



UNESCO CHAIR in "Population, Migrations and Development"

Statement on Migration by Italian UNESCO CHAIRS



UNESCO CHAIR in
Population, Migrations and Development

Director: Cristina Giudici
Scientific Coordinator: Raimondo Cagiano de Azevedo
General Secretary: Benedetta Cassani

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE:

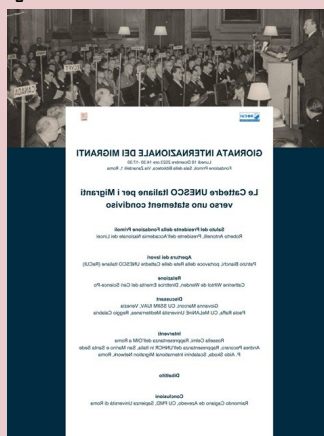
Cristina Giudici (Director),
Giorgio Alleva,
Elena Ambrosetti,
Philippe Boquier,
Raimondo Cagiano de Azevedo,
Alessandra De Rose,
Donatella Strangio,
Catherine Wihtol de Wenden

In 2020, the Italian UNESCO Chairs began to develop an intense scientific dialogue on the goals of the 2030 Agenda and started a process aimed at operating as a collective body, interacting and proposing themselves as a community of knowledge. In 2021, the project "UNESCO Chairs' Dialogues: a laboratory of ideas for the world to come" was launched. Demography, anthropology, sociology, economics, engineering and various other disciplines started to dialogue around the theme of Sustainability. Interdisciplinarity was the keyword of the project, which was an absolute novelty in the panorama of UNESCO Chairs worldwide.

On Friday 24 March 2023, in the Aula Magna of Piazza San Marco, in Florence, the first Convention of the Italian network of UNESCO chairs - ReCUI took place. Patrizio Bianchi, Former Minister of Education, was appointed to act as spokesman of the network.

In the same year, the UNESCO Chair on Population, migrations and development started to coordinate the ReMIG working group, spontaneously established within the ReCUI. The aim was to produce and disseminate a concerted policy statement, expressing the views of UNESCO Chairs on migration issues. Throughout the year, the ReMIG working group met periodically and collectively discussed the key topics of Citizens, Cities, Education, Health, and the Role of Europe and Unesco Chairs in relation to migrations.

On December 18th, on International Migrant Day, a first draft of the Statement was presented by Catherine W. De Wenden and discussed with representatives of the IOM, the UNHCR, and the Scalabrini IMN. The event was hosted by the Primoli Foundation, in the library of the prestigious Palazzo Primoli in Rome and welcomed by Roberto Antonelli, President of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. The discussion was introduced by Patrizio Bianchi, spokesman of the Italian network of UNESCO chairs, and enriched by the testimonies of Giovanna Marconi, UNESCO Chair on Social and Spatial Inclusion of International Migrants, and Paola Raffa, UNESCO Chair on Mediterranean Landscape in the Context of Emergency, who shared their experience of UNESCO Chairs in the field of migration.



In his concluding remarks, Raimondo Cagiano de Azevedo underlined the role of borders in defining migrants (paradoxically, migrants would not exist if there were no borders) and stressed the idea of the *acquis communautaire* as the substantial political frontier of the European Union in the era of migrations.

In January 24th 2024, the concerted policy statement on migration has been approved by the Convention of the Italian network of UNESCO chairs - ReCUI, held at the Department of Law, Economics and Cultures of the University of Insubria.

This 31st Chair News is entirely dedicated to the Statement, the English text of which is published on the following pages.

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Principles

The Network of Italian UNESCO Chairs (ReCUI)

Proclaims the following principles:

1. Established to foster cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and a culture of peace. UNESCO Chairs have a crucial role as think tanks and bridge builders between academia, civil society, local communities, research and policy making to promote the dialogue between civilizations, cultures and peoples on shared values of social cohesion and peace.
2. Migrations are one of the major challenges of this century. Education, cities, places and territories, health, participative citizenship, must take into account this global turn. Today, two thirds of international migrants (out of 187 million according the UNDESA annual report) are living in twenty countries. Five countries (namely the United States, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Russia and the United Kingdom) are welcoming the major part of refugees in the world (Turkey, Columbia, Pakistan, Uganda, Germany), and Poland has provisionally hosted four million of its Ukrainian neighbors. The Global Compact of the UN adopted in 2018 has defined 23 objectives for international migrants and 4 for refugees, with a scope to reach a safe, organized and legal mobility.
3. Education has a central role to be played, both for host societies and for migrants and their children. In 2019, the Global Educational Monitoring Report "Migration, Displacement and Education: building bridges, not walls", states that education provided equally, builds bridges while unequal provision raises walls between refugees, migrants and their host communities.
4. Regarding Inclusion, Human Dignity and Human Rights, UNESCO Chairs play an important role in fostering and emphasizing intercultural dialogue, a culture of peace and diversity, equity in education and shared values while creating an academic forum. Human dignity and human rights are working for convergence and cooperation in global ethics.
5. The Italian UNESCO Chairs stand in favor of equal dignity of all human beings against all discrimination, in favor of equal status and social justice for all, in line with the objectives and indicators of the Agenda 2030.
6. The Globalization of Migrations in a world on the move implies pluralizing citizenship and respect of human equality, dignity and social cohesion within States.
7. The respect of human rights is at the heart of a democratic governance implying extending participation to newcomers and long term residents with a migrant background, enlarging decision processes and evaluation to new actors for the effectiveness of the rights involved (freedom, equality of rights, justice, security, inclusive governance and peace), aiming at constructing a democratic culture and sustainable development, fostering intercultural dialogue, creative cooperation and respect of human dignity. Humanities in progress are always accompanied by a respect of human rights.
8. The ethical dimension it requires is trust in the human being, the development of dignity of each person and the ability to answer to the requests and needs of each one, the fight against violations and human rights seen in their interdependence and indivisibility. It aims at enlarging citizenship, inclusive and peaceful urban societies, with a right to the city for all, the right to health, promotion of intercultural dialogue and sharing values thanks to inclusion of migrants in their places of settlement.

Citizenship

9. In order to reach an effective universal citizenship, the traditional definition of citizenship must move, from a view of exclusion to a more egalitarian and participative citizenship, including diversity. The Italian Constitution (art. 32), for example, does not refer to the concept of citizenship but rather to the individual. In this way, it extends the protection of health to every person, regardless of their legal status, reaffirming that the right to health is not tied to citizenship.
10. European citizenship is an original experiment, based on freedom of circulation, work and settlement for Europeans, but also a pioneer of pluralization of forms of citizenship, built on belonging to territories and a common identity. International migration and citizenship can mutually enrich themselves instead of bringing contradictory issues, as nationalisms to enroll them.
11. The "*acquis Communautaire*" (an addition of rights forming a standard of civilization for European identity and rights) is a new frontier between extra- European migrants, asylum seekers and Europeans to be progressively crossed thanks to access to rights, to citizenship and to the fight against any form of discrimination.
12. Building inclusive and diverse societies in cultural and religious terms implies rights, duties and freedom for all. Education is central to reach this goal as well as the search for a status of equal rights, the promotion of social cohesion, the respect of the individual and social dimensions of the person as a master force in this world.
13. Socio-spatial inclusion lies in the active participation of migrants in their places of settlement thanks to access to intercultural dialogue and shared identity values. Their right to be fully part of the local society (rather than a society apart) on equal basis implies:
 - Equal access to basic services and urban opportunities/assets;
 - Quality of education for all;
 - Strengthening transnational cooperation;
 - Supporting local institutions.

Cities

14. Cities have always been migration hubs for international migrants. They include:
 - Inclusive services for more wellbeing;
 - Inclusive public spaces where diversity is experienced and differences should be accommodated;
 - Inclusive housing against precariousness.
 Access to affordable and adequate housing is a priority for building inclusive cities. Some city networks alike ANVITA or the Intercultural City Programme (ICC) in Europe can be experienced in larger territories all over the world.

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Education

15. Students are today one of the most important legal flows of international migrants. Those with a migratory background can also, in spite of their disadvantages mostly due to their social origin, enrich host societies and promote various forms of cultural pluralism or multiculturalism according to the societies which decided to develop it. Migration can influence education to promote cohesive societies and fighting prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination. Education plays a major role in fully integrating migrants in host societies, especially:

- Children of immigrants with low economic status and poor language or skills;
- International students which are the most significant expression of human mobility.

The aim is to produce inclusive and equitable quality education to migrant children and youth and to provide equal learning opportunities for migrants and refugees.

Health

16. The right to health refers to individuals. It extends the protection of health to every person, regardless of the legal status, reaffirming that the right to health is not tied to citizenship. It means:

- Ensure access to healthcare services along migrants' journeys to prevent health risks and mortality;
- Prioritize securing maternity care in destination countries for migrant women;
- Address psychological issues stemming from traumatic experiences during migration;
- Recognize that migrant health is integral to public health initiatives;
- Promoting inclusive health education;
- Special attention in protecting vulnerable groups;
- Strengthening transdisciplinary cross-sectorial collaboration between health, education, housing and employment sectors at multilevel (governments, NGO's, local communities) programs to enhance the effectiveness of healthcare interventions;
- Sensitizing healthcare providers, invest in cultural competency and cultural mediation;
- Promoting community-based healthcare models;
- Advocate for the global development of integrated strategies to anticipate and prepare for the increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events due to climate change. This includes strengthening infrastructure, building community resilience, and implementing proactive measures between countries to mitigate displacement risks arising from escalating climate challenges.

The role of Europe

17. European societies confronted with migration must accept they have become societies of migration and settlement and undertake, at European, national and local level, policies of welcome, integration and social welfare and consider it as a structural phenomenon rather than an emergency, entailing social requirements such as housing, health, education, professional training and the extension of *jus soli*, that is more inclusive than *jus sanguinis*, or other more innovative forms for recognition of citizenship rights (i.e. *jus culturae*; *jus domicilii*).

18. Local governments are entitled to share the principle of "responsibility to protect" launched by the UN at the start of the 3rd millennium because human rights are protected or violated in the places where people live their daily lives.

19. European countries should re-open legal migration channels to help receiving countries to cope with their domestic shortages, with the segmentation of the labor market and the structural process of the population ageing. This should help to recognize migration as a structural phenomenon and not a transitory one, and avoid the negative attitudes exacerbated by a political discourse and policy action dominated by security, temporary and security issues, formalizing the access to Europe.

20. Integration must be viewed as a constitutive trait of Europe which should accept being a continent of immigration and settlement. In order to build more inclusive societies, the multilevel governance is a highly recommended approach to manage migration in an integrated manner at EU, national and local levels.

UNESCO's mission at local and world's level

21. UNESCO Chairs' activity is entirely dedicated to contributing to the building of more inclusive, just and peaceful urban societies through the promotion of socially responsible citizenship, particularly of young people and the provision of long-learning opportunities for urban stakeholders, focused on tools and methods to reduce socio-spatial inequalities and to accommodate differences. Focusing on the social and spatial inclusion of international migrants in contemporary cities, both in the Global North and Global South, the aim is, on the one hand to counter any form of racism, discrimination, intolerance and exclusionary discourse and, on the other, to actively contribute to sustainable active development, to be rooted in intercultural and interreligious dialogue, equality, respect of diversities, the strengthening of socio-spatial cohesion and the right to the city for all. UNESCO Chairs are also committed to have an impact on the ground, involving close collaboration and partnership with local administrations and civil society organizations. The Italian Network of Unesco Chairs (ReGUI) commit to pursue this aim through the promotion of interconnected and interdisciplinary activities, including action-research, knowledge production and sharing, capacity building, awareness raising, advocacy, production and dissemination of policy recommendation, promotion of good practices exchange, teaching and training.

The main operational objectives include:

- To further develop action and projects on migrants' education, access to adequate housing and migrant-oriented services;
- To explore new emerging issues to help local actors to better accommodate differences and better respond to the new demands of the city expressed by diverse urban societies;
- To promote socially responsible citizenship and intercultural dialogue skills in urban areas.

Along with migration, environment, the North/South divide regarding inequalities, the urbanization of the planet is one of the other challenges to be confronted with.

Chair Group ReMig

Coordinator

Raimondo Cagiano de Azevedo, UNESCO Chair in Population, Migrations and Development | Sapienza University of Rome

Advisor

Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, Ceri-Sciences Po, Paris

Members

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U
-
A
-
V

Flavia Albanese, Giovanna Marconi | UNESCO Chair on the Social and Spatial Inclusion of International Migrants – Urban Policies and Practices | Università Iuav di Venezia



Francesco Castelli, Beatrice Formenti | UNESCO Chair on Training and Empowering Human Resources for Health Development in Resource – Limited Countries | Università degli Studi di Brescia



Paolo Ceccarelli | UNESCO Chair in Urban and Regional Planning for Sustainable Local Development | Università degli Studi di Ferrara



Alberto García Gómez, Serena Montefusco | UNESCO Chair in Bioethics and Human Rights | Ateneo Pontificio Regina Apostolorum, Università Europea di Roma



Cristina Giudici, Lucia Occhi, Angela Paparusso, Giuliana Polo | UNESCO Chair in Population, Migrations and Development | Sapienza Università di Roma



Gaia Proietti | UNESCO Chair on Water Resources Management and Culture | Università per Stranieri di Perugia



Natalina Carrà, Paola Raffa | UNESCO Chair on Mediterranean Landscape in Context of Emergency | Università Mediterranea di Reggio Calabria



Annateresa Rondinella | UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Energy Communities | Università di Pisa