



WELCOME

2024 EDITION

**WORKING
FOR REFUGEE INTEGRATION**



FOCUS 2024



a programme by



in cooperation with



METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

This report is based on the processing of data collected through the application questionnaire filled in by the companies and organisations that participated in the project.

Due to rounding, the percentages displayed in the graphs do not always add up to 100%.

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Introduction

Like every edition, the *Welcome. Working for refugees integration* programme report provides a valuable opportunity to share the achievements of the previous year and to present the new activities that UNHCR is initiating or enhancing in 2025.

We cannot but begin with a reflection on the international context. In a world where the number of refugees and displaced persons continues to grow significantly, drastic cuts in humanitarian aid and international cooperation risk having dramatic consequences on the lives of millions of people. In the face of this profound crisis in the global humanitarian system, a concrete and coordinated response by the international community is essential. But equally essential is the commitment of each of us: citizens, workers, companies. Only through collective action can we generate real change.

In this scenario, the *Welcome* programme proves to be a key tool. Not only does it offer practical solutions for the labour inclusion of refugees, but it also succeeds in bridging the gap between the world of work and business with a reality that is often overlooked: that of refugees in Italy and across the globe.

In 2024, the programme experienced significant growth: 227 companies will receive the award for their commitment to labour inclusion, 7 more than the previous year. In total, these companies promoted 16,237 job inclusion pathways, a 33% increase over 2023, reaching a total of 50,373 since the programme began. These numbers testify to the attention and social responsibility of Italian companies, and have contributed to making *Welcome* an internationally recognised best practice. The effectiveness of the programme is also confirmed by an independent evaluation study commissioned by UNHCR from a specialised research organisation, the results of which will be published shortly.

The success of *Welcome* is the result of many factors, among which is the determination displayed by refugees to build a dignified future, making the most of their skills and talents. There are many examples of virtuous pathways pursued by refugees in companies participating in the *Welcome* initiative. We share some of these stories in this report - albeit only in part - which highlight journeys of resilience, courage, and transformation. These experiences have enriched not only the lives of the individuals involved, but also those of their colleagues and the communities that welcomed them.

Alongside this, the contribution that our partners have made over time to the success of *Welcome* should be highlighted. It was certainly also thanks to the important support of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and the collaboration with Confindustria, Confimprese, AIDP, Assolavoro and Global Compact Italy that we were able to further grow our programme. Lastly, it is

necessary to mention the contribution of expertise and professionalism brought by our now historical partner Fondazione Adecco.

Welcome is, first and foremost, an ever-expanding ecosystem of collaborations between different actors. Since 2022, the *WelcomeNet* network has involved 127 civil society organisations in 18 regions and 60 provinces, demonstrating a widespread presence on the ground. Supporting businesses, refugees, and local associations, seven *Welcome Liaison Officers* operate from integration hubs set up in partnership with the municipalities of Bari, Bologna, Brescia, Milan, Naples, Rome, and Turin under the Spazio Comune programme. 2024 also marked the launch of new projects. The *Welcome-in-one-click* platform, launched at the end of 2023, has seen exponential growth in users and opportunities and has now entered a second, more dynamic and targeted phase to facilitate the matching of job offers with the skills and talents of refugees. In parallel, the first labour corridors for refugees were activated, thanks to the collaboration between institutions and businesses. Three pilot projects in the IT, goldsmithing and shipbuilding sectors are already a reality; others will be launched in the coming weeks.

However, we cannot ignore the difficulties still widespread among the refugee population. A [recent UNHCR survey](#), based on 1,200 interviews in 16 Italian provinces, shows that 43.5% live below the absolute poverty line and 67% in relative poverty. The causes are many: language barriers, job insecurity, housing difficulties, bureaucratic obstacles and limited access to welfare. Yet, the study also reveals great potential: 84% of the respondents have worked in the last year and around 20% have a degree or a doctorate. When viewed through the lens of [Centro Studi Mediobanca's analysis](#) on the costs of non-integration, these data clearly highlight the need for a national strategy that both values the skills of refugees and addresses the needs of the labour market. What is needed is a broad alliance - bringing together government, businesses, and civil society organisations - to promote genuine and effective integration. UNHCR is ready to play its part. *Welcome* shows that integration, with everyone's commitment, is possible!!!

Chiara Cardoletti

Representative for Italy, the Holy See and San Marino



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The *Welcome* network



WelcomeNet



Welcome Liaison Officer

FOCUS 2024



Evaluation of the *Welcome* programme 2020-2024

In 2024, UNHCR commissioned an **independent evaluation** of the *Welcome Working for refugee integration* programme, with the aim of assessing its relevance and effectiveness, and identifying good practices and areas for improvement to guide its future evolution. In particular, it sought to understand how *Welcome* contributes to overcoming systemic barriers to refugee employment and what value it brings to actors involved in inclusion processes.

The research, conducted by the institute **Opcit Research**, addressed activities carried out between 2020 and 2024, adopting a mixed-methods approach that integrated **documentary analysis with both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis**. Group discussions and semi-structured interviews were conducted with refugees, as well as with representatives from companies, civil society organisations and institutions involved in the *Welcome* programme, alongside staff from UNHCR and Adecco Foundation.

The *Welcome* programme demonstrated clear **relevance** to the barriers hindering refugees' access to employment in Italy. Through its various components, *Welcome* supports both the **employability and employment of refugees** by facilitating access to information and guidance, recognising and building upon their existing skills, and providing training opportunities. It also aids in job searching and, most importantly, promotes the development of tailored inclusion pathways. At the same time, the programme prepares companies to employ refugees, fostering inclusive practices and encouraging corporate social responsibility.

The analysis also confirms **the effectiveness** of the programme. Thanks to its extensive and diverse network, and a methodology grounded in collaboration between companies and civil society organisations, the programme fosters more robust inclusion pathways while simultaneously strengthening mutual trust between the actors involved, contributing to the creation of a shared ecosystem. Companies have reported a cultural shift in how refugees are perceived within their teams, along with an enhanced capacity to initiate pathways to labour market inclusion. Furthermore, the *WelcomeNet* – comprised of civil society organisations – and the *Welcome-in-one-click* platform have expanded the programme's ability to generate connections and opportunities, offering flexible responses to emerging needs.

The **sustainability of the *Welcome* programme's outcomes** emerges as a further positive aspect. Refugees retain the networks and knowledge they have acquired, and benefit from more stable employment opportunities, while companies embrace the inclusive practices implemented through the programme. Thanks to its collaborative model, *Welcome* has also fostered a sense of shared responsibility among all stakeholders, an achievement that extends beyond the individual inclusion pathways. These effects go **beyond employment**: the programme contributes to building a more inclusive society by promoting a positive narrative of refugees as contributors to economic and social development. The evaluation confirms that *Welcome* represents **a replicable good practice**, capable of generating a virtuous circle of opportunity and change. At the same time, it highlights that **structural challenges persist** and require, alongside the continuation of the programme's good practices, sustained commitment from all actors involved.

In this regard, the evaluation puts forward several recommendations:

- to **UNHCR**: to strengthen collaboration with all key stakeholders, including in areas such as health, housing, and access to welfare, and to continue advocating for the systemic adoption of good practices developed through the *Welcome* programme;
- to **companies**: to formalise internal inclusion policies and enhance the monitoring of refugee recruitment and employment practices;
- to **civil society**: to commit to sharing and systematising successful experiences, and to reinforce advocacy efforts towards institutions;
- to **institutions**: to recognise the economic and social value of refugee inclusion and actively engage the business community in shaping integration policies.

Partnership

UNHCR

Established in 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is mandated with leading and coordinating at the global level all actions aimed at providing international protection and material assistance to persons forced to flee, and is committed to finding durable solutions. The Agency's key task is to support States in seeking lasting solutions that help refugees rebuild their lives in safety and dignity through voluntary return to their countries of origin, integration in the country of asylum or resettlement to a third country. UNHCR is active worldwide - directly or through partners - in protection and assistance programmes. In over 70 years of activity, the agency has helped tens of millions of people rebuild their lives. For this it has been awarded two Nobel Peace Prizes, in 1954 and 1981. With staff in 134 countries, the UNHCR is one of the world's leading humanitarian agencies.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL POLICIES

The Directorate General for Migration Policies and the Social and Labour Inclusion of Migrants of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies promotes socio-labour integration pathways for vulnerable migrants, including international and temporary protection holders.

CONFINDUSTRIA

Confindustria is the main association representing manufacturing and service companies in Italy. Over 150,000 small, medium and large enterprises are voluntary members.

GLOBAL COMPACT NETWORK ITALY

The Global Compact Network Italy (GCNI) works to promote the UN Global Compact and its 10 Principles at national level. To date, more than 60 business and non-business entities (private foundations, business associations, universities, etc.) have joined the Network.

AIDP

Since 1960 Associazione Italiana per la Direzione del Personale promotes a committed and responsible development of managerial culture in the field of human resources, with a network of +30,000 members, over 4,000 associates, 17 regional groups and an international network.

CONFIMPRESE

Confimprese is the leading Italian retail association that groups leading operators with direct and franchising networks, protects their interests and promotes the development of shops and brands in Italy and abroad. In Italy Confimprese represents 490 retail brands, 90,000 points of sale and 800,000 employees.



THE WELCOME
PROJECT
IS IMPLEMENTED BY



Awards and timeline



THE WELCOME. WORKING FOR REFUGEE INTEGRATION LOGO

In the 2024 edition, the call for applications to receive the *Welcome. Working for refugee integration* logo was addressed to companies and organisations that throughout the year recruited people who had been forced to flee or, in any case, promoted their concrete integration into the labour market through effective internship and/or training programmes. However, traineeships supported exclusively with third-party funds are not considered eligible for the purposes of the call.



THE WEWELCOME LOGO

Starting with the 2019 edition, UNHCR also wanted to highlight the role of all those entities that, in different capacities, are committed to promoting the labour market inclusion of refugees. To this end, the *WeWelcome* logo was established for organisations and entities (trade associations, trade unions, chambers of commerce, local authorities, employment services and associations engaged in assistance and protection activities) that have promoted the labour market inclusion of persons forced to flee.

DEADLINE

10 DECEMBER 2024

Applications can be submitted online

13 MAY 2025

Announcement of winners

19 JUNE 2025



LAUNCH OF THE CALL

Promotion of the call and support with applications



APPLICATIONS ASSESSMENT

Verification and examination phase



SELECTION AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF WINNERS

Selection process



AWARD EVENT

- Project presentation meetings with small, medium and large enterprises
- Meetings with key players in the territories
- Meetings with civil society organisations and other actors involved in the labour inclusion of refugees
- Assistance and support with applications
- Due Diligence checks
- Telephone interviews
- Company visits
- Convening the Evaluation Committee, composed of representatives from UNHCR, Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, Confindustria, Global Compact Network Italy, Radio24/Il Sole 24 Ore, AIDP, Confimprese and with the participation of the Tent Partnership for Refugees
- Selection of suitable applications
- With the participation of companies, refugees, associations, local authorities and institutions

FOCUS 2024

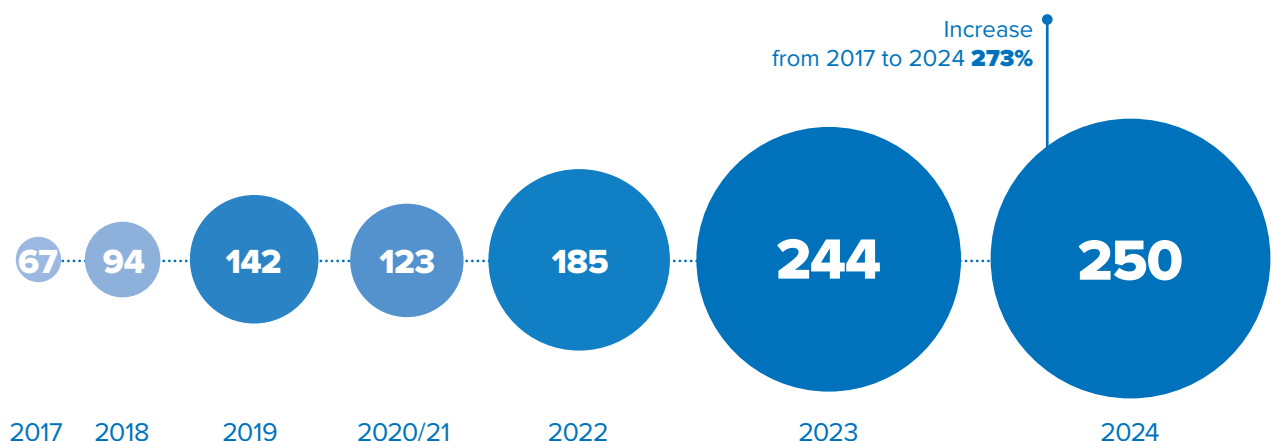
The Welcome. Working for refugee integration logo



1.1 AWARDED COMPANIES OF THE 2024 EDITION

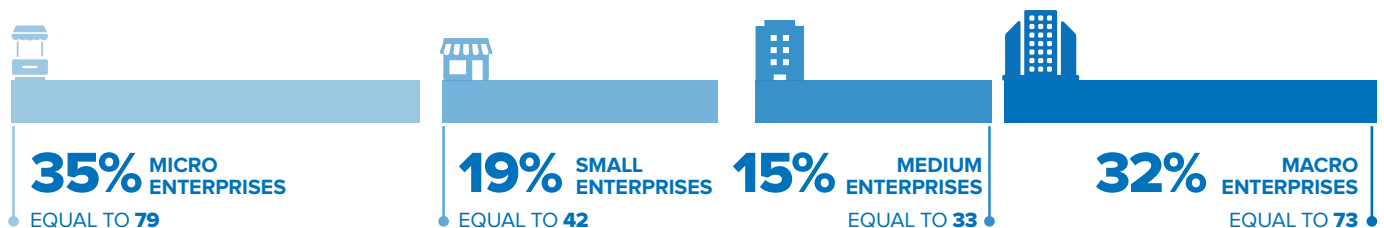
F1 – INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS

Now in its seventh year, the *Welcome* programme records a new increase in the number of applications from companies: in 2024 a new record number is reached, as 250 companies from the private sector have applied for the *Welcome. Working for refugee integration* logo. This figure has increased almost fourfold since 2017, when the programme was launched.



F2 – AWARDED COMPANIES BY SIZE

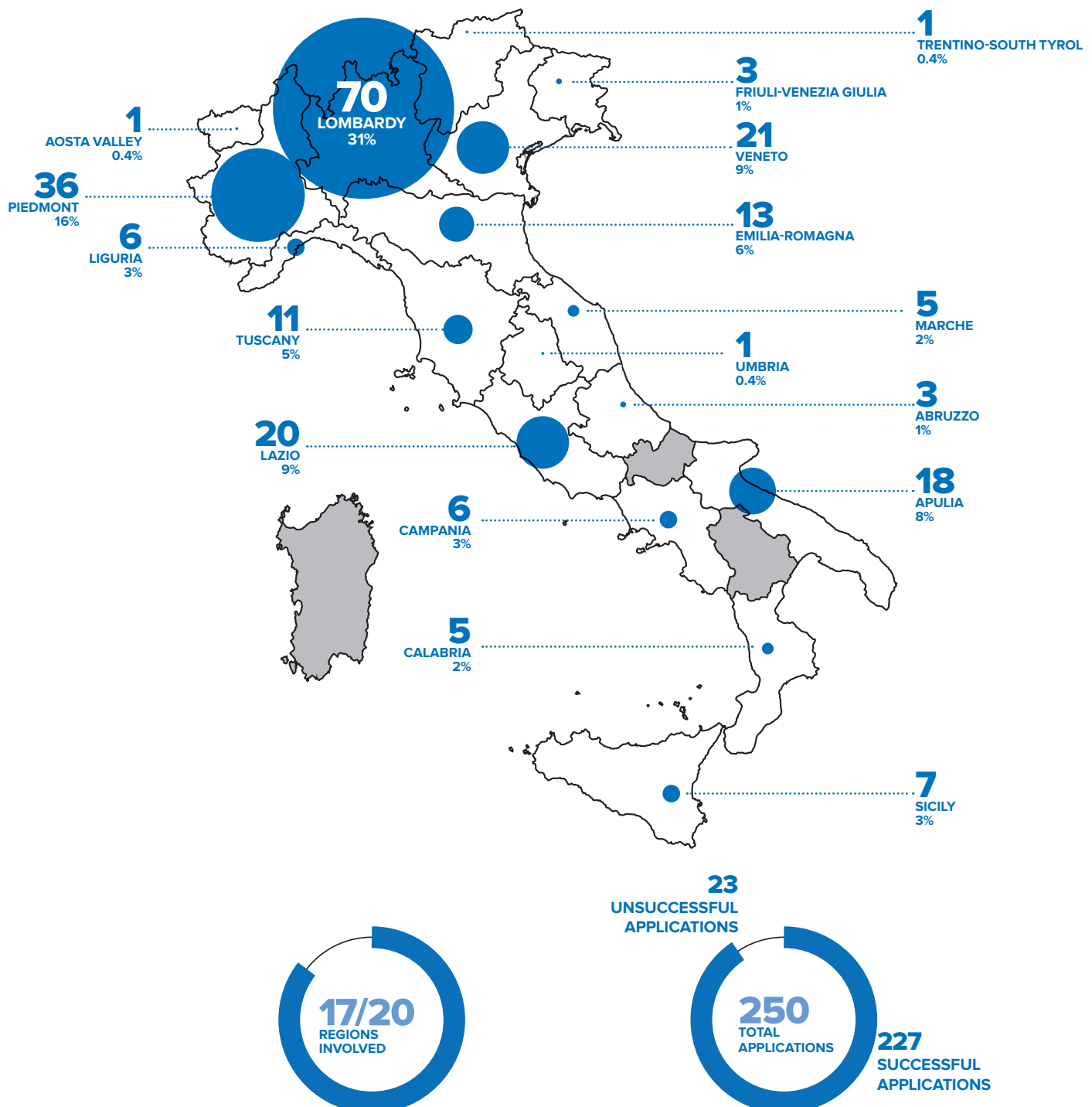
Micro and small enterprises consolidate their central role in creating job opportunities for people forced to flee. At the same time, there is stable participation by **large companies**, which account for 32% of the total in 2024, in line with what was observed in the previous edition of the award.



FOCUS 2024

F3 – AWARDED COMPANIES BY REGION

Out of 227 companies awarded in 2024, **43%** had already received the *Welcome. Working for refugee integration* logo in previous editions, confirming the ongoing **commitment of many companies to create job inclusion opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers**. This figure represents a tangible recognition of the values and operational approach promoted by the *Welcome* programme. From a regional perspective, **Lombardy and Piedmont** are the regions with the highest number of companies involved, followed by **Veneto** and **Lazio**.



FOCUS 2024

From fragility to strength: Franca's story between resilience and educational work *Dalla Parte Dei Bambini*

The *Dalla Parte Dei Bambini* educational network, founded and led by Rachele Furfaro, has been active in Naples for over 35 years. In 2014, it established the Quartieri Spagnoli Foundation - FOQUS, with the aim of promoting an urban regeneration initiative conceived as a pedagogical experience. Within this framework, educational activities serve as a catalyst for activation processes, designed to counter the fragmentation of the

urban social fabric through training, social cooperation, and self-entrepreneurship. The processes initiated by the network engage children, parents, and the wider local community, also through initiatives of welcome and inclusion – such as supporting the job placement of individuals fleeing war zones or persecution in their home countries.

THE STORY OF FRANCA

Franca Osayande, a 26-year-old Nigerian woman, was arrived in June 2020 at the *Karabà* shelter for women survivors of violence, managed by the Dedalus Cooperative, after reporting the abuse she had suffered at the hands of her former partner. In 2023, she began an internship with the *Dalla Parte Dei Bambini* educational network, which, as of 2024, employed her on a permanent basis as a full-time childcare assistant.

Born in a small village in Edo State, Franca is the youngest of three daughters. Severe economic hardship compelled her to undertake the journey to Europe. She endured a traumatic passage from Nigeria to Italy, crossing the Libyan desert. During this time, she was sold multiple times and eventually placed under the control of a Nigerian man who initially appeared supportive but soon began to abuse her, exploiting her vulnerable condition. Upon discovering she was pregnant, Franca feared she would be prevented from keeping her child. In an effort to protect her baby, she agreed to the man's request to present themselves as a couple upon arrival in Italy. The abuse continued in the reception centre and persisted after the child's birth. Following a police intervention, both parents were reported to local social services, and the child was placed in foster care. Despite this, the violence did not cease. After several months, Franca sought help from mediators at the Dedalus Cooperative and formally reported the abuse.

Franca arrived at the shelter deeply distressed and anxious. A long and challenging period followed, marked by separation from her son. Nevertheless, she remained strongly motivated to rebuild her life, recognising that doing so

would help her become a more capable woman and mother, better able to care for herself and her child.

She worked to improve her Italian language skills to communicate more effectively with her son, who had learned the language while living in a foster home. Franca received legal support in both criminal and civil matters, was eventually reunited with her son, and began a psychotherapeutic programme that yielded excellent results. Together, they were placed in a centre where they could reconnect and strengthen their bond. Franca secured a place for her son in nursery school and began laying the foundations for her professional future, aspiring to achieve economic independence to support herself and her child. Her encounter with the ***Dalla Parte Dei Bambini***

network – FOQUS, which recognised her potential and offered her stable employment – provided her with financial security and a renewed sense of purpose. Reflecting on her journey, Franca shares her aspiration: "I want to be able to give my child the chance to grow into an independent person, free from violence, blackmail, and abuse."



Photo ©Dalla Parte Dei Bambini

FOCUS 2024

Employment as a path to redemption, personal growth, and freedom: Sandra's rebirth

Bricocenter

Bricocenter works daily to foster a workplace that respects the uniqueness, individuality, and rights of every person, grounded in the belief that the strength of a team lies in the diversity of experiences, ideas, and perspectives each individual brings. The company is committed to creating a fair and inclusive working environment where everyone can fully express their potential and grow professionally. Within its sustainability strategy, particular emphasis is placed on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion: a commitment to implementing

initiatives that combat all forms of discrimination and promote social inclusion and multiculturalism as core values lived throughout the organisation. This approach reflects a strong sense of awareness and responsibility towards the communities in which Bricocenter operates. In line with this commitment, since 2017, several Bricocenter stores have participated in labour integration programmes for refugees, reinforcing the company's role as an active and responsible contributor to inclusive social development.

THE STORY OF SANDRA

"I am Sandra Vanelle Gamou, I am 23 years old and I was born in Cameroon. I left my country because of the war. I arrived in Italy, in Bologna, with my younger brother and, after a few days, we were transferred to a community in Turin. It was difficult at first—without parents, in an unfamiliar country, and unable to speak the language. Then I started school and earned my lower secondary school diploma. In 2020, I attended a training course for warehouse assistants at Enaip in Nichelino and began an internship at the Bricocenter store in Turin Cigna. I continued with another internship, which led to a fixed-term contract and, from 1 April 2024, a permanent position. At first, I struggled with the language, didn't know the products, and was unfamiliar with the type of work. During the initial period, I was supported by Vera, who patiently taught me the basics of the job, and later by Ibrahim, who gave me confidence and motivation. He was a great example for me, as he also comes from Africa. I'm part of the logistics team, but I also wanted to learn how to work on the tills, so I help my colleagues in the shop on weekends. My life has changed. I've integrated into the team, I know my job well, and thanks to this, I've become independent and fulfilled my dream of buying a house in Turin, where I now live with my brother."

VERA - Store logistics officer Bricocenter Turin Cigna

"Sandra has carved out a well-defined role within our logistics team. She's a young woman who has shown remarkable adaptability and has a clear vision for her future. Her smile and cheerful nature have won all our hearts."

ROSITA - Bricocenter Customer Experience Manager, formerly Manager of the Bricocenter shop in Turin Cigna

"I met Sandra in 2020, when she was very young and had just started her internship at our Turin Cigna store. From the beginning, her determination, eagerness to learn, and strong desire to achieve a personal goal stood out: to gain independence and economic autonomy so she could leave the community and build a life of her own. The journey wasn't always easy—there were challenges, difficult moments, and unexpected obstacles. Today, I look at Sandra with great pride. She has reached significant milestones, both professionally and personally, proving that with the right support and a lot of determination, dreams can come true. Her story is a powerful example of how work can be a tool for redemption, growth, and freedom."

DANIELA - Manager of the Bricocenter shop in Turin Cigna

"Being part of a company that places inclusion at the heart of its values is a source of pride for me. I'll never forget the moment I told Sandra her contract would become permanent—her slightly nervous eyes when we were alone in the office, followed by her radiant smile and heartfelt hug. There aren't many young people who, like Sandra, leave their country, find work, and become self-sufficient in a new place. Sadly, even fewer are young women. Sandra is an inspiration: with commitment, determination, and the support of an inclusive workplace, it's truly possible to achieve your dreams."



Photo ©Bricocenter

FOCUS 2024

Beyond words: Alina's role in shaping inclusive education *Educolab*

Educolab is a social cooperative founded by a group of professionals in the socio-educational and psychological fields, specialising in neurodevelopmental disorders and autism. It operates in the Agrigento area and is deeply committed to inclusion at all levels.

The opportunity to support the employment inclusion of refugees arose almost by chance, but developed in a spontaneous and natural way – proving to be both a fascinating and rewarding challenge, enriched by a high-quality professional experience.

THE STORY OF ALINA

"Alina is a professional in the educational sector from Ukraine, whom we came to know through a family attending our centre. The initial period was marked by a necessary process of mutual understanding, with the usual challenges posed by the language barrier. However, from the outset, Dr Laura Mendola – President of the cooperative and project manager/coordinator – recognised Alina's evident professional qualities. Her integration into the team was gradual. Alina immediately began studying Italian, a crucial step for both social and professional engagement. After a few months, she started attending the centre more regularly while continuing to improve her language skills. She was soon offered her first contract, which was converted into a permanent position within a few months.

Alina's inclusion had a positive impact on both colleagues and the families we support. She quickly became a true point of reference, thanks to her exceptional professional and personal qualities. Her dedication to ongoing training and professional development, along with her exemplary work ethic, has made her a role model within the team. Educolab is proud to have welcomed a professional of such calibre, and it is deeply rewarding to see that she has found an environment where she can fully express her potential."

Photo © Educolab



FOCUS 2024

List of awarded companies



- A TUTTO GAS SAS DI BRUNI SIMONE & C.
- A2A SPA
- ABANTU SOCIETÀ COOPERATIVA SOCIALE
- ACCENTURE SPA
- ACCOR ITALIA
- AGRICOLA CALAFATA - SOCIETÀ COOPERATIVA AGRICOLA SOCIALE
- ALEPH ROME HOTEL - SAMERYA ITALY SRL
- ALICE PIZZA NEGOZI
- AMICO LOANO SRL
- AMPLIA INFRASTRUCTURES SPA
- ARAMINO SRL
- ARNALDO CAPRAI SOCIETÀ AGRICOLA SRL
- ARREDAMENTI FAGNINI SRL
- ASC SRL SOCIETÀ LICENZIATARIA PER MCDONALD'S ITALIA
- ASSOCIAZIONE FRANCESCO REALMONTE
- ASYSEL-BDF SPA
- ATLANTIS SRL
- ATTIVA SRL
- AUTHENTIC ENTERPRISE SOLUTIONS SRL
- AZIENDA AGRICOLA DI CASSANO ALESSIA
- AZIENDA AGRICOLA EROICO VINO DI LUCA CIOTOLI
- AZIENDA AGRICOLA ILARIA CAMPISI
- AZIENDA AGRICOLA NATURA E SALUTE
- B.T.E.
- BANCA IFIS
- BAR MENAMÈ TRICASE PORTO
- BEL SAS
- BERNARDINI AGOSTINO
- B-FOOD
- BIPE
- BLUSERENA SPA
- BOTTEGA VENETA
- BRICOCENTER ITALIA
- BRUNDU COSTRUZIONI SRL
- BVLGARI
- C&P GROUP
- CAPITANIO COSTRUZIONI SAS DI CAPITANIO LODOVICO
- CAPPELLI RIOLO CALDERARO CRISOSTOMO DEL DIN & PARTNERS STUDIO LEGALE
- CAPP-PLAST SRL
- CARELLO
- CARROZZERIA BOLCATO
- CARROZZERIA DI CRISTOFARO NICOLINO
- CASAGRANDE
- CAUTO CANTIERE AUTOLIMITAZIONE
- CENJA DEMIR
- C'ERA UNA VOLTA A ROSTA DI VALLE ALESSANDRO
- CLO COOPERATIVA LAVORATORI ORTOMERCATO SCRL
- COLORIAGE
- COOP LIGURIA SCC
- COOPERATIVA AUTOTRASPORTI NCV SC A RL
- COOPERATIVA SOCIALE P.G. FRASSATI DI PRODUZIONE LAVORO SCS ETS
- COOPERATIVA SOCIALE QUID
- COSMINT SPA
- COSTRUZIONI 1957 SRL
- CUCCI ASCENSORI SRL
- CYKLOP
- D.A.S. SOCIETÀ COOPERATIVA
- DADALEO SAS DI ROSSO NADIA E C.
- DECATHLON ITALIA
- DEDONI
- DELTHA PHARMA SRL
- DI IORIO 1750 SRL
- DSG DI DI SILVESTRO GIUSEPPE
- DVT SRL
- EATALY
- ECHO LABS IMPRESA SOCIALE
- ECOEDILCASE SRL
- EDEA COSTRUZIONI SNC
- EDIL FOX DI FORNARELLI FABIO
- EDILX COSTRUZIONI DI CARLASSARE LEONARDO SNC
- EDUCOLAB SOCIETÀ COOPERATIVA SOCIALE
- EFFECIDI SRL
- EMME 2 DI FERRERO MARIO & C. SAS

FOCUS 2024

- ESI SPA
- EURORISTORO
- EY
- FAMILY CARE SRL AGENZIA PER IL LAVORO
- FAMILY GROUP SERVICE SRL
- FANTAMONDO SRL SOCIETÀ LICENZIATARIA PER MCDONALD'S ITALIA
- FIEGE ECOMMERCE LOGISTICS
- FIEGE LOGISTICS SERVICES
- FLUNCH ITALIA
- FN MONTAGGI
- FORGI GROUP SRL
- FORNO MAURIZI
- FOS COMPANY SRL
- G.S. SPA
- GELATERIA GINEVRA
- GENERAZIONE VINCENTE
- GEOEDIL SRL
- GI GROUP
- GIMER IMPIANTI SRLS
- GRUPPO CONVERTINI SAS DI CONVERTINI ANGELO & C.
- GRUPPO FELTRINELLI
- GRUPPO NEGOZI SRL
- HABARI WE DORM
- HILTON LAKE COMO - VICO SPA
- HILTON MOLINO STUCKY - GHMS VENEZIA SPA
- HILTON ROME AIRPORT & HILTON LA LAMA - ICARUS SPA
- HOTEL AKROPOLIS MUSEUM DI GLOBE SERVICE SRL
- HOTEL RELAX DI BERNARDINI ANNA MARIA & C. SAS
- ICOP SPA SOCIETÀ BENEFIT
- IES SRL
- IKEA ITALIA RETAIL
- IL PONTE SOCIETÀ COOPERATIVA SOCIALE A RL
- IL SABBIONE DI ALICE ZANABONI
- IMBAL CARTON SB A RL
- IMPRESA EDILE IAMPIETRO LUCIO
- IMPRESA EDILE VERZELETTI SRL
- IMPRESA SOCIALE DALLA PARTE DEI BAMBINI SRL
- IN'S MERCATO SPA
- INTERCOS EUROPE SPA
- ISOCLEAN
- IT FOOD SRL
- ITG SRL
- ITT ITALIA
- KECHIC
- KIABI - SEKI SRL
- KREIZY SRL
- L.E. GARAGE SERVIZI
- LA CHIMERA COOPERATIVA SOCIALE
- LA DORIA SPA
- L'AGRICOLTORE SRL DI SALVATORE LIMA
- LANIFICIO CANGIOLI 1859 SPA
- LARCHITRAVE SRL
- LAVOROPIÙ
- LENOCI GIOVANNI
- LEROY MERLIN
- LOGICAL JOB
- L'ORÉAL ITALIA
- LUIGI LAVAZZA SPA
- MAGMA SRL IMPRESA SOCIALE
- MAISONS DU MONDE ITALIE SRL
- MAMMA LI TURCHI DI ESPOSITO VITO
- MANPOWER SRL
- MARE FOOD LAB SRL
- MASTROCICCIO SRL
- MATOS SRL
- MAZZEI ALBERTO
- MILLEVENTI SNC
- MISSION SOCIETÀ COOPERATIVA
- MONCULLO LUIGI
- MONDELÉZ ITALIA BISCUITS PRODUCTION SPA
- MOTOVELODROMO TORINO SSD A RL
- MUTTI
- NAUSICAA VILLAGE-GESTITUR SRL
- NESPRESSO ITALIANA SPA - SOCIETÀ BENEFIT
- NESTI DI PACELLI DANIELE & C. SAS
- O.M. LEGNO DI MUCCI TIZIANO E C. SNC
- O.P.I. CITTÀ DI MILANO SRL
- OASI DYNAMO SOCIETÀ AGRICOLA
- OFFICINE MECCANICHE GUIZZARDI
- OFFICINE MECCANICHE ZANETTI SRL
- OG SRL
- OMB TECHNOLOGY SPA
- ONIVERSE
- OPENJOBMETIS
- ORIENTA SPA SOCIETÀ BENEFIT
- OVERIT
- OVS SPA
- PANCOT FRATELLI SRL
- PASSONI & DI MAURO SRL - GRUPPO MCDONALD'S

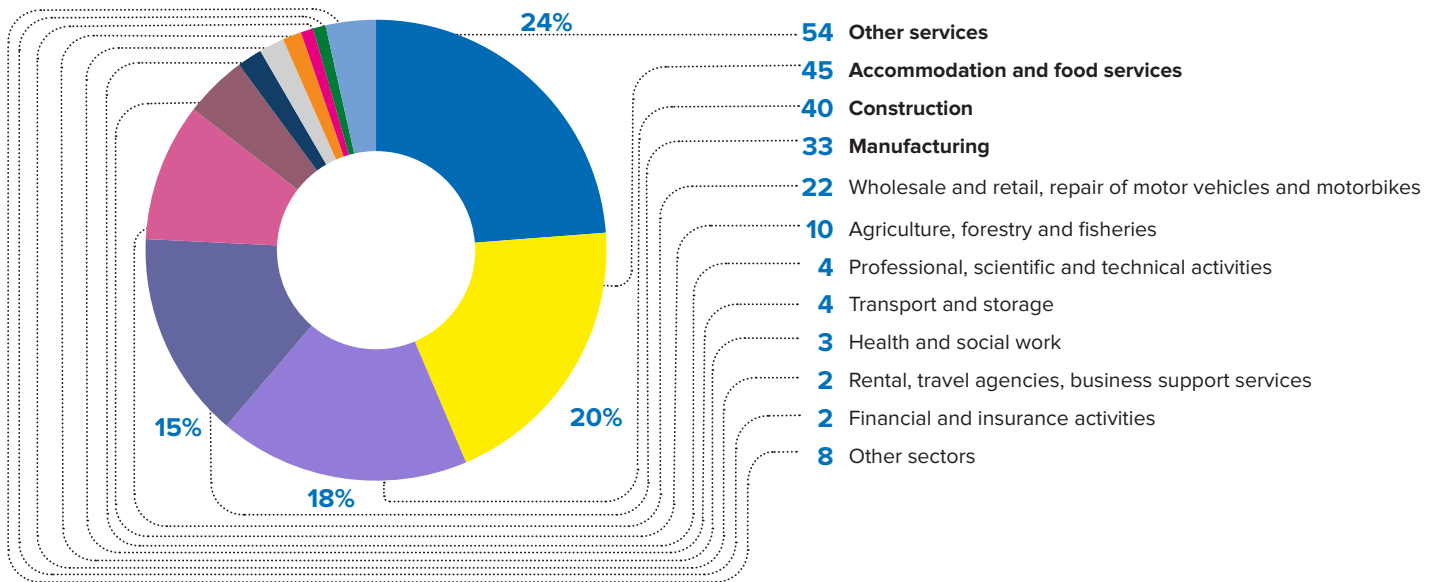
FOCUS 2024

- PELLEGRINO LUIGI
- PERIN ANDREA
- PETRARCA SAS DI COSTA COSIMO & C.
- PFIZER
- PGS IMPIANTI SRL
- PICTOR SOCIETÀ COOPERATIVA SOCIALE
IMPRESA SOCIALE
- PORTALUPI CARLO IMPRESA
- PRIMARK ITALY
- PRIMIZIE SOCIETÀ COOPERATIVA SOCIALE
IMPRESA SOCIALE
- PRINCIPE DI SAVOIA SRL
- PRISM SRL SOCIETÀ BENEFIT
- PROGES SOC COOP SOCIALE
- R.A.M. SRL
- R.M. IMPIANTI
- RAFFAELE CARUSO
- RANDSTAD ITALIA
- RANDSTAD SERVICES
- RENO MECCANICA SRL
- RICCARDO BARTHEL & C. SAS
- RIGENERATION SBARL
- RISORSE
- RISTORANTE TAVERNA DEL PORTO
- RISTORANTE VALLE VERDE DI PAOLO E MARIA
TERESA FILIA SNC
- RISTOSÌ SRL
- ROMEO GESTIONI SPA
- RUBINETTERIE BRESCIANE BONOMI SPA
- S.ITALIA SPA
- SACE
- SALBAROLI MATTEO
- SAN MARCO GROUP
- SANGINESI LIDIA
- SASSONE COSTRUZIONI EDILI SRL
- SATURNO
- SCAI SRL
- SECOOP IMPRESA SOCIALE SCS ONLUS
- SEPHORA ITALIA SRL
- SIAMO COOP
- SILFLEX SNC DI CARLONI SILVIA
- SINTAL SRL
- SOCIETÀ AGRICOLA FARM HOUSE SRL
- SODEXO ITALIA SPA
- SOTTOCOPERTA SRLS
- STAFF SPA
- STAMP-FER SRL
- STP SRL
- STUDEO SRL
- STUDIO MINETTI CONTE E PIAZZA
ASSOCIAZIONE PROFESSIONALE
- STUDIOSERRAMENTI
- SUPERMERCATO COOP DI BARBERA ROSA
- T&B DI BETTO MAURIZIO & TARDIVEL MASSIMO
SNC
- T.B. COSTRUZIONI MECCANICHE
- TERMOIMPIANTI SRL
- TERSAN PUGLIA
- TERZO TEMPO SAS
- THE ADECCO GROUP ITALIA
- TOP EDILE DI IBRAHIM MOHAMED ABOSELIM
MAHMOUD
- TRIVENETA MULTISERVIZI SOC COOP SOC
- UMANA SPA
- VALDAN SECURITY GROUP
- VASTÉ SCS IMPRESA SOCIALE
- VIVALDI & CARDINO SPA
- WA ROME CAVALIERI - HILTON ITALIANA SRL
- WOLF ENTERTAINMENT SRL SEMPLIFICATA
- WORLD FASHION FOOD SRL
- ZULIAN COSTRUZIONI SRL

FOCUS 2024

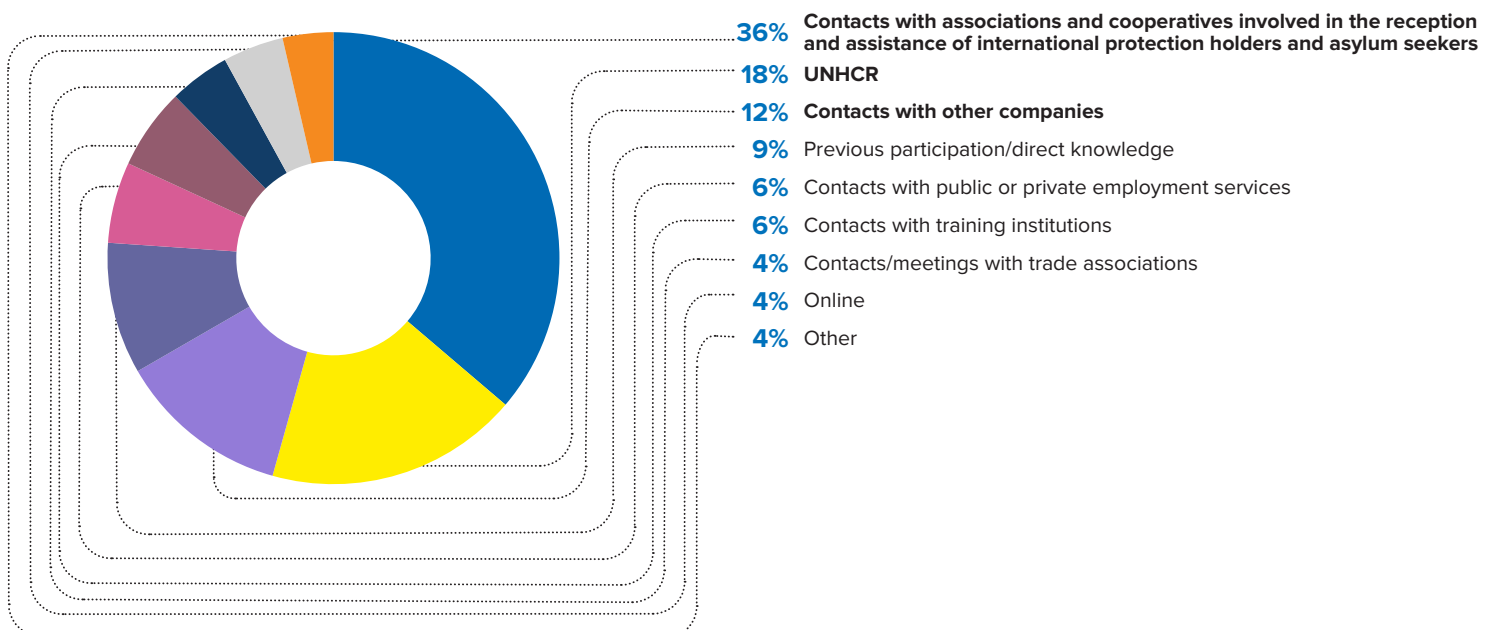
F4 – AWARDED COMPANIES BY SECTOR OF ACTIVITY

As in previous years, **this edition confirms the continued diversification of the production sectors** represented by the award-winning companies. The **service** sector remains predominant, showing growth compared to the previous year, alongside notable participation from the **hospitality and catering industries**. The **construction sector** recorded a 38% increase in the number of award-winning companies compared to last year – a figure that reflects the positive outcomes of the collaboration between institutions, trade associations, and trade unions. This cooperation was initiated through the memorandum of understanding promoted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, the Ministry of the Interior, and the aforementioned key stakeholders in the construction industry.



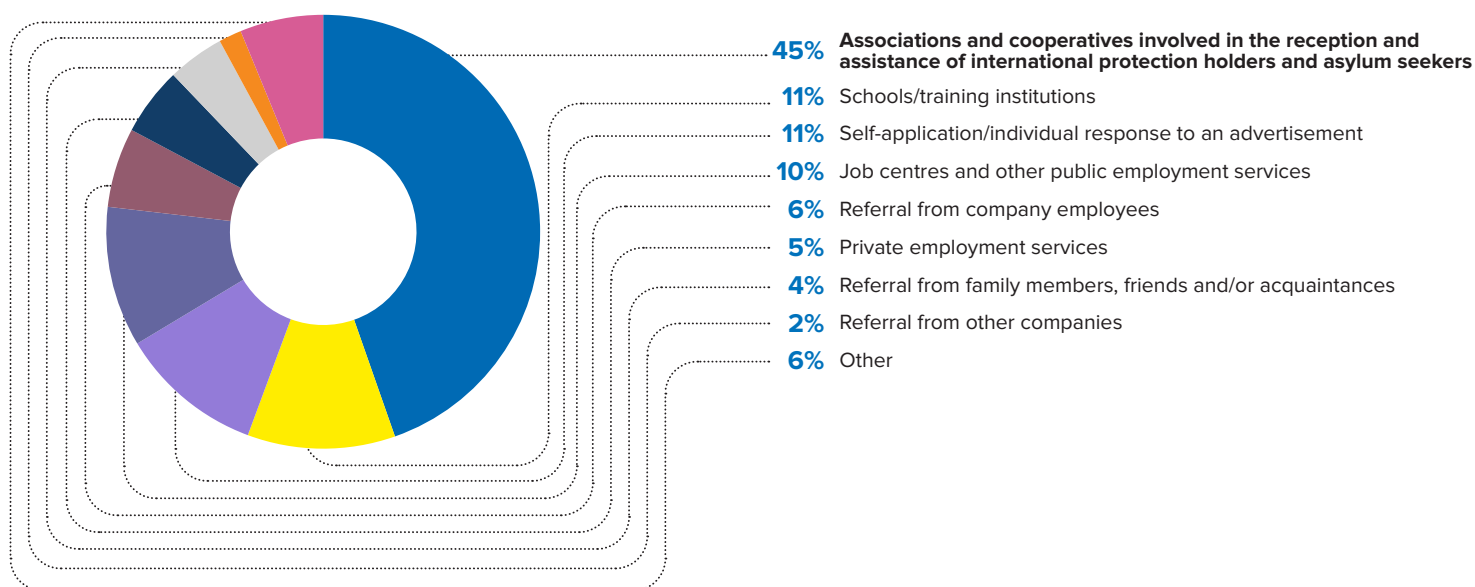
F5 – SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE WELCOME. WORKING FOR REFUGEE INTEGRATION LOGO

The dissemination of the *Welcome. Working for refugee integration* initiative among companies is made possible, in large part, by the ongoing commitment of **civil society**. Active in the **reception and support of people forced to flee**, civil society remains an **indispensable ally** of UNHCR. This commitment plays a crucial role in promoting pathways to labour inclusion and encouraging the engagement of businesses. It is also worth highlighting the increasingly significant contribution of **other companies, associations, and organisations** operating at the local level.



F6 – CHANNELS USED BY AWARDED COMPANIES TO REACH REFUGEES

The synergy between businesses and **local organisations involved in reception and integration** continues to play a decisive role in facilitating employment pathways for asylum seekers and individuals holding international or temporary protection. This collaboration accounted for **45% of the placements** recorded in the current edition. At the same time, the role of **schools and training providers** is becoming increasingly significant, with their contribution rising from 3% in 2021 to 11% in 2024. The number of placements resulting from **self-applications and responses to job advertisements** is also growing, reflecting the programme's increasing ability to reach more autonomous refugees entering the labour market. This progress is further supported by the **Welcome-in-one-click digital platform**, launched in 2024.

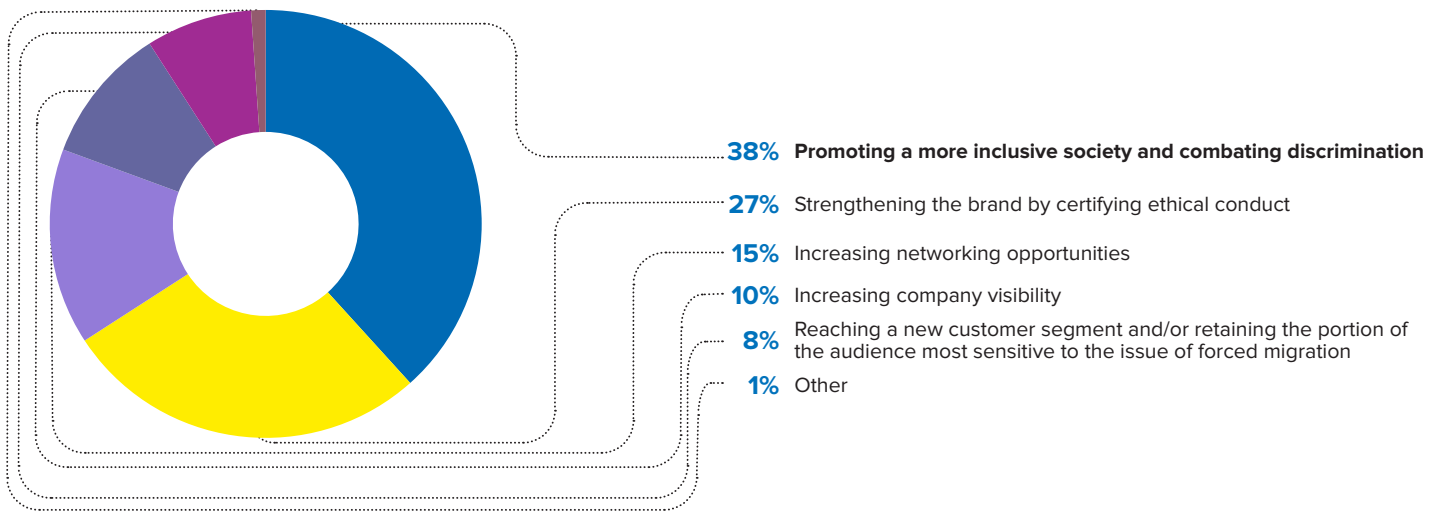


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1.2 CORPORATE FOCUS ON SOCIAL IMPACT

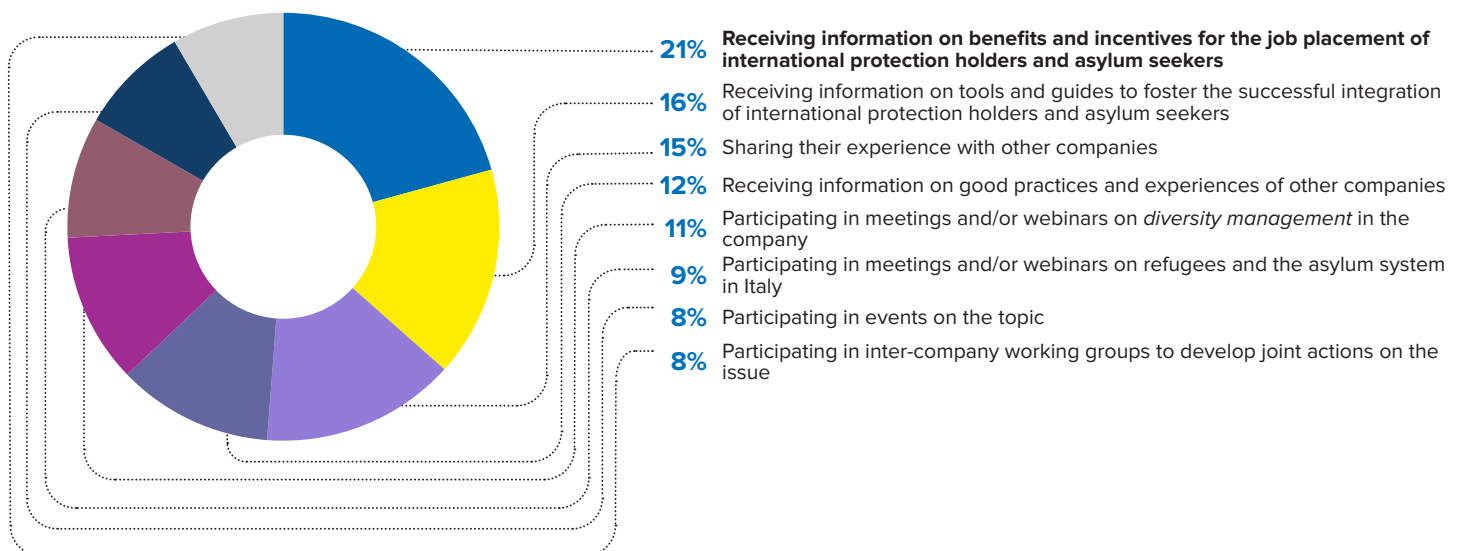
F7 – REASONS FOR SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION FOR THE WELCOME. WORKING FOR REFUGEE INTEGRATION LOGO

Among the main reasons companies applied for the *Welcome. Working for refugee integration* logo in 2024 was a desire to **promote more inclusive communities and actively contribute to combating discrimination**. Additionally, many companies expressed an interest in strengthening their brand by demonstrating a commitment to ethical principles and social responsibility.



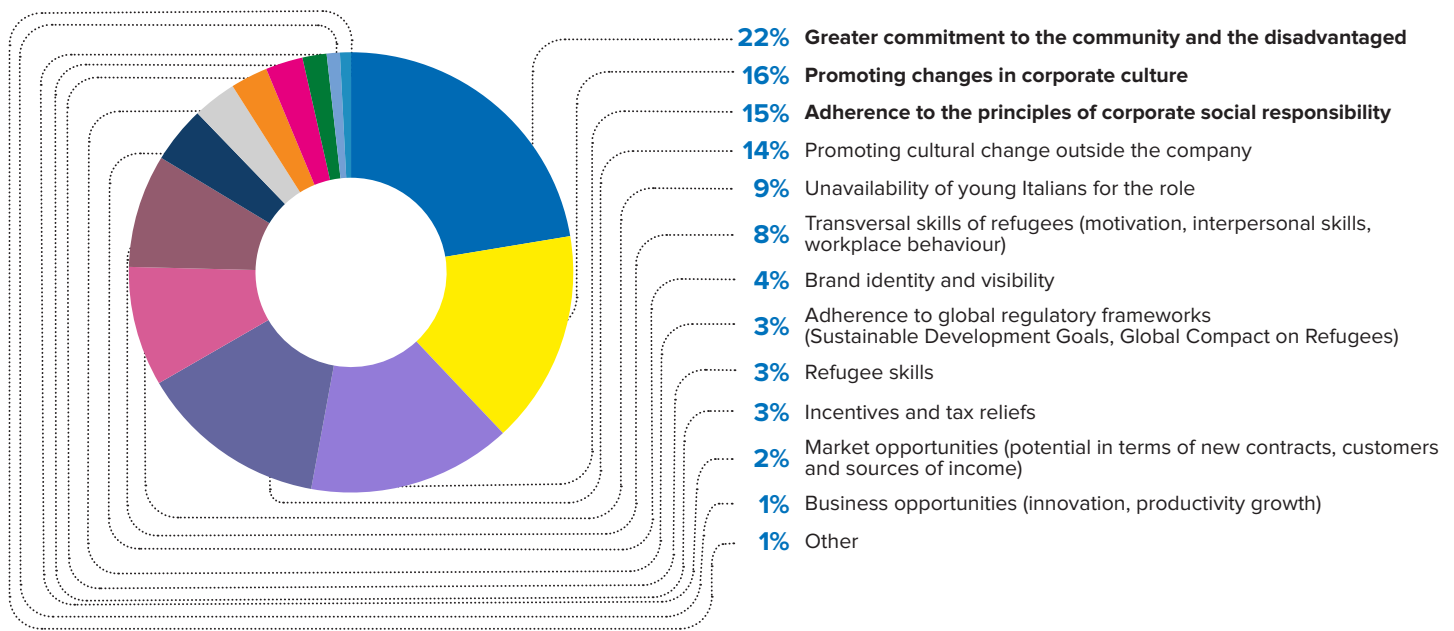
F8 – COMPANIES' INTEREST IN RELATION TO THEIR EXPERIENCE WITH ASYLUM SEEKERS AND BENEFICIARIES OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

Companies participating in this edition also expressed a growing interest in **detailed information regarding incentives and support measures** for hiring asylum seekers and international protection holders. At the same time, they reiterated the need for **practical tools and guidance materials** to help design effective inclusion pathways. Another noteworthy aspect is the value placed on **exchanging experiences and sharing proven good practices**, reflecting a genuine commitment to the collaborative spirit of the *Welcome* programme and highlighting the added value of the network of actors involved.



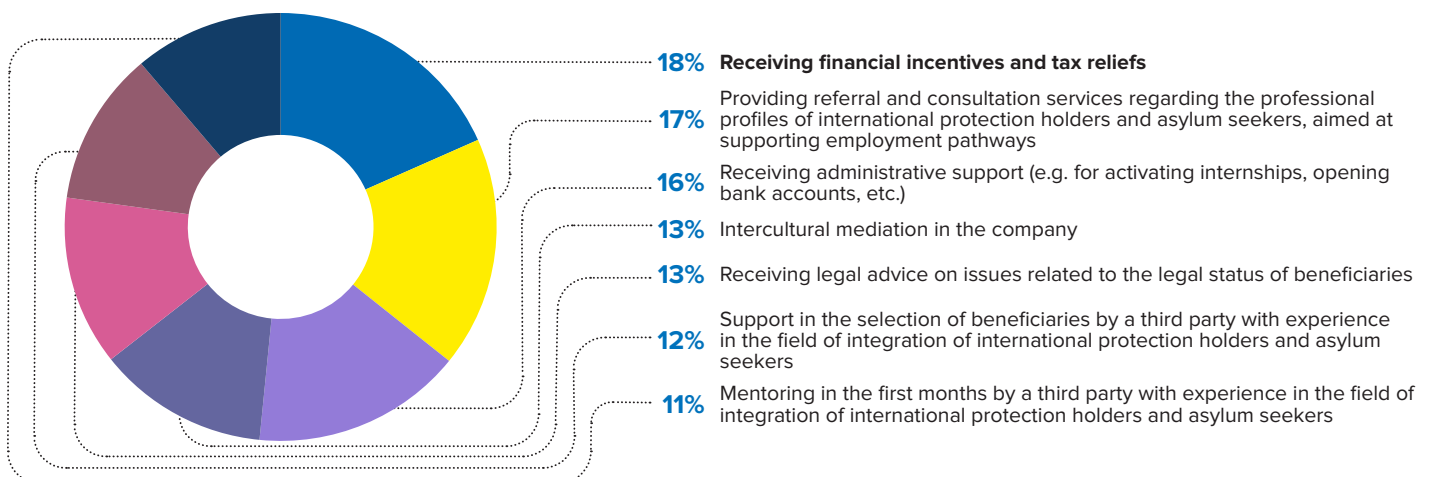
F9 – FACTORS ENCOURAGING COMPANIES TO HIRE REFUGEES

Among the primary motivations for companies to promote inclusion pathways for forcibly displaced individuals is the desire to **strengthen their commitment to vulnerable population groups and their communities**. This is closely followed by the aim to foster a shift in corporate culture and uphold the principles of corporate social responsibility. In 2024, companies also reaffirm their intention to make a positive impact beyond the corporate sphere, recognising the value of their **contribution to building a fairer and more inclusive society**. Another significant motivation, cited by a considerable number of companies, relates to the difficulty in finding young Italians willing to undertake the required roles- highlighting the importance of cultivating a **more open and welcoming labour market**.



F10 – SERVICES OF INTEREST FOR COMPANIES WISHING TO OFFER JOB INCLUSION OPPORTUNITIES

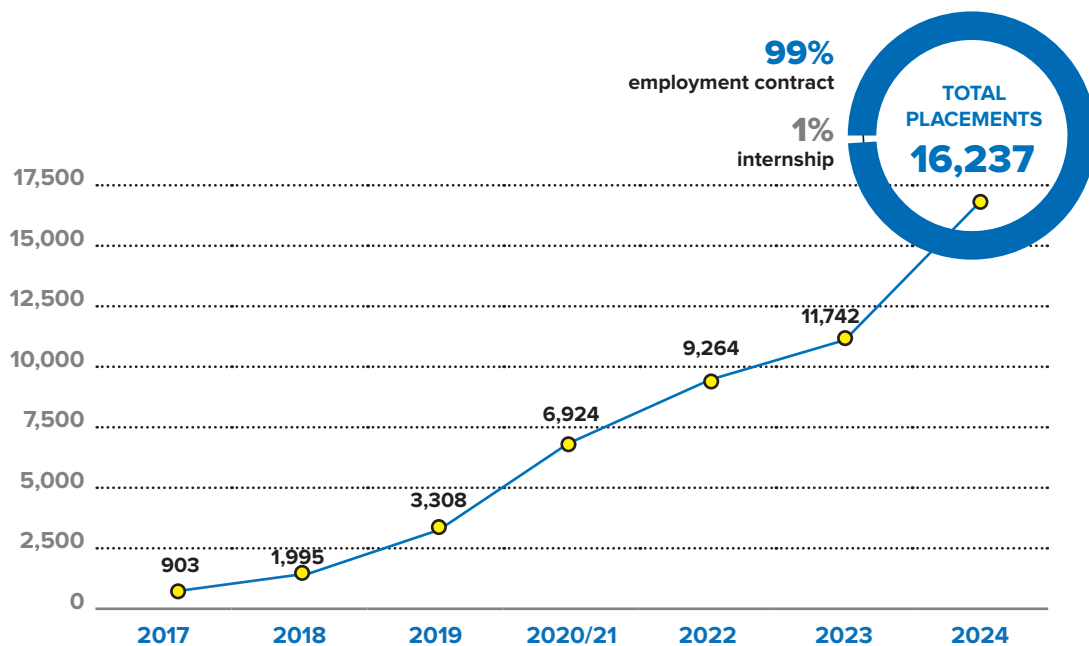
The seventh edition maintains continuity with previous ones in terms of the types of services that would support the employment of refugees, including the provision of **financial incentives and tax concessions**. In response to the need for **access to referrals and professional profiles** of international protection holders and asylum seekers, the *Welcome* programme has primarily addressed this through the **WelcomeNet** and the **Welcome-in-one-click** platform. Additionally, the availability of **administrative support services** is highlighted as a key factor in attracting participation.



FOCUS 2024

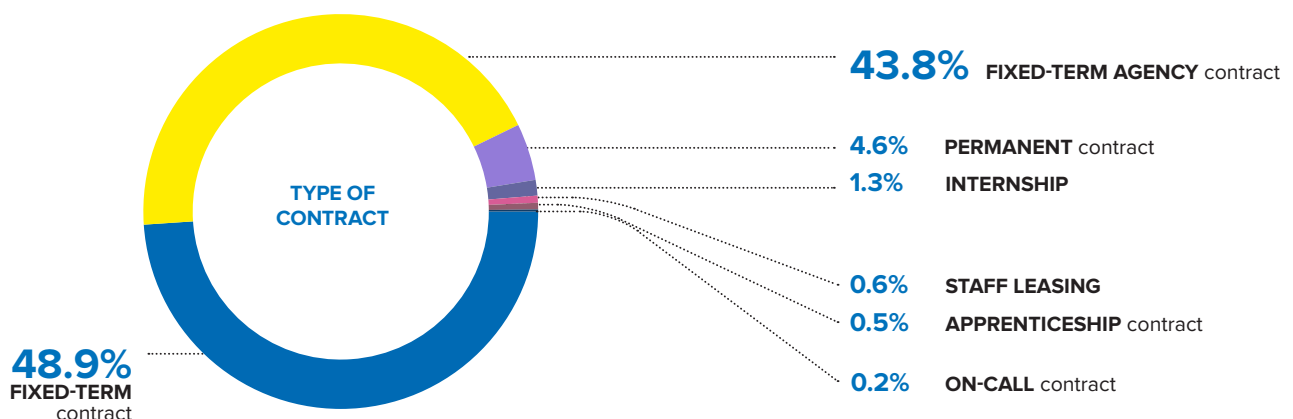
1.3 LABOUR INCLUSION PATHWAYS
IN AWARDED COMPANIESF11 – REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT IN THE SEVEN EDITIONS OF THE
WELCOME. WORKING FOR REFUGEE INTEGRATION AWARD

Over **eight years of activity**, the *Welcome. Working for refugee integration* programme has facilitated the creation of more than **50,000 job inclusion pathways**, reinforcing the role of the private sector in promoting labour market integration. This commitment represents a tangible step towards the full and effective inclusion of individuals forced to flee conflict, persecution, and serious human rights violations into Italian society.



F12 – REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT BY TYPE OF CONTRACT

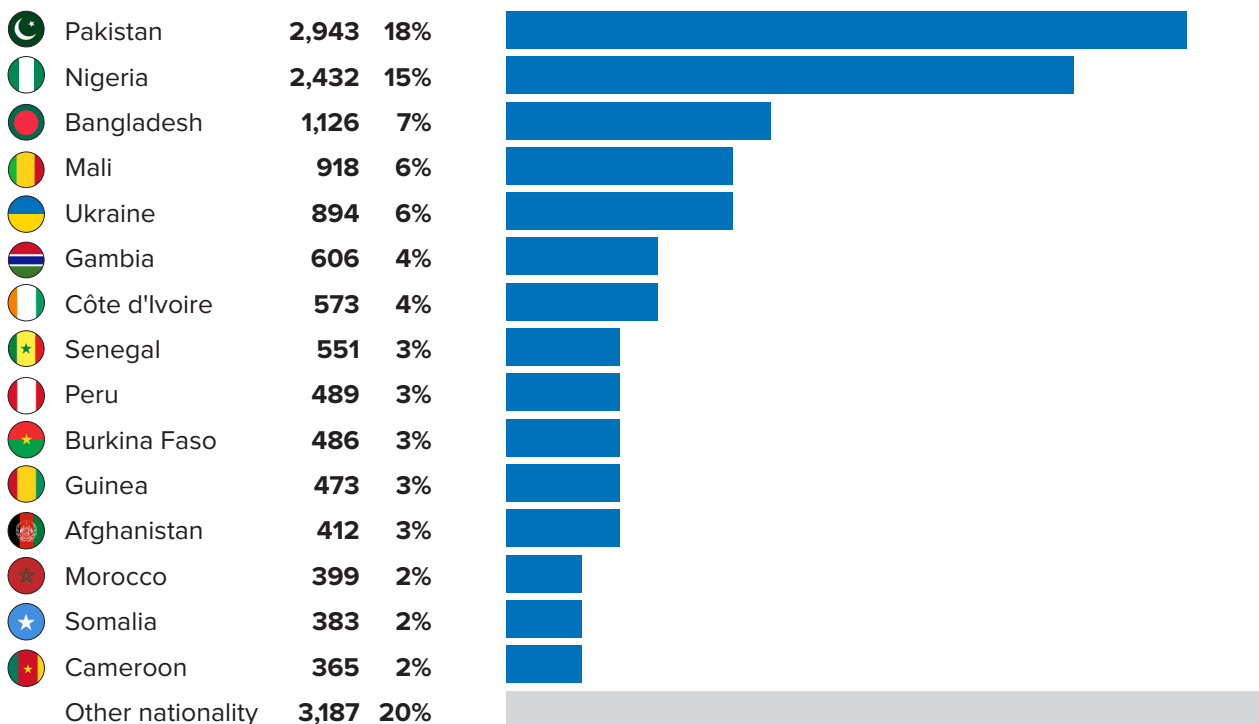
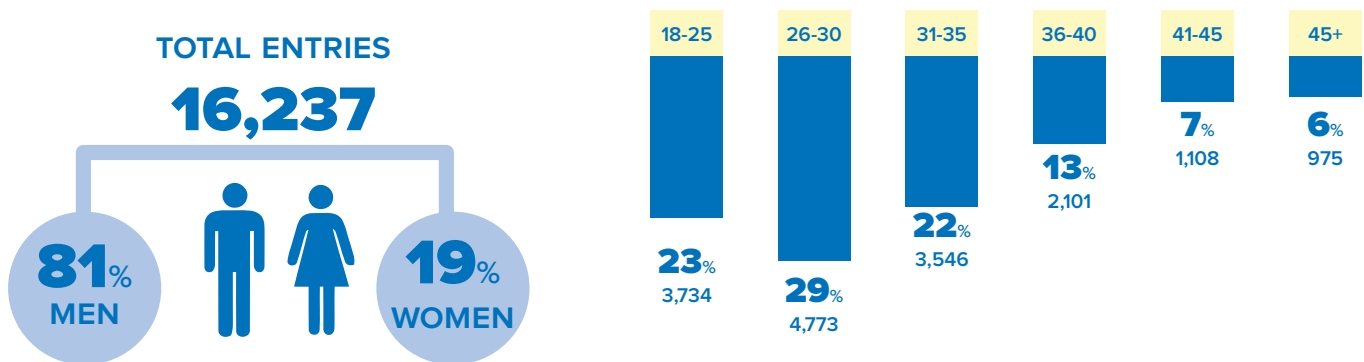
In 2024, the programme continues to experience steady growth, as evidenced by the results achieved in this seventh edition of the award: **16,237** labour inclusion pathways have been activated through various forms of recruitment and internship.



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F13 – REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT BY NATIONALITY, GENDER AND AGE

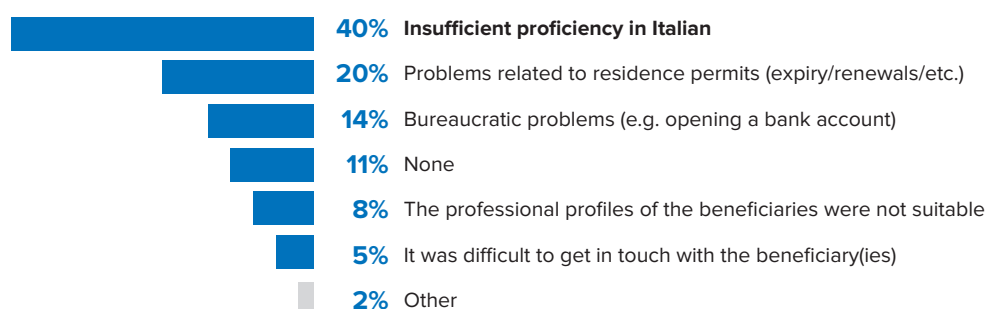
The profiles of individuals involved in the employment pathways implemented by the award-winning companies reflect the **diversity** of the refugee population in Italy. **87%** of them are **under the age of 40** and **81% are male**. These figures underscore the urgent need **to promote genuine gender equality** in access to the labour market for international protection holders and asylum seekers. The current employment rate for women stands at 19% (compared to 10% in 2021, 18% in 2022, and 20% in 2023), a figure that is undoubtedly influenced by the caregiving responsibilities that disproportionately affect women.



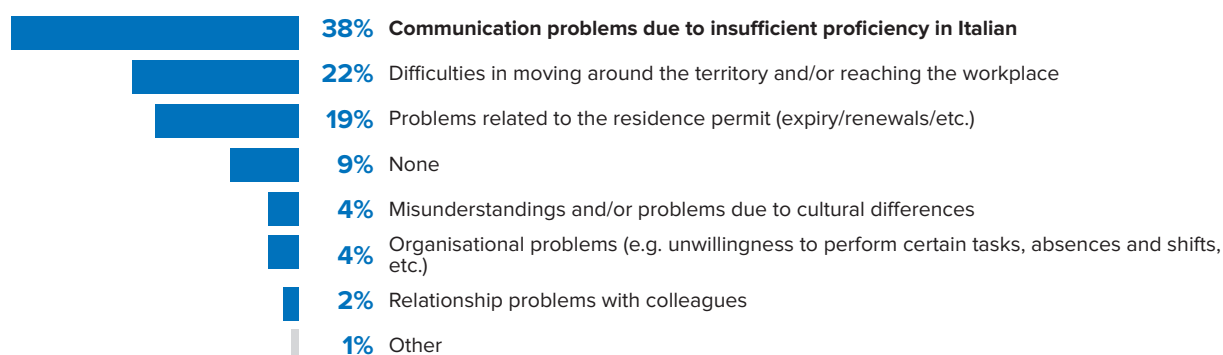
FOCUS 2024

Among the most significant challenges affecting refugee employment pathways are **limited proficiency in Italian** and various **administrative and bureaucratic barriers** – such as issues related to the expiry and renewal of residence permits or difficulties in opening a bank account. These factors, along with **logistical challenges** related to transportation, are among the main obstacles refugees face in building successful integration pathways. In contrast, interpersonal difficulties with colleagues or misunderstandings arising from cultural differences are reported to be largely marginal.

F14 – MAIN OBSTACLES FOR COMPANIES IN REFUGEE IDENTIFICATION AND HIRING PROCESS



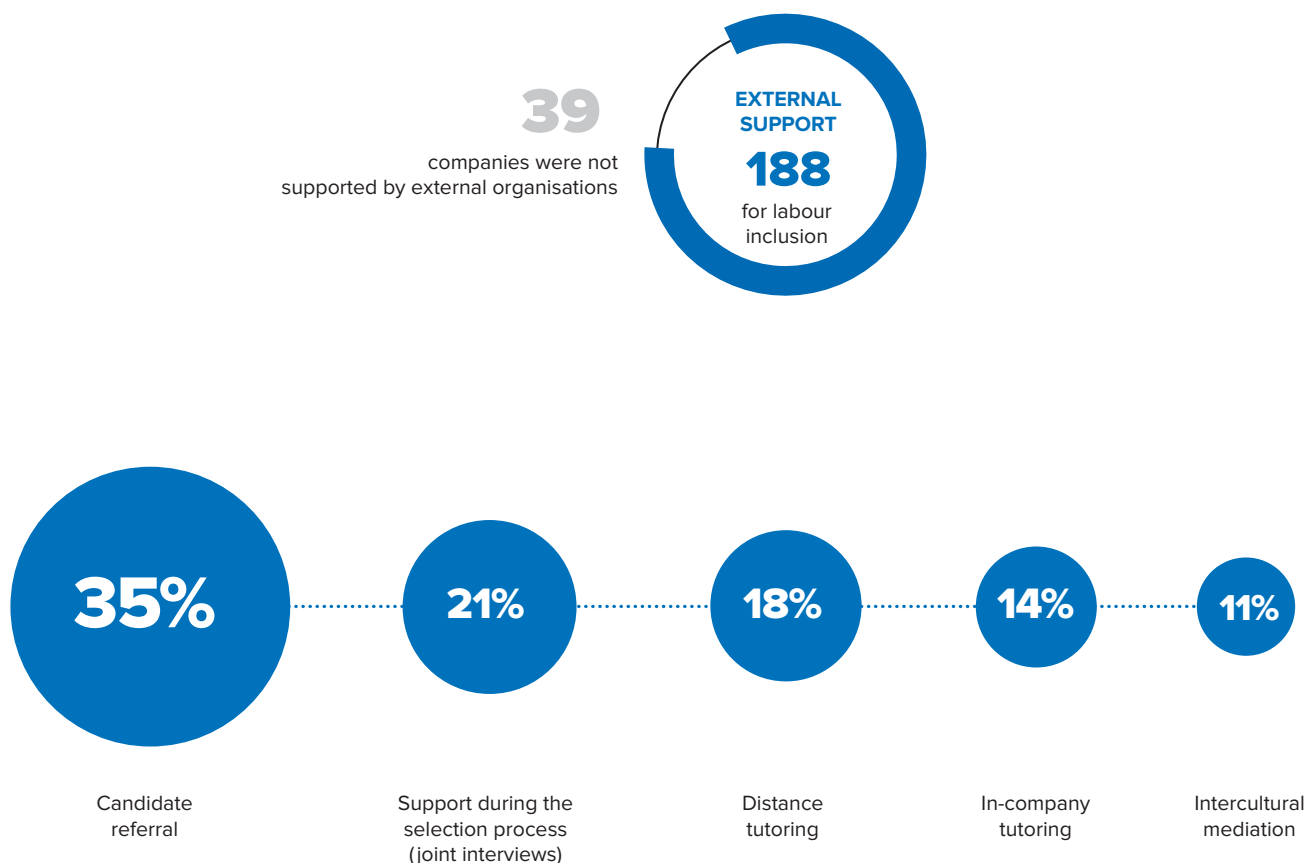
F15 – MAIN OBSTACLES FOR COMPANIES IN REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT



FOCUS 2024

F16 – SUPPORT BY EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

The involvement of external bodies and organisations has proven to be crucial in facilitating the employment of refugees, with **83%** of companies reporting that they have made use of such support. These actors play a particularly **vital role** in the stages of **candidate referral, selection, and mentoring**, significantly contributing to the success of workplace integration.

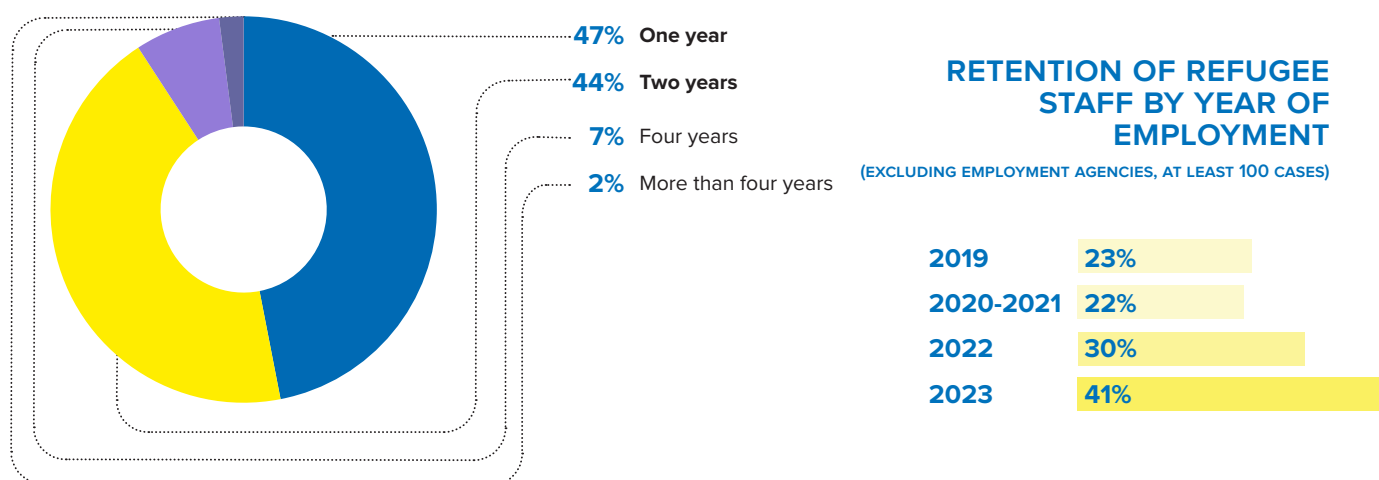


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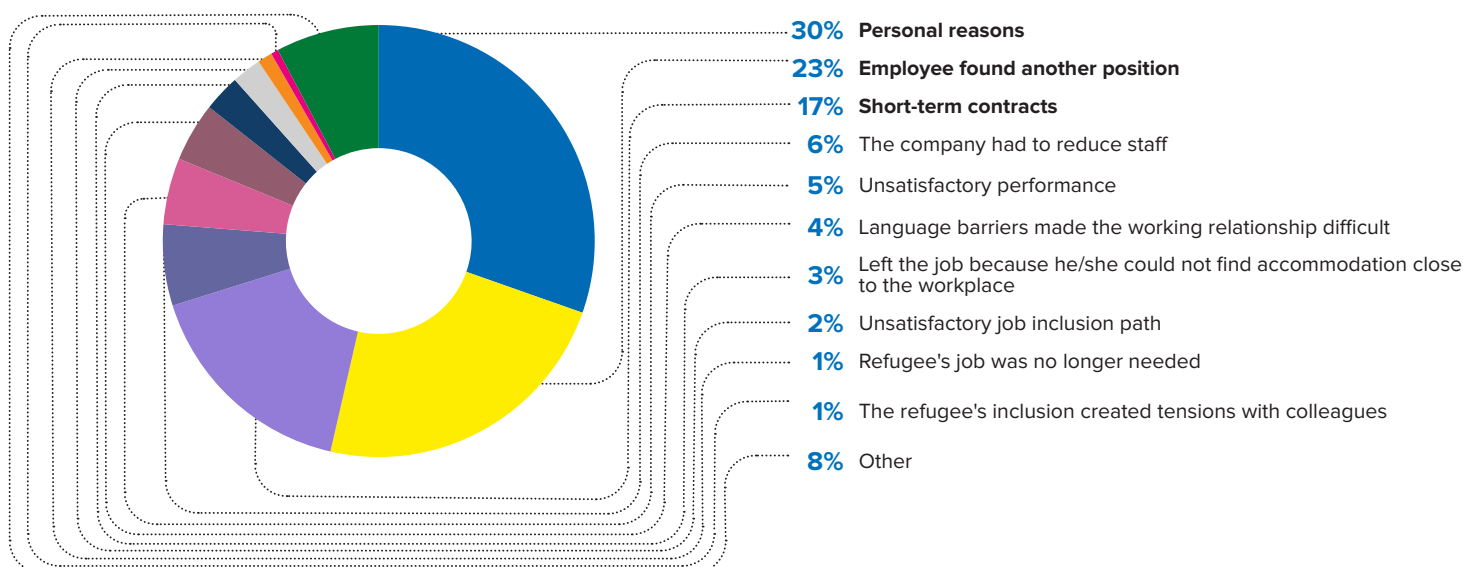
F17 – RETENTION RATES AMONG EMPLOYEES HIRED BY WELCOME AWARD-WINNING COMPANIES

In the 2024 edition, for the first time, companies that had previously been awarded the *Welcome* logo provided data on the **retention of refugee** staff over the years. Among the 43% of past award-winning companies that shared this information, **91%** reported an average employment duration of **between one and two years**. Additionally, **29%** of refugees employed were retained **from 2019**, and **41% from 2023**.

It is important to interpret these figures in light of the fact that, in previous editions, over 90% of employment pathways were initiated through fixed-term contracts, a significant proportion of which were temporary agency contracts. This naturally affects overall retention rates; for example, employment agencies have reported an average retention rate of less than 5% over the past four years. Moreover, it is not currently possible to statistically assess the continuity of job inclusion pathways when contracts are no longer managed by the original employment agency, even in cases where the job placement has effectively continued.



It is also important in this analysis to highlight the main reasons why individuals previously hired are no longer employed by the company. These include **personal choices** and the decision to **pursue other job opportunities**. In 17% of cases, non-retention was due to the nature of **fixed-term contracts**, which are limited in duration. Only 7% of cases were attributed to company decisions based on underperformance. Additionally, although less frequent, language barriers and limited access to independent housing continue to impact retention. These factors underscore the importance of **developing targeted, coordinated actions** that can positively influence the integration pathways of refugees.



The *Welcome-in-one-click* platform

Launched at the end of 2023, the [Welcome-in-one-click](#) platform became fully operational in 2024. This innovative digital tool, developed by UNHCR in partnership with the Adecco Foundation, was designed with a dual purpose: to digitise the approach of the *Welcome. Working for refugee integration* programme, which is based on the co-design of labour inclusion pathways by multiple stakeholders, and to ensure that refugees living in Italy have broad access to job and training opportunities, as well as to the employment services offered through the *WelcomeNet*.

The success of the *Welcome* programme and the growing interest from companies in hiring refugees have highlighted the need for a centralised tool capable of fulfilling several key functions: systematising information on the geographical distribution and professional profiles of refugee jobseekers; streamlining the connection between companies and refugees; and supporting those outside the reception system by linking them to organisations within the *WelcomeNet* network.

The platform offers tailored functionalities for four key stakeholder groups. **Refugees** can create a professional profile, upload their CV, browse and apply for job and training opportunities, and connect with a *WelcomeNet* organisation. **Companies** and **training providers** can register, post job, internship, and training offers, and view candidate profiles. With support from UNHCR and the *WelcomeNet*, **companies** can also co-design employment inclusion pathways. **WelcomeNet** members assist refugees in creating profiles, identifying suitable opportunities and liaising directly with companies to facilitate tailored inclusion pathways, thereby strengthening collaboration within local and regional networks.

Periodic data extraction from the platform provides a comprehensive overview of all stakeholders involved and a detailed insight into the refugee population. Jobseekers are distributed across the country, with notable concentrations in Lazio, Campania, Piedmont, Lombardy, and Apulia – regions where *Welcome Liaison Officers* and *Spazi Comuni* are active, confirming the positive impact of these initiatives. The educational background of registered refugees is also noteworthy: while one-third report having completed only primary education, around 20% hold higher education qualifications, including degrees and postgraduate degrees. The most common fields of study include Business Administration and Engineering, followed by Law, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Computer Science.

The platform's first year focused on onboarding users. Approximately 130 companies and training organisations registered and published hundreds of opportunities for the 700 refugees who completed their profiles and actively use the tool. In 2025, efforts will concentrate on enhancing platform engagement. Through targeted activities that facilitate matching between job offers and refugee skillsets, companies will be notified of the most suitable candidates, while refugees will be directed to opportunities aligned with their qualifications and aspirations. In just over a year since its launch, the *Welcome-in-one-click* platform has become an essential component of the programme, significantly enriching the *Welcome* initiative!



Refugees and business: the Labour Corridors

Engaging in an innovative pathway that enables refugees to enter Italy in a regulated and safe manner for employment – while addressing labour and skills shortages – is the opportunity embraced by the first companies that enthusiastically supported UNHCR and its partners' proposal for the **Labour Corridors for Refugees**.

With the enactment of Law No. 50 on 5 May 2023, Italy became one of the first countries to establish a regular entry route for refugees and stateless persons to access employment. For the 2023–2025 period, 250 annual quotas have been reserved for these groups, with future programming for the next three-year period currently under development. One of the most notable innovations introduced by Law 50/23 is the possibility for refugees and stateless persons who have completed vocational and civic-linguistic training abroad to access so-called "extra-quota" work visas, allowing them to work and reside in Italy (pursuant to Article 23 of Legislative Decree 286/98, as amended by Law 50/23).

Many of the companies that chose to participate in this initiative are part of the *Welcome. Working for refugee integration* programme and have been recognised in current and previous editions. Others joined along the way. The project *Ready For IT – Labour Pathways for Refugees*, focused on Uganda and the Information Technology sector, is led by **Fondazione Italiana Accenture** and involves seven companies: **Accenture**, **Reale Mutua – Reale Ites**, **Aubay**, **Dedagroup**, **OverIT**, **Btinkeeng**, and **Valuetech**. The company and employment agency **Oriente** launched *Sailing into the Future from Egypt*, in the shipbuilding sector. The *Goldsmith for Italy* project, focused on Jordan, was presented by the training agency **Professional School for Goldsmiths "E.G. Ghirardi"** for ten refugees who will be employed by **Mattioli** in the goldsmith sector. The *Wings for a New Future* project, in the airport sector, is led by the **Skillab** training agency and will bring a group of refugees from Colombia to work for **Aviapartner** in Italy.

The goal for the coming months is to further expand the number of beneficiaries of the Labour Corridors, offering effective protection pathways to refugees in countries of first asylum, while helping to address labour shortages in Italy and support economic development and innovation. At the same time, the initiative aims to foster growth in countries of origin by equipping workers with skills that may enable them to return and contribute to their home communities, should conditions improve.

Despite the challenges, the programme has already demonstrated its effectiveness: the first refugees have arrived in Naples and Turin, with more expected in these and other cities throughout 2025 – totalling over seventy workers in the first year of implementation. New projects are currently being developed in the healthcare and transport sectors.

The **Labour Corridors for Refugees** are the result of a collaborative initiative involving UNHCR, Diaconia Valdese, Talent Beyond Boundaries, and Pathways International, in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, and the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. A broad network of partners actively contributes to the initiative, including the Unione Industriali di Torino, the International Trade Centre (ITC), and various international and local organisations. UNHCR and its partners support companies in identifying housing solutions and facilitating the integration of refugee workers. The Labour Corridors for Refugees are promoted thanks to the support of ACRI – Associazione di Fondazioni e di Casse di Risparmio Spa, Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo, The Human Safety Net, Reale Foundation, and Fondazione Conad ETS.

For further information you may contact:
mittendo@unhcr.org or pecoraro@unhcr.org

FOCUS 2024

Special mention



Lafarmacia., Italy's leading pharmacy retailer, has long placed health as a universal right and individual wellbeing as a shared value at the heart of its vision. With a widespread network of pharmacies across the country, the Group has established itself not only as a trusted provider of care, but also as a socially responsible and inclusive actor.

The *Progetto Ucraina*, launched in 2024 in response to the humanitarian crisis caused by the ongoing conflict, reflects this commitment. The initiative has enabled 18 Ukrainian pharmacists to access housing, training, and employment opportunities within the Group's pharmacies, demonstrating the company's dedication to community support and the civic role of pharmacists. Through comprehensive assistance, Lafarmacia. has helped beneficiaries build on their existing skills, facilitating both professional and linguistic integration, while also providing administrative support for the recognition of their qualifications. The outcomes speak to stories of renewal, warmly welcomed colleagues, and mutual enrichment for the teams involved.

Until February 2022, Oksana Odynska lived in Ivano-Frankivs'k, western Ukraine, where her life revolved around her profession as a pharmacist. Holding degrees in both linguistics and pharmacy, she managed a 24-hour pharmacy. Then came the war. "My professional dream was interrupted, adding to the pain of war and the despair of fleeing with my child," Oksana recalls. With her 11-year-old son, she boarded a bus and crossed Europe, carrying only a small suitcase, speaking no Italian, and knowing no one. "I was ready to start from scratch, even after years of study and practice, but I knew I wouldn't be truly happy working again unless I could reclaim my professional identity."

Upon arriving in Italy, she initially found work as a waitress and domestic helper. After gaining some fluency in Italian, she secured a job as a stockist in a pharmacy. However, due to bureaucratic complications surrounding the renewal of her residence permit, her contract was not extended, and she had to resume her job search.

She then discovered the project promoted by Lafarmacia.Lipomo, which offered support and employment opportunities to Ukrainian pharmacists who had fled the conflict. A new chapter began. Since 1 June 2024, Oksana has been working at Lafarmacia.Lipomo, initially shadowing colleagues at the counter. Her team admires her resilience, saying: "Seeing her so determined and passionate every day is an inspiration. Despite everything she has endured, Oksana works with enthusiasm, humility, and exceptional professionalism. She immediately bonded with the team and is a true asset to the pharmacy, both personally and professionally." Today, Oksana is employed as a collaborating pharmacist under the special provisions introduced by Italian law for Ukrainian professionals, and she is currently completing the process to have her qualifications formally recognised.

The *Progetto Ucraina* initiative was designed to support female pharmacists on their journey back into employment, offering language courses, legal and administrative assistance, help with qualification recognition procedures, and – where possible – practical support with relocation and housing. "Our *Progetto Ucraina* is a tremendous opportunity for everyone," said Davide Tavaniello, Co-CEO of Lafarmacia. "For Ukrainian pharmacists, it offers the chance to resume their professional careers in a stimulating and respectful environment where they are valued both as professionals and as individuals. For our pharmacists, it's an opportunity to grow by engaging with colleagues from diverse backgrounds. For Lafarmacia., it means welcoming a highly qualified workforce at a time when recruiting healthcare professionals remains a significant challenge."

Photo ©Lafarmacia.



2. The WeWelcome logo



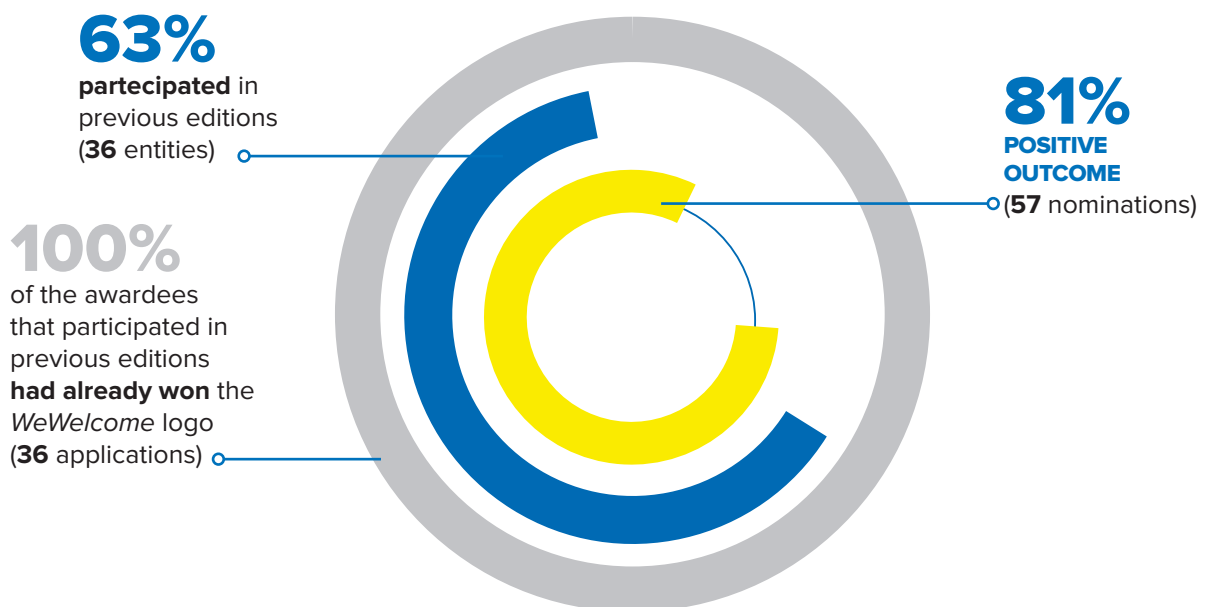
2.1 AWARDED INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS

F18 – TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICANTS AND AWARDEES

The *WeWelcome* logo recognises the commitment of public and private stakeholders in facilitating the labour market integration of **forcibly displaced** individuals, highlighting their central role in fostering a more inclusive workforce.

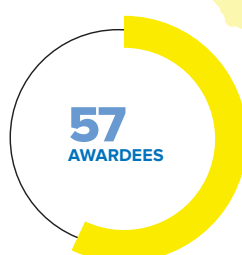
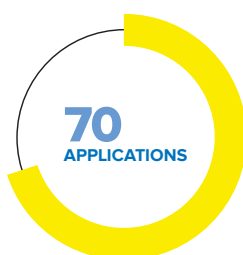
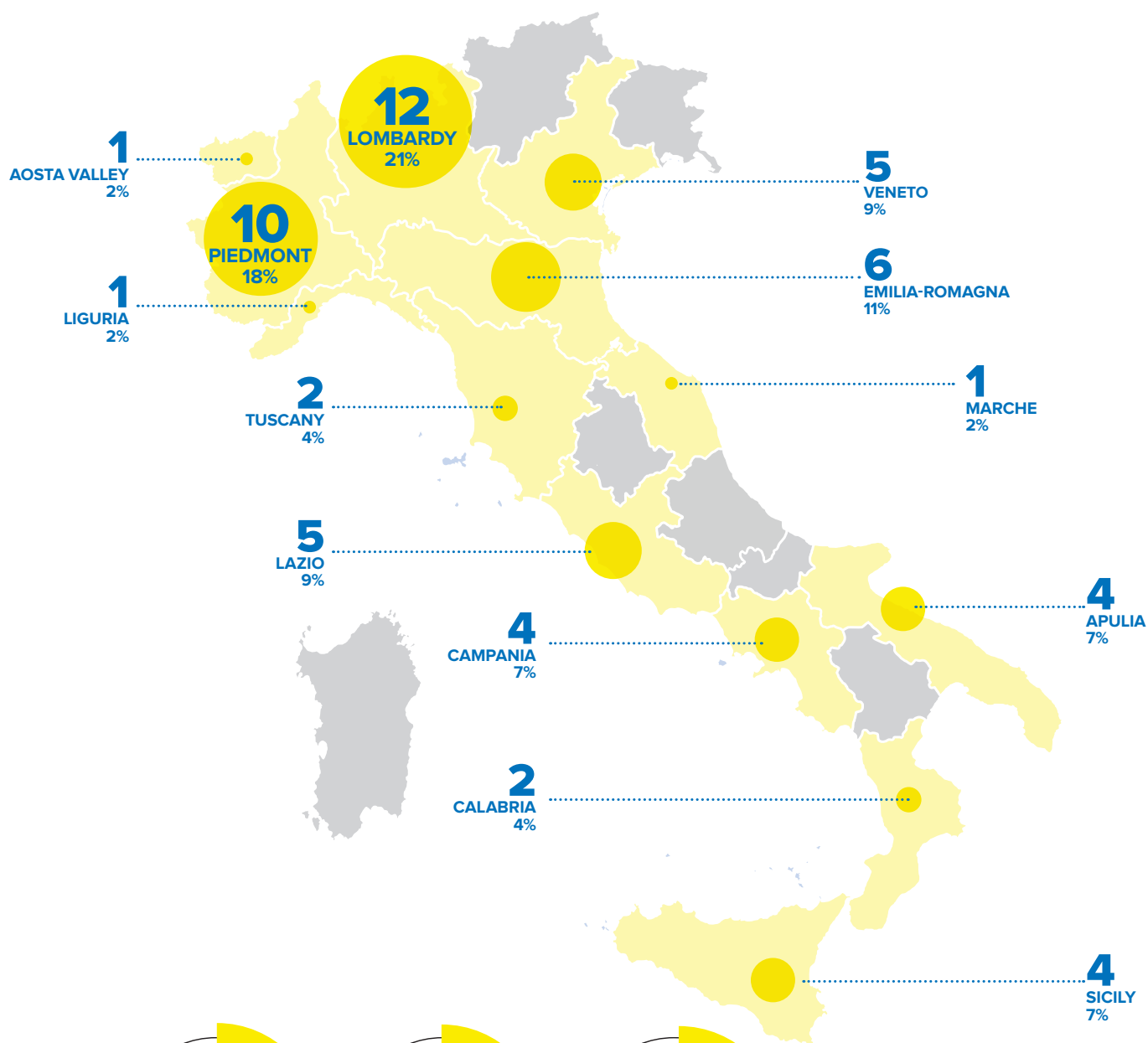
In 2024, **70 entities and civil society organisations** from 15 regions took part in the programme. Of these, **57 were awarded** the *WeWelcome* logo, having promoted job inclusion pathways in collaboration with companies that were themselves recipients of the *Welcome* logo.

Notably, **63% of the awardees** had participated in previous editions of the programme, having **already received the *WeWelcome* logo** in earlier years.



FOCUS 2024

F19 – AWARDED ENTITIES BY REGION



FOCUS 2024

Carving the future: the story of Fanto

Echo Labs

Echo Labs is a non-profit social enterprise founded by FERCAM and DACHSER, dedicated to advancing social innovation and sustainability within the logistics supply chain. Among its strategic priorities is the job inclusion of individuals in vulnerable circumstances, with a particular focus on international protection holders. Since 2022, Echo Labs has launched training and professional development programmes in the artisanal and environmental sectors, providing young refugees with a structured environment that fosters growth, dignity, and recognition. This initiative has reaffirmed the transformative power of work as a tool for integration – enabling individuals to cultivate their talents, build meaningful relationships, and reclaim an active role in society. The Echo Labs social carpentry

workshop, in particular, has emerged as a true incubator of professional and personal development, generating shared value for both the local community and the individuals involved.

Since 2022, Echo Labs has also been a participant in *Welcome. Working for refugee integration*, a programme promoted by UNHCR and supported by organisations within the *WeWelcome* network. The initiative recognises companies that implement tangible pathways for refugee labour inclusion. Echo Labs aims to strengthen its involvement in the programme, fully leveraging the opportunities it presents and fostering concrete collaborations with the national network of businesses, third-sector organisations, and institutions engaged in this mission.

THE STORY OF FANTO

Samake Fanto is 19 years old, originally from Mali. He arrived in Italy nearly three years ago, following a long and arduous journey that began when he was just 14. Fleeing conflict in the dead of night with his sister, the war tore his family apart. Tragically, during the crossing from Libya, he lost his sister at sea. He reached Malta, where he remained for almost two years before arriving in Italy. Today, Fanto lives in Rome and works as a carpenter at the Echo Labs workshop, where he is known for his enthusiasm, curiosity, and determination. Upon arriving in Italy, his first goal was to pursue education. He successfully completed his middle school qualification and, with the support of Echo Labs, now attends afternoon classes to earn his diploma. "I enjoy studying," he says, "so I can learn Italian properly."

His journey has been guided by a strong desire to grow, learn, and become self-sufficient. From the outset, Fanto expressed a keen interest in learning a trade. This led him to the K_Alma social carpentry workshop, a partner of Echo Labs located in Rome's *Città dell'Altra Economia*. There, he discovered a passion for working with wood and acquired the foundational skills of the craft. The workshop fosters a family-like atmosphere – where humour, creativity, and collaboration make each day an opportunity to engage, smile, and support one another.

Today, Fanto is capable of working independently, interpreting technical drawings, and mentoring newcomers in the trade. His dedication and reliability earned him a place in the *Giovani Adulti* project, promoted by the Social Policies Department of the Municipality of Rome in collaboration with ASP Asilo Savoia. He now lives in a co-housing arrangement with three other young people in an intercultural and stimulating environment. "It's nice to live together, to get to know each other, to share," he says. "My Italian roommate and I share a room—we help each other."

The project provides ongoing support, with a tutor guiding Fanto through daily life and helping him plan for the future. That future is becoming increasingly tangible: he has secured a permanent contract with Echo Labs, is preparing to obtain his driving licence, and dreams of having a home of his own.

Dino Menichetti, President of Echo Labs, reflects:

"We were fortunate to meet a young man who, despite having lost so much, continues to face the world with determination and a disarming smile. These young artisans value their time and the work they do, showing great enthusiasm and commitment. We at Echo Labs are grateful to have Fanto with us – he has taught us a great deal about humanity, courage, and kindness in the face of adversity."

Fanto's story is a testament to the fact that inclusion is not merely a goal, but a continuous process built on relationships, opportunities, and trust. When well-structured, this process can lead to new, solid, and shared pathways in life.



Photo © Echo Labs

FOCUS 2024

Inclusion generating social value

Coop Liguria

Coop Liguria is a consumer cooperative established to meet the needs of families. Its profits are not distributed among shareholders but reinvested to enhance the retail network, improve services and working conditions, and support the local community. Social responsibility is a core part of its identity: Coop Liguria is committed to environmental protection, the promotion of cultural and natural heritage, and the organisation of cultural and community activities for members and citizens. It also offers educational programmes for schools and supports initiatives aimed at combating poverty, such as *Dona la Spesa*, *Spesa Sospesa*, and the *Buon Fine* programme, which donates surplus food. While Coop Liguria has always embraced inclusion, a dedicated project involving refugees was launched in 2022, thanks to its collaboration with Father Vitalji Tarasenko, chaplain of the Ukrainian community in Genoa. The cooperative had made a donation to his association, *Pokrova*, which is committed to supporting refugees fleeing the war. With Father Vitalji's assistance in overcoming linguistic and bureaucratic barriers, Coop Liguria was

able to employ an initial group of Ukrainian refugees, followed by others.

To date, 48 refugees have worked or are still working with Coop Liguria, including six deaf individuals who are part of protected categories. Of those initially hired on temporary contracts, ten have continued their journey with the cooperative, securing permanent roles or training contracts such as apprenticeships. Beyond its work with the Ukrainian community, Coop Liguria remains open to employing refugees who demonstrate a willingness to engage and learn. This is exemplified by the story of Mouhamed Sadek, who arrived in Italy from Niger and is now a Trainee Department Head at the Ipercoop in Albenga—a high-level managerial training programme that will lead to a position of responsibility. Coop Liguria has also recently entered into an agreement with Defence for Children International Italia to provide job placement opportunities for young adults in mentoring programmes who arrived in Italy as unaccompanied minors.

THE STORY OF MOUHAMED

Mouhamed Ali Sadek was born in Niger and arrived in Italy in 2016 at the age of just 19. He joined Coop Liguria in 2021 on a three-month fixed-term contract, following a chance meeting with Cosimo Giudice, Director of Ipercoop Mondovì, while volunteering with Caritas. Prior to this, he had held various jobs across Italy and spent time in France, where he hoped to resume his studies in geography, history, and anthropology. He also faced serious health challenges, which have fortunately now been fully resolved. After his initial contract was renewed, Sadek – known by his surname among colleagues – was offered the opportunity to embark on a training pathway to become a Trainee Department Manager. This demanding programme combines theoretical instruction with hands-on experience in-store. He currently manages

the fruit and vegetable department at Ipercoop Le Serre in Albenga, working alongside his tutor. "I'm doing well," he says, "although I sometimes struggle with the language, as I'm French-speaking. But my colleagues and the director are always supportive. I enjoy the course because it prepares you to become a real entrepreneur. My dream is to return to my country one day and build something there, even though it's facing many challenges and is not safe at the moment. Now that my Italian has improved, I'd also like to start studying again. Although I'm a bit shy about being in the spotlight, I agreed to this interview because I think it's important for other refugees to see that it's possible to integrate and build a future here in Italy." Director Cosimo Giudice adds:

"Sadek is a very cheerful presence at work, but in private he's more reserved. He's self-restrained, while we Italians tend to be expressive and quick to form close relationships. His natural reserve can sometimes be misunderstood by those who don't know him well. When undertaking a placement like this, it's important to recognise that communication challenges may arise and to work together to overcome them. For instance, Sadek finds acronyms and abbreviations difficult, so we've tried to simplify things for him – assigning him to the fruit and vegetable department, which is a bit more straightforward in that regard."

Photo © Coop Liguria



FOCUS 2024

Beyond the frontiers of law: Mohammad's journey *Studio Legale CRCCD*

Cappelli Riolo Calderaro Crisostomo Del Din & Partners (CRCCD) is an independent Italian law firm with a strong international outlook. It provides legal assistance and advisory services to industrial and commercial enterprises, financial institutions, institutional investors, and private equity and venture capital funds operating in both Italian and global markets.

For several years, the firm has maintained an ESG Committee dedicated to promoting and implementing initiatives in social responsibility, both internally and externally. Among its recent endeavours, CRCCD has joined the *Welcome* project, an initiative led by UNHCR – the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees – designed to foster labour integration

pathways for refugees.

Within this framework, CRCCD welcomed Mohammad Qasim Shamal, an Afghan refugee and qualified lawyer in his home country. For the firm, this collaboration represents a tangible example of inclusion and a commitment to a fairer, more open society. It is a mutually enriching experience, offering Mohammad a professional development path aligned with his legal background, while bringing valuable perspective and diversity to the firm.

Crucial to Mohammad's successful integration was the support provided by the *Welcome* programme network, particularly through the dedicated efforts of the *Welcome Liaison Officers*, who offered expert guidance throughout his journey.

THE STORY OF MOHAMMAD

Mohammad is 29 years old and holds a three-year law degree, awarded by a public university in Afghanistan in 2015 and formally recognised in Italy. Since 2022, he has been pursuing a degree in International Relations at the Catholic University of Milan. Following his graduation in Afghanistan, Mohammad worked for four years with the Citizens' Charter National Priority Programme—an inter-ministerial local development initiative of the former Afghan government, planned and funded with support from the World Bank. In this role, he served as a trainer and analyst, focusing on the organisation and evaluation of community involvement in rural development projects. Alongside his professional work, Mohammad was actively engaged with the International Law Students Association, serving as co-coordinator of its activities in Afghanistan. He notably coached the Afghan team participating in the Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition, in which he also competed, spending time in Washington D.C. His involvement in US-affiliated programmes placed him at risk following the return of the Taliban regime, forcing him to flee Afghanistan.

In the tense days leading up to the fall of Kabul, Mohammad and his family were evacuated under critical conditions – just hours before the borders were closed – thanks to their inclusion on evacuation lists coordinated by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Italian Army. This was made possible through the intervention of journalist Monica Maggioni, who recounts the story in her book *Spettri*. After arriving in Italy, Mohammad completed a six-month internship in the People & Culture department at IKEA Italy. In July 2024, he began a traineeship at CRCCD as part of the UNHCR *Welcome* project. His initial role focused on knowledge management activities, including potential applications of artificial intelligence, maintaining the firm's library database, and conducting legal research in international law and English to support the litigation team. Mohammad speaks Farsi (his mother tongue), Pashto, English, and a good level of Italian. His skills and potential were immediately evident, although some challenges emerged in legal research due to language barriers. To support his integration into the firm's professional environment, his internship was renewed and expanded to include a broader range of legal and administrative tasks across five practice areas: structured finance, corporate law, capital markets, labour law, and litigation. Mohammad's involvement with the firm continues, with a view to a comprehensive evaluation of his potential for long-term inclusion within the team.



Photo © Studio Legale CRCCD

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List of awarded entities



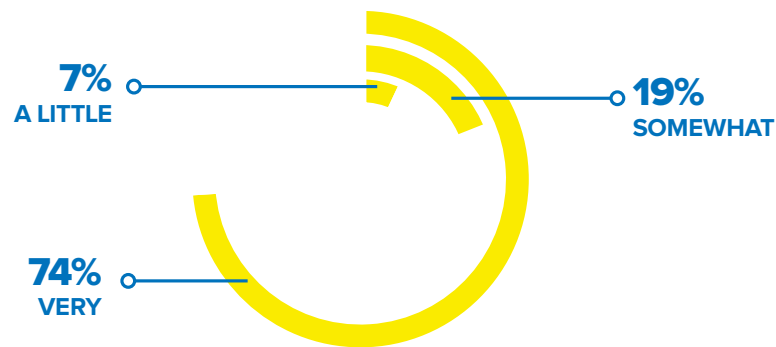
- AGORÀ SOCIETÀ COOPERATIVA SOCIALE
- ANCE BRESCIA
- ARCA DI NOÈ SOCIETÀ COOPERATIVA SOCIALE
- ARCI SOLIDARIETÀ VITERBO IMPRESA SOCIALE
- ASSOCIAZIONE CONSORZIO COMMUNITAS ETS
- ASSOCIAZIONE DI PROMOZIONE SOCIALE CAMBALACHE
- ASSOCIAZIONE DIAKONIA ONLUS
- ASSOCIAZIONE DON BOSCO 2000-IMPRESA SOCIALE
- ASSOCIAZIONE IL MONDO NELLA CITTÀ ONLUS
- ASSOCIAZIONE NEXT APS
- ASSOCIAZIONE PAÏS - PERCORSI DI ACCOMPAGNAMENTO E INCLUSIONE SOCIALE
- ASSOCIAZIONE POPOLI INSIEME ODV
- CIAC ETS
- CIDAS SOC COOP A RL IMPRESA SOCIALE
- CIES ONLUS
- CO.GE.S. DON MILANI SOCIETÀ COOPERATIVA SOCIALE
- COMMISSIONE SINODALE PER LA DIACONIA-CSD
- COMUNE DI ADELFA
- CONSORZIO MESTIERI PUGLIA SCS
- CONSORZIO UMANA SOLIDARIETÀ SCS
- COOP21 COOPERATIVA SOCIALE
- COOPERATIVA ANIMAZIONE VALDOCCO SOCIETÀ COOPERATIVA SOCIALE IMPRESA SOCIALE ONLUS
- COOPERATIVA BABEL SCS - ONLUS
- COOPERATIVA LOTTA CONTRO L'EMARGINAZIONE
- COOPERATIVA OPERA PROSSIMA SCS
- COOPERATIVA SAN FRANCESCO SCS
- CRESCEREINSIEME SCS ONLUS
- CROCE ROSSA ITALIANA COMITATO DI MILANO
- DEDALUS COOPERATIVA SOCIALE
- DIALOGOS SOCIETÀ COOPERATIVA SOCIALE
- DYNAMO ACADEMY SRL IMPRESA SOCIALE
- ESEB
- ETNIE APS ETS
- EUROCOOP SERVIZI
- FONDAZIONE CITTÀ SOLIDALE
- FONDAZIONE GEOS ETS
- FONDAZIONE HUMAN AGE INSTITUTE ETS
- FONDAZIONE ITALIANA ACCENTURE ETS
- FORMA-RE-TE
- GENERAZIONE VINCENTE ACADEMY
- I.F.O.A.
- I.S.O.L.A. (INCLUSIONE SOCIALE, ORIENTAMENTO, LAVORO E ACCOGLIENZA), HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER
- LE SOLEIL
- MEDIHOSPES COOPERATIVA SOCIALE
- MESTIERI LOMBARDIA BERGAMO - CONSORZIO DI COOPERATIVE SOCIALI SCS
- MESTIERI LOMBARDIA U.O. CREMONA
- ON THE ROAD SOCIETÀ COOPERATIVA SOCIALE
- PERCORSI CONSORZIO DI COOPERATIVE SOCIALI
- PROGETTO TENDA SCS
- PROGRAMMA INTEGRA
- RANDSTAD HR SOLUTIONS
- "SALE DELLA TERRA" CONSORZIO PREVALENTEMENTE DI COOPERATIVE SOCIALI, SOC COOP CONSORT ETS
- SISTECH
- SISTEDIL - SISTEMA EDILE PER LA FORMAZIONE E LA SICUREZZA DELLA PROVINCIA DI ALESSANDRIA
- SOLETERRE ETS
- STUDIO PROGETTO SOC COOP SOC
- UNION SOCIAL COOPERATIVES - COOPERATIVA SOCIALE

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2.2 REASONS TO APPLY FOR THE WEWELCOME LOGO

F20 – TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU CONSIDER THE *WELCOME. WORKING FOR REFUGEE INTEGRATION* LOGO A USEFUL TOOL TO ENCOURAGE COMPANIES TO EMPLOY REFUGEES?

Almost all organisations (93%) that collaborated with companies to develop employment inclusion pathways and received the *WeWelcome* 2024 award consider the *Welcome. Working for refugee integration* logo a valuable tool for encouraging businesses to employ refugees.

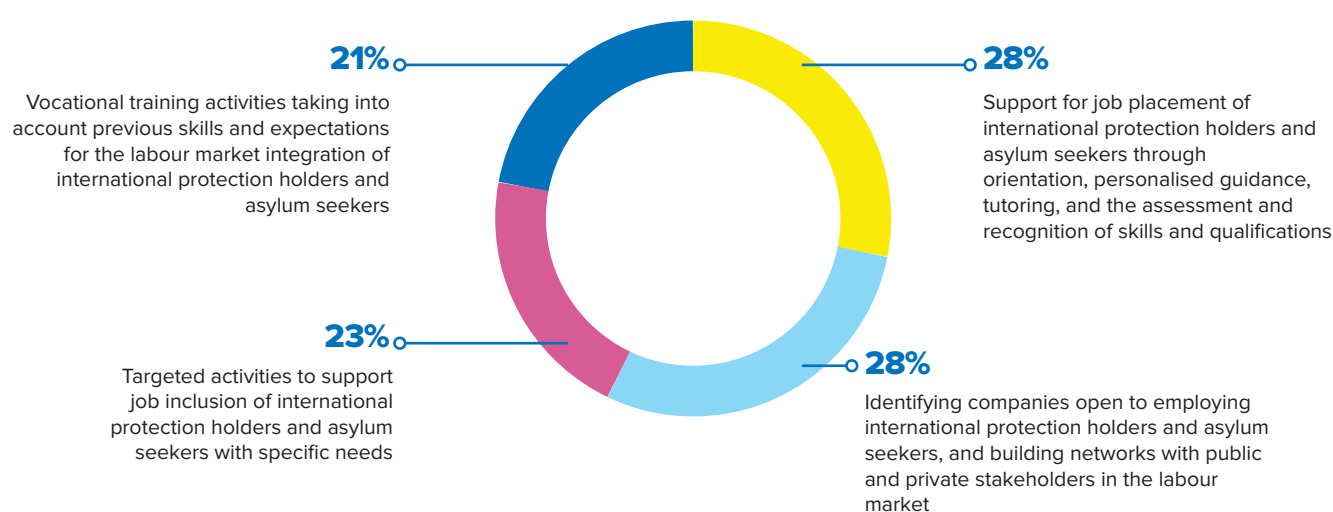


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2.3 INCLUSION INITIATIVES PROMOTED BY WEWELCOME AWARDEES

F21 – ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT THE LABOUR INCLUSION OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION HOLDERS AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

The organisations awarded the *WeWelcome* 2024 logo report that the main activities undertaken to activate labour inclusion pathways included **company scouting, orientation, personalised support, and tutoring**, alongside **vocational training programmes** tailored to the individuals involved. These initiatives were designed to enhance the employability of refugees by recognising, developing, and strengthening their existing skills and competencies—ultimately fostering meaningful and sustainable access to the labour market.



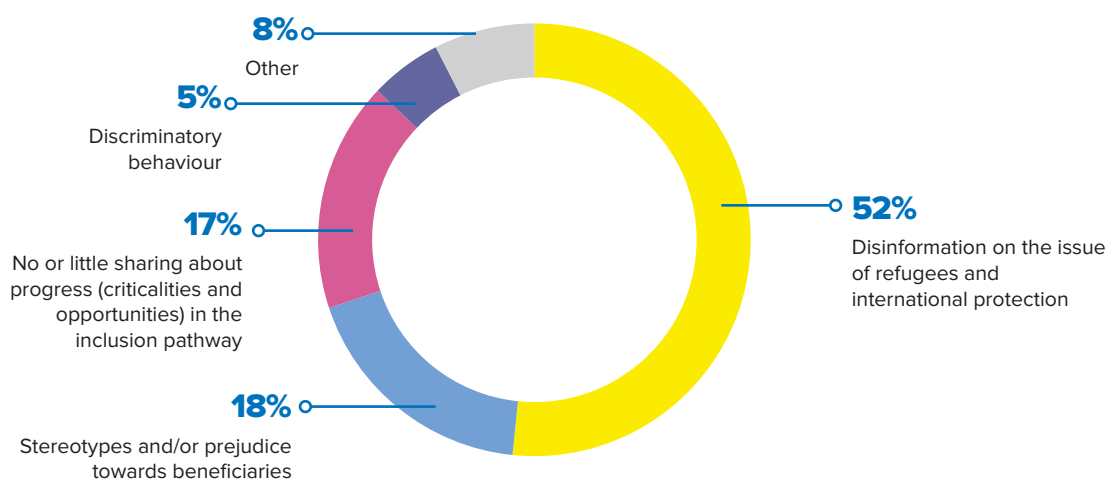
F22 – SUPPORT PROVIDED TO COMPANIES

By leveraging their expertise and networks, *WeWelcome* awardees provided tangible support to companies throughout the refugee job inclusion process, while also offering guidance to the individuals involved. Their efforts were instrumental in initiating labour inclusion pathways through a range of actions, including **identifying suitable candidate profiles**, assisting companies with **administrative procedures** for internship activation, participating in interviews, and **supporting the selection process**. In many cases, their involvement continued beyond the initial placement, through ongoing tutoring and intercultural mediation. Some organisations also undertook awareness-raising activities to help companies better understand the importance of inclusion for people forced to flee.



F23 – CHALLENGES IN ENGAGING WITH COMPANIES

Thanks to their ongoing dialogue and close contact with businesses, *WeWelcome* award recipients are particularly well-placed to identify criticalities in the collaboration as well as key factors to the success of refugee inclusion pathways. The most frequently reported issue remains a **lack of awareness** around international protection and the realities faced by refugees, often compounded by persistent **stereotypes and prejudices**. Another challenge is the limited exchange of information regarding the progress of inclusion initiatives, highlighting the need in some cases to strengthen coordination between organisations and companies, as well as to increase awareness-raising efforts directed at employers.



F24 – INTERESTS OF WEWELCOME AWARDEES

Responses from *WeWelcome* award-winning organisations reveal a strong interest across several key areas: **learning from good practices and successful experiences** of other organisations; accessing **tools and materials** to effectively manage employment inclusion pathways; and staying informed about available **incentives and support measures** that encourage refugee employment. Organisations expressed interest in participating in events and training on inclusion issues. They also expressed enthusiasm for participating in events and training sessions focused on inclusion. These responses highlight the potential of the **WelcomeNet** – a network designed to foster the exchange of experiences and provide tailored training opportunities. This added value of the programme plays a vital role in helping members enhance their capacity to activate effective and sustainable labour inclusion pathways.

