges faced by migrants and refugees within the vocational education system and the potential benefits of adopting the narrative method as an inclusive teaching strategy.

The report also explores important case studies in which the narrative method has been successfully implemented, evaluating the results and impact on both learners and educators. In this way, it will provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of education and vocational training for migrants and refugees and offer suggestions to policy-makers, to educational institutions and practitioners on how to include narrative techniques to improve access, involvement and success in vocational training programmes.

Through this research it is intended to demonstrate that narrative methods can work as transformative tools in vocational education, supporting migrants and refugees not only to overcome educational challenges, but also to establish themselves in their new environment.





Methodology

The methodology by which this study was conducted is characterized by theoretical research, and therefore the use of secondary data sources. These sources were useful for exploring the use of narrative methods in vocational education and training addressed to migrants and refugees, both in Poland and Italy.

This research addresses the obstacles encountered by migrants and refugees in accessing vocational education and evaluates the applicability of the narrative method (STM) in didactics and pedagogy, considering it as an instrument to overcome these obstacles. Statistics, national reports, case studies and pedagogical and educational methods were analysed. This analysis allowed to observe the current situation in both countries, as well as to estimate the potential of the narrative method to improve teaching and learning processes, especially with refugees and migrants. This section does not contain a detailed list of sources, which will be presented in the final part of the report. The general research approach is described, indicating the types of materials analysed and the methods used to process the data.





Data on migrants and refugees

Demographic data on migrants and refugees

In the last fifty years, the foreign population has played a fundamental role in the demographic and social change of Italy.

Fondazione ISMU ETS estimates that on 1 January 2024 the number of foreigners present in Italy is 5 million 755 thousand, slightly down (20 thousand less, -0.3%) compared to the same date in 2023. Residents are growing: 5 million and 254 thousand units compared to 5 million 141 thousand in 2022, while the decline of illegal immigrants recorded since 2019 continues: ISMU estimates that there are 321 thousand (5.6% of the total number).

In 2023, the "non-resident regulars" remain essentially stationary, rising from 176,000 to 180,000 units (+4,000). In the previous year their number had fallen substantially, from 293,000 to 176,000 (-117,000).

Regarding the entrances into Italy, there was a significant reduction in work permits in 2023 (-42.2% compared to 2022). There is a growing number of cases for family, asylum and international protection reasons, as well as studies. There are 2.139 million non-EU citizens with a long-term residence permit.

Turning to landings, in 2024 were just over 66 thousand (-57.9% compared to 2023). In decline also arrivals by land: in the first 6 months of 2024 were 3,400, against 5,600 in 2023. On the other hand, asylum applications are growing: in the first nine months of 2024 there were 116 thousand (+27.1%).



The decrease in the number of illegal immigrants recorded since 2019 continues. In particular, as of 1 January 2024, ISMU estimates that the latest number is 321 thousand units, i.e., -137 thousand compared to the previous year's 458 thousand. The irregular component constitutes 5.6% of the total number of participants (in 2022 it was 7.9%) (ISMU Report, 2024).

While in the first half of 2024 the migratory pressure on the Mediterranean and Balkan routes decreased compared to the previous year, the influx of refugees and migrants continued throughout the year, making continuous humanitarian support necessary.

Since the beginning of 2025, arrivals in Italy have been 11,759, of which 1,728 are under 18. As of 31 March 2025, at least 136,803 refugees and migrants were present in the Italian reception system: among them, 16,922 unaccompanied foreign minors, as recorded on 28 February. In 2024, arrivals in Italy were 33% of the 199,400 recorded on the migratory routes of the Mediterranean, in 2023 they had been about 58% of the more than 270,700 arrivals in Europe.

As for the countries of origin, according to IOM-UNHCR data, people arriving on the Tunisian route were mainly from sub-Saharan Africa, such as Guinea (18.4%), Côte d'Ivoire (16.0%), Burkina Faso (8.5%) and Mali (5.8%), as well as from Tunisia itself (17.9%). From Libya, on the other hand, people came mainly from Asia and the Middle East, in particular Bangladesh (23.7%), Pakistan (14.5%) and Syria (17.4%), and from Egypt (21.3%).

The arrival of Ukrainian refugees in Italy following the Russian invasion in 2022 was of considerable importance.

The European Union has faced a large influx of people fleeing war, particularly in its central and eastern regions. At the end of October 2024, some 4.2 million people fleeing Ukraine were enjoying temporary protection in the EU.

Almost 27% of them are in Germany (1,129,335 people), 23.3% in Poland (979,835). In Italy there are 166,785 people with this status (UNHCR, 2025).



Challenges faced by migrants and refugees in vocational education

The main barriers to vocational education are mainly language barriers. In addition, others, including lack of funds for school inclusion, insufficient infrastructure, inadequate training of teachers to work with refugee and migrant minors, language barriers, lack of psycho-social support and remedial education activities. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNICEF call on European states to make a greater effort to ensure that all migrant minors Refugees and asylum seekers access to quality education and guarantees for the continuation of the academic path.

In Italy, the problem of school drop-out remains. Since the first data of 2005/06 it has been reduced progressively, but overall, it remains high, especially in secondary schools, where almost half of students with an immigrant background are one or more years late (48.0%). There are also concerns about distance from the education/training/work system and early school leavers. In 2022, foreign-born ELET, that is to say young people who have stopped at the first secondary school, are still 28.7% of 18–24-year-old foreigners, or three times the number of natives, which drops to 9.7%. Young people in the NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) condition, that is, who do not study or work) between 15 and 29 years old are 29% of the total, about twice as many as the Italians (17.9%).

The disparities in the rates of schooling of foreigners and Italians are particularly evident among unaccompanied foreign minors (MSNA). The ISMU ETS Foundation studies show that, within a sample of about 3,400 MSNA surveyed on Italian territory between 2020 and 2022, only one in five minors had access to the Italian school system (21%) and only 18% are enrolled in the first level courses (corresponding to first-level secondary education) and second level courses (second-level secondary education) at the CPIA. The majority (55%) attend a literacy course in Italian at the reception centre where they live or at a CPIA and 6% are outside of any type of learning programme (UNICEF, 2022).



In the last twenty years, students of immigrant origin have remained a stable component of technical schools (+4.4% from 2002/03 to 2022/23), while the share in vocational schools has decreased (-15.9%) and the presence in secondary schools has increased (+11.5%). In the a.s. 2022/23, 33.4% of non-Italian students enrolled in the second cycle of education attend high school, technical institutes (39.9%) and vocational schools (26.7%).

The barriers that migrants and refugees face in vocational education are many and complex. It is important that vocational education systems are able to address these challenges and create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment for all students (ISMU ETS, 2024).



Social and economic impact of migrants and refugees

Vocational education is a key tool for promoting the social and economic integration of migrants and refugees in Italy.

Although national governments are primarily responsible for creating and implementing social policies, the EU plays a crucial role in supporting member states by providing funding, developing guidelines and fostering partnerships.

In November 2020, the Commission adopted an action plan for integration and inclusion 2021-2027 that promotes inclusion through a comprehensive approach involving, among other things, both migrant and local communities, employers, civil society and all levels of government. The action plan places emphasis on providing targeted support at all stages of integration.

The main actions include:

- inclusive education and training from early childhood to higher education, with a particular focus on faster recognition of qualifications and language learning through support from EU funds;
- the SIRIUS network for migrant education, a network that supports the education of children and young people from a migration background through strategic activities at national and international level, and also brings together researchers, policy-makers and practitioners involved in migrant education.

In order to contribute to the integration of migrants and refugees, the Commission facilitates the exchange of good practices between Member States through mutual learning activities within the European Education Area working groups.



In addition, the European Commission has provided access to online language support for over 100,000 newly arrived refugees and migrants. The initiative aims to help people integrate into the host society by giving them the opportunity to learn the local language.

The Whole-COMM project is a European Union funded initiative that looks at how to improve the integration of migrants and refugees in small and medium-sized local communities.

In Italy, it was coordinated by the Collegio Carlo Alberto and involved six municipalities in Piedmont and Sicily. It promotes a "whole community" approach that values the role of local actors, public bodies, associations and schools in the construction of inclusion paths (Whole-COMM, 2021).

In emergency situations, the EU and relevant bodies act promptly to provide support and deploy resources and strategies to deal with the situation.

In response to the influx of Ukrainian refugees, several interventions and actions have been implemented. Assistance to these refugees has been financed by various national and/or international sources, including the EU budget. Many private initiatives have been undertaken by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), charities and civil society, private companies and citizens. Local, regional and national public administrations have also taken initiatives.

At EU level, the fund that provides support for legal migration to member states and contributes to the integration of non-EU nationals is the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). This fund is intended for the initial reception and immediate relief phase, as well as the initial welcome and integration phase. It focuses on education, language and other training (e.g., civic education courses and vocational guidance) and supports the related infrastructure costs. People fleeing from Ukraine were eligible for integration operations funded by AMIF. In addition, the European Fund for Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) supports action by EU countries to provide food and/or basic material assistance.



Despite the efforts made, significant challenges remain, such as the lack of adequate resources to meet the diverse educational needs of migrants and refugees in both urban and rural areas. It is therefore essential to continue developing inclusive policies and investing in vocational training programmes that can contribute to a more equitable and cohesive society (UNHR, 2022).

Data on the vocational education system

The vocational education system in Italy for migrants and refugees is designed to promote social and work integration of these people, offering them training opportunities and skills development. Education policies are regulated by laws and programmes which focus on different aspects, from language training to vocational specialisation. Mastery of the Italian language is essential for integration. Migrants and refugees can enroll in language courses offered by the Permanent Territorial Centres (CTP), public schools, local associations and private bodies (Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, 2023).





Vocational training opportunities for migrants and refugees

Vocational training courses: local and regional authorities, as well as non-profit associations, often organise courses to acquire specific skills in areas such as crafts, catering, care of the elderly, and much more. These courses are designed to meet the needs of the labour market and are also accessible to those who do not have a good knowledge of the language or the Italian educational system.

Dual training: some programmes offer a "dual" training model which combines classroom learning with on-the-job work experience. This approach enables migrants and refugees to acquire skills in the field, facilitating their integration into the labour market.

Vocational education also extends to initiatives to promote integration from the practical work point of view. Migrants and refugees can benefit from work grants, or European or local projects that allow these people to gain experience in the required fields of work, or make use of job search guidance and support services, as public or private bodies offering job-counselling services, curriculum writing advice, interview preparation and other forms of support (Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, 2023; Migrants Foundation, 2025; UNICEF Italia, 2025).

European and international programmes

Italy, as part of the European Union, participates in integration and training programmes at European level. Among the most important:



- Erasmus+: The EU's Erasmus+ programme is not limited to university students, but also offers significant opportunities for migrants and refugees, focusing on education, training and social inclusion.
- Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (FAMI): The "Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund" 2017-2027 (FAMI) is one of the main instruments of the European Union to finance actions and projects related to immigration, integration of migrants and management of migration flows, support reception structures in order to ensure fair access to the right to asylum, Reception and integration pathways Improve the procedures for receiving and taking care of migrants, with particular attention to the emergence of vulnerabilities, even latent ones, and accompanying.
- United Nations programmes: The United Nations, in particular through the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), implement several educational programmes for refugees in Italy. These programmes focus on access to education, vocational training and social integration.



In addition to government and international programs, numerous foundations and NGOs provide educational support for migrants and refugees in Italy. Some of the major organizations that fund and manage educational projects for migrants include:

- Caritas Italiana: Provides educational and training support, including language courses, vocational guidance and social integration.
- CIR (Italian Council for Refugees): It offers vocational training courses, awareness-raising programmes and support for refugees, with a particular focus on work inclusion and skills acquisition.
- Save the Children: Promotes education for refugee and migrant children, providing them with equal access to education and cultural awareness initiatives.



European and international programmes in Italy offer a wide range of educational opportunities for migrants and refugees, covering various aspects of integration, including language training, vocational training, educational mobility and intercultural awareness. These programmes, funded by funds such as Erasmus+, FAMI, Horizon 2020, the ESF and international agencies such as UNHCR and IOM, are key to promoting the social and economic inclusion of migrants and refugees in Italy, improving access to education and increasing their opportunities for employment and active participation in society (European Commission, 2024; UNHCR Italia, 2024; Save the Children, 2024; Italian Caritas, 2024).

Access and inclusion for migrants and refugees

Italy, like many other EU countries, is committed to ensuring that migrants and refugees have access to education and job opportunities, but the effectiveness of these policies in practice varies depending on different factors. The integration of migrants and refugees into vocational education is regulated by national and regional policies that have evolved over time, in response to growing migration flows and social inclusion needs.

The main policies and legislation on inclusion for migrants and refugees are:

Law 132/2018 and security decree bis (2019): These decrees introduced measures for the reception and integration of migrants, with the aim of improving access to education and vocational training.

Social inclusion projects, continuing training and support Post-training: Several regional policies promote integration through vocational training, financing Italian language courses, traineeships, and pathways that recognise work experience gained in the countries of origin.



Continuing training programmes and retraining courses are also offered. These programmes aim to strengthen existing skills or train participants for new occupational fields so that they can integrate into the Italian labour market (Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, 2023; ASGI, 2023; European Commission, 2023).

Critical aspects of integration policies for migrants and refugees in Italy

Although inclusion policies are well defined at the regulatory level, the effectiveness of these initiatives in practice is tested by a number of issues.

Despite language courses, many migrants and refugees struggle to acquire sufficient language skills to integrate into the vocational training system or the labour market. The teaching of the Italian language remains a long and arduous process. Another obstacle to the inclusion of migrants and refugees in the world of work is the lack of personalisation of programmes for these people, as they fail to respond to the specific needs of migrants, in particular for those with professional skills already acquired in their countries of origin. It should be considered that not all Italian regions have the same resources to implement effective inclusion policies. In some areas, especially those with high migration flows, vocational guidance services and training courses are inadequate (Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, 2023; ASGI, 2023; European Commission, 2023).

Storytelling Methods in Education

Narration, both as a theoretical construct and as an educational practice, stands as a potent tool capable of triggering significant cognitive and educational benefits. Particularly within the realm of vocational education, the integration of narration can transform learning into a profoundly engaging and meaningful experience, effectively promoting the acquisition of practical skills, the understanding of complex concepts, and the development of crucial communication abilities.



Theoretical Foundations: The Connecting Fabric of Human Learning

As illuminated by the theories of Jerome Bruner, narration is not merely a rhetorical device but a fundamental modality through which we organize our experience and attribute meaning to the world around us. For Bruner, narration represents a primary cognitive process that allows us to construct our inner landscape and share it with others. The narrative method, with its emphasis on personal stories and life accounts, offers an intimate and participatory perspective on human experience, valuing individual voices and interpretations. Narrative thought, distinct from logical-scientific thought, operates through a "logic of stories" based on internal coherence, the plausibility of events, and emotional resonance, allowing us to understand the complexity of human situations.





Cognitive and Educational Benefits of Narration: Broadening Comprehension

The benefits deriving from the use of narration in education are numerous and profound:

- **Development of Emotional Intelligence and Empathy:** Sharing personal stories, imbued with emotions, offers a unique opportunity to connect with the feelings of others. Listening to narratives of joy, sorrow, challenges, and triumphs fosters the development of emotional intelligence, the ability to recognize and understand one's own and others' emotions. Empathy, the ability to put oneself in another's shoes, is refined through immersion in diverse narrative perspectives, a fundamental skill in professional contexts based on collaboration and interaction with clients and colleagues.
- **Improved Understanding of Concepts:** Narration acts as a bridge between the abstract and the concrete. Complex or theoretical concepts become more accessible and memorable when illustrated through stories, practical examples, and personal anecdotes. The emotional engagement generated by narratives facilitates long-term retention of information, anchoring knowledge to a meaningful context.
- **Development of Communication Skills:** Telling and listening to stories hones communication skills on various levels. Narration requires a logical structure, the coherent organization of thoughts, and the use of expressive language. Active listening to others' narratives trains comprehension, the ability to grasp details, and to infer implicit meanings. In the professional sphere, the ability to communicate ideas clearly, engagingly, and persuasively is crucial, and narration represents a powerful tool for its development.



- **Rehabilitative Function:** Narration proves to be a valuable tool in rehabilitative contexts, supporting the reconstruction of identity and the processing of negative experiences. Telling one's own story, giving it meaning, and sharing it can foster a process of healing and acceptance, helping to give voice to experiences and build new self-narratives.

Application in the Professional Sphere: Enhancing Skills and Relationships

The integration of narration in vocational education offers various practical applications:

- **Success Stories:** Sharing success stories, both individual and corporate, serves as a powerful source of inspiration and motivation, showing students the concrete applications of their knowledge and potential career paths.
- **Case Study Analysis:** Presenting case studies in narrative form makes the analysis of complex problems more engaging and allows students to understand the dynamics at play, the challenges faced, and the solutions implemented in a realistic context.
- **Development of Soft Skills:** Narration is intrinsically linked to the development of soft skills such as effective communication, collaboration (in constructing group narratives), critical thinking (in analyzing others' stories), and problem-solving (in creating narratives that resolve conflicts or achieve goals).
- **Search for Creative Solutions:** Exploring different narratives and creating original stories stimulates creativity and innovation, offering new perspectives and encouraging "out-of-the-box" thinking.
- **Empathizing:** Sharing personal and professional stories fosters a deeper understanding of the needs, motivations, and requirements of clients and colleagues, developing greater empathy and a sense of professional responsibility.



The Storytelling Method in Vocational Education: A Bridge to Inclusion

The storytelling method in vocational education goes beyond the mere transmission of information; it creates an emotional connection with students, making learning more memorable, meaningful, and contextualized. Globally, the narrative approach is applied in various forms, from career stories to narrative case studies, from professional testimonials to the use of metaphors and digital media.

For migrant and refugee students, STM proves to be a particularly powerful tool for inclusion:

- **Engagement and Language Development:** Stories capture attention and provide a rich context for acquiring a new language, making technical vocabulary and grammatical structures more accessible and memorable.
- **Emotional and Cultural Connection:** Sharing stories creates an emotional and cultural bridge, facilitating the understanding of social norms and professional practices of the new country and promoting a sense of belonging.
- **Strengthening Confidence:** Listening to success stories of people with similar backgrounds and having the opportunity to tell their own experiences strengthens self-confidence and belief in their professional abilities.
- **Meaningful Learning:** STM makes learning more relevant to students' life experiences, connecting professional concepts to meaningful human and social contexts.



In conclusion, the storytelling method represents an intrinsically human and profoundly effective pedagogical approach for vocational education. Its ability to leverage the cognitive mechanisms of learning and create emotional connections makes it a valuable tool for engaging all students, with particularly significant benefits for those facing linguistic and cultural challenges such as migrants and refugees. Consciously harnessing the power of narration can transform learning into a more meaningful, lasting, and inclusive experience, preparing future professionals with the technical and human skills necessary for success.





Case Studies on the Use of STM in Vocational Education

Case Study 1: "Tales of the Trade" - A Vocational Training Program in the Hospitality Sector

Program Context:

"Tales of the Trade" is an intensive six-month vocational training program held in Lombardy, Italy. The program, a collaboration between NGOs and vocational schools, focuses on the hospitality sector (waitering and cooking) and aims to facilitate employment, with a particular focus on the integration of migrants and refugees. Each year, the program welcomes approximately 40 participants, 60% of whom come from migrant or refugee backgrounds.

Implementation of the Storytelling Method (STM):

Storytelling is integrated into various phases of the program:

- **Welcome and Orientation Module:**

- **Success stories of former participants:** Former students, many with migrant backgrounds, share their positive post-training professional experiences, creating hope and showcasing concrete integration pathways.
- **"My Motivation":** New participants tell their own stories, motivations, and aspirations, fostering mutual understanding and the creation of a sharing environment.



- **Technical Training Modules (Waitering and Cooking):**
 - **"The Tale of the Ingredient":** During cooking lessons, chef trainers narrate the origin, traditions, and challenges related to ingredients, transforming the lesson into a cultural and engaging experience (e.g., the story of the San Marzano tomato).
 - **"Service Stories":** In service simulations, trainers share anecdotes and real-life examples to highlight the importance of communication, incident management, and customer relations.
- **Soft Skills Development Module:**
 - **"The Professional Journey":** Students reflect on their professional path, identifying skills (including informal ones) and challenges overcome, to build a coherent narrative for job interviews.
 - **Narrative Role-playing:** Job interviews or interactions with clients are simulated, in which students must "tell their professional story" effectively.
- **Mentoring and Job Placement Support:**
 - **"Stories of Work Integration":** Mentors (industry professionals or former participants) share their experiences of entering the workforce, offering emotional and practical support, especially to participants with migrant backgrounds.



Challenges Faced:

- **Language barriers:** Linguistic diversity required the use of clear and simple language, supported by visual materials and practical activities, and the encouragement of peer-to-peer narration.
- **Cultural differences:** Different cultural backgrounds necessitated the development of intercultural sensitivity among trainers, who promoted respect for diverse narratives and created a safe space for sharing.
- **Management of traumatic stories:** Trainers received specific training to handle narratives of difficult experiences sensitively, offering psychological support in collaboration with external professionals.
- **Measurement of narrative impact:** Measurement was complex and required the use of qualitative questionnaires, focus groups, and the analysis of shared stories to assess changes in motivation, self-confidence, and understanding of concepts.



Results Obtained:

- **Increased engagement and motivation:** Stories made learning more engaging and meaningful, especially for migrant and refugee students.
- **Improved language skills:** Exposure to contextualized language and the opportunity to tell their own experiences fostered the development of technical vocabulary and communication skills.
- **Strengthened emotional connection and sense of community:** Sharing personal stories created an empathetic and supportive learning environment, strengthening the sense of belonging and group cohesion.
- **Greater awareness of one's own skills:** Autobiographical narration helped students identify and value their prior experiences.
- **Better results in job placement:** Participants more involved in storytelling showed a higher likelihood of finding employment, and the success stories of former participants acted as a powerful motivator.



Conclusion:

The "Tales of the Trade" program demonstrates the effectiveness of integrating storytelling in vocational training, particularly for migrant and refugee students. Stories facilitated learning, language development, emotional connection, and job integration, acting as a cultural and linguistic bridge.





Case Study 2: Digital Futures Through Our Stories

"Digital Futures Through Our Stories" was an 18-month pilot project in Berlin that aimed to provide digital skills and introduce entrepreneurship concepts to adult refugees, using storytelling to make learning more accessible and motivating. The project involved 30 participants mainly from Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

Implementation of Storytelling:

- **Community Building and Introduction to Digital Concepts:** Participants shared their initial digital experiences, and stories of digital innovators from different cultures were presented.
- **Digital Literacy Modules:** Learning computer functionalities was linked to narrative goals, such as telling one's story online, and online safety concepts were explained through stories of online scams.
- **Introduction to Digital Entrepreneurship Module:** Success stories of startups founded by migrants were shared, and participants developed their own digital project ideas by presenting them as "stories."
- **Mentoring and Networking:** Mentors shared their stories, and events were organized for participants to tell their ideas to potential investors.

Challenges Faced:

- Variety of initial digital skills.
- Language and cultural barriers.
- Measuring the impact on entrepreneurship.



Results Obtained:

- 45% increase in perceived digital self-efficacy.
- Improved presentation and communication skills.
- 70% of participants developed digital project prototypes.
- Positive feedback on the learning experience.
- Increased networking and opportunities.

Conclusion:

The project demonstrated that storytelling can effectively increase digital self-efficacy, improve communication skills, and promote the development of digital projects among refugees.





Findings and Analysis

The application of narrative methods (STM) in vocational education aimed at migrants and refugees has proven to be a powerful and transformative pedagogical approach, capable of effectively addressing the unique challenges that this student population faces. The analysis of case studies and emerging research highlights a significant impact on several fronts:

Overcoming Linguistic and Cultural Barriers:

One of the main obstacles for migrants and refugees in accessing and succeeding in vocational education is represented by linguistic barriers and cultural differences. STM proves to be an effective bridge in this context. Stories, through their contextual and often emotional nature, facilitate language comprehension in a more natural and meaningful way than purely grammatical or technical learning. Listening to and sharing narratives allows for the acquisition of sector-specific vocabulary in a practical and memorable context. Furthermore, stories can act as "cultural translators," illustrating the social norms, work practices, and values of the new country in an accessible and engaging way, reducing confusion and promoting intercultural understanding.

Improvement of Engagement and Motivation:

Traditional learning, especially in contexts of stress and transition such as those experienced by migrants and refugees, can be alienating and demotivating. STM, with its ability to capture attention and evoke emotions, reverses this trend. Success stories of people with similar backgrounds, narratives of overcome challenges, and testimonies of passionate professionals create a sense of hope and show concrete paths towards professional integration. The active involvement of students in sharing their own stories and aspirations fosters a sense of belonging and purpose, significantly increasing their motivation to actively participate in the learning process and to persevere in the face of difficulties.



Enhancement of Skills Acquisition:

STM is not limited to making learning more enjoyable; it actively contributes to the acquisition of technical and transversal skills. Professional stories illustrate the practical application of theoretical concepts, making learning more tangible and relevant for the future workplace. Narrative case studies develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills in a realistic context. Moreover, the very act of telling stories strengthens communication skills, the ability to structure thought, and to present one's ideas effectively, crucial skills in the world of work. Autobiographical narration, in particular, helps students identify, value, and communicate their prior skills, often not formally recognized, increasing their self-esteem and their marketability in the labor market.

Facilitation of Social Integration:

Social integration is a fundamental aspect of the journey of migrants and refugees. STM creates safe and inclusive spaces for the sharing of experiences, fostering empathy and mutual understanding among students from diverse backgrounds. Listening to the stories of others and sharing one's own creates a sense of community and reduces feelings of isolation. Narratives of professional success of people with migrant backgrounds offer positive role models and help to dismantle stereotypes and prejudices. Furthermore, the ability to tell one's professional story effectively is a powerful tool for building social and professional networks in the new country, facilitating access to job opportunities and integration into the social fabric.

Measurement of Impact:

Although the quantitative measurement of the impact of narration can be complex, qualitative results and some measurable indicators (such as increased perceived self-efficacy, improved communication skills, and employment rates) suggest a positive link between the use of STM and the outcomes of migrant and refugee students in vocational education. The analysis of shared stories reveals changes in motivation, self-confidence, and understanding of concepts.



In conclusion, narrative methods prove to be a powerful and holistic pedagogical approach that addresses the multiple challenges faced by migrants and refugees in vocational education. By facilitating communication, increasing engagement, enhancing skills acquisition, and promoting social integration, STM stands as an essential tool to support their educational success and their full inclusion in the labor market and society.



Recommendations

Recommendations for the Integration of STM in Vocational Schools

The effective integration of the storytelling method (STM) into vocational education programs represents a significant opportunity to improve student learning, engagement, and integration, including migrants and refugees. This holistic approach requires a commitment to curriculum redesign, teacher professional development, and active community involvement.



1. Curriculum Redesign:

- **Identify Narrative Integration Points:** It is essential to analyze the existing curriculum to identify areas where STM can be integrated naturally and meaningfully. This includes the introduction of narrative case studies, career stories, professional testimonials, and student storytelling activities within technical and transversal modules. The goal is to make content more engaging and memorable through the power of stories.
- **Develop Narrative-Based Learning Modules:** Creating specific modules that use storytelling as the primary methodology can transform learning. For example, professional ethics can be explored through ethical dilemmas presented as stories, while innovation can be understood through accounts of discoveries and failures. This approach makes concepts more accessible and stimulates critical reflection.
- **Encourage Narrative-Based Project Learning:** Structuring projects where students must solve problems or achieve goals through an engaging narrative increases interest and motivation, especially for those who find traditional approaches abstract. Narration becomes a tool to give meaning and context to practical learning.



- **Integrate Digital Technologies for Storytelling:** Leveraging the potential of digital media enriches storytelling activities. Creating videos, podcasts, interactive multimedia presentations, or using online platforms for sharing stories offers new modes of expression and engagement.
- **Adapt Teaching Materials:** Reviewing and adapting existing teaching materials to include narrative elements can make learning more dynamic. Transforming exercises into narrative challenges or presenting concepts through stories and concrete examples facilitates understanding and memorization.
- **Evaluate Learning Through Narration:** Consider assessment methods that take into account students' narrative skills, such as presenting projects in the form of stories, creating narrative case studies, or written reflections on their learning experiences in narrative form, offers a more complete view of their abilities.



2. Teacher Professional Development:

- **Specific Training on STM:** Offering teachers specific training opportunities on the storytelling method, its theoretical foundations, different narration techniques, and practical strategies for integrating it effectively in the classroom is crucial. This allows teachers to acquire the necessary skills to use STM with confidence.
- **Storytelling Workshops:** Organizing practical workshops where teachers can experiment with different forms of narration, develop their own storytelling skills, and exchange ideas on how to apply them in the specific context of their disciplines fosters active and collaborative learning.
- **Communities of Practice:** Creating communities of practice among teachers to share experiences, challenges, and best practices in the implementation of STM promotes mutual learning and the dissemination of innovative approaches within the institution.



- **Support and Mentoring:** Providing individual support and mentoring to teachers who wish to experiment with STM in their classes, offering feedback and useful resources, can encourage the adoption of this method and overcome any initial resistance.
- **Involvement of Storytelling Experts:** Inviting storytelling experts from various sectors (narrative, journalism, theater, etc.) to conduct workshops and seminars for teachers and students offers new perspectives and techniques, enriching the narrative approach of the institution.



Recommendations for Phase 2 of the Project - Methodology Development Phase

Phase 2 of the project represents a fundamental opportunity to systematize and expand the STM-based approach in vocational education, with a specific focus on the inclusion of migrants and refugees. A structured and collaborative approach in this phase is essential to develop a solid and validated methodology.

- **In-depth Research on Global Best Practices:** Conducting more in-depth research on successful implementations of STM in vocational education globally, with particular attention to projects aimed at vulnerable populations such as migrants and refugees, allows for the identification of effective models, strategies, and tools already tested.
- **Development of a Detailed Methodological Framework:** Based on the research and experiences of Phase 1, it is crucial to develop a clear and detailed methodological framework for the integration of STM in vocational education. This framework should include guiding principles, pedagogical objectives, a range of storytelling techniques and activities suitable for different contexts, guidelines for adapting stories to different cultures and language levels, strategies for managing sensitive stories, suggestions for the use of digital technologies, and methods for evaluating the effectiveness of STM.
- **Creation of Resources and Teaching Tools:** Developing a series of practical resources and tools to support educators in the implementation of STM is essential. These could include a collection of inspiring and adaptable professional stories, models of narration activities for different disciplines, guidelines for creating digital stories, and narrative-based assessment tools.



- **Development of a Training Program for Trainers:** Creating a specific training program to prepare educators for the effective use of STM, including both theoretical aspects and practical and experimental activities, will ensure that teachers are adequately prepared to implement the methodology.
- **Pilot Implementation and Rigorous Evaluation:** Implementing the methodological framework and the developed resources in a limited number of vocational institutions (pilot project) and conducting a rigorous evaluation of the impact of STM on learning, engagement, language development, social integration, and employment outcomes of migrant and refugee students, using both quantitative and qualitative methods, will provide concrete data on the effectiveness of the approach.
- **Creation of a Community of Practice for Educators:** Establishing a platform or network to allow educators participating in the pilot project to share experiences, challenges, and best practices in the implementation of STM will foster collaboration and continuous refinement of the methodology.
- **Dissemination of Results and Advocacy:** Disseminating the results of the pilot project and best practices through publications, conferences, and workshops, raising awareness of the importance of STM in vocational education for migrants and refugees and promoting its adoption on a wider scale, will help maximize the impact of the project.
- **Adaptation and Scalability:** Based on the evaluation results, adapting and refining the methodological framework and resources to ensure their scalability and applicability in different geographical and cultural contexts will ensure that the methodology can be successfully implemented in a variety of institutions.

Through a structured and collaborative approach in Phase 2, it will be possible to develop a solid and validated STM methodology, capable of bringing significant benefits to the vocational education of migrants and refugees, facilitating their path towards social and economic integration.



Conclusions

This report has explored in depth the application and impact of the storytelling method (STM) in vocational education, with a specific focus on the benefits for migrant and refugee students. The analysis of concrete case studies and the examination of the mechanisms through which STM acts highlight a significant potential to overcome the unique challenges that this student population faces in the learning and professional integration process.

The main results that emerged underscore how STM acts as a crucial bridge between linguistic and cultural barriers, making learning more accessible and meaningful through engaging narrative contexts. The impact on student engagement and motivation is remarkable, as stories create emotional connections, offer role models, and instill hope, fundamental elements for overcoming the difficulties related to change and trauma. STM also proves to be an effective tool for enhancing the acquisition of both technical and transversal skills, making concepts more tangible and developing essential communication skills for the world of work. Finally, the sharing of personal and professional stories facilitates social integration, creating a sense of community, promoting empathy, and breaking down prejudices.

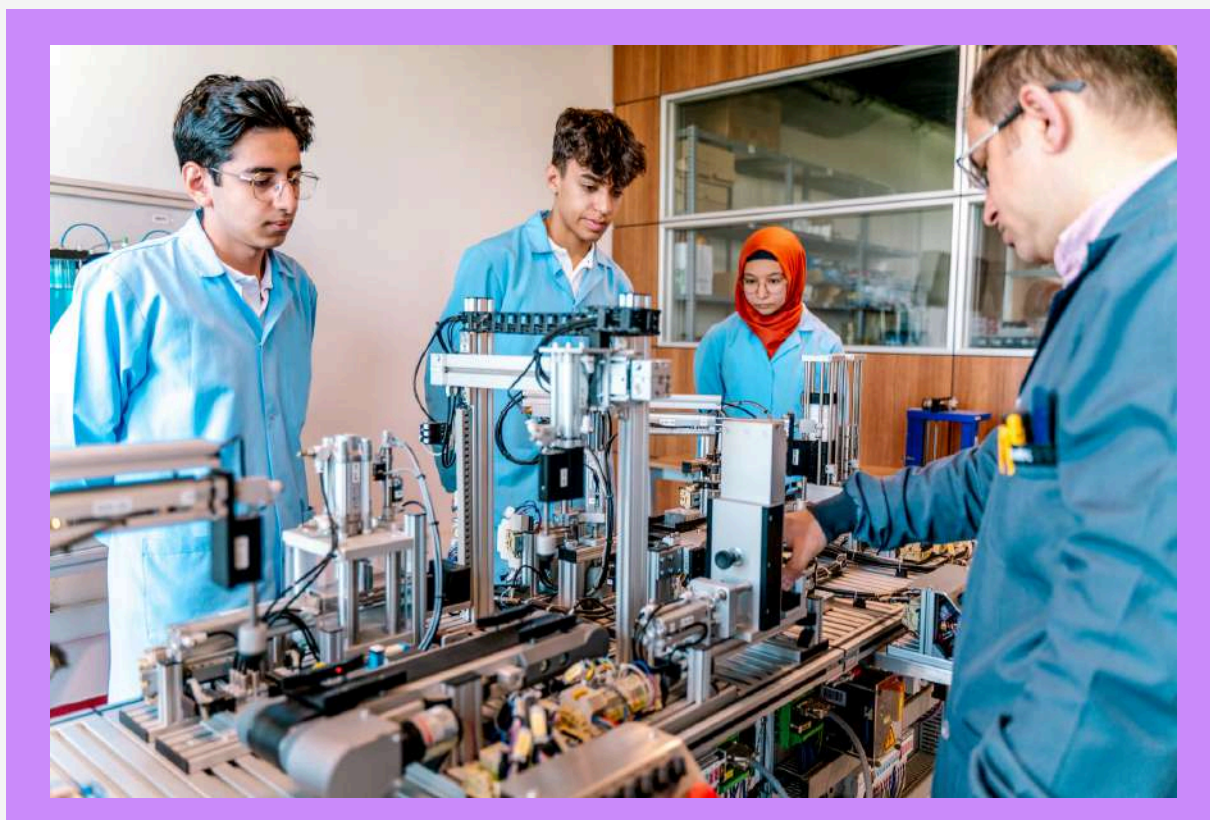
The final reflections converge on the importance of recognizing and valuing the transformative potential of STM in the field of vocational education and training for migrants and refugees. This method is not simply an alternative pedagogical approach, but an inclusive strategy that effectively responds to the specific needs of students who often come from complex backgrounds and require a supportive, culturally sensitive, and future-oriented learning environment.

However, it is essential to emphasize that the effective implementation of STM requires a concerted commitment from educational institutions, trainers, and communities. This implies a conscious redesign of curricula, an investment in teacher professional development, and a willingness to actively involve the local community to enrich the narratives and create authentic learning opportunities.



Furthermore, it is crucial to recognize that research on the application of STM in vocational education for migrants and refugees is still in a developmental phase. Further studies, with rigorous methodologies and measurable impact indicators, are needed to fully understand the potential of this approach and to identify best practices in different cultural and professional contexts. Phase 2 of the project represents an important step in this direction, offering the opportunity to develop a solid methodology, create practical resources, and evaluate the effectiveness of STM on a larger scale.

In conclusion, storytelling emerges as a powerful and promising tool for improving the outcomes of vocational education for migrants and refugees. Its potential to foster engagement, skills development, and social integration is undeniable. Investing further in the research and implementation of this method in vocational education and training can not only enrich the learning experience of these students but also contribute significantly to their full economic and social inclusion in new communities. Listening to and sharing their stories is not only an act of humanity but also a strategic investment in the future of more inclusive and resilient societies.





Chapter 3 – Results from Questionnaire Surveys Conducted in Poland and Italy



Poland's Data Report

Summary of the Report

This report explores the current situation of migrants and refugees, focusing on their experiences in education, the labour market, and integration practices. A key aspect of the study is the examination of how storytelling is being used in educational and vocational settings to support migrants and refugees. By gathering insights from professionals working in the education sector, the report aims to improve strategies and methods that facilitate more effective integration, especially within the realm of education and training.

Research methodology

The research is based on 29 responses collected through a survey distributed via Google Forms. These surveys were sent to a range of organizations, including high schools, universities, vocational institutions, and other educational service providers. In some cases, the surveys were shared directly with individuals—often migrants themselves—who expressed interest in contributing to the study.

Overview of Findings

The findings are presented in two main parts. The first section provides demographic details of the respondents, including their country of residence, gender, and their relationship to migration—whether they are migrants, educators, or professionals working with migrants in some capacity. The second section focuses on qualitative insights, highlighting perspectives from both educators and migrants regarding the use of storytelling in vocational education. These responses shed light on the potential value of storytelling as a method for enhancing learning, fostering integration, and making vocational training more effective and inclusive.



Metric

1. Country of residence



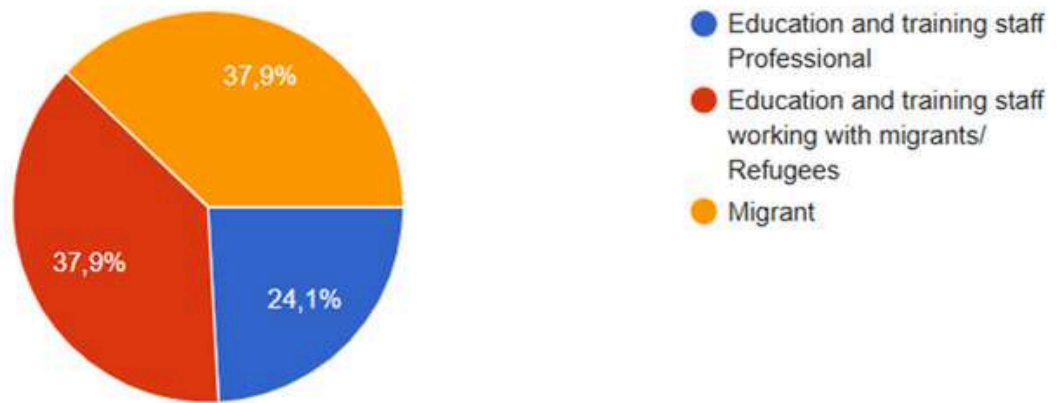
All 100% of respondents that finished the survey chose the country that they currently reside in to be Poland.



2. Status

Status:

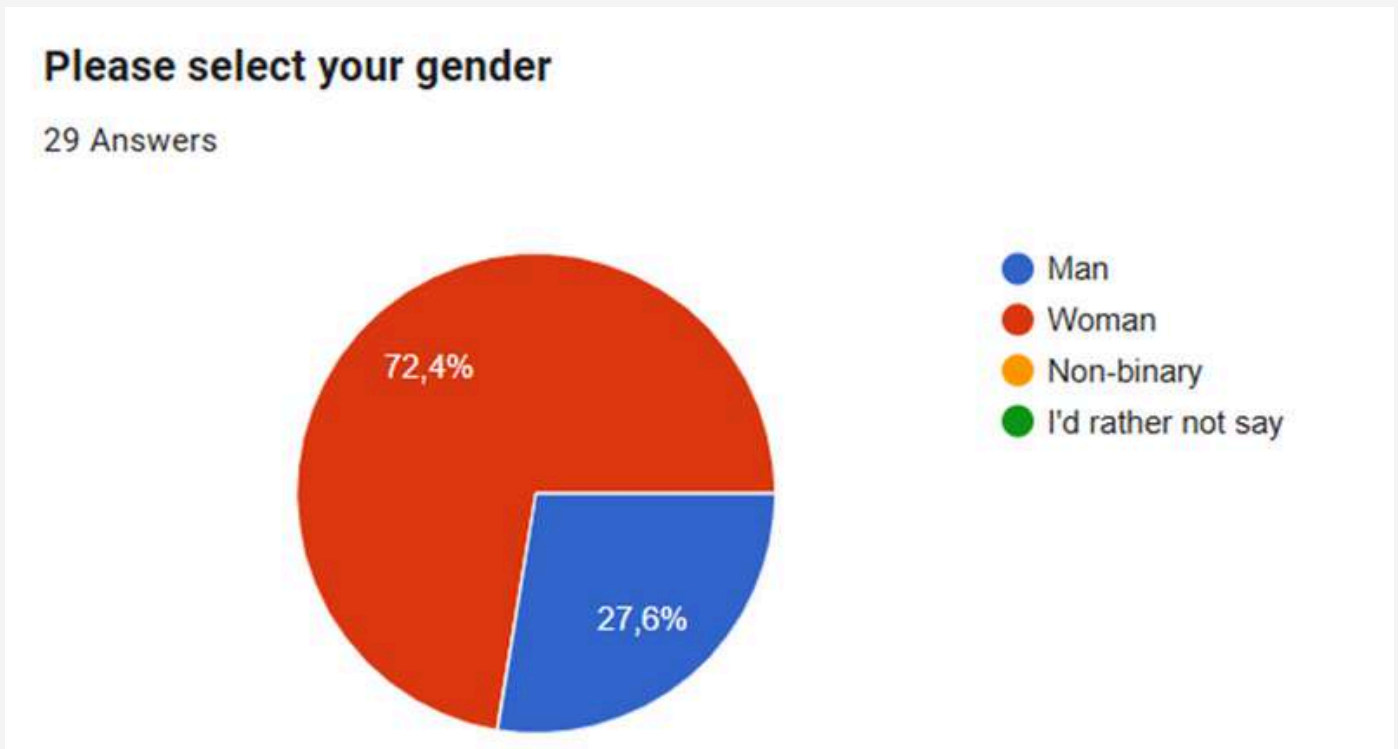
29 Answers



Respondents from “Education and training staff working with migrants/refugees” and “Migrants” themselves together make up 75.8% of all respondents (37.9% each, 11 respondents each). 24.1% (7 respondents) of respondents were “Education and training staff professionals”.



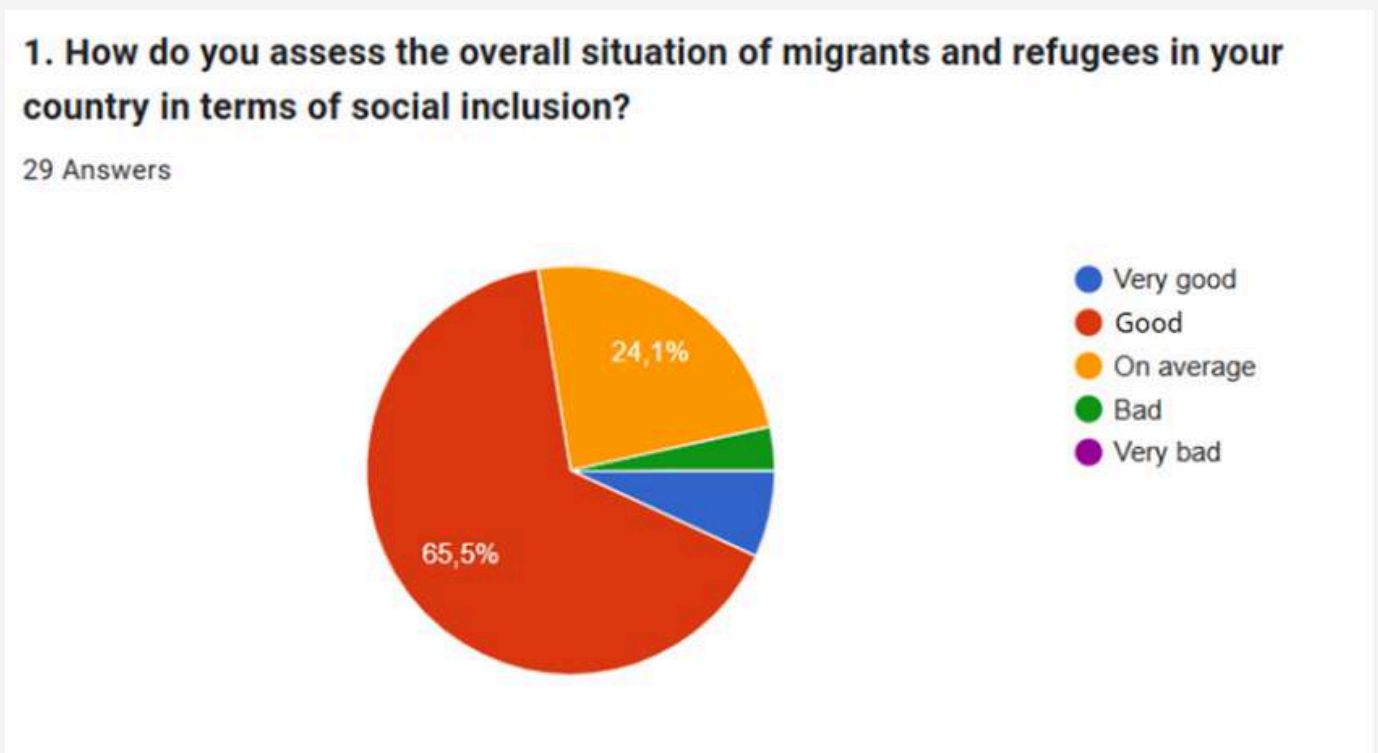
3. Gender



72.4% of all respondents were women, while 27.6% were men. There were no respondents who identified as non-binary, nor did anyone refuse to answer.

Data

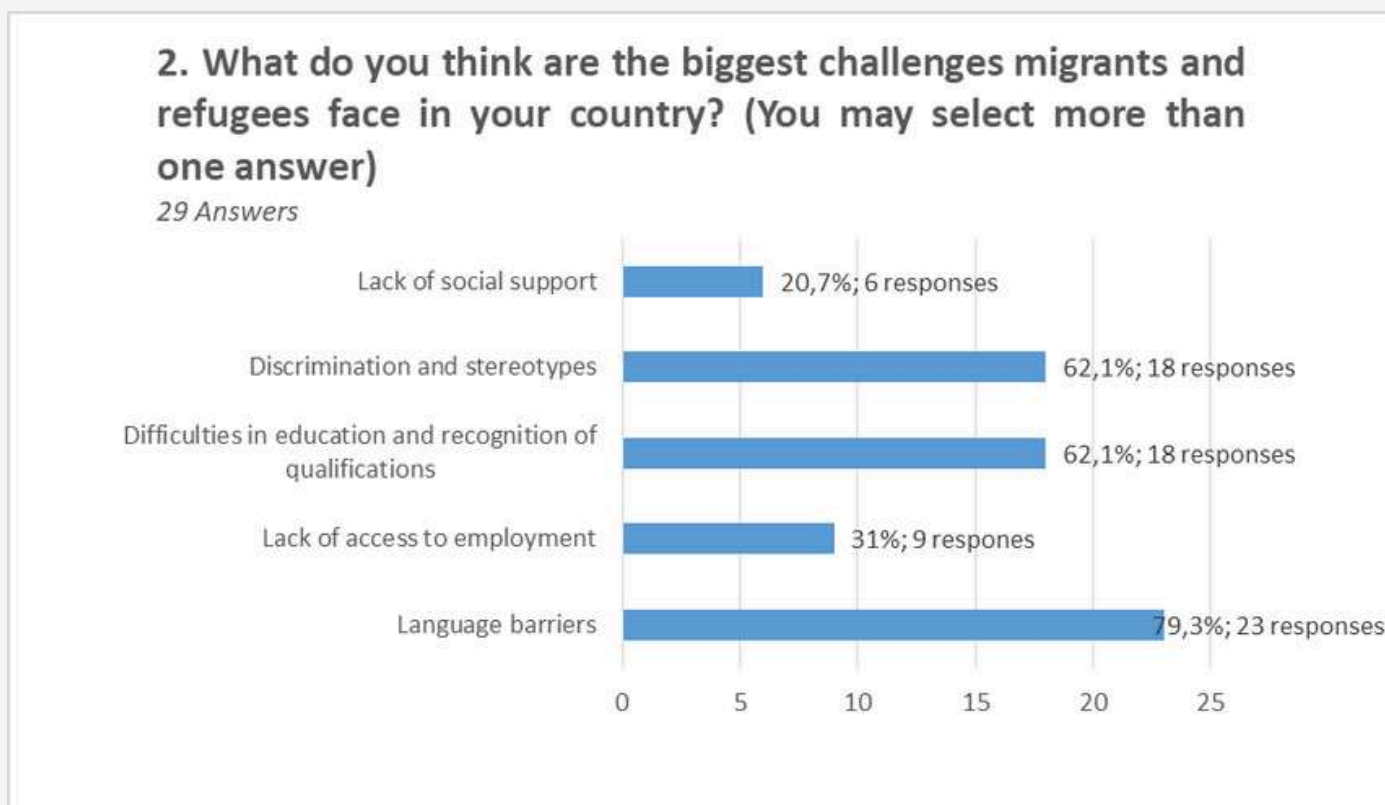
1. How do you assess the overall situation of migrants and refugees in your country in terms of social inclusion?



More than half of respondents (65.5%) assessed the overall situation of migrants and refugees in their country of residence, in terms of social inclusion, as good. Another 24.1% described the situation as average, while 6.9% considered it to be very good. Only one respondent (3.4%) rated social inclusion in their country as poor.



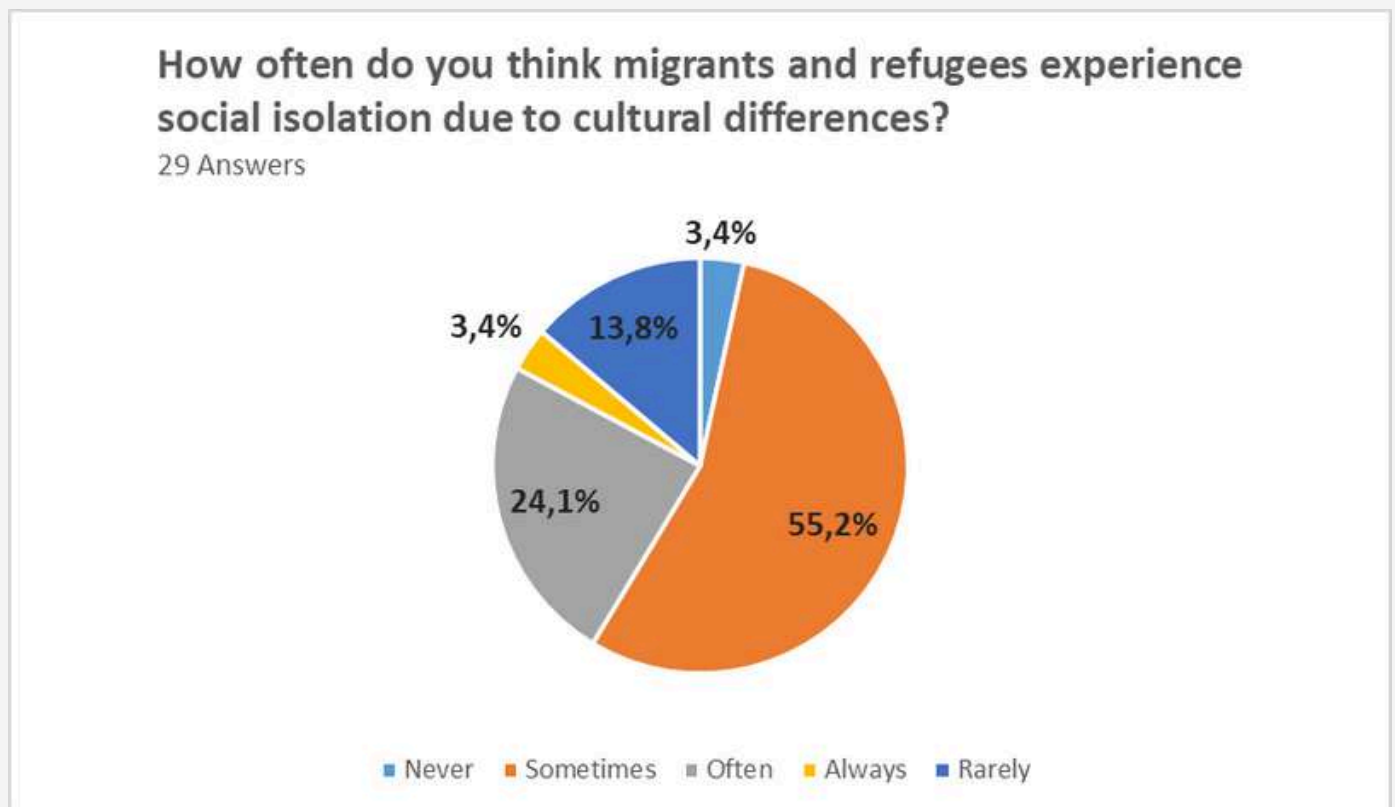
2. What do you think are the biggest challenges migrants and refugees face in your country? (You may select more than one answer)



Language barriers were the most frequently selected challenge in response to the question about difficulties faced by migrants and refugees, chosen by 79.3% of respondents (including both migrants and educational professionals). The second and third most frequently cited challenges were “Difficulties in education and recognition of qualifications” and “Discrimination and stereotypes”, each being chosen by 62.1% of respondents. These were followed by “Lack of access to employment” (31%). The least selected option was “Lack of social support,” chosen by 20.7% of respondents.



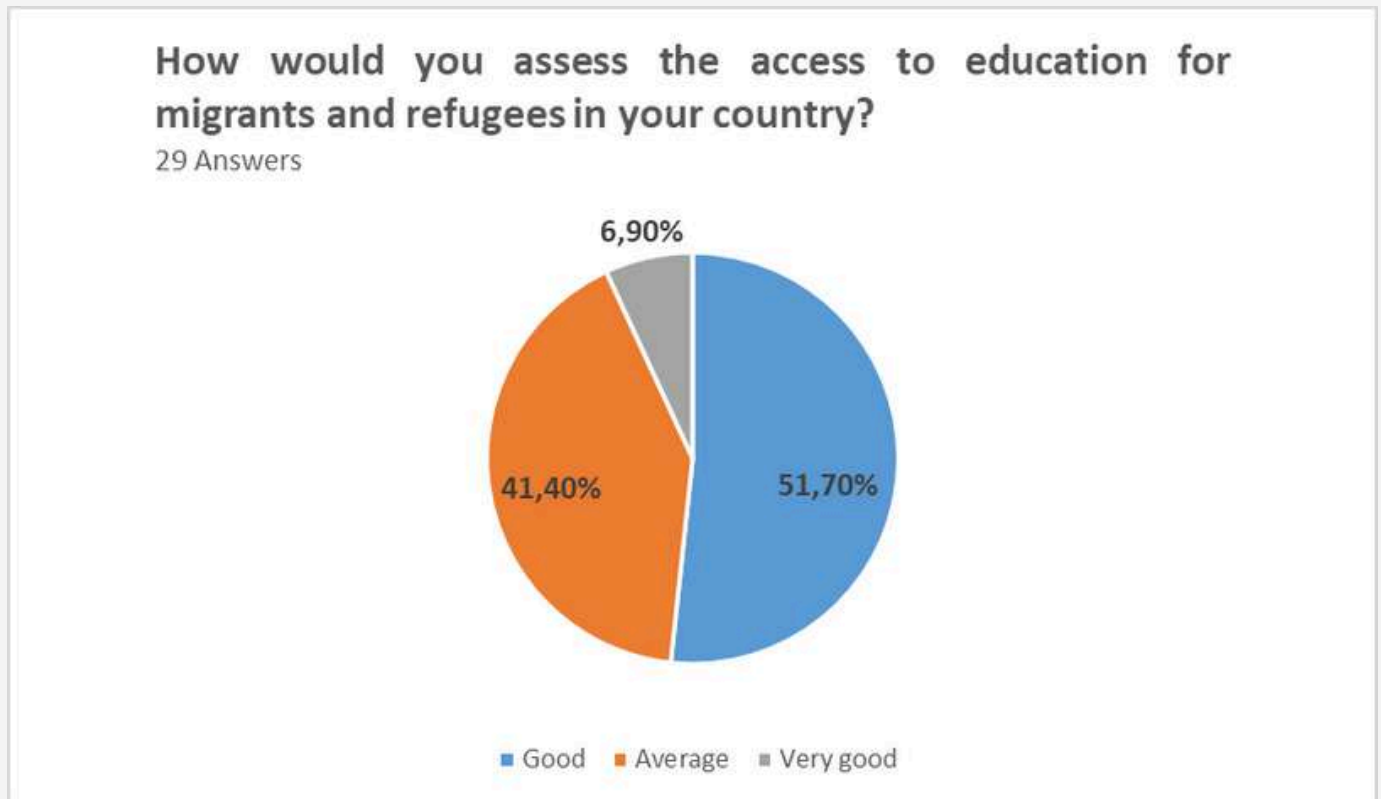
3. How often do you think migrants and refugees experience social isolation due to cultural differences?



More than half of respondents think that migrants and refugees experience isolation based on cultural differences (55,2%). Some respondents (24,1%) believe that migrants and refugees are often harmed by isolation in the same context. 13,8% of respondents indicated that they rarely experience such a challenge. 3,4% of respondents believe that migrants and refugees always suffer isolation due to cultural differences, while the same percentage (3,4%) believe this never happens.



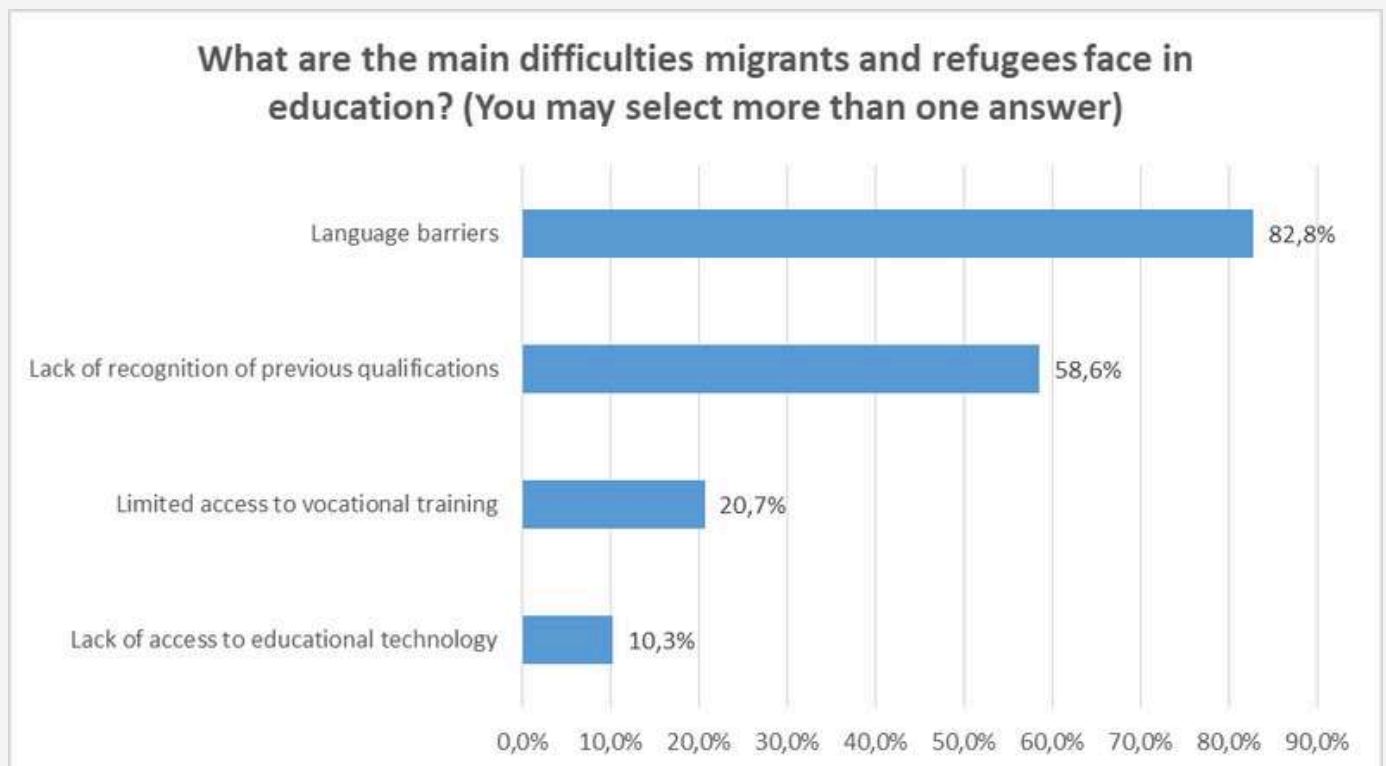
4. How would you assess the access to education for migrants and refugees in your country?



More than half of the survey participants (51.7%) indicated that migrants and refugees have good access to education in their country of residence. Meanwhile, 41.4% of respondents were less positive, stating that access to education is at an average level. The remaining 6.9% considered the education access to be at a very good level.

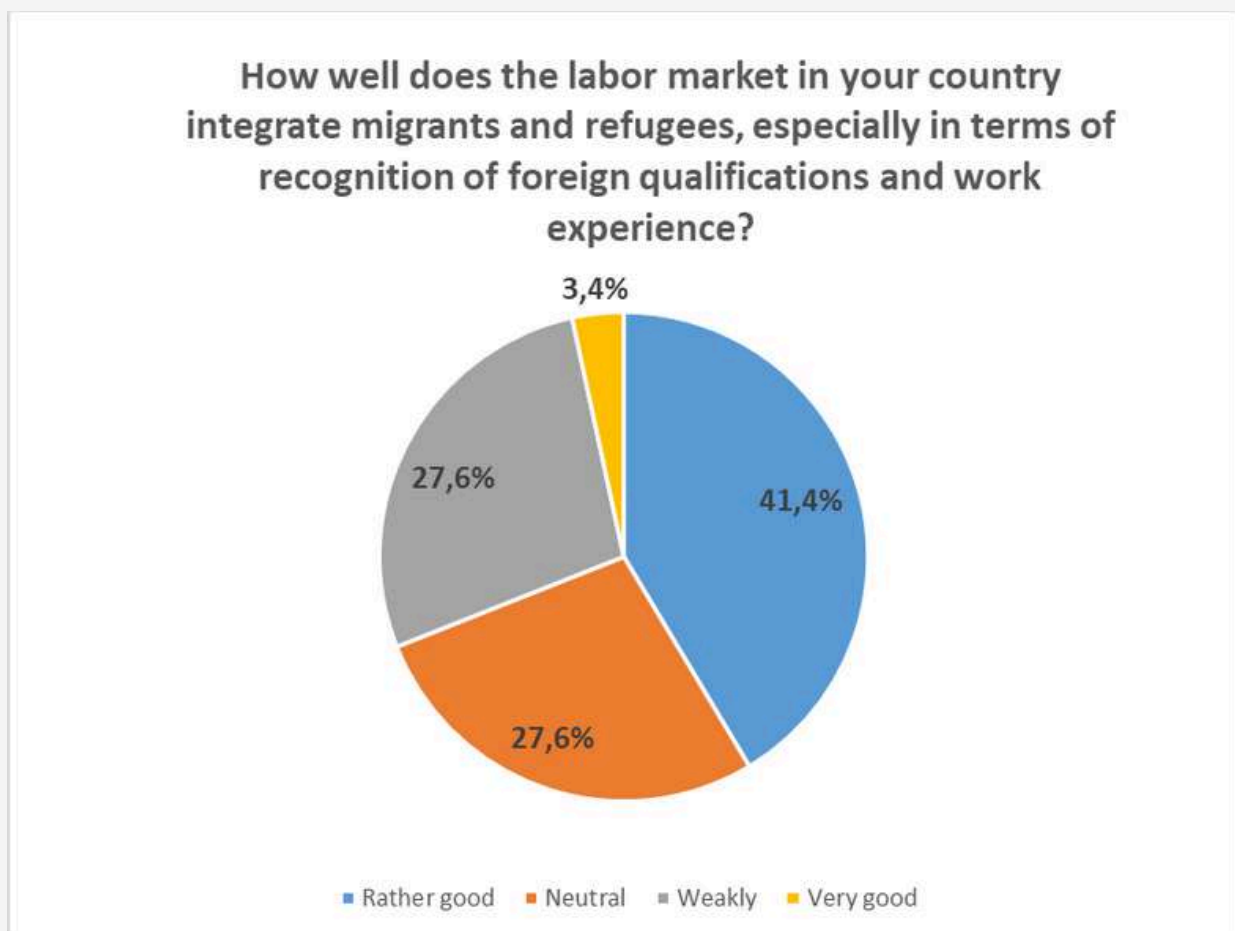


5. What are the main difficulties migrants and refugees face in education? (You may select more than one answer)



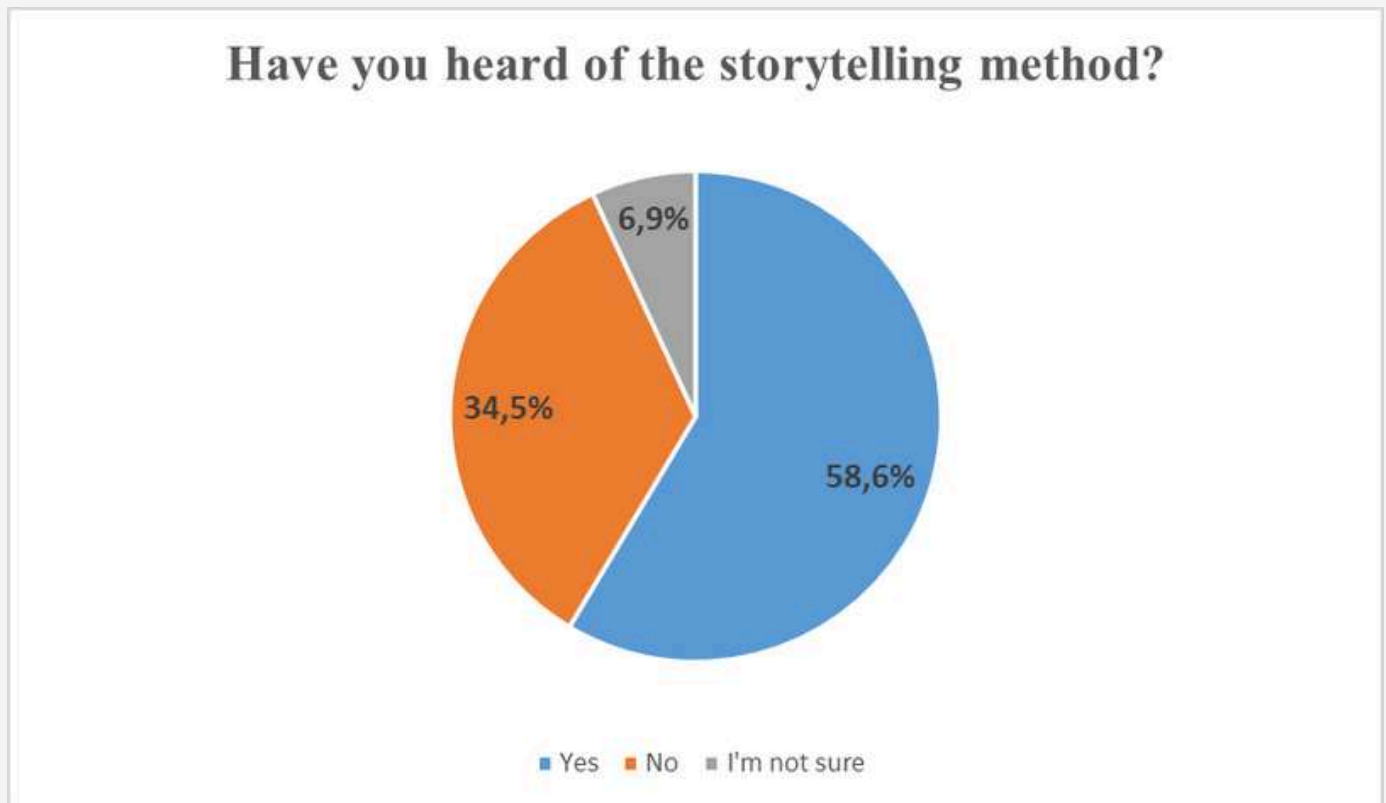
82,8% of respondents chose language barriers as the main difficulty that migrants and refugees encounter in education. The second most commonly selected option was "Lack of recognition of previous qualifications, with 58,6%." "Limited access to vocational training" was chosen by 20.7% of respondents. The least selected option was "Lack of access to educational technology," with 10.3%.

6. How well does the labor market in your country integrate migrants and refugees, especially in terms of recognition of foreign qualifications and work experience?



41.4% of respondents stated that the labour market does, in fact, help with the integration of migrants and refugees, particularly in terms of recognizing foreign qualifications and work experience at a “rather good” level. Both the “Neutral” and “Weakly” options were selected by 27.6% of respondents. Additionally, 3.4% of survey participants considered the labour market to be a “very good” integrator of migrants and refugees.

7. Have you heard of the storytelling method?

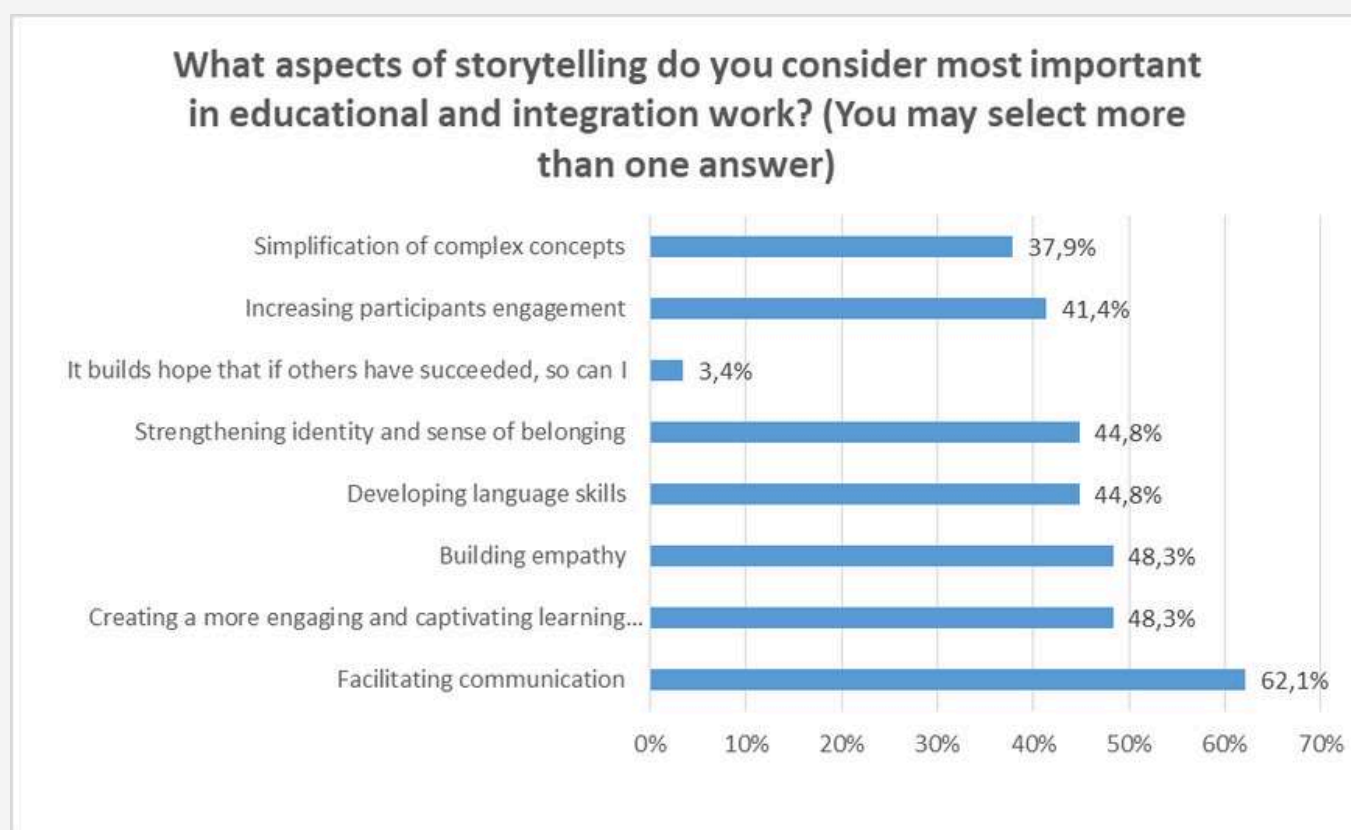


58,6% of respondents answered positively when asked about being familiar with the concept of Storytelling. 34,5% of participants answered negatively. 6,9% weren't sure if they ever encountered something like the Storytelling method.



8. Storytelling is a method of communication that involves telling a story to convey a message, teach a lesson, or engage an audience. It uses narratives, characters, and plot to make information more relatable, memorable, and impactful. In education and training, storytelling helps to simplify complex concepts, foster emotional connections, and encourage active participation by creating a more immersive and engaging learning experience.

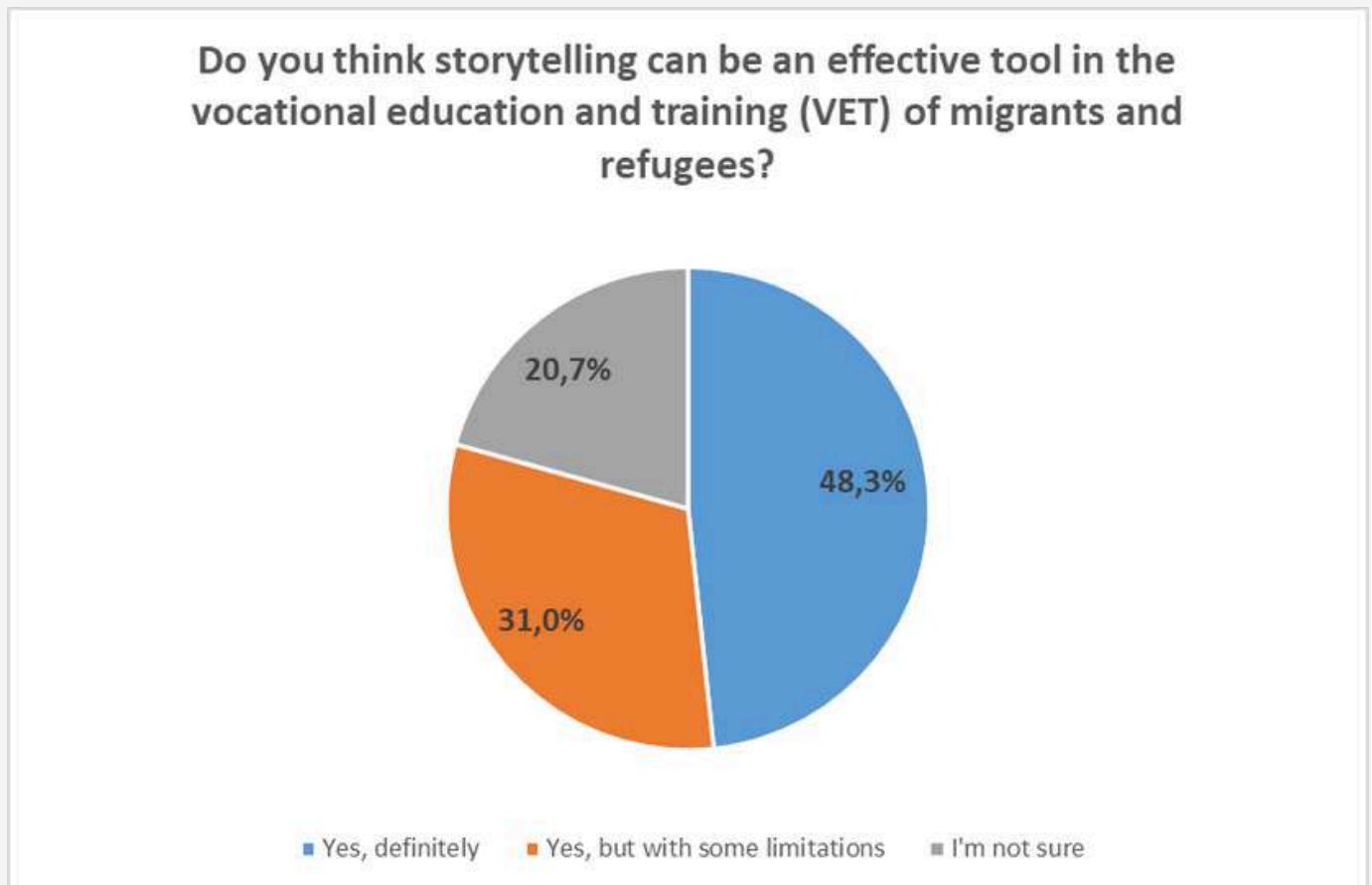
What aspects of storytelling do you consider most important in educational and integration work? (You may select more than one answer).





“Facilitating communication” emerged as the most frequently selected aspect of storytelling, chosen by 62.1% of respondents. Following that, both “Creating a more engaging and captivating learning experience” and “Building empathy” were each selected by 48.3% of respondents. “Developing language skills” and “Strengthening identity and sense of belonging” were also considered important, with 44.8% of respondents selecting each of these options.

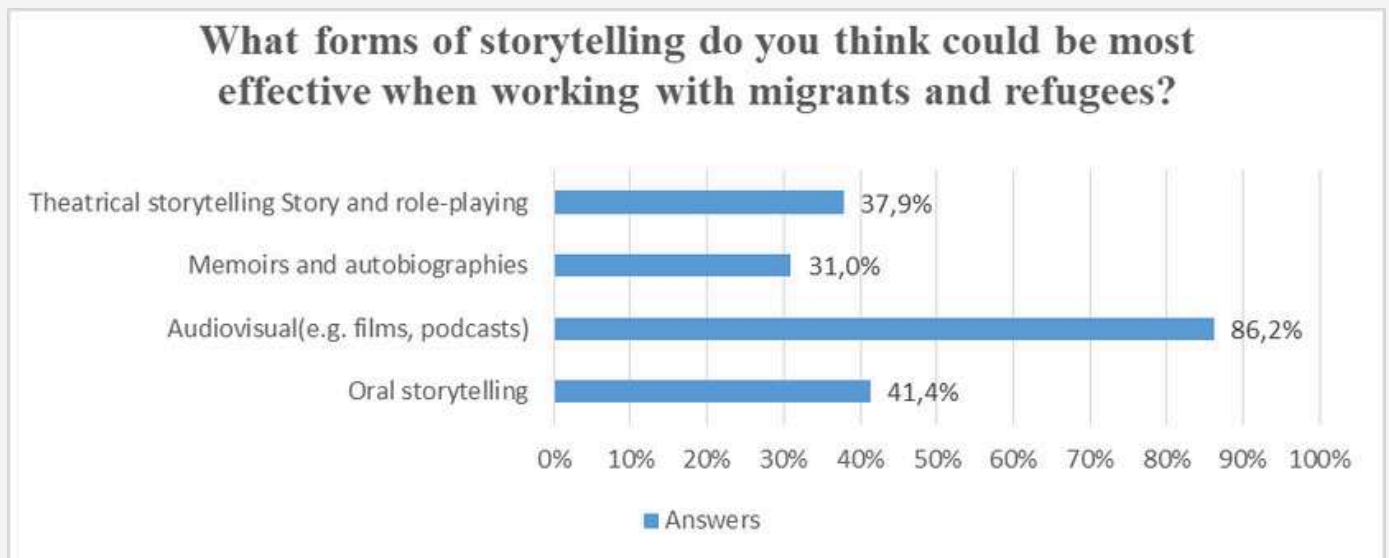
9. Do you think storytelling can be an effective tool in the vocational education and training (VET) of migrants and refugees?



48,3% of respondents were very positive (“Yes, definitely”) when asked about the effectiveness of storytelling in vocational education and training for migrants and refugees. 31% of respondents agreed with effectiveness of the tool, but highlighted some limitations (“Yes, but with some limitations”). 20,7% of respondents weren’t sure if it’s effective or not.



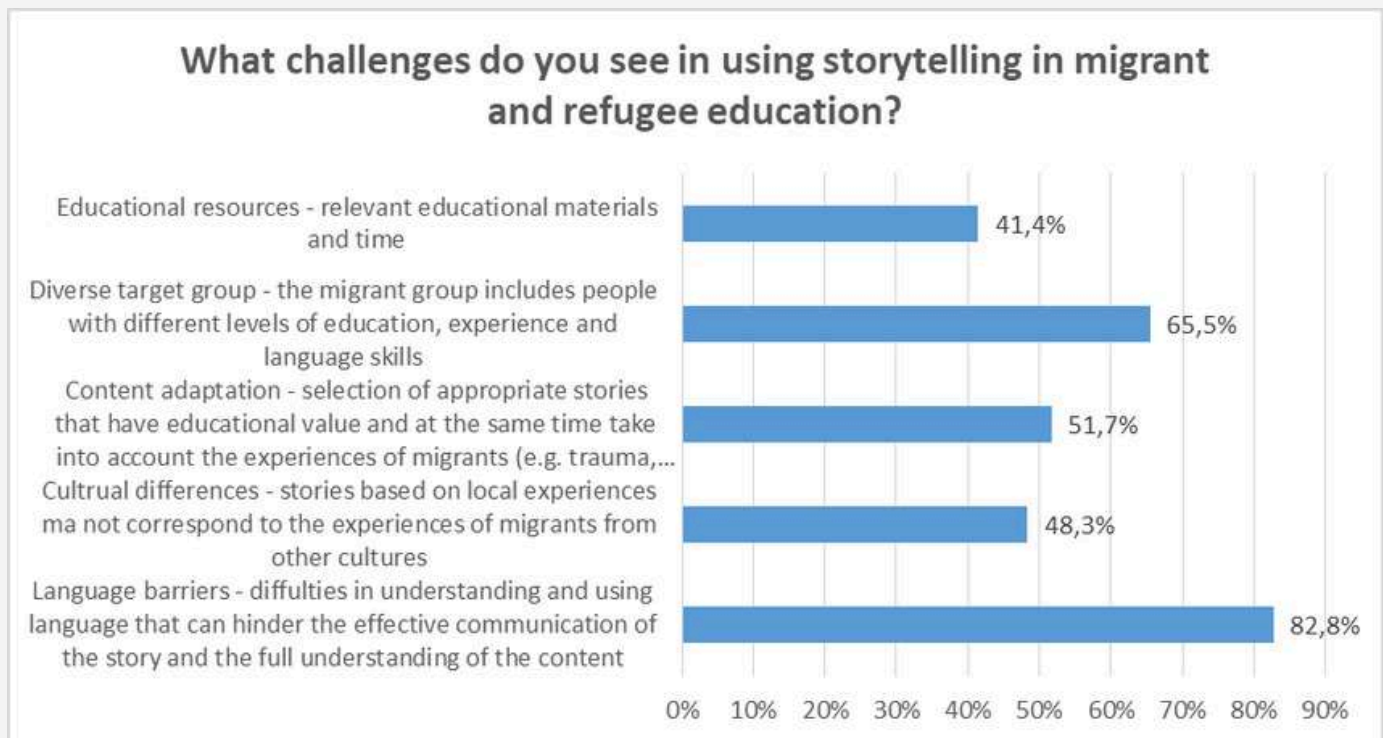
10. What forms of storytelling do you think could be most effective when working with migrants and refugees?



86,2% of respondents indicated that audiovisual form of storytelling would help migrants and refugees the most. 41,4% of respondents decided that oral storytelling would be the best. 37,9% of survey participants would prefer “Theatrical storytelling Story and role-playing”. 31% respondents would prefer memoirs and autobiographies as an effective tool of storytelling.

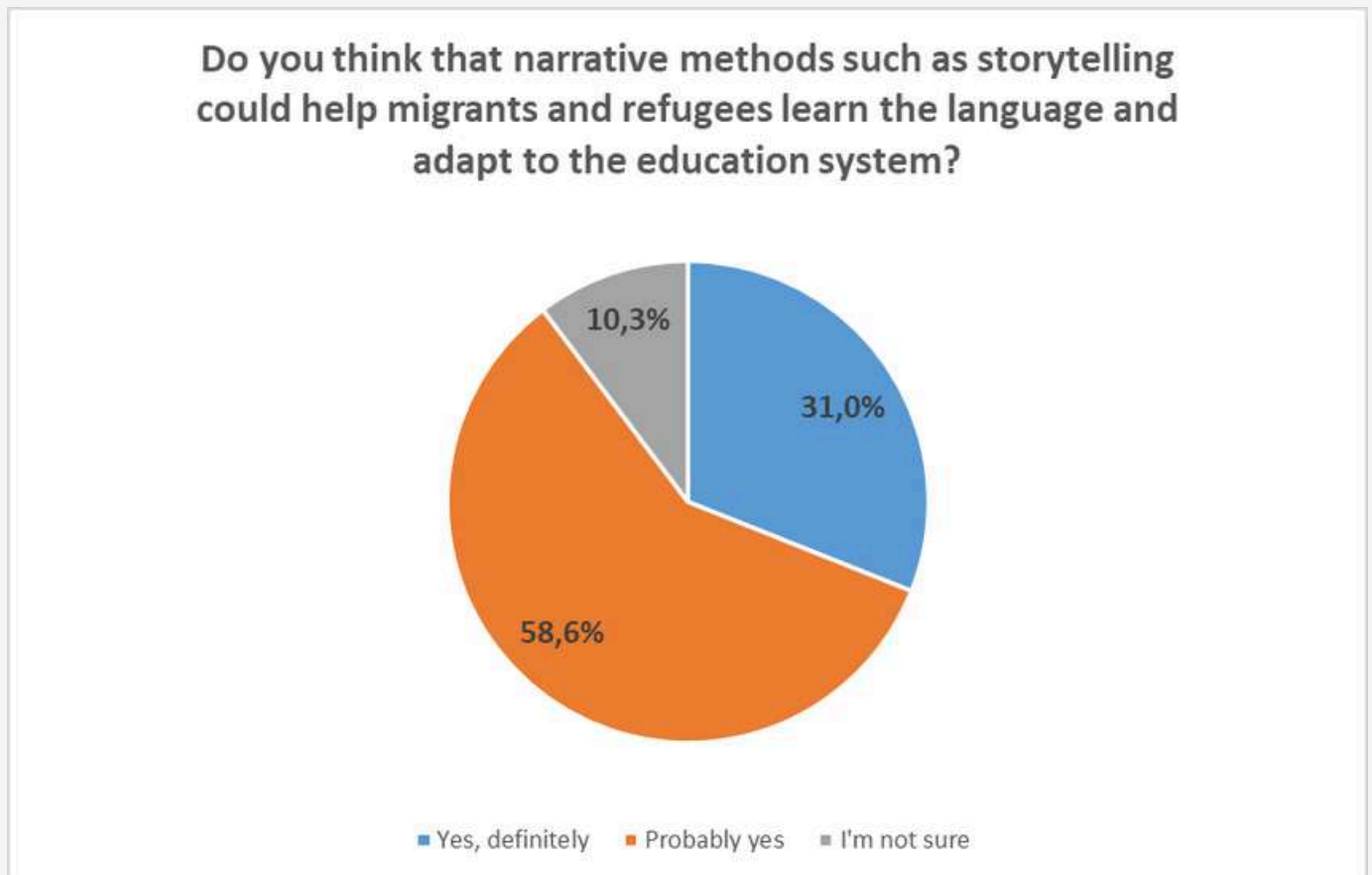


11. What challenges do you see in using storytelling in migrant and refugee education?



"Language barriers" were identified as the biggest challenge in education using storytelling, selected by 82.8% of respondents. The second most frequently mentioned challenge was a "Diverse target group" (65.5%). "Content adaptation" was also commonly selected (51.7%), followed by "Cultural differences" (48.3%). The least selected challenge was "Educational resources", chosen by 41.4% of respondents.

12. Do you think that narrative methods such as storytelling could help migrants and refugees learn the language and adapt to the education system?



58,6% of respondents decided that storytelling methods could be useful in language learning for migrants and refugees, and helping in their integration process. 31% of survey participants think that storytelling method used in the context above is a very good way of learning. 10,3% of respondents weren't sure if that was a good, or bad method of learning.



Italy's Data Report

Summary of the Report

This study aims to shed light on the current circumstances of migrants and refugees, with a particular focus on their experiences in education, the labour market, and integration practices. It also examines how storytelling is being used as a tool to support these individuals—especially within educational and vocational training settings. Insights gathered from representatives of the education sector provide valuable guidance for enhancing support systems and developing more effective strategies for integrating migrants and refugees into society, particularly through education.

Research methodology

The report is based on 20 survey responses collected via Google Forms. The survey was distributed by email to a diverse range of institutions, including high schools, universities, vocational training centres, and other educational providers. In addition, some surveys were shared directly with individuals—typically those with a migration background—who expressed a willingness to participate.

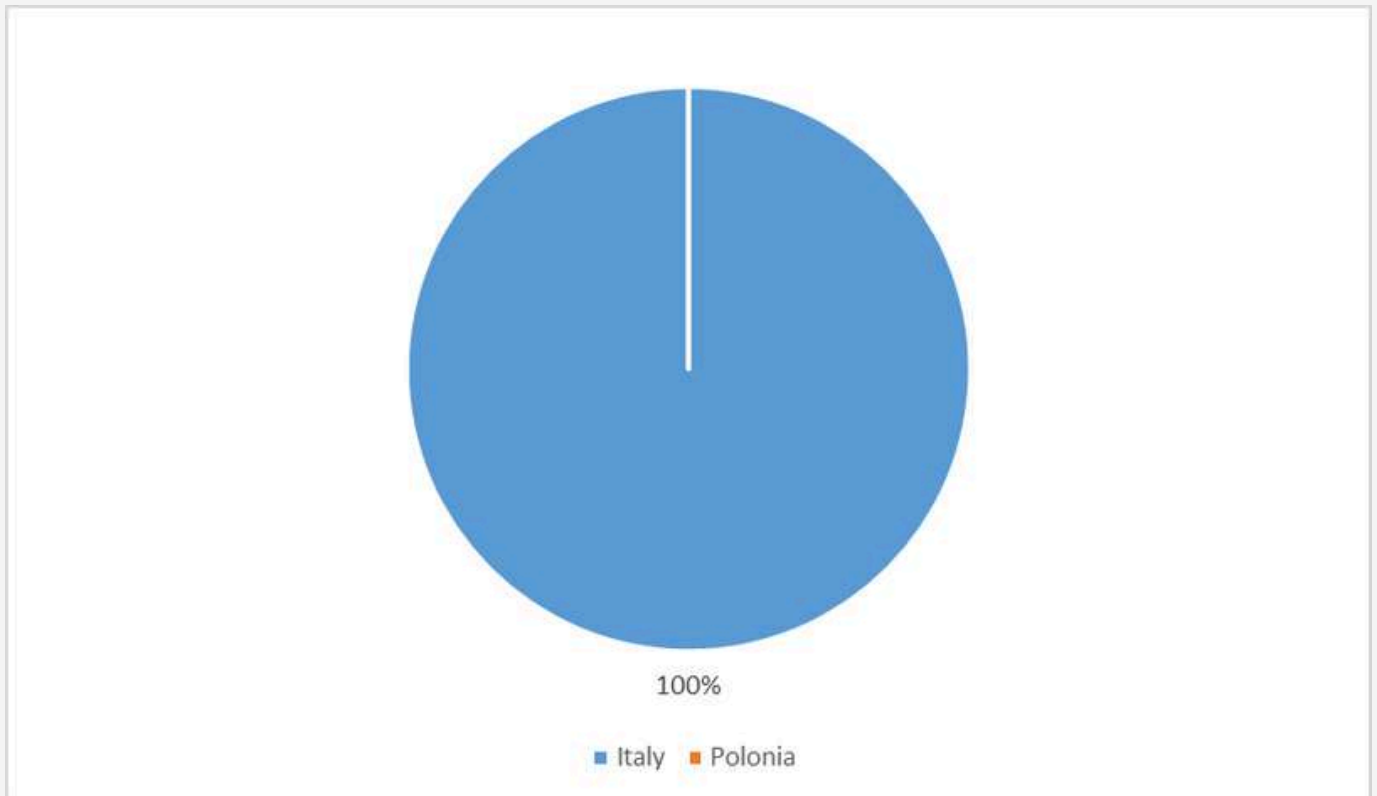
Overview of Findings

The findings are organized into two key sections. The first presents demographic information about the respondents, including their country of residence, gender, and their connection to the topic—whether they are migrants themselves, educators, or professionals working with migrants. The second section offers qualitative insights from both educators and migrants, exploring their views on the usefulness of storytelling in vocational education. These responses highlight the potential of storytelling as an inclusive and impactful method to enhance learning, foster engagement, and support the social and professional integration of migrants and refugees.



Metric

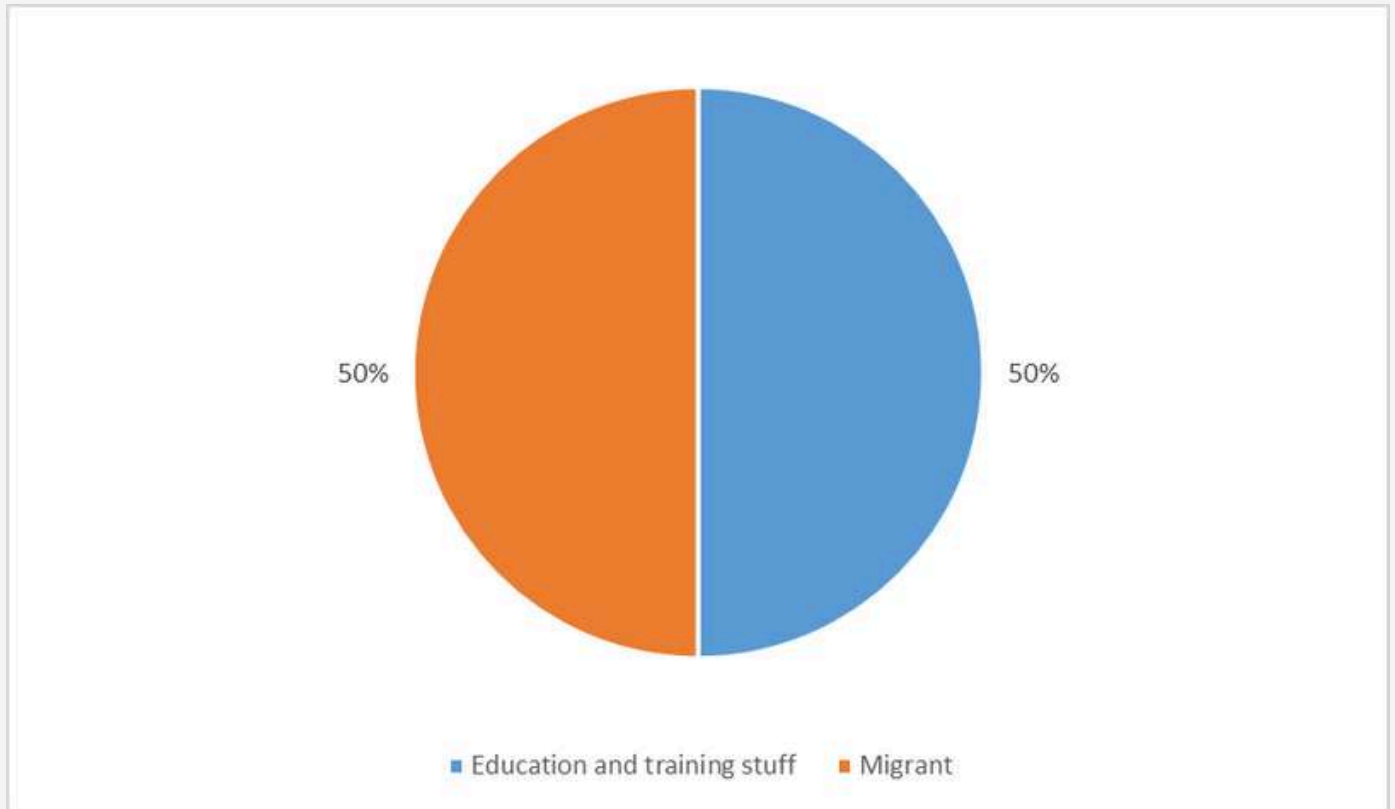
1. Country of residence



All 100% of respondents that finished the survey chose the country that they currently reside in to be Italy



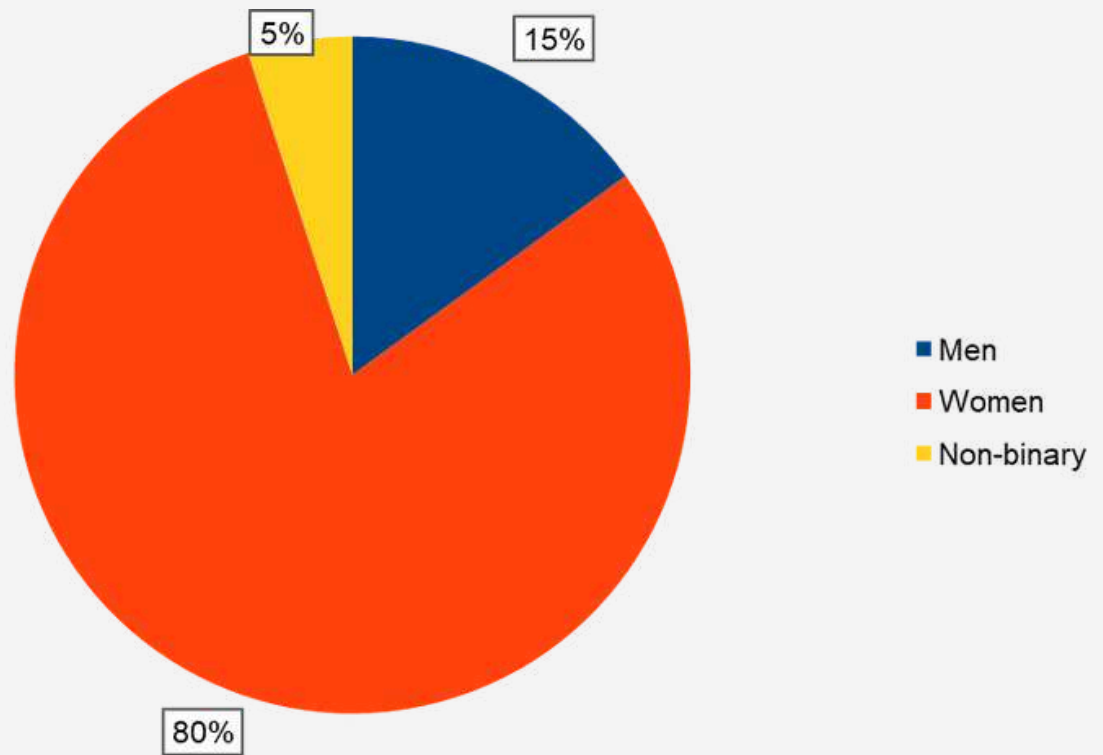
2. Status



Respondents from “Education and training staff” and “Migrants” are both the 50% of the participants.



3. Gender



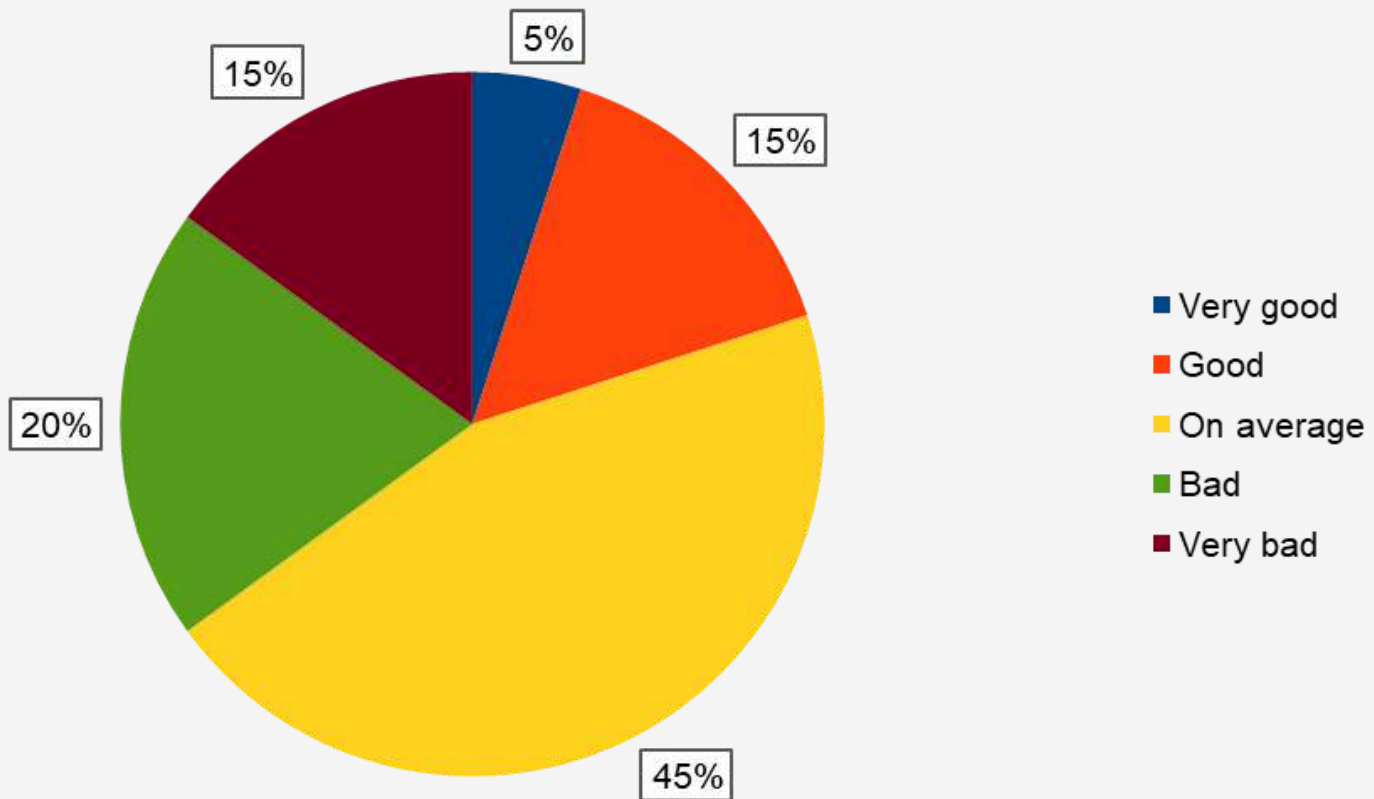
80% of all respondents were women, while 15% were men. Only the 5% of the responders identified as non-binary.



Data

1. How do you assess the overall situation of migrants and refugees in your country in terms of social inclusion?

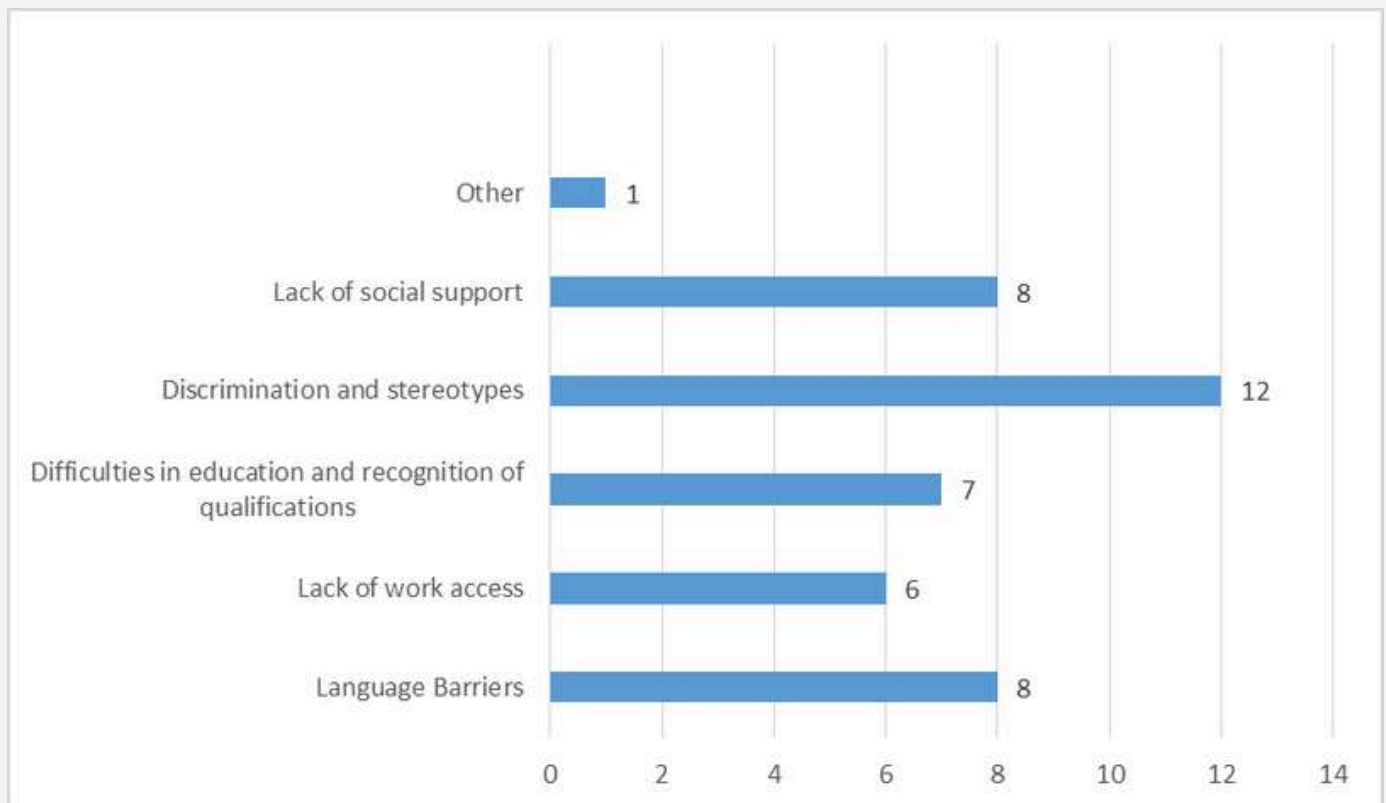
1. Very good 5%
2. Good 15%
3. On average 45%
4. Bad 20%
5. Very bad 15%



The responses indicate that nearly half of the participants (45%) view the social inclusion of migrants and refugees in their country as "so-so," or average. A significant 35%, however, consider it problematic ("negative" for 20% and "very negative" for 15%). Only a minority have a positive impression: 15% judge it as such, and just 5% find it "very positive"



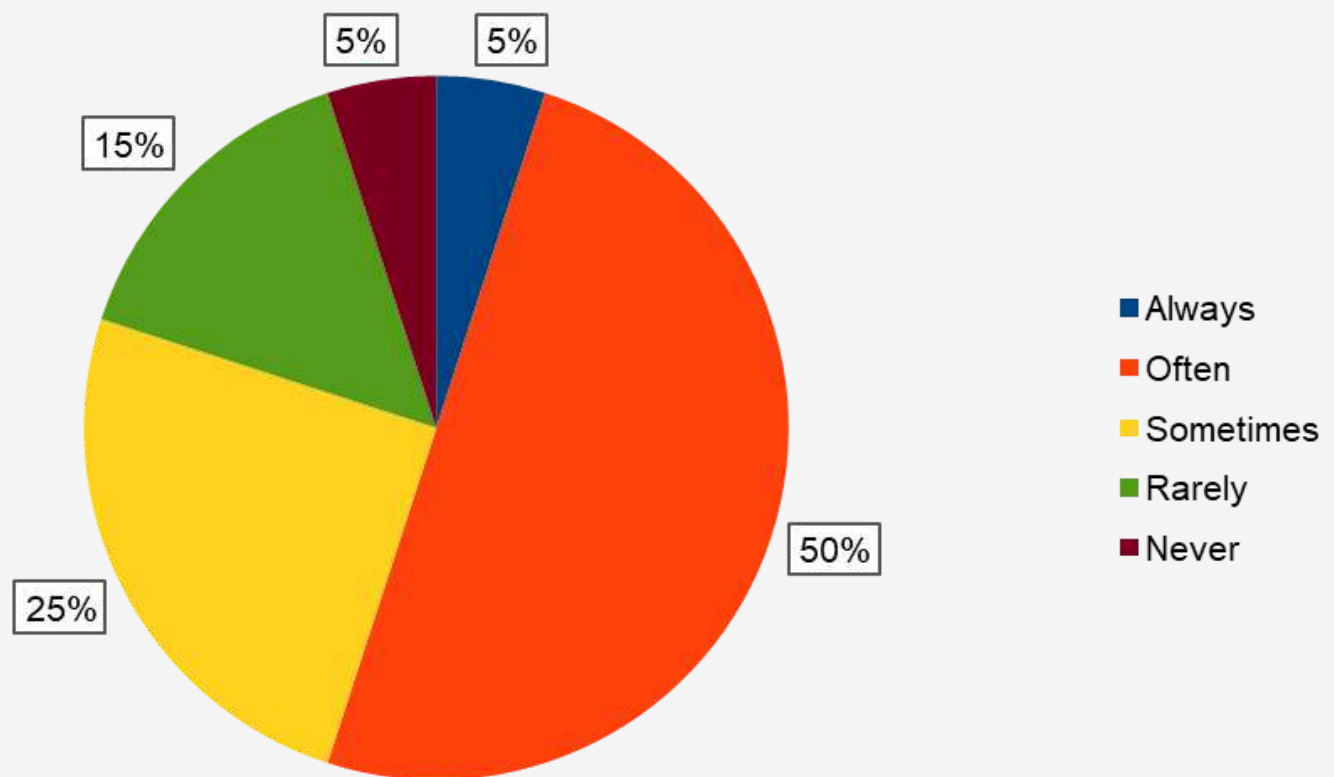
2. What do you think are the biggest challenges migrants and refugees face in your country? (You may select more than one answer)



The greatest difficulty faced by migrants and refugees in Italy appears to be discrimination and stereotypes. This is followed, at the same level of difficulty, by a lack of social support and language barriers. The academic recognition of previous qualifications and, finally, the lack of access to work also prove challenging.



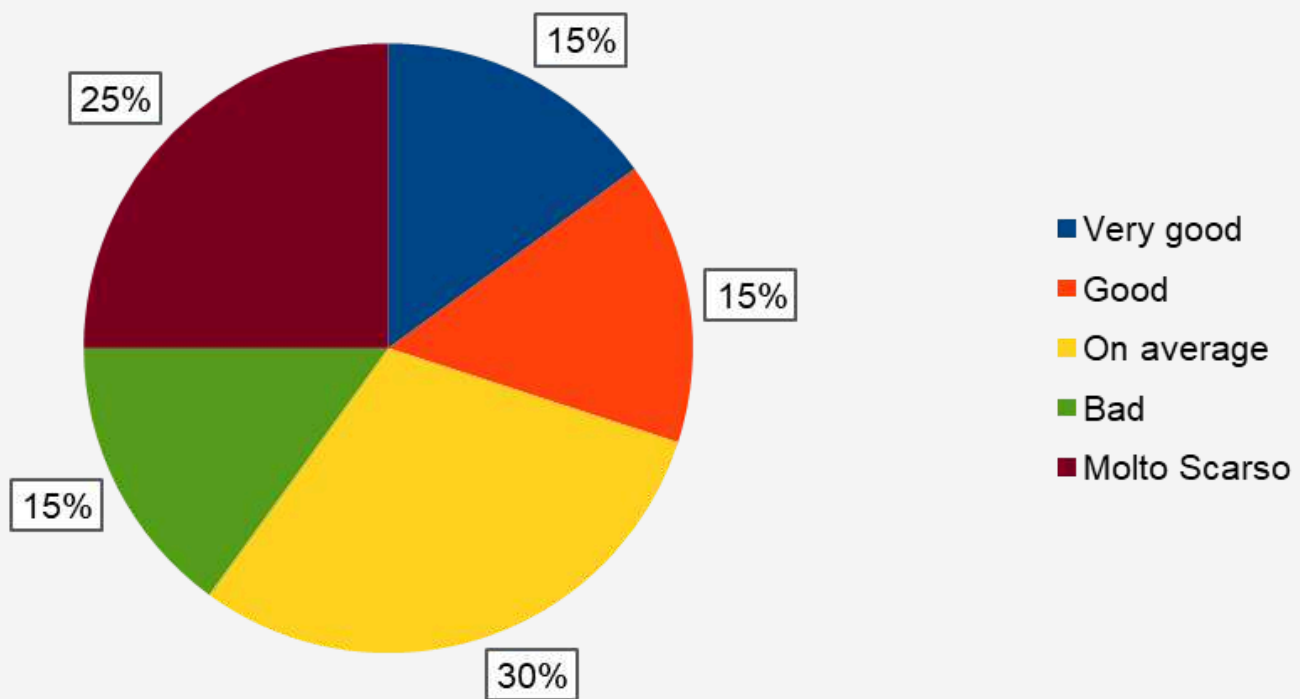
3. How often do you think migrants and refugees experience social isolation due to cultural differences?



For the majority of participants (50%), cultural differences are a frequent cause of social isolation for migrants and refugees. A quarter of the sample (25%) observe this phenomenon sometimes, while opinions are polarized at the extremes: 5% consider it rare and another 5% never. An intermediate 15% believe it rarely occurs.



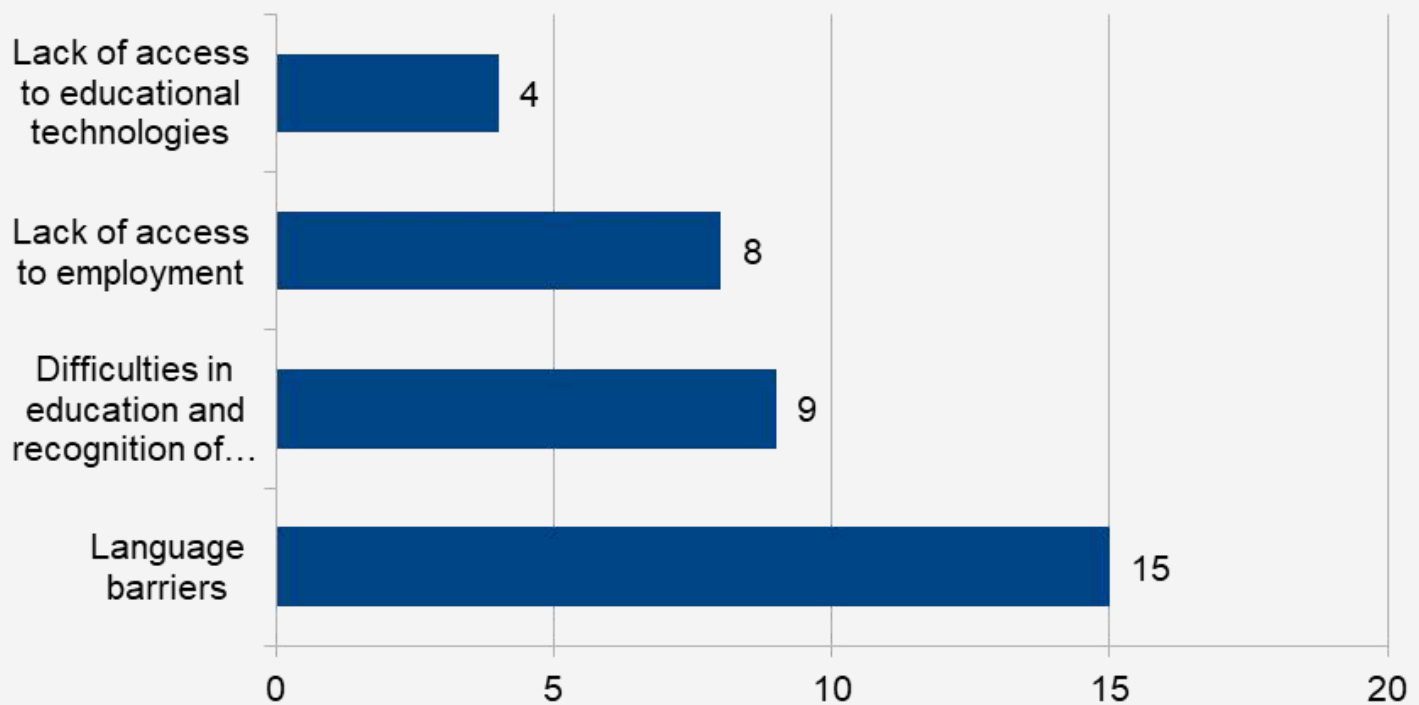
4. How would you assess the access to education for migrants and refugees in your country?



The evaluation of access to education for migrants and refugees highlights a critical situation for a considerable portion of the participants. A significant 40% judge it negatively (15% "poor" and 25% "very poor"), while a further 30% consider it "average." Only a small percentage express a positive opinion, with 15% defining it as "good" and another 15% as "very good"



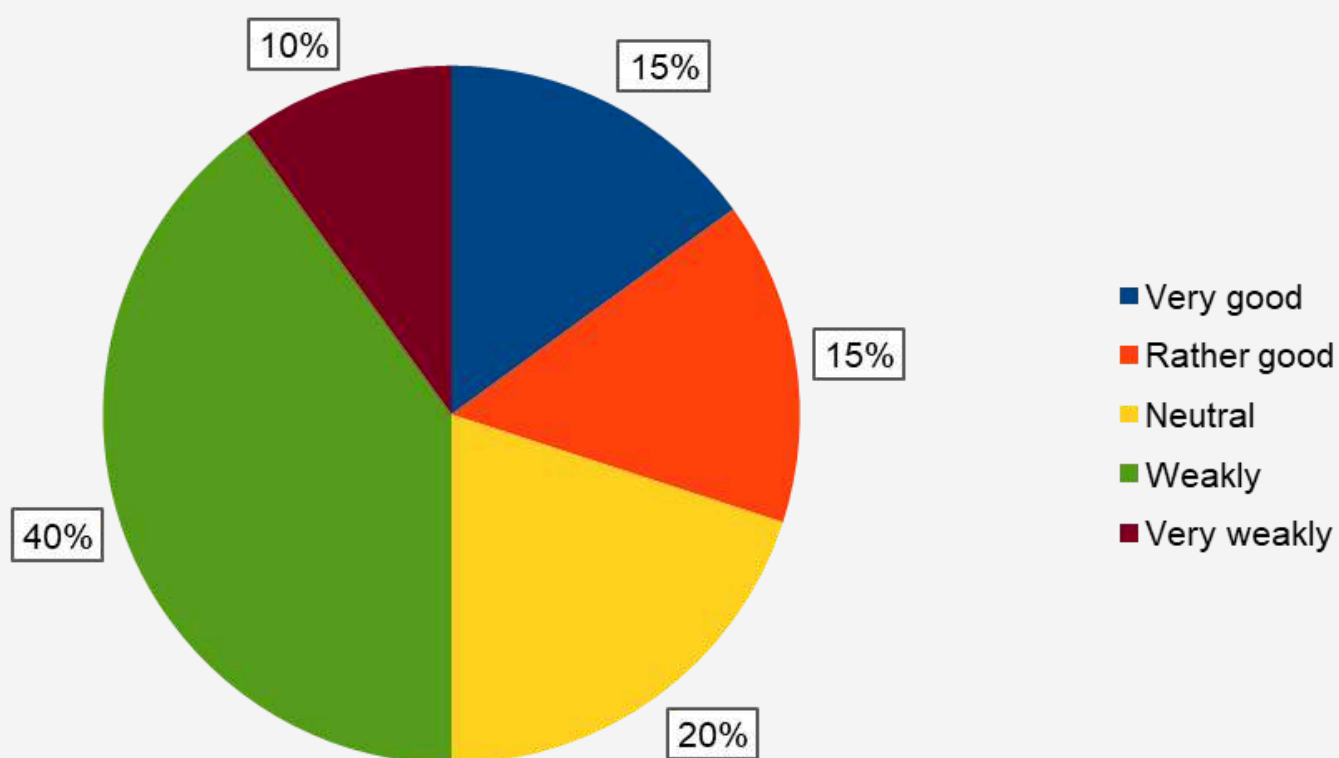
5. What are the main difficulties migrants and refugees face in education? (You may select more than one answer)



Language barriers clearly emerge as the primary challenge that migrants and refugees encounter in the educational pathway, according to the majority of participants. Following in importance are the recognition of previous qualifications, limited access to vocational training, and, as the last-mentioned critical issue, access to educational technology."



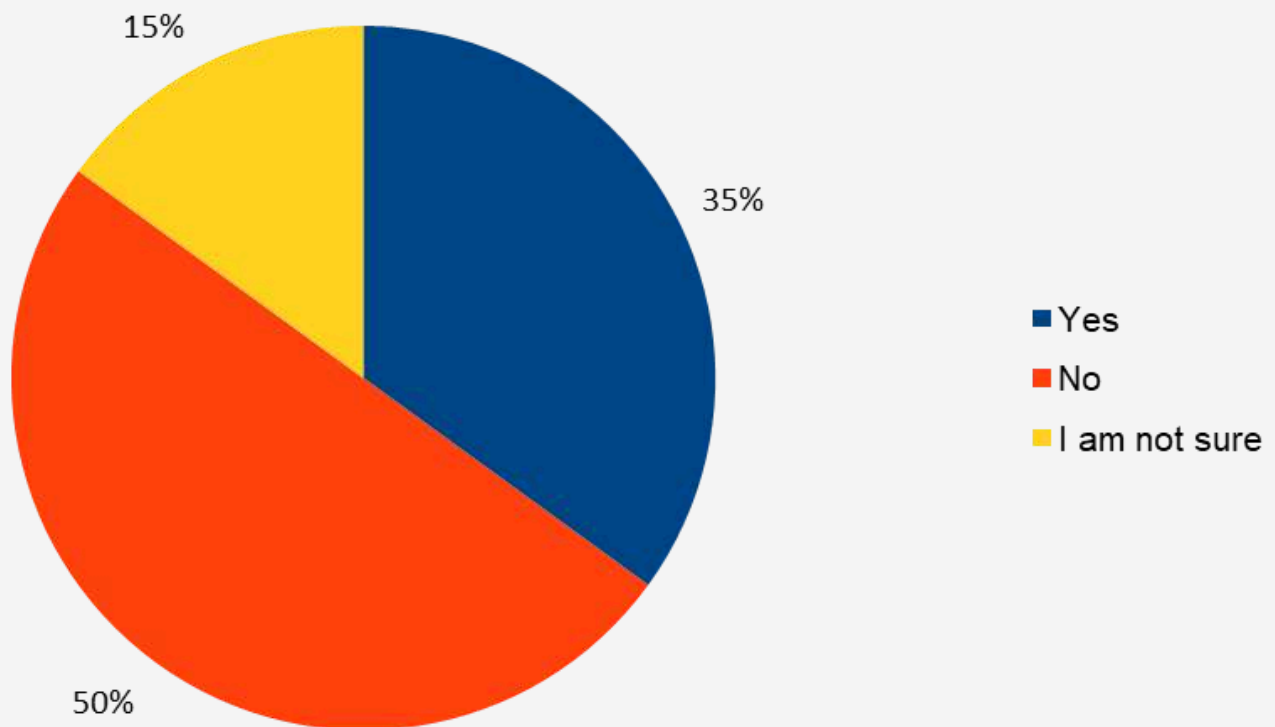
6. How well does the labor market in your country integrate migrants and refugees, especially in terms of recognition of foreign qualifications and work experience?



Fifteen percent of respondents stated that the labor market effectively aids the integration of migrants and refugees, particularly regarding the recognition of foreign qualifications and work experience at a "very" high level. The "quite a bit" and "neutral" options were selected by 15% and 20% of participants, respectively. Nearly half of the respondents (40%) believe that the labor market is not very inclusive towards migrants, while 10% believe it is not inclusive at all.



7. Have you heard of the storytelling method?

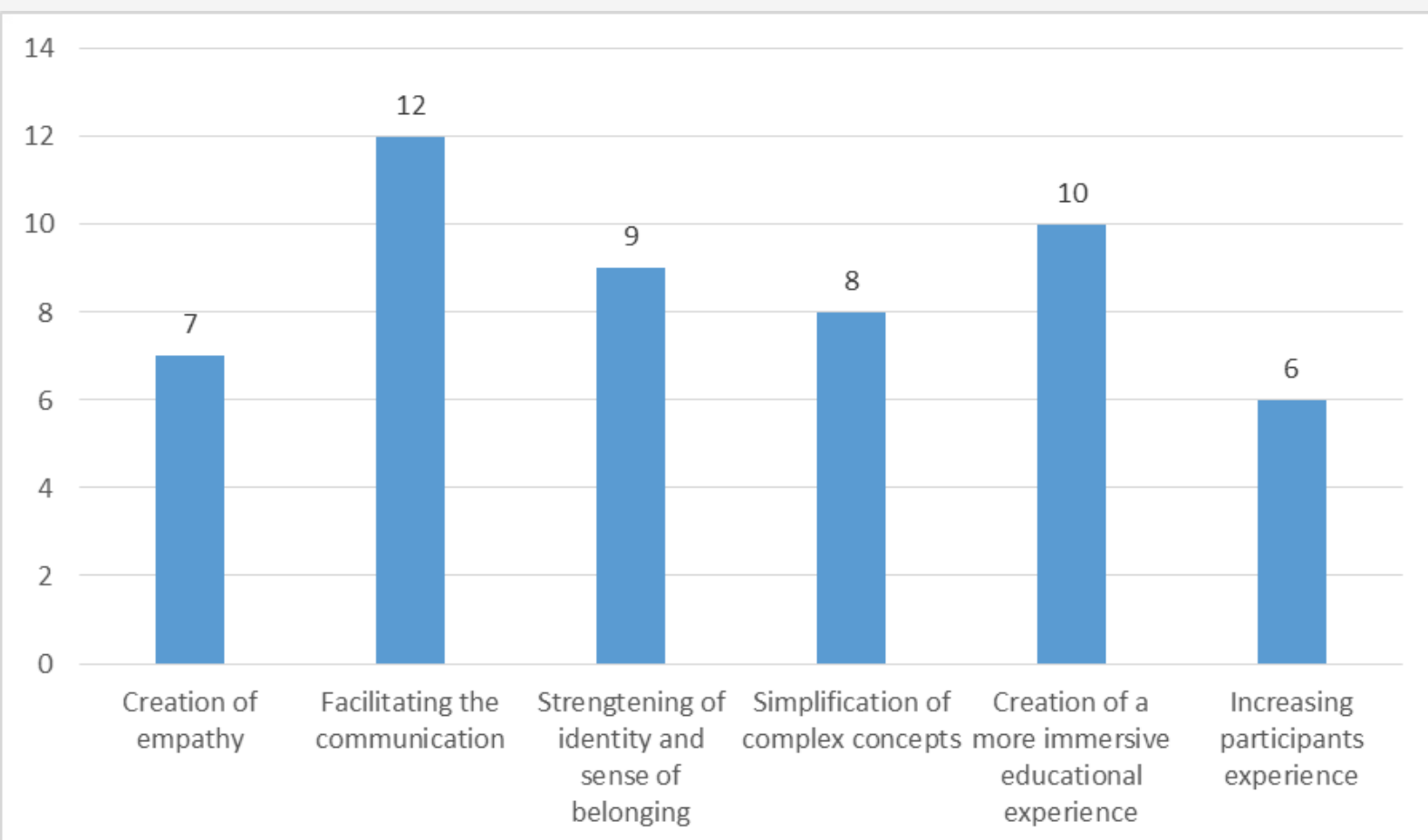


Only a third of the respondents (35%) are familiar with the narrative method. The remaining portion of the sample is divided between those who have never heard of it (50%) and those who are unsure (15%).



8. Storytelling is a method of communication that involves telling a story to convey a message, teach a lesson, or engage an audience. It uses narratives, characters, and plot to make information more relatable, memorable, and impactful. In education and training, storytelling helps to simplify complex concepts, foster emotional connections, and encourage active participation by creating a more immersive and engaging learning experience.

What aspects of storytelling do you consider most important in educational and integration work? (You may select more than one answer).

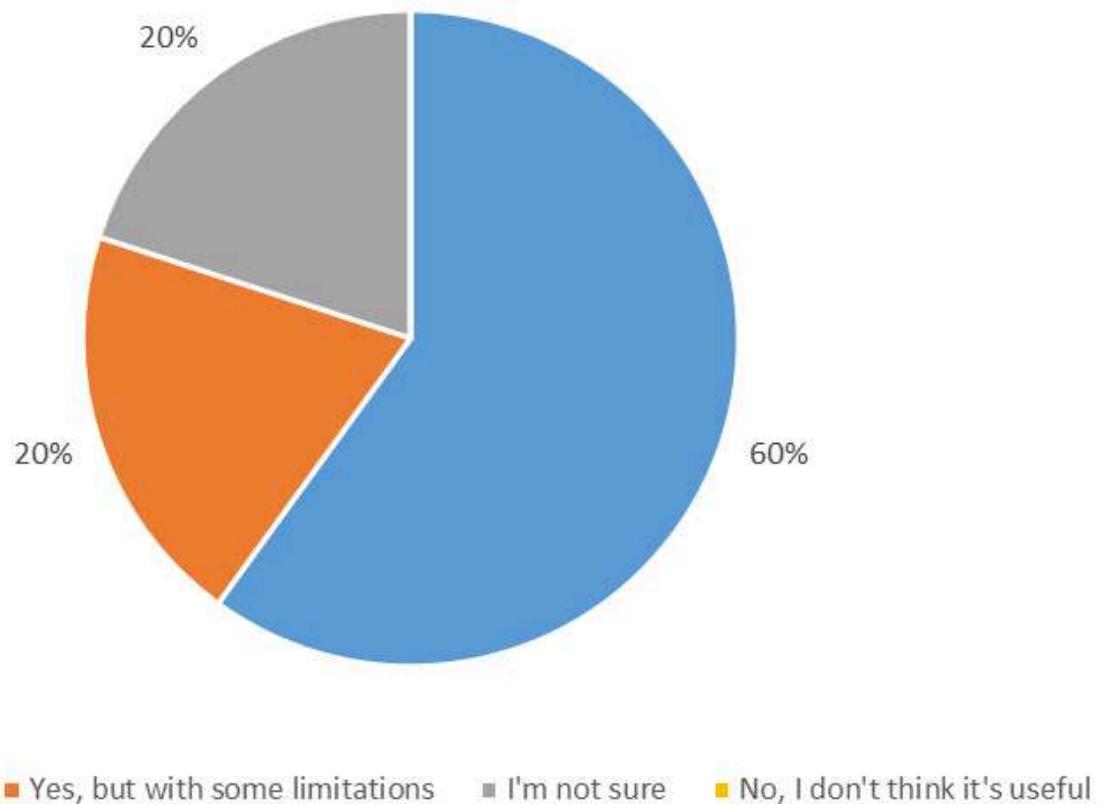




The analysis of the most relevant aspects of storytelling in educational and integration contexts reveals a clear priority for the simplification of communication, which received the highest score (12). Following in importance are the facilitation of complex concepts (10) and the strengthening of identity and the sense of belonging (9). The development of language skills and the creation of a more immersive and engaging educational experience were both rated with a score of 8.



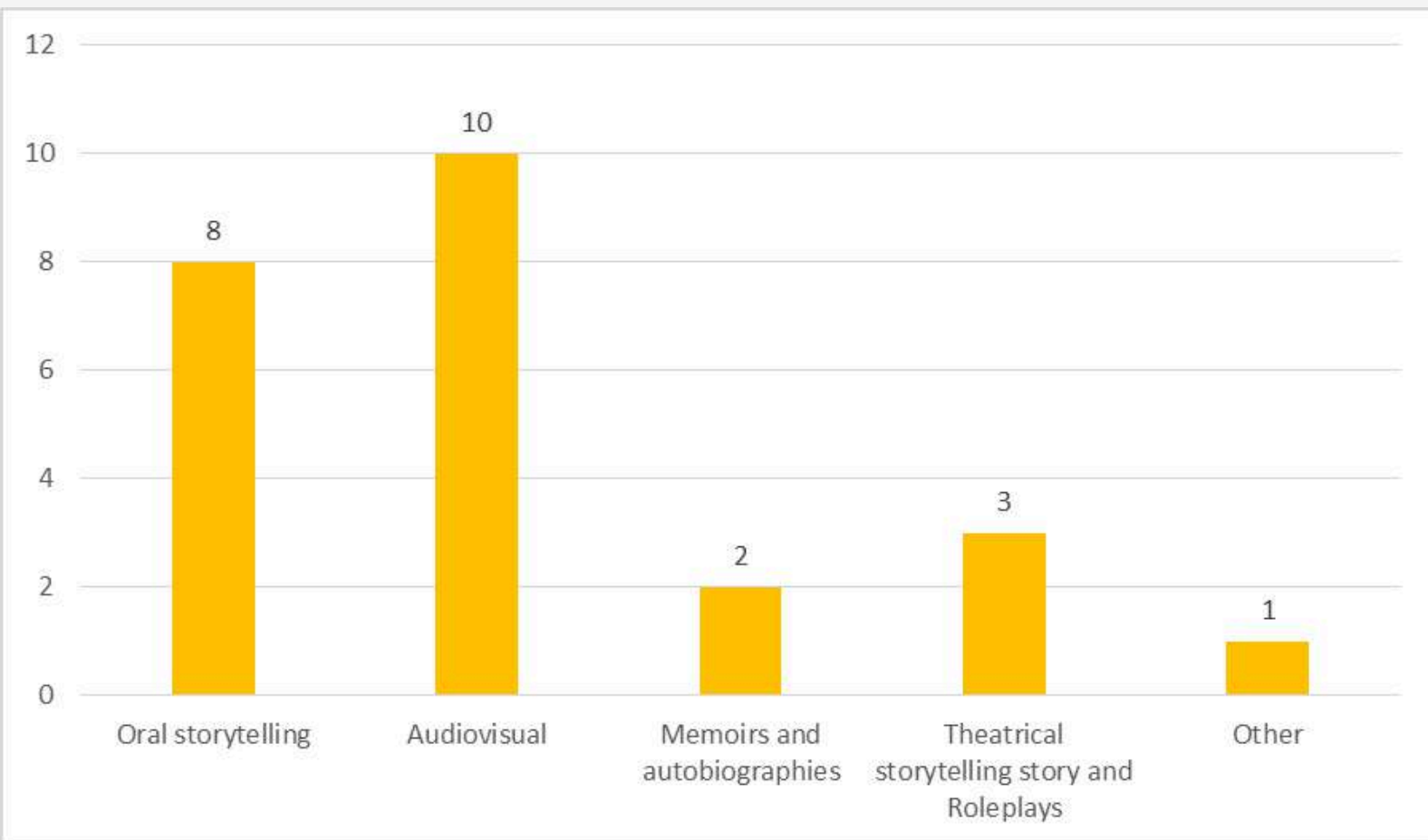
9. Do you think storytelling can be an effective tool in the vocational education and training (VET) of migrants and refugees?



The majority of respondents (60%) strongly believe in the effectiveness of the narrative method in the education and vocational training of migrants and refugees, while another 20% see its usefulness with some limitations. Twenty percent do not express certainty, and no one denies its utility.



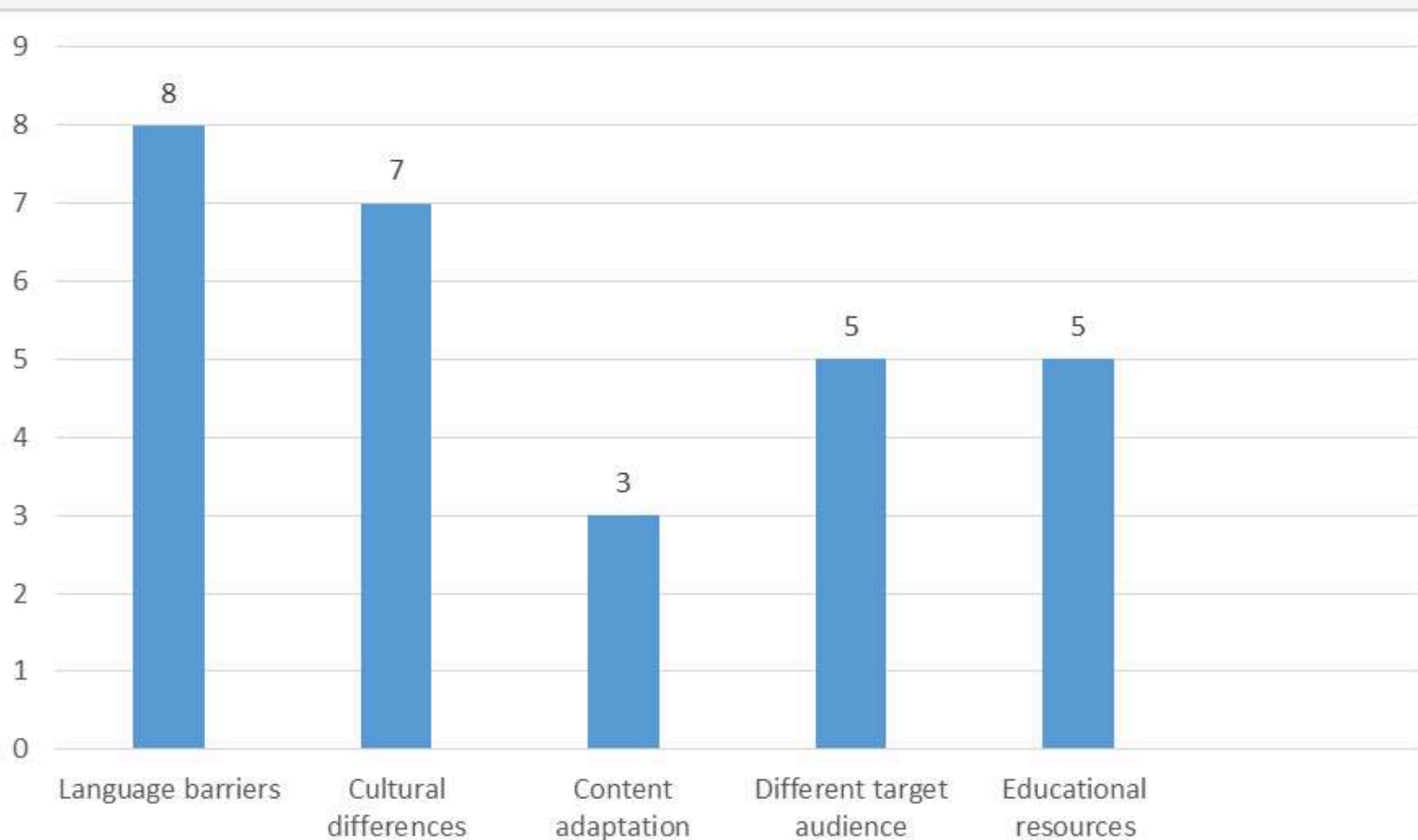
10. What forms of storytelling do you think could be most effective when working with migrants and refugees?



The data indicates a clear preference for audiovisual narratives (10) as a potentially more effective narrative approach in working with migrants and refugees. Oral storytelling follows (8), suggesting the importance of direct communication and listening. Approaches based on diaries and autobiographies (2) and theatrical narration and role-playing (3) appear to be considered less of a priority, as is the "Other" category (1), which received the lowest score. This suggests that narrative modalities involving visual and auditory elements are perceived as particularly useful.

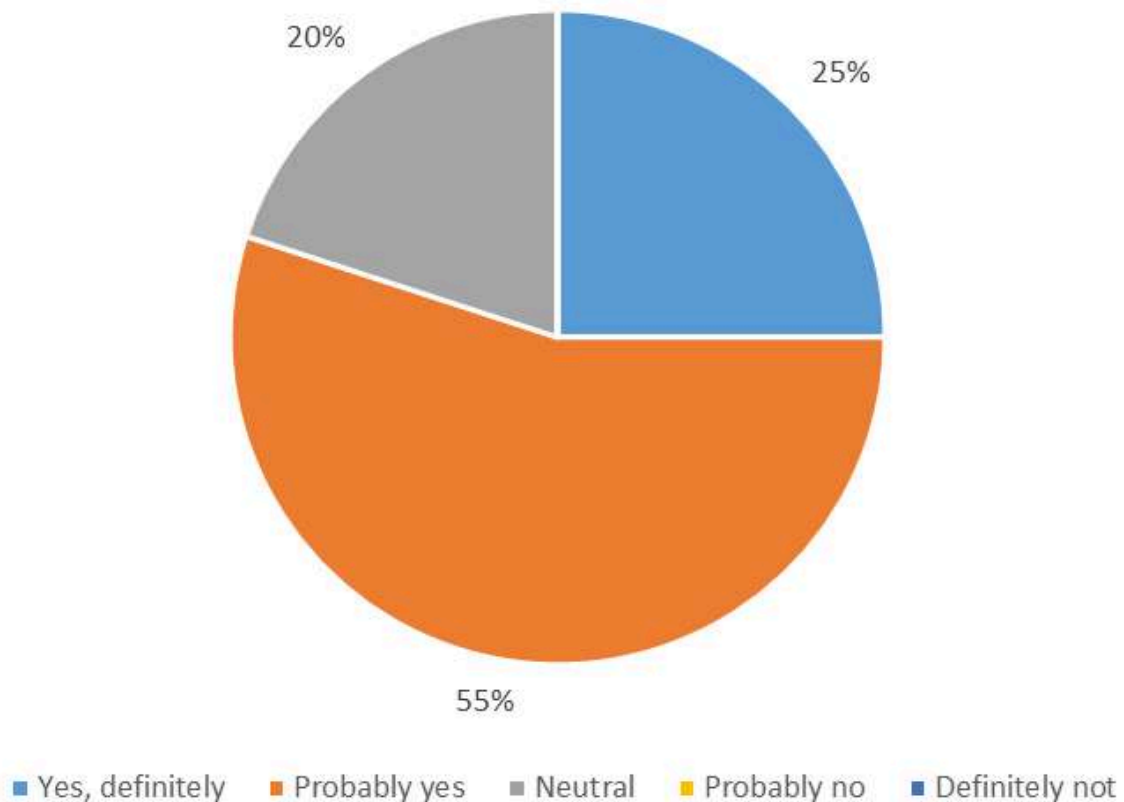


11. What challenges do you see in using storytelling in migrant and refugee education?



The main challenges in using narration in the education of migrants and refugees appear to be language barriers (8) and cultural differences (7), which represent the most significant obstacles. Following, with lesser but still relevant importance, are the diversity in the target audience and the availability of educational resources, both with a score of 5. The adaptation of content (3) seems to be considered a less pressing challenge, while the "Other" category (0) received no indications.

12. Do you think that narrative methods such as storytelling could help migrants and refugees learn the language and adapt to the education system?



The vast majority of participants believe that narrative methods can be useful for language learning and adaptation to the educational system for migrants and refugees. Specifically, 55% think it is probably yes, while an additional 25% strongly believe it is yes. Only a minority remain neutral (20%), and no one expresses a negative opinion. This indicates a strong confidence in the potential of stories as a tool to support linguistic and educational integration.



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PROJECT: „STORY-TELLING METHOD IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY AND REFUGEES”



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