



People for development

MIGRATION

AVSI's observations, lessons learned, and recommendations based on its work in the field

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AVSI

IN THIS PAPER AVSI PRESENTS ITS POSITION ON THE ISSUE OF MIGRATION AND HUMAN MOBILITY, STARTING FROM A VIEW OF MIGRATION AS A STRUCTURAL PHENOMENON RATHER THAN AN EMERGENCY (1). FOR AVSI, ANY APPROACH TO UNDERSTAND THE COMPLEXITY OF THIS PHENOMENON AND ANY ATTEMPT TO GOVERN IT MUST ALWAYS BEGIN WITH PROTECTING AND KEEPING THE PERSON AT THE CENTER (2). THE PERSON MIGRATING MUST ALWAYS BE SAFEGUARDED AND CONSIDERED WITHIN HIS OR HER NETWORK OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILY AND COMMUNITY (3). THROUGH ITS EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD, AVSI OBSERVED THE NEED FOR A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER APPROACH (4) AND FOR A VIEW OF THE MIGRATION PHENOMENON – NOW UNPRECEDENTED IN ITS PROPORTIONS – THAT CONSIDERS ITS MULTI-DIMENSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN TIME AND SPACE (5). FURTHERMORE, WHEN BUILDING A COMMON NARRATIVE ABOUT MIGRATION, ONE SHOULD ALWAYS ACCOUNT FOR DIFFERENT CULTURAL FACTORS AND COMMUNICATION STYLES (6). TO CONCLUDE, AVSI SHARES SOME IMPORTANT TOOLS, THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS (7).

1. Migration is a structural phenomenon, not an emergency

Migration flows are a structural phenomenon and must be faced and handled as such.

Even though extraordinary migratory flows with emergency characteristics (caused by wars, natural disasters, political crises) occur in certain circumstances, regions or historical phases, this cannot distract us from the fact that people have always migrated, and for different reasons: first and foremost for the legitimate desire for a better life - a desire which is rooted in the very nature of mankind and a key factor in humanity's continuous development.

2. WHO – the person at the center

Irregular migrants, returnees, economic migrants, displaced persons, refugees, asylum seekers, illegal immigrants: there is a real risk that people who migrate will be reduced to one of these labels, even for their whole life.

Therefore, any project, program or law dealing with migration and human mobility must always reiterate that there is a person at the center, and that his or her dignity must be always protected.

Every attempt to weaponize migrants and reduce a person to a bargaining chip in national and international disputes must be rejected. At the same time, other forms of exploitation, including human trafficking, must also be denounced and fought.

3. The person and the community

A person who migrates must always be considered in his or her entirety, with all the needs and resources he or she has, within his or her network of personal and community relationships: the family and community of origin,

along with the families and communities that host and welcome him or her during their journey in transit and destination countries.

For this reason, the following factors must always be kept in mind:

The family and community of origin: what cultural/traditional pressure a person may experience in choosing to leave or come back;

The community and country of arrival: current reception laws, actual reception options and available services, the need for security of the local community, the steps to be taken for an integration process, and the narrative about migration.

4. Multi-stakeholder approach

The inherent complexity that characterizes migration makes the multi-stakeholder approach the only suitable one, as it can bring together different actors, perspectives, tools and resources to devise and implement successful solutions.

More specifically, the multi-stakeholder approach calls into play, at various levels, the following actors:

The local, national and international institutions in their different forms, which are called to be increasingly active as guarantors of compliance with international conventions and national laws that govern the processes of reception, integration, labor insertion, and repatriation;

Civil society organizations and NGOs, which play a fundamental role in disseminating knowledge about the impact of migration on our society and communities, as well as in the processes of reception, job placement, and voluntary repatriation;

The private sector, as partners in integration through employment pathways;

Diaspora groups, which are positive forces for migrants and play an important role in preserving cultural heritage; when involved, they can facilitate the integration process and become co-development actors.

5. The dimension of time and space

Migration impacts more than one generation and more than one country.

Therefore, rapid interventions, which can buffer emergency situations, need to be embedded in long-term plans and supported by adequate funds, providing for integrated actions across the following phases:

Before the choice to migrate is made, when alternatives can be offered and root causes can be addressed. Indeed, it is vital to protect everyone's right to find the conditions for a dignified life in their own homeland;

Along migration routes, carrying out actions to support, protect and safeguard human rights;

During the waiting period and, if necessary, appeal process for asylum applicants;

In the country of arrival, during the reception phase and integration in new contexts, including, when needed, job placement and accommodation services;

In the assessment phase of voluntary repatriations and during reintegration in the country of origin.

Being present and able to carry out integrated projects in a coordinated way in different countries along migration routes is a key asset: in this way, it is possible to follow the beneficiaries as they travel along the migration routes and meet them with specific interventions tailored to their needs.

6. Attention to culture and communication

Being at the center of the migration phenomenon, each person should always be considered with respect to his or her relationships, culture, traditions, and religion. Together, they form a category system through which a person looks at reality, makes choices, and relates to new people and communities.

Likewise, the cultural heritage of the host community must not be neglected.

Cultural differences should be acknowledged and never set aside. They should be considered in all paths and structured forms of reception, seen as opportunities and not as obstacles to the encounter between different people.

Communication plays a decisive role in constructing narratives that influence interpersonal and inter-community relations. Institutions, civil society, the private sector, universities and research centers should come together to promote the dissemination of correct data and information, so that:

- the risks linked to irregular migration are well known;
- people who settle in a certain country can get to know its culture, traditions, laws;
- specific processes are put in place to encourage the expression of one's culture of origin, avoiding the risk of self- marginalization;
- the real extent of migratory flows is made known through reliable sources, to reduce the gap existing between its perception and reality.

Wherever possible, personal encounters between people belonging to different communities should be encouraged, as they provide a special, more direct path to overcome mutual stereotypes and prejudices.

7. Tools, themes and recommendations

Education first and foremost Access to education must be always ensured for children, young people, and adults. Education must be guaranteed in contexts of emergency, war, poverty, and through programs such as Distance Support (where individual donors make recurring gifts to support children, their families and entire communities) as it is essential for development. In particular, in host countries, schools are recognized as a fundamental place to provide the necessary tools to foster integration, especially for children and young people of the first and second generation. Language learning is also an essential step for adults to become more integrated: if it is not included in programming from the beginning, it can then prevent migrants from fully exercising their rights and respecting their duties.

Protection and Livelihood Refugees and migrants should be ensured of possibilities for a dignified livelihood. Development actors should pay special attention to protecting refugees and migrants, especially unaccompanied minors, from abuse, violence and exploitation, especially from employers. This should be combined with psychosocial support interventions for both migrants and their hosts.

Work Work is always necessary to protect and strengthen the dignity of each person. It should be promoted as an alternative to irregular or forced migration, as a tool for integration in new contexts or reintegration for those who decide to return home, through:

- training, recognition of previously acquired skills and qualifications, support in the acquisition of new ones;
- the creation of new jobs, by fostering personal entrepreneurship or collaboration with private companies. Workers should be protected through the elaboration of different forms of labor that can counteract exploitation and illegal hiring, while encouraging companies (also with tax allowances) to invest in training paths that foster migrant integration.

Home A person always needs a home. It is necessary to ensure that this need is met in destination and transit countries, where the size of refugee camps and the long lengths of stay often create unsustainable situations of chronic emergency.

Communities as protagonists The active involvement and participation of host communities in integration processes should be promoted. Host communities must also be able to trust and experience the potential benefits of hosting, in terms of services and development. In this scenario, civil society organizations are active players and key partners, but they never can substitute the institutions. In the countries of origin and transit, institutions can play a key role in capacity building and technical assistance to manage more effectively the migratory flows and to change inadequate regulatory and legislative frameworks.

Climate and Sustainability As climate change is one of the main causes of migration, it is essential to engage in serious, concrete mitigation and adaptation actions in the countries of origin, both in urban and rural areas. Cities are increasingly the preferred destination of migrants. They should be livable and sustainable, according to appropriate urban development plans capable of facing the challenge of demographic and climate change.

A cross-border approach Only a cross-border approach allows the migration phenomenon to be measured in its entirety and seen as a disruptive force. At the same time, such an approach makes it possible to experiment with solutions tailored to people's mobility needs.

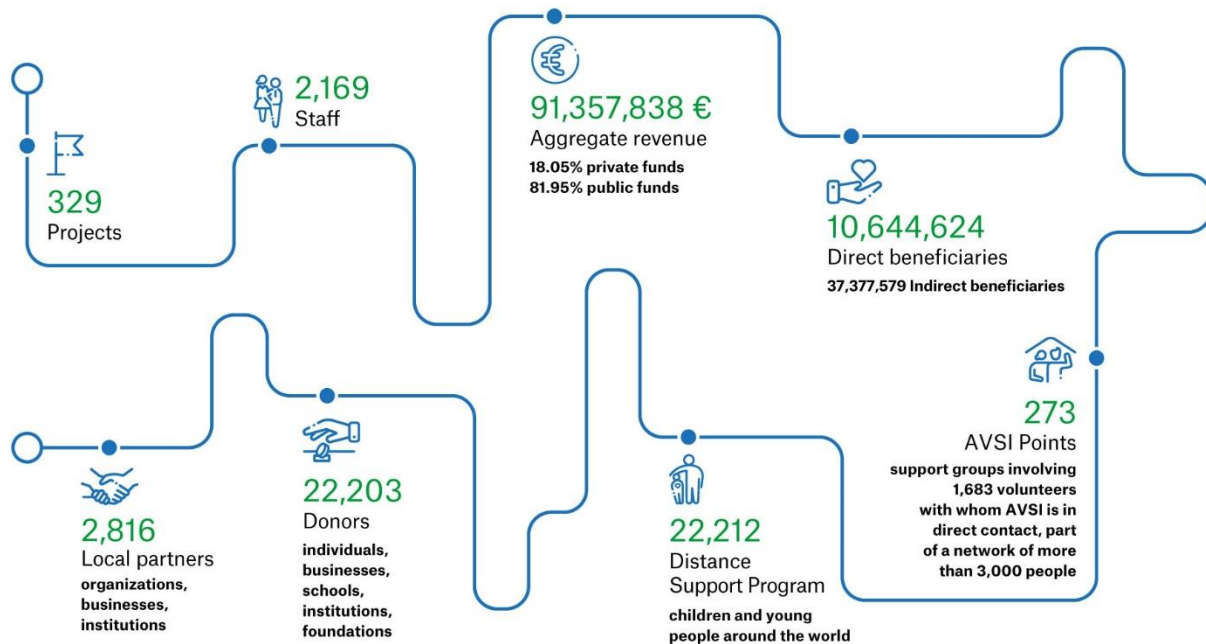
Reception funds More funds are needed to support reception, integration, and repatriation programs, with mechanisms and traceability systems that ensure absolute transparency in the management of money, rather than funds solely dedicated to strengthening national border protection.

Fair laws It is essential for laws and regulations to recognize and promote real integration of refugees in different countries. They must be able to adequately govern such phenomenon. Those laws that can no longer keep pace with the evolution of the migratory phenomenon must be overcome - where they still exist. The distinction between people emigrating to seek work or training, who must therefore be able to find regular emigration forms, and those seeking international protection must be well regulated.

Dynamic knowledge In the end, it is essential to foster and maintain a constant development in the knowledge and ability to read migration processes and phenomena, in their development and changeability over time and space.

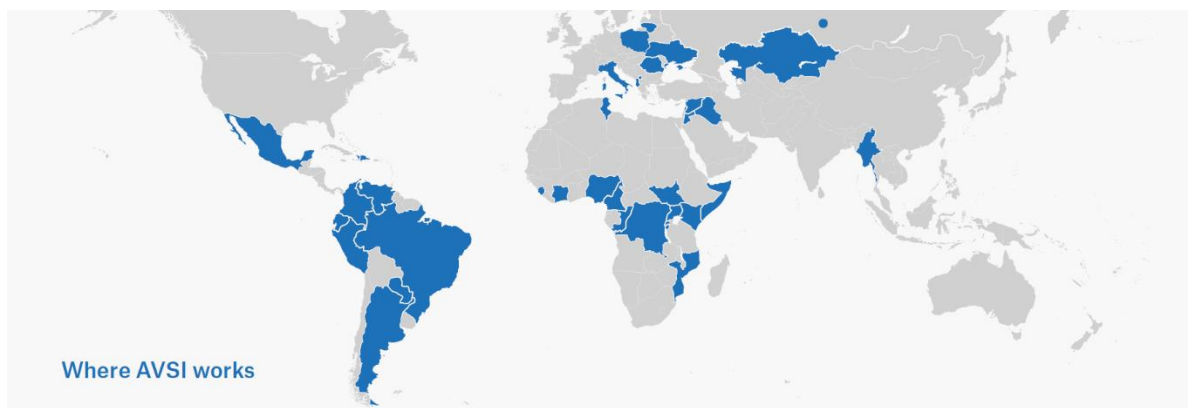
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AVSI carries out development cooperation and humanitarian aid projects in 39 countries, including Italy



AVSI works for a world in which every person can be the protagonist of their own integral development, along with that of their community, even in emergency situations.

AVSI implements cooperation projects in various sectors with a preferential focus on education, meaning that the person is accompanied towards self-discovery and recognition that the other person is a resource. Each project is conceived as an instrument to promote this awareness in everyone involved, has in itself a need for communicating and sharing, and creates an impact capable of generating a positive change.





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