



www.coe.int/lang-refugees

LIAM Project:
Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants
www.coe.int/lang-migrants



Language Support for Adult Refugees: a Council of Europe toolkit.

Report on piloting carried out in Italy from February to April 2017

Introduction

The piloting of the Council of Europe LIAM Toolkit took place in Italy from 13 February to 5 April 2017. Lorenzo Rocca, a member of the LIAM group and contributor to the toolkit, coordinated the work of 18 local coordinators at national level via weekly meetings that were conducted face-to-face and using Skype. The first meeting was held in Perugia at the end of January to share aims, guidelines and timetable.

Aims

The aims were to collect general feedback on the toolkit and to elicit detailed information on the use of specific tools.

Guidelines

Users were free to decide which tools to pilot, depending on their specific context and the needs of their group. Nine variables had an impact on the piloting: whether participants

1. had already started to offer language support (so that the toolkit came in the middle of a process);
2. were just starting to offer language support (so that the toolkit came at the beginning of a process);
3. were working only with refugees in transit;
4. were also supporting refugees in a situation that was medium-term or related to long-term settlement;
5. were working only inside a reception centre;
6. were working only or also outside a reception centre;
7. were providing support only for asylum seekers;
8. were providing support only for refugees;
9. had asylum seekers and refugees together in the same group.

In addition to these variables, it was necessary to take account of large variations in the numbers of learners volunteers were working with. Sometimes they had to manage small groups, but more often they were working with large groups. The minimum ratio was two volunteers to every six learners (1:3) and the maximum was ten to every 175 learners (1:17.5).

Timetable

As *Table 1* shows, during the first part of February participants were able to review the entire toolkit (58 items) in its English-language version. Then the national coordinator sent the local coordinators Italian translations of the tools to be piloted. Data was collected using the instruments designed for the purpose (see section 1) during the first ten days of April, after which the national coordinator sent participants a letter of thanks from the Council of Europe and began to analyse the data.

Table 1 Piloting schedule

31 Jan – 13 Feb	Overview of toolkit (English-language version)
14 Feb – 5 Apr	Piloting of selected tools (translated into Italian)
First week of Apr	Data collection using the instruments designed for the purpose (Appendixes 1 and 2)
10 Apr	Letter of thanks from the Council of Europe sent to all participating volunteers
10 – 20 Apr	Data analysis

1. Instruments used for the piloting

1.1 Questionnaire (see Appendix 1)

All volunteers who took part in the piloting were asked to respond anonymously to a questionnaire that was divided into three parts. The first part (six questions) elicited personal information on the individual respondent; the second part (two questions) focused on where and for which organization the respondent was working; the first three questions in the third part invited volunteers to use a four-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree) to respond to a series of statements that focused on (i) the toolkit as a whole, (ii) the usefulness of individual tools, and (iii) the effectiveness of the toolkit; and the final question in the third part invited respondents to add comments and identify tools that in their view might be dropped and areas for which new tools might be developed.

The questionnaire took about 15 minutes to complete, and volunteers responded by visiting a password-protected platform that was created using Google Module. There were 150 responses, 138 from Italian native speakers and 12 from migrants who were experienced cultural mediators.

1.2 Focus groups (see Appendix 2)

Altogether 29 focus groups (22 face to face and seven via Skype) were organized by local coordinators, who acted as external moderators; the groups ranged in size from three to nine volunteers. The groups met for about an hour and participants shared information and opinions following the structure given in Appendix 2. The moderator took notes and afterwards expanded them into a detailed report that was sent to the national coordinator.

2. The tools that were piloted

Table 2 shows the overall structure and content of the toolkit. Forty of the 58 tools (70%; printed in red) were translated into Italian and made available to participants for piloting. These comprised 13 of the 19 tools in section 2, *Preparation and planning*, and all the items in section 3, *Activities*.

Table 2 The structure and content of the toolkit (tools piloted printed in red)

0 Home	1 Introduction	2 Preparation and planning	3 Activities	4 Other resources
<p>1.1 General</p> <p>1. Geopolitical context of migration</p> <p>3. The rights and legal status of refugees</p>	<p>1.1 Cultural and language awareness</p> <p>4. Ethical and intercultural issues to be aware of when working with refugees</p> <p>16. Responding appropriately to cultural difference and managing intercultural communication</p> <p>6. Arabic: some information</p> <p>7. Kurdish: some information</p> <p>8. Persian: some information</p> <p>9. Somali: some information</p> <p>1.2 Language learning</p> <p>14. Approaches to language teaching and learning</p> <p>2. What is involved in providing language support for refugees</p> <p>10. Refugees as language users and learners</p> <p>13. Engaging adult refugees as learners</p> <p>30. Acquiring a very elementary ability to use a new language</p>	<p>2.1 Some points to think about</p> <p>15. Diversity in working groups</p> <p>11. Supporting refugees with low literacy</p> <p>18. Plurilingual portrait: a reflective task for volunteers</p> <p>12. Challenges in learning to read and write in a new language</p> <p>31. Preparing an environment for offering language support</p> <p>55. Organising writing practice at elementary level</p> <p>56. Selecting and using texts for reading at elementary level</p> <p>54. Selecting pictures and “realia” for language activities</p> <p>53. Reflecting on your language support work – some ideas</p> <p>2.2 Needs analysis</p> <p>20. Identifying refugees’ most urgent needs</p> <p>5. Describing what someone can do in a range of communicative situations</p> <p>22. First steps in the host country language</p> <p>21. Refugees’ linguistic profiles</p> <p>23. Finding out more about refugees’ own resources and capacities</p> <p>24. What are the most important things to learn? The refugees’ point of view</p> <p>25. Observing situations in which refugees need to use the target language</p> <p>2.3 Planning content</p> <p>26. Selecting situations to focus on in language support</p> <p>27. Selecting communicative functions that are useful for beginners</p> <p>28. A list of expressions for everyday communication</p>	<p>3.1 Getting started</p> <p>29. Handling initial meetings with refugees: some guidelines</p> <p>58. Breaking the ice and building group confidence</p> <p>3.2 Learning vocabulary</p> <p>48. Ideas for learning basic vocabulary: everyday life</p> <p>49. Basic vocabulary to express opinions and emotions</p> <p>51. Techniques for learning vocabulary</p> <p>3.3 Thinking about language and learning</p> <p>17. Plurilingual portrait: a reflective task for refugees</p> <p>52. Helping refugees to think about their learning</p> <p>3.4 Scenarios for language support</p> <p>33. Introduction to scenarios</p> <p>34. Starting to socialise</p> <p>41. Using a mobile phone</p> <p>37. Using apps like Google Maps</p> <p>35. Finding out about social services</p> <p>36. Using health services</p> <p>38. Shopping – buying credit for a mobile phone</p> <p>47. Shopping – buying clothes</p> <p>61. Food</p> <p>39. Finding your way in town: the local library</p> <p>40. Looking for training opportunities</p> <p>42. Looking for a job</p> <p>43. Finding accommodation</p> <p>44. Using postal and banking services</p> <p>45. School and college</p> <p>46. Socializing with the local community</p> <p>3.5 Interacting with the host community</p> <p>32. Mapping the local area: an activity for refugees</p> <p>50. Planning language support activities in the community</p> <p>57. Practising language in the real world</p>	<p>4.1 Web directories and links</p> <p>4.2 Glossary</p> <p>4.3 Toolkit contributors</p>

Note: The numbering of the tools differs from that in the published version of the toolkit

3. Participants in the piloting

Thanks to the support received from volunteers, associations, cooperatives, NGOs and schools, it was possible to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Altogether, 168 people (150 volunteers and 18 local coordinators) participated in the piloting. Between them the volunteers were providing language support to a total of 2,076 migrants in the north, centre and south of Italy. The piloting covered a representative range of volunteer and migrant profiles.

3.1 Migrant profiles

As Figure 1 shows, 72% of the migrants participating in the piloting were men and 28% women.

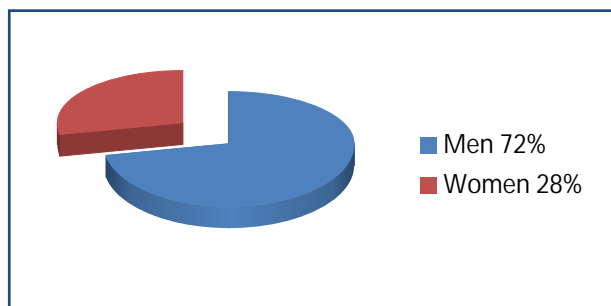


Figure 1 Gender of migrants involved in the piloting

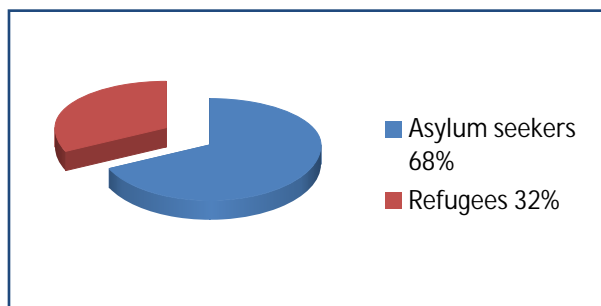


Figure 2 Status of the migrants who participated in the piloting

Most of them were aged between 18 and 45, and most members of this sub-group were aged between 18 and 28. There were also a few minors, aged 16 or 17, and a few migrants older than 45. The great majority of participating migrants had low literacy or were non-literate.

Figure 2 shows the legal status of the participating migrants, distinguishing between asylum seekers, who were waiting for an official response to their request for international protection, and refugees, to whom international protection had already been granted. The refugees had generally been living in Italy for between six and 18 months; most of them were involved in specific social inclusion projects under the auspices of SPRAR (Sistema Protezione Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati). These projects provided around ten hours of non-formal language support per week, sometimes given by experienced teachers.

The asylum seekers were either in transit and accommodated in arrival camps like those in Lampedusa and Brindisi or hosted on a short- or medium-term basis in CAS (Centri Accoglienza Straordinaria) and CARA (Centri Accoglienza Richiedenti Asilo) centres. In these latter centres they received non-formal language support, less structured than in SPRAR, and provided by volunteers who often had little teaching experience. Especially in Northern Italy some asylum seekers were often included in SPRAR even though they had not yet received an official response to their request for asylum.

The map in Figure 3 shows the countries of origin of the migrants who participated in the piloting; the most strongly represented countries are shaded in dark blue: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Eritrea, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Iran, Iraq, Mali, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Togo.

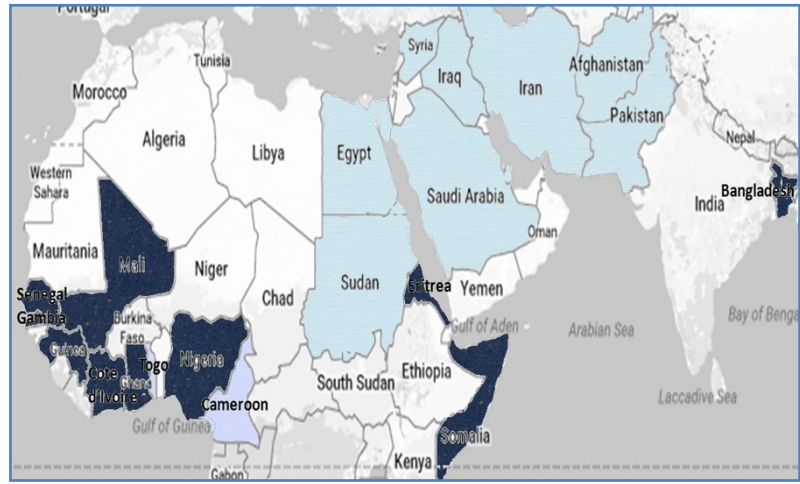


Figure 3 Countries of origin of the migrants who participated in the piloting

In alphabetical order, the languages included in the migrants' repertoires as reported by the volunteers were: Arabic, Bambara, Bangla, Dari, English, French, Krio, Kurdish, Mandinca, Peul, Pidgin, Portuguese, Urdu, Wolof.

3.2 Profiles of participating volunteers (Questionnaire section 1)

Figure 4 shows that the majority of volunteers participating in the piloting were women (Question 1.1) and Figure 5 shows the participating volunteers' age profile (Question 1.2).

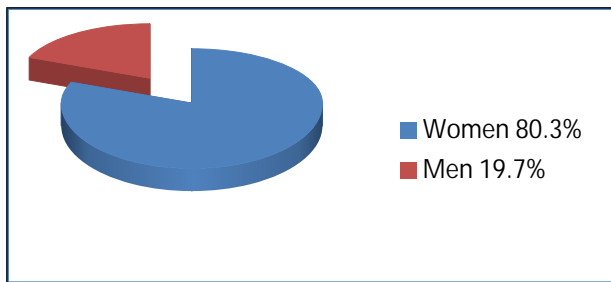


Figure 4 Gender of volunteers participating in the piloting

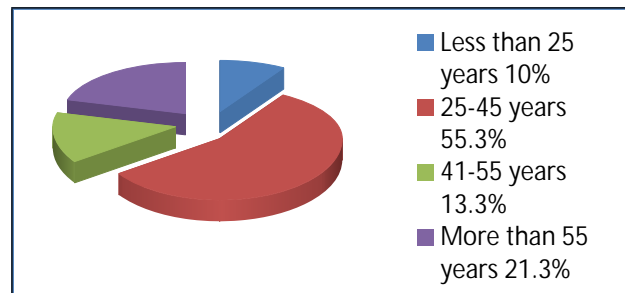


Figure 5 Age profile of volunteers participating in the piloting

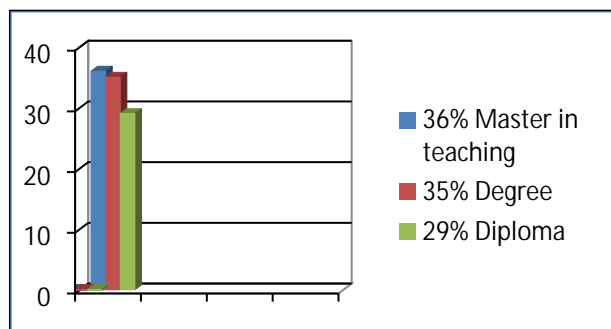


Figure 6 Educational qualifications of volunteers participating in the piloting

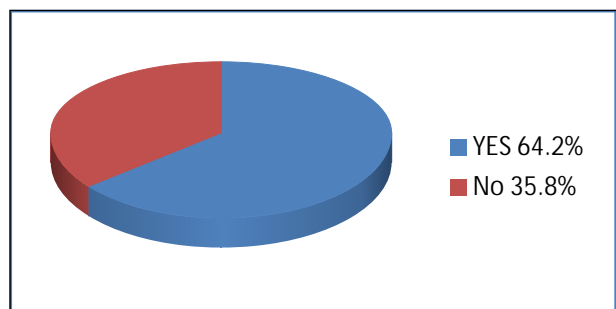


Figure 7 Percentage of participants with previous experience of volunteering

Figure 6 shows the participating volunteers' educational qualifications (Question 1.4) and Figure 7 shows the percentage with previous experience in volunteering activities with asylum seekers /

refugees (Question 1.5). Of the 64.2% of participants with teaching experience only 30.3% had taught for more than three years (Question 1.6).

As Figure 8 shows, 53% of the participating volunteers had no experience of providing language support or had been doing so for less than a year; 19% had more than five years' experience.

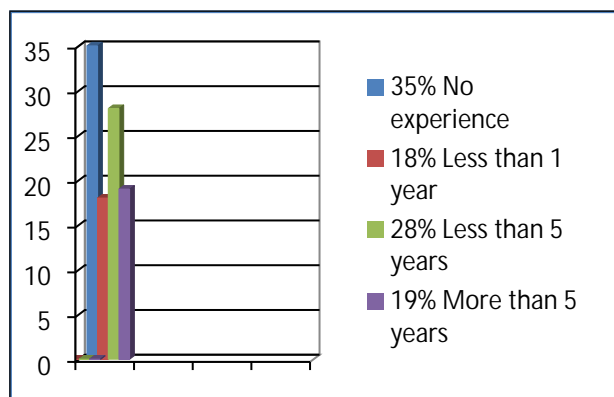


Figure 8 Participating volunteers' experience of providing language support

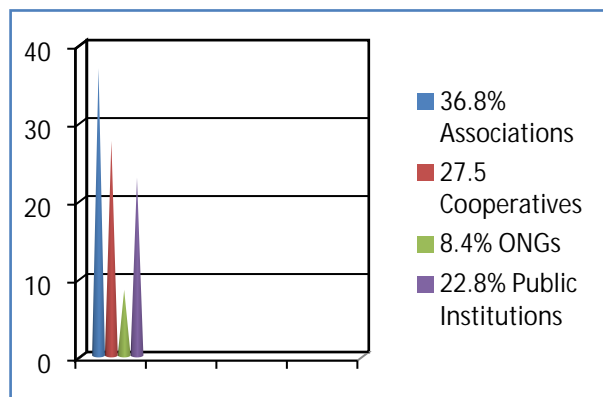
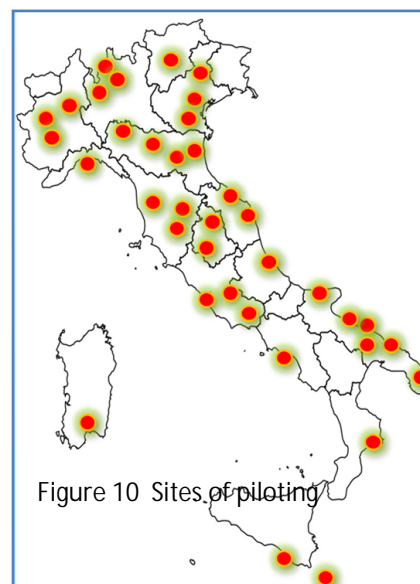


Figure 9 Types of organization for which participating volunteers were working

There were many highly experienced retired teachers among the 21.3% of volunteers in the oldest age group (55+), whereas many among the 10% who were not yet 25 had little experience of language teaching but were intending to teach, having taken a master's degree in language teaching or a postgraduate certificate in teaching Italian as a foreign language. The participants with the greatest experience of volunteering belonged to the 41–55 age group, who were aged more than 55. The 55.3% with the least experience of providing language support were also the most heterogeneous with regard to experience of volunteering. Often older participants with substantial experience of teaching Italian as a foreign language only had a diploma. Participating volunteers were working mostly in the so-called "third sector", which includes cooperatives, lay and religious associations and NGOs.

Figure 9 (Question 2.2) shows the percentages working for different types of organizations.



4. The context (Questionnaire, section 2)

The map in Figure 10 shows the 16 Italian regions where the piloting took place (the red dots mark the cities and villages where the reception centres were located). Puglia was the region with the most reception centres and the greatest number of volunteers and migrants.

Figure 11 (Question 2.1) shows that half the piloting took place in reception centres and half took place outside, depending on the migrants' status (asylum seekers, refugees) and situation (transit, medium-term, long-term).

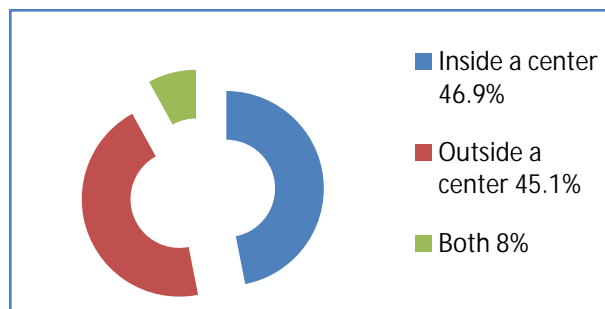


Figure 11 Percentages of piloting carried out inside and outside reception centres

5. General feedback (Questionnaire, question 3.1; Focus Group, question 4)

Feedback on the toolkit overall was very positive (for comments related to specific items, see section 7). Participating volunteers appeared to be enthusiastic for two reasons:

1. The toolkit contained items that seemed very useful to them and fit for purpose.
2. The toolkit made them feel that they were not alone; they appreciated it as an instrument designed to give value to their volunteering work.

The following nine statements from volunteers were recorded by local coordinators during the focus groups:

1. *The tools are user-friendly, easy to adapt and suitable for the learners.*
2. *At last there is something really helpful, a guide that concretely helps us to get away from constant improvisation.*
3. *The toolkit gives value to the experiences and competences of asylum seekers and refugees and helps me to get to know the background and cultures of my learners.*
4. *Every tool creates a chance to interact, to imagine going outside the camp, to discover more about the learners' profile.*
5. *There is a good balance between modularity and flexibility on the one hand and structured materials on the other.*
6. *The best thing is that the tools are ready to use, rich in content, and with suggestions for self-reflection on the part of volunteers and learners.*
7. *The toolkit is very effective in helping volunteers with limited experience to avoid adopting the wrong approach.*
8. *I would like to use the toolkit after the end of the piloting.*
9. *It was an honour for me to pilot the toolkit for the Council of Europe.*

To generate quantitative data (Figures 12–19) the respondents rated eight statements (Question 3.1) on a four-point scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = agree; 4 = strongly agree.

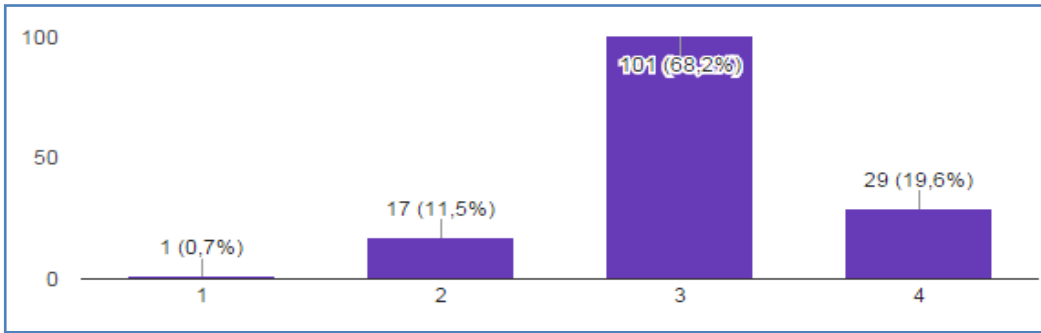


Figure 12 "The toolkit helped me in my work with refugees"

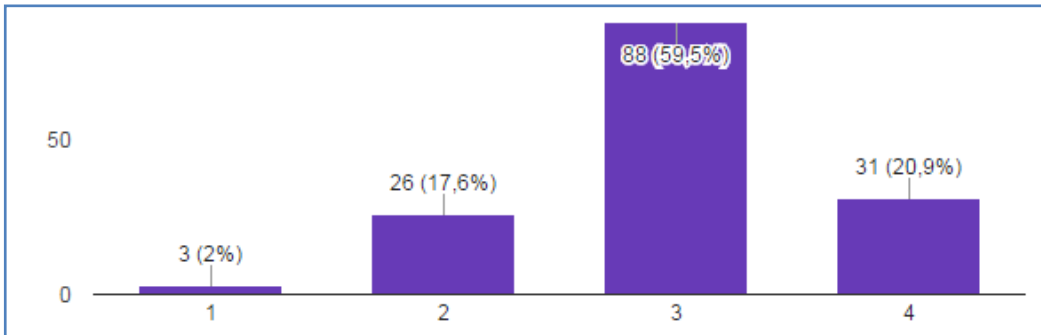


Figure 13 "The toolkit gave me more confidence as a volunteer"

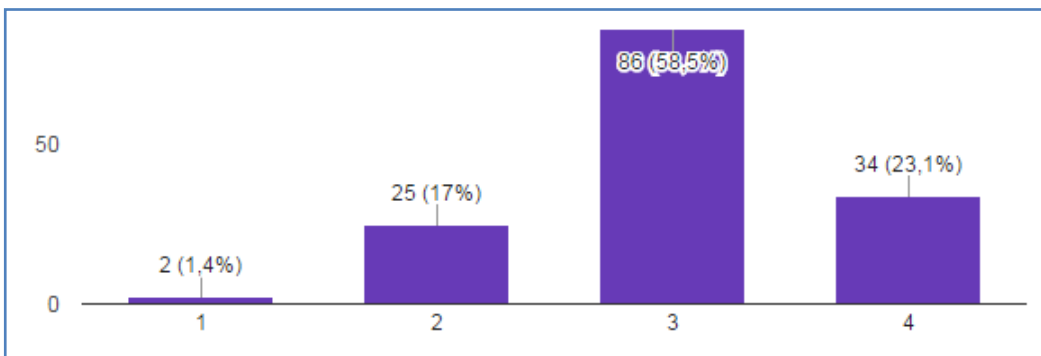


Figure 14 "The toolkit is easy to use"

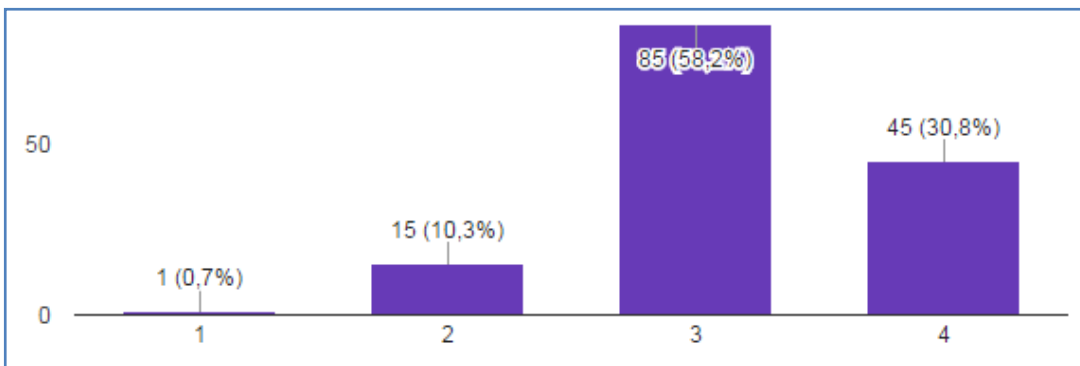


Figure 15 "The toolkit provides practical suggestions"

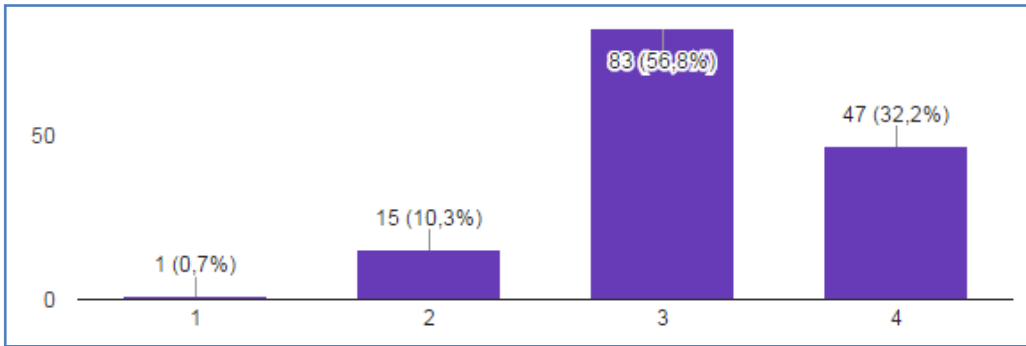


Figure 16 "The toolkit provides useful information"

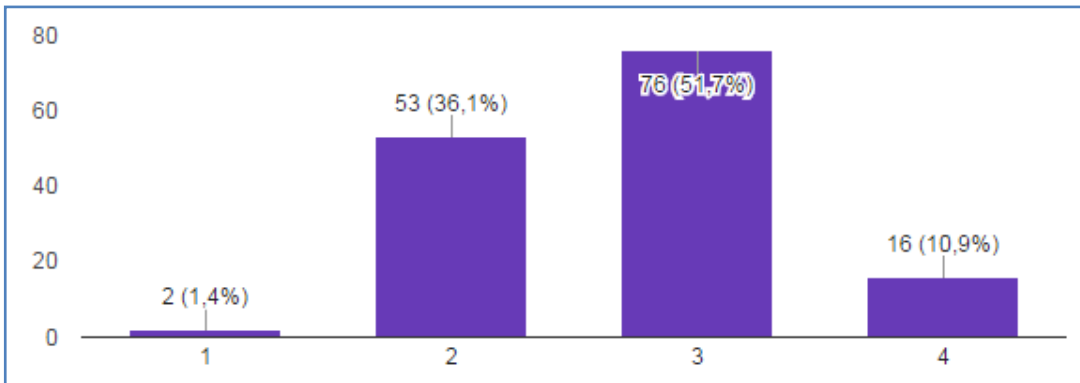


Figure 17 "The toolkit is complete, covering most of the aspects related to language support"

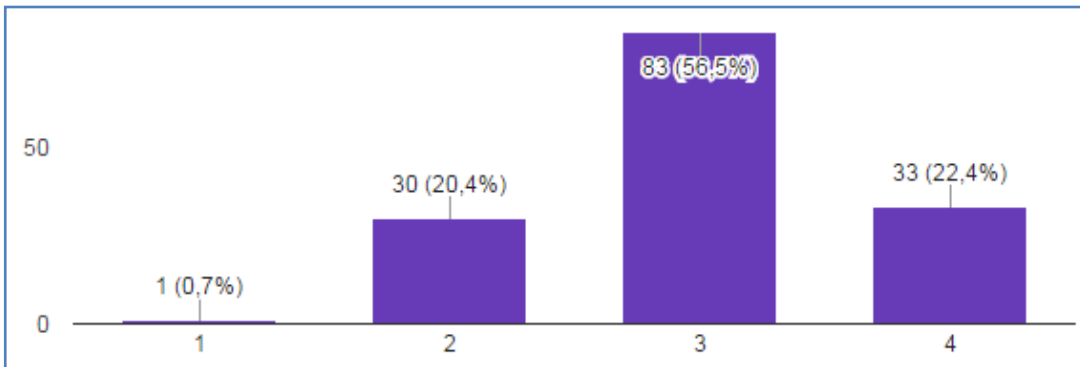


Figure 18 "The toolkit is comprehensive, with a coherent, clear and logical structure"

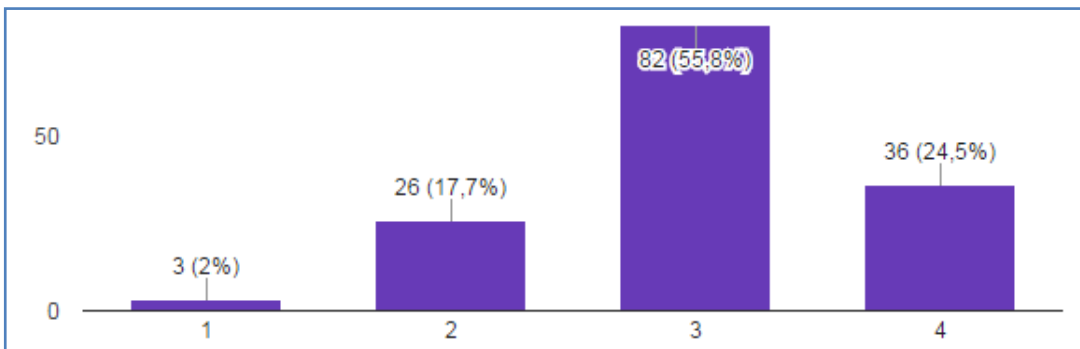


Figure 19 The toolkit is easy to understand, with clear instructions, pictures and icons

Statement 6, “The toolkit is complete, covering most of the aspects related to language support” (Figure 17), elicited the highest percentage of strongly disagree/disagree responses (37.5%): 55 volunteers indirectly suggested that the toolkit could be expanded by adding to existing tools or creating new tools. Section 7 provides more detail.

If responses to Question 3.1 are filtered according to the age, gender and previous experience of volunteers, experienced teachers also strongly confirmed the usefulness of the toolkit and there were no significant differences between the responses of men and woman or between those belonging to different age groups.

As Figure 20 shows, when the responses of volunteers who were experienced language teachers are compared with those who were not, the only important difference appeared in relation to statement 7, *The toolkit is comprehensive, with a coherent, clear and logical structure.*

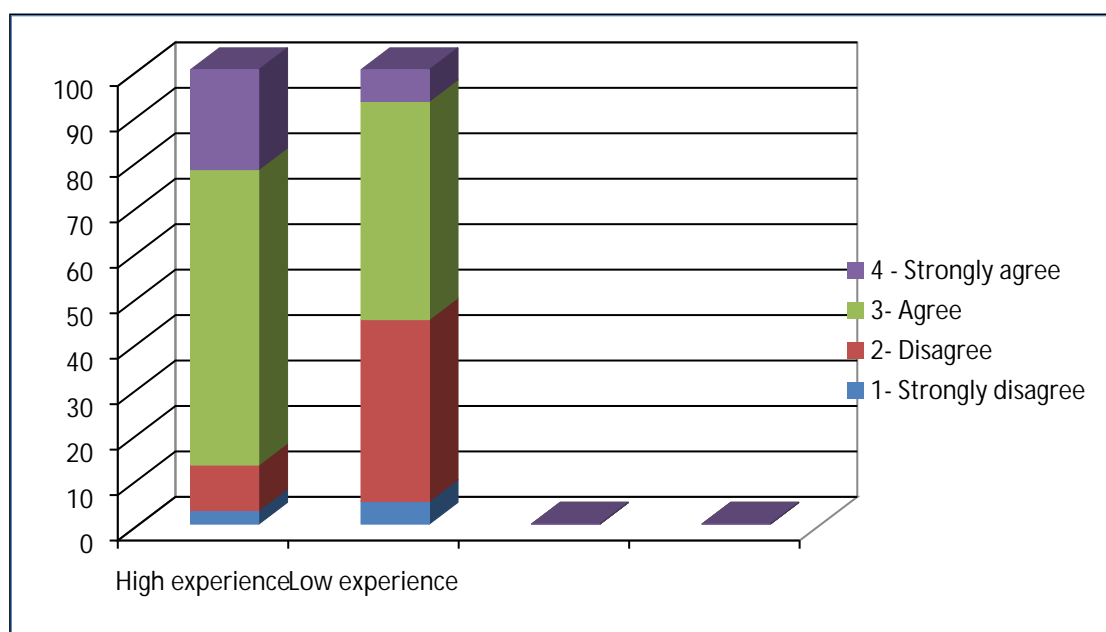


Figure 20 Differences between users with high and low experience in language teaching in relation to the statement: *The toolkit is comprehensive, with a coherent, clear and logical structure*

6. Feedback related to specific tools (Questionnaire, question 3.2; Focus Group, questions 5 and FG6)

6.1 General

Here too feedback was generally positive: for each of the 40 tools piloted (Questionnaire 3.2), positive responses outweighed negative responses.

As Figure 21 shows, the total of positive responses (agree/strongly agree) ranged from 68.5% to 98.4% and averaged 84.8%.

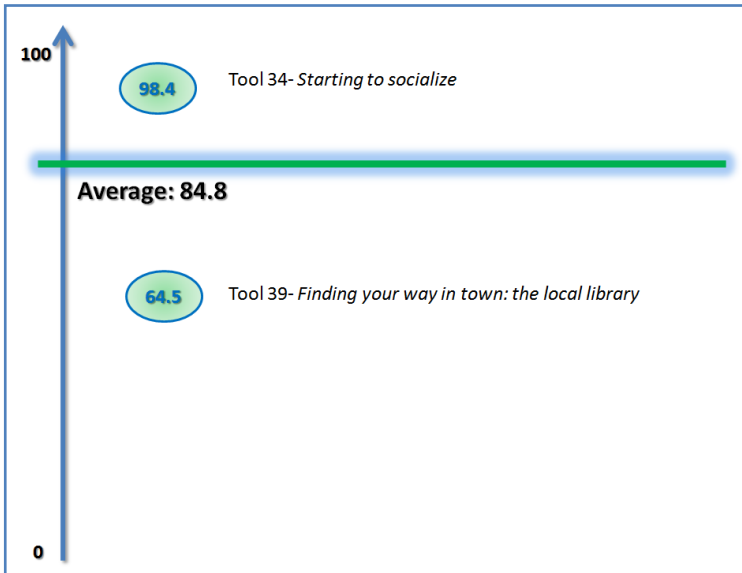


Figure 21 Sum of positive responses (agree/strongly agree): maximum, minimum and average value

6.2 Most appreciated items

Figure 22 shows the three items that elicited the highest percentage of “strongly agree” responses (all are scenarios) in descending order: Tool 42, *Looking for a job*; Tool 37, *Shopping: buying clothes*; Tool 61, *Foods*.

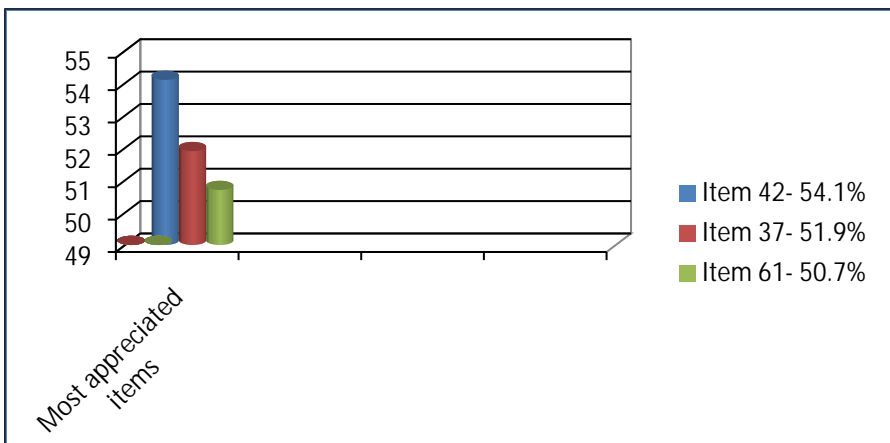


Figure 22 Most appreciated tools

6.3 Most and least frequently used tool

The most frequently used tool was 37 (*Shopping: buying clothes*) and the least frequently used was 50 (*Planning language support activities in the community*). It is important to stress that if volunteers did not use a particular tool, that does not imply a negative evaluation; the questionnaire required them to identify the tools they had not used and to evaluate only the tools they had used.

- Most frequently used tools (in descending order)

Tool 37, *Shopping: buying clothes*

Tool 38, *Shopping: buying credit for a mobile phone*

Tool 48, *Ideas for learning basic vocabulary: everyday life*

- Least frequently used items (in ascending order)

Tool 50, *Planning language support activities in the community*

Tool 45, *School and college*

Tool 46, *Socializing with the local community*

In most cases volunteers did not use a particular tool because of time constraints: they reported that with a longer piloting period they would probably have been able to use about 80% of the tools translated into Italian. However, some volunteers pointed out that the situation of their group meant that certain tools were inappropriate (Focus Group, question 5); this was the case, for instance, with Tools 46 and 50, which were relevant only for refugees who were allowed to go outside their reception centre (SPRAR projects). Other volunteers said that they preferred not to pilot some tools, although they seemed appropriate for their learners, because the piloting took place in the middle of a programme of language support and they had already dealt with the situations and topics involved (cf. the nine variables indicated in the Introduction).

6.4 Differences between volunteers who were experienced teachers and those who were not

Figure 23 shows how five tools were evaluated by (i) volunteers who were experienced teachers and (ii) volunteers with little or no teaching experience. There were no significant differences according to gender, age or the educational qualifications of the volunteers.

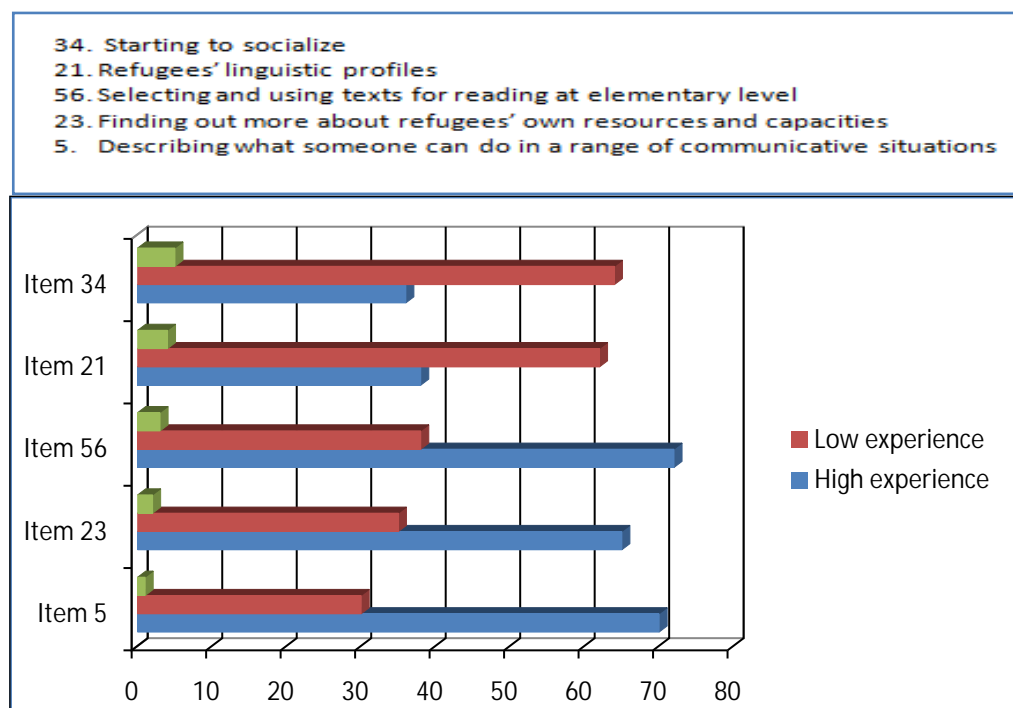


Figure 23 Main differences related to single items between users with high and low experience in language teaching

7. Feedback on the impact of the toolkit (Questionnaire, question 3.3; Focus Group, question 7)

Again feedback was very positive. The following three statements by volunteers were recorded by local coordinators during the focus group:

1. *Thanks to the toolkit I managed to build group confidence.*
2. *Thanks to the toolkit it was easier to create expectations in my learners and motivate them to learn Italian. They collaborated better with one another.*
3. *The items helped my group to learn Italian better, in particular improving their competence in speaking and giving them useful information on daily life in Italy.*

As regards quantitative data (Figures 24–27), respondents used the same four-point scale to respond to four statements:

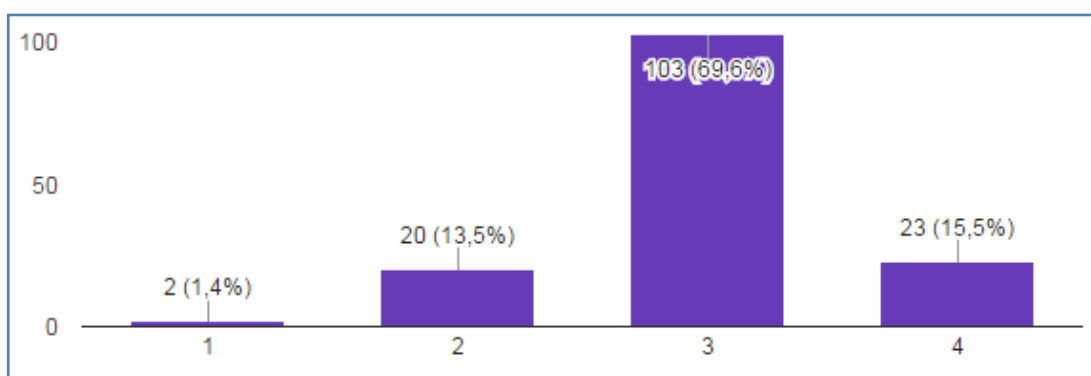


Figure 24 "Activities based on toolkit items helped asylum seekers/refugees to learn the host country's language"

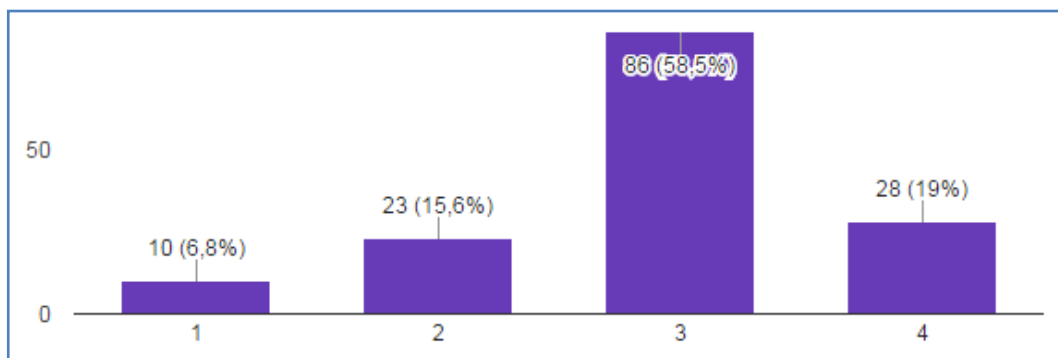


Figure 25 "Activities based on toolkit items were a useful way for them to spend their time in the host country"

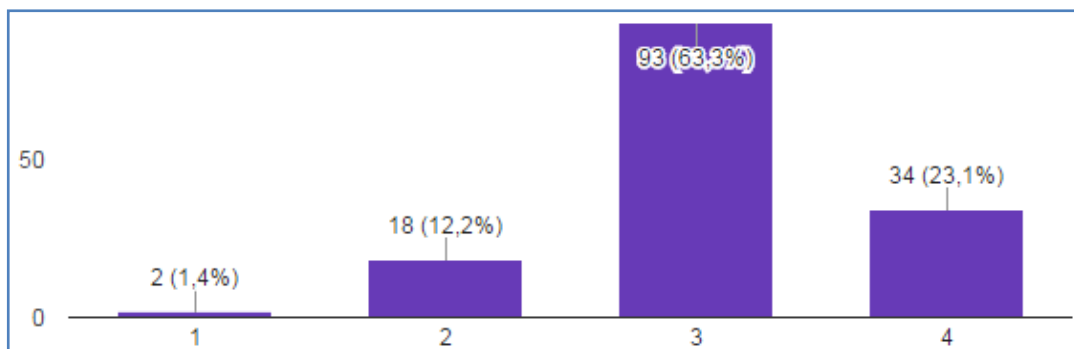


Figure 26 "Activities based on toolkit items were useful for their everyday life in the host country"

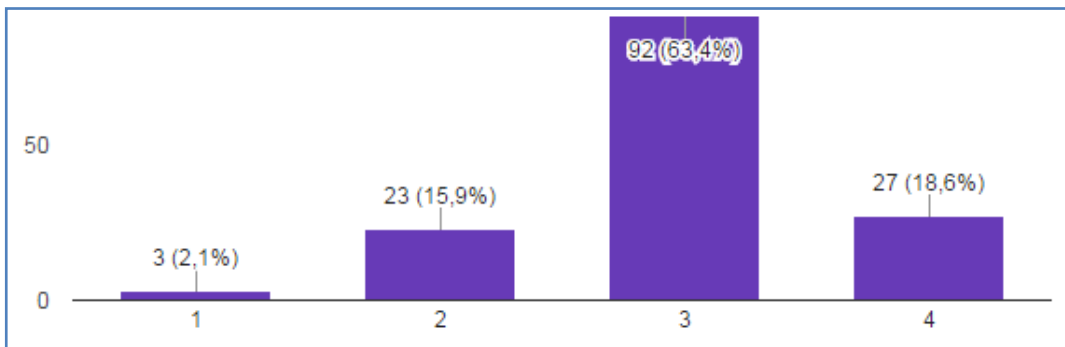


Figure 27 "Activities based on toolkit items improved their communication with other people (fellow migrants, volunteers, local citizens)"

8. Comments and suggestions (Questionnaire, question 3.4; Focus Group, question 8)

In this last section of the report, we present the comments and suggestions that participating volunteers offered in relation to individual tools and the structure of the toolkit as a whole, considering only the tools translated into Italian (see Table 2). Underlining is used to indicate critical remarks, negative feedback and/or suggestions for changes and improvements.

Toolkit Section II – Preparation and planning

Tool 5, Describing what someone can do in a range of communicative situations

Figures 28 and 29 show Tool 5 in use. In Figure 28 a learner is completing his own proficiency profile using a smartphone app to help him translate into Italian; in Figure 29 a volunteer has turned Tool 5 into a group activity, copying the grid on to the blackboard so that members of the group can take turns to share their proficiency in Italian and later talk about their needs.



Figure 28 Tool 5 used with a smartphone

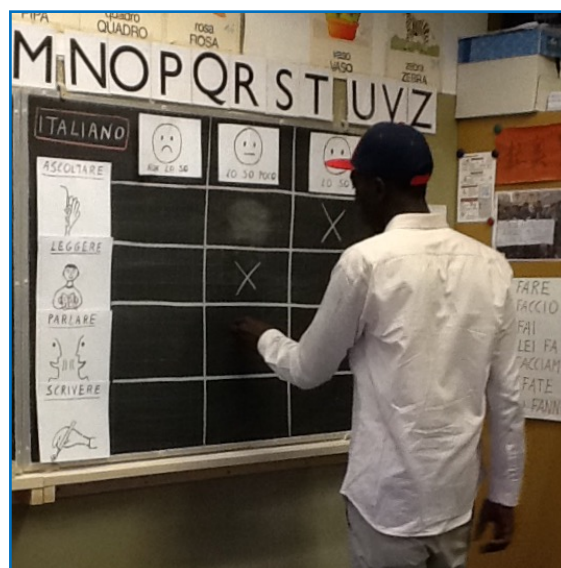


Figure 29 Tool 5 transferred to the blackboard

Although Tool 5 was frequently used and generally appreciated, it was also the object of the following three remarks:

1. Some pictures should be changed and others made clearer (in particular the following ID images: 400272154; 457785208; 172698236).

2. The second part of the grid – *What I need now* – would be more useful if it allowed learners to give their needs in order of priority.
3. Not always easy to understand, especially for migrants with low literacy profiles: in particular the grid with the double access makes significant cognitive demands.

Tool 20, Identifying refugees' most urgent needs

Tool 21, Refugees' linguistic profiles

Tool 22, First steps in the host country language

These three tools were highly appreciated: most users agreed that they represent a mini block, very useful for needs analysis; they seemed to work better in the order 20, 22, 21.

In addition, volunteers who were experienced language teachers felt that these three tools were suitable for use at the beginning of a formal language course.

Tool 23, Finding out more about refugees' own resources and capacities

"Very useful, apart from the section where the learner is asked to associate his/her language with a flower" (*If your language were a flower, it would be a _____*).

The most highly appreciated section of this tool was the one where the learner is invited to write a word he/she likes and a word he/she doesn't like in Italian (Figure 30).

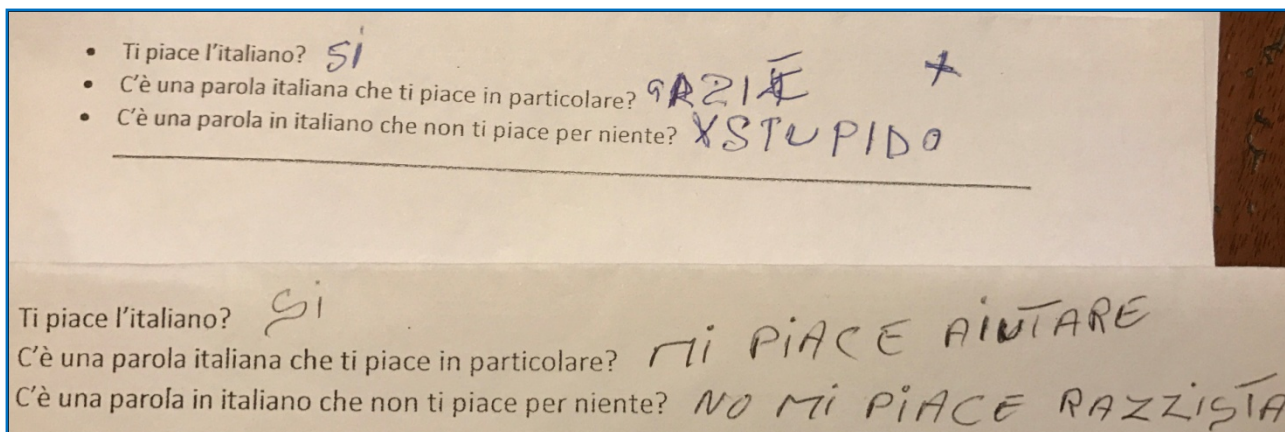


Figure 30 Two examples from Tool 23: the learners liked the words *grazie* ('thanks') and *aiutare* ('to help') and they disliked the words *stupido* ('stupid') and *razzista* ('racist')

Tool 24, What are the most important things to learn? The refugees' point of view

All participating volunteers thought this a very good tool: easy to understand, with simple questions that were perceived as interesting. Nevertheless, some users noticed a degree of overlap between tools 23 and 24 and suggested that they should be merged.

Tool 28, A list of expressions for everyday communication

All participating volunteers said that this tool worked very well, providing learners with expressions they could use to satisfy the needs other tools (especially 5 and 20) had helped them to identify. Volunteers who were experienced language teachers admitted that their first response to the tool had been sceptical, but after using it their attitude changed. As one of them said, “Tool 28 broke a taboo for me.” A list of key words and phrases turned out to be really useful, and it was possible to consider extending the tool to include useful classroom expressions.

The only suggestion concerns the need to extend section 7, adding more expressions to help learners orient themselves, especially when they are in transit, for example when they have just arrived by sea in Lampedusa.



Figure 31 Tool 28 in use

Toolkit Section III – Activities

Generally the participating volunteers found the activities suitable and capable of being used flexibly according to context and the learners' profile.

A lot of volunteers were strongly in favour of an accompanying repository of the pictures and flash cards included in the different tools. This would make it possible for materials to be provided in a larger format than when they are embedded in the tools.

Tool 17, Plurilingual portrait: a reflective task for refugees

All participating volunteers gave strongly positive feedback on this tool. It was perceived as a very “inclusive” instrument in the sense that it can be used with large heterogeneous learners and does not exclude those with no literacy skills. The *Plurilingual portrait* allows all refugees to express their linguistic repertoire and in doing so to enhance their self-esteem. Whenever it was used motivation was very high. Learners spent a lot of time creating their plurilingual portrait, sometimes making three or four drafts to ensure that their choice of colours captured what they wanted to express.

Figures 32 and 33 show Tool 17 in use. In Figure 32 a learner is copying his self-portrait on the board in order to share it with the other members of the group; and in Figure 33 we see how one volunteer combined the use of Tool 17 with learning to use a tablet – a way of supporting low-literacy learners.

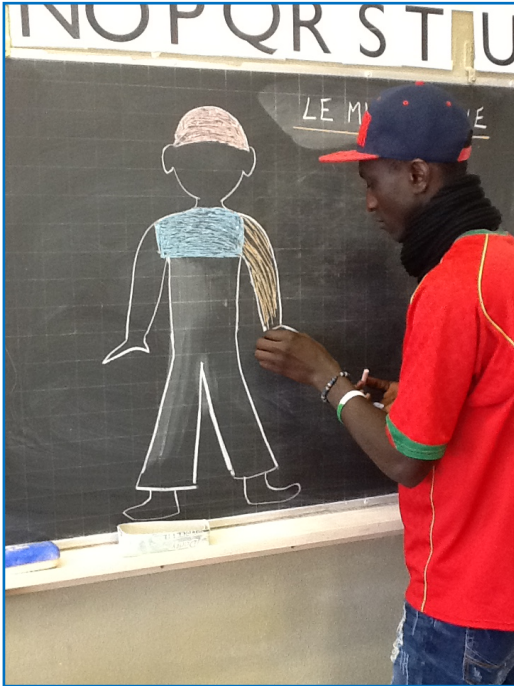


Figure 32 Tool 17 in use (1)

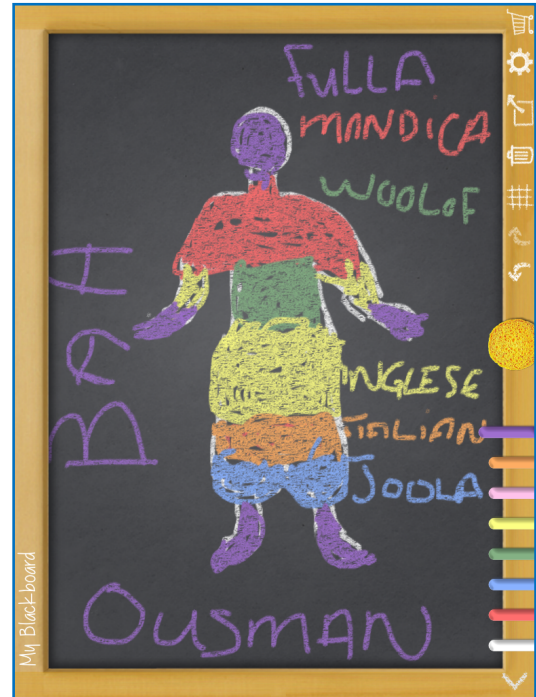


Figure 33 Tool 17 in use (2)

Scenarios

The scenarios were highly appreciated partly because they were ready to use and partly because they also served to stimulate ideas for the selection of materials and the creation of additional activities.

All the participating volunteers agreed on the choice of topics for the 15 scenarios, which were closely linked to the everyday life of their learners, always allowing for differences in the learners' conditions and status (see section 3.1). All the proposed activities were eminently practical, easy to understand and based on real-life situations.

The volunteers thought the approach adopted in the scenarios helped them to manage heterogeneous groups. In this regard, they particularly appreciated the inclusion of activities for low-literacy learners.

Participating volunteers also appreciated the flexibility of the scenarios: they can be used as an "accordion", spending less or more time on different sections according to the needs of the group. Some volunteers attempted to calculate the time needed to "complete" a scenario and came up with answers that ranged from two to six hours for a group of 15 learners. This seems to coincide with another positive quality attributed to the scenarios: each of them was perceived as a skeleton that volunteers can fill out and supplement with other materials, other examples of interactions, and other content (which may be related to other scenarios). In particular, volunteers with language teaching experience confirmed that the modular structure of the scenarios meant that they could be used in accordance with the profile of their learner group. At the same time, volunteers with less experience in language teaching appreciated the fact that because the scenarios were all structured in the same way, they provided a consistent "method".

Although their feedback was strongly positive, participants were aware that they were expected to suggest ways in which the scenarios could be improved collectively and individually.

Many of them (especially those with experience in language teaching) said that in the introduction of the scenarios it was important make clear that:

1. the scenarios are not a textbook;
2. the dialogues are illustrative rather than prescriptive and include only a small sample of possible role-play activities;
3. with a few exceptions, the activities are intended for beginners in Italian (in other words, there are few activities for intermediate learners).

Many participants felt that there should be more listening activities; it would be possible, for instance, to suggest that volunteers should record a short dialogue to illustrate each of the interactions included in the scenarios.

There was a commonly felt need for activities focused on grammar (for example, gap-filling exercises) to meet the expectations of volunteers and learners.

Many volunteers felt that there should be scenarios dealing with:

1. driving a car (road signs; traffic rules; how to obtain a driving licence in the host country);
2. environmental education and recycling.

Finally, two additions were proposed: to Tool 44, *Using postal and banking services*, an activity dealing with money transfer services like *Western Union* or *Money Gram* because migrants use these services to send money to their parents; and to Tool 43, *Finding accommodation*, a dialogue with a letting agency.

Tool 32, Mapping the local area: an activity for refugees, helped many migrants to improve their knowledge of their immediate environment (Figure 34), but especially in the transit and short-term stages, a lot of volunteers said that it should be expanded (using the additional expressions proposed for Tool 28, section 7) to include mapping Europe and the world.

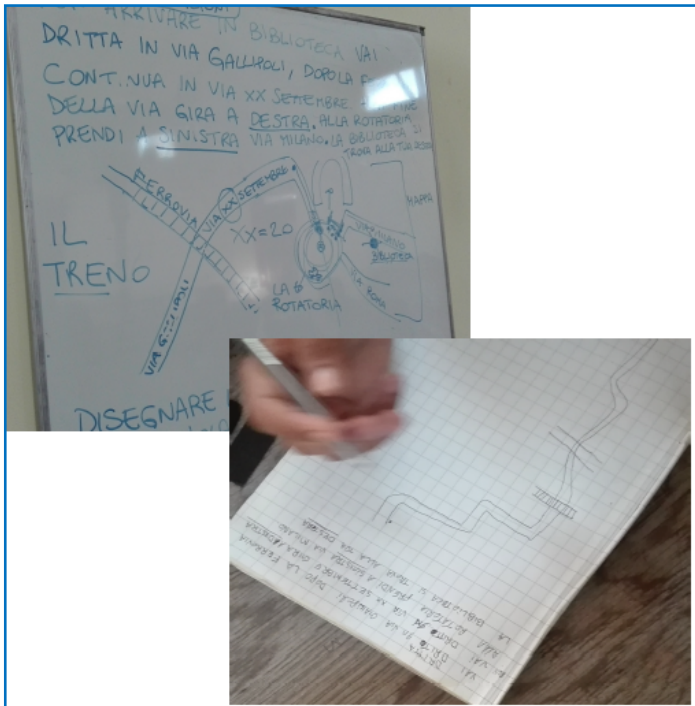


Figure 34 Tool 32 in use



Figure 35 Four tools used in combination

Tool 50, Planning language support activities in the community, was highly appreciated by many groups because it encouraged socialization.

Tool 51, Techniques for learning vocabulary, was judged to be too complex, even by volunteers with language teaching experience.

Tool 57, Practising language in the real world, provided many volunteers with their most positive piloting experience, because (depending on the conditions of their learners) it allowed them to move outside the reception centre and open up spaces in the real world. Some volunteers used this tool together with Tools 61, 32, 50 and 57 as shown in Figure 35.

Lorenzo Rocca
19 April 2017

Appendix 1

Questionnaire for piloting

Dear Volunteer,

We are asking you to take a few minutes to answer some questions about the Council of Europe's LIAM Toolkit that you used in your work with refugees.

Your answers are very important as they will help us to improve our work.

Thank you!

INSTRUCTIONS

Please, write clearly on the dotted lines. Tick the relevant box like this:

1 3 4

SECTION 1

Volunteers' profile

1.1 Gender M F

1.2 Age

Less than 25 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
25-40 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
41-55 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over 55 years	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.3 Current or former job

1.4 Qualifications (*select one option*)

Master's/postgraduate degree in language teaching

University degree

Diploma

Other (please specify):

1.5 Have you had previous experience working with refugees? YES NO

1.5.1 If yes, how many years of experience?

<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-3 years	<input type="checkbox"/> Over 3 years
---	------------------------------------	---------------------------------------

1.6 Have you had previous experience teaching a second/foreign language? YES NO

1.6.1 If yes, how many years of experience?

<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/> 1-5 years	<input type="checkbox"/> Over 5 years
---	------------------------------------	---------------------------------------

SECTION 2

Working as volunteer using the Council of Europe LIAM Toolkit

2.1 Where were you working as a volunteer when you used the Toolkit items?

Country Town Region
 Inside a centre for refugees Outside a centre Both

2.2 Who were you working for as a volunteer?

Public institution Charity association
 Cooperative NGO
 Other (please specify)

SECTION 3

Your opinion about the Council of Europe LIAM Toolkit

3.1 Please give your feedback on the Toolkit as a whole by agreeing or disagreeing with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
The Toolkit				
helped me in my work with refugees	1	2	3	4
give me more confidence as a volunteer	1	2	3	4
is easy to use	1	2	3	4
provides practical suggestions	1	2	3	4
provides useful information	1	2	3	4
is complete, covering most of the aspects related to language support	1	2	3	4
is comprehensive, with a coherent, clear and logical structure	1	2	3	4
is easy to understand, with clear instructions, pictures and icons	1	2	3	4
is too difficult, requiring competences that assume a professional background	1	2	3	4
is too complex, with too many pages and too much information	1	2	3	4

3.2 Please rate the usefulness of individual tools, indicating those you did not use.

		NOT USED	Not at all useful	Not useful	Useful	Very useful
5	Describing what someone can do in a range of situations		1	2	3	4
17	Plurilingual portrait: a reflective task for refugees		1	2	3	4
20	Identifying refugees' most urgent needs		1	2	3	4
24	What are the most important things to learn?		1	2	3	4
25	Situations in which refugees need to use the target language		1	2	3	4
29	Handling initial meetings with refugees: some guidelines		1	2	3	4
28	Expressions for everyday communication		1	2	3	4
30	Acquiring a very elementary ability to use a new language		1	2	3	4
22	First steps in the host country language		1	2	3	4
23	Finding out more about refugees' own resources		1	2	3	4
21	Refugees' linguistic profiles		1	2	3	4
31	Preparing an environment for offering language support		1	2	3	4

32	Mapping the local area: an activity for refugees		1	2	3	4
58	Breaking the ice and building group confidence		1	2	3	4
33	Introduction to scenarios		1	2	3	4
34	Starting to socialize		1	2	3	4
35	Finding out about social services		1	2	3	4
36	Using health services		1	2	3	4
37	Shopping: buying clothes		1	2	3	4
61	Foods		1	2	3	4
47	Using apps like Google Maps		1	2	3	4
38	Shopping – buying credit for a mobile phone		1	2	3	4
39	Finding your way in town: the local library		1	2	3	4
40	Looking for training opportunities		1	2	3	4
41	Using a mobile phone		1	2	3	4
42	Looking for a job		1	2	3	4
43	Finding accommodation		1	2	3	4
44	Using postal & banking services		1	2	3	4
45	School and college		1	2	3	4
46	Socializing with the local community		1	2	3	4
48	Ideas for learning basic vocabulary: everyday life		1	2	3	4
49	Basic vocabulary to express opinions and emotions		1	2	3	4
50	Planning language support activities in the community		1	2	3	4
52	Helping refugees to think about their learning		1	2	3	4
51	Techniques for learning vocabulary		1	2	3	4
53	Reflecting on your language support work		1	2	3	4
54	Selecting pictures and 'realia' for language activities		1	2	3	4
55	Organising writing practice at elementary level		1	2	3	4
56	Selecting and using texts for reading at elementary level		1	2	3	4
57	Practising language in the real world		1	2	3	4

3.3 Please rate the effectiveness of the Toolkit items by agreeing or disagreeing with the following statements

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Activities based on the tools:				
helped refugees to learn the host country's language	1	2	3	4
were a useful way for them to spend their time in the host country	1	2	3	4
were useful for their everyday life in the host country	1	2	3	4
improved their communication with other people (fellow migrants, volunteers, local citizens)	1	2	3	4

3.4 Please use the space below to add comments or suggestions that might help improve the Toolkit: what could be left out/ what seems to be missing, to what extend the Toolkit is a positive support helping volunteers etc.

.....

THANKS FOR YOUR HELP!

Appendix 2

Volunteers' focus group

How to manage the focus group

- The focus group is coordinated by an external moderator.

Suggested structure and order of topics

The moderator invites volunteers to:

1. Introduce themselves, briefly describing their previous experiences as volunteers.
2. Describe the context in which they used the toolkit.
3. Give as much information as they can about the group of refugees they supported using the toolkit (for instance: number of participants, countries of origin, gender, age, literacy profiles, linguistic profiles, etc.)
4. Say what they think about the toolkit in general, giving reasons for their answer.
5. Explain how they used the toolkit (for instance: how much time they spent on particular items, which parts in particular they focused on, etc.)
6. If there were some tools that they did not use, explain why that was the case (time constraints, inappropriate to their context, etc.)
7. Identify at least one positive and one negative feature of the toolkit, giving concrete examples.
8. Suggest how the Toolkit could be improved: what could be omitted and what needs to be added, etc.