



Co-funded by the Asylum, Migration
and Integration Fund of the European Union



Ministero dell' Istruzione

FONDO ASILO, MIGRAZIONE E INTEGRAZIONE 2014 – 2020
Misura emergenziale Alfabetizzazione Linguistica e accesso all'istruzione ALI-MSNA 1° Volo



Report ISMU
September 2021

Edited by Mariagrazia Santagati and Alessandra Barzaghi

**Explorative Study
on Unaccompanied Minors
in Italy and Access
to Education and Training**



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The study, commissioned by the Ministry of the Interior, was conducted by the ISMU Foundation, in collaboration with a Steering Committee made up of the General Directorate on Immigration of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (Division II), the Ministry of the Interior and ANCI.

The study is part of the larger project ALI 1 - *Linguisti Literacy and Access to Education for UAMs* (N. HOME/2019/AMIF/AG/EMAS/0093), cofunded by the European Union as part of the Emergency Measures of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.

ISMU Foundation

Via Copernico 1 - 20125 Milan

Tel. +39.02.678779.1

www.ismu.org

Editing: Susanna Compostella

Graphics and layout: Marta Carraro

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Research management and coordination:

Mariagrazia Santagati (Management and scientific coordination, ISMU Foundation)

Alessandra Barzaghi (Management and operational coordination, ISMU Foundation)

In collaboration with:

Livia Ortensi (ISMU Foundation), *Giovanni Giulio Valtolina* (ISMU Foundation), *Nicoletta Pavesi* (ISMU Foundation).

Scientific Committee:

Gianluca Argentin (Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca), *Rita Bertozzi* (Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia), *Emanuela Bonini* (ISMU Foundation), *Liana Daher* (Università degli Studi di Catania), *Roberta Teresa Di Rosa* (Università degli Studi di Palermo), *Livia Ortensi* (ISMU Foundation), *Nicoletta Pavesi* (ISMU Foundation), *Mariagrazia Santagati* (ISMU Foundation), *Giovanni Giulio Valtolina* (ISMU Foundation).

Research Team:

Paolo Barabanti, *Alessandra Barzaghi*, *Alessandra Caragiuli*, *Chiara Colombo*, *Elisabetta Ciccirelli*, *Erica Colussi*, *Chiara Ferrari*, *Chiara Larossa*, *Livia Ortensi*, *Giorgia Papavero*, *Mariagrazia Santagati*, *Cristiano Santinello*, *Giulietta Zanga*.

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introduction

The explorative study on the condition of Unaccompanied Foreign Minors (UAMs hereafter) is part of the *Alfabetizzazione Linguistica e Accesso all'Istruzione per MSNA - ALI 1* (N. HOME/2019/AMIF/AG/EMAS/0093) project, which has been co-financed by the European Union in the context of the Emergency Measures of the Migration and Asylum Fund. It was carried out by the ISMU Foundation on behalf of the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with a steering committee composed by the General Directorate (DG) Immigration and Integration Policies of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (Division II), the Ministry of the Interior and the ANCI ("Associazione Nazionale Comuni Italiani", i.e. the National Association of Italian Municipalities).

By reconstructing a nation-wide picture of the phenomenon based on new data, the explorative study adds a significant piece to the puzzle analysing the conditions of UAMs in Italy, with reference to an area still under-investigated: how UAMs gain access to education and other vocational and training programmes and what happens thereafter. In order to explore this question two main approaches have been used and the results are presented in this Report:

1. a national survey on access to education among UAMs present in reception facilities across Italy;
2. a qualitative study on 10 local networks coordinated by schools, that are responsible for the educational and training integration of UAMs in different areas of the Country.

The first phase of the study: a survey on UAMs and the education and training opportunities they access

The first phase of the study is based on a national survey, conducted on primary and secondary reception facilities hosting UAMs in 2020. Those surveyed were the so-called "implementing organizations" responsible for the reception of UAMs, who were appointed by "managing organizations", i.e., those public agencies responsible for reception and integration.

Without going into detail on how the Italian reception system operates¹, it is useful to remember that it operates on two levels, or phases. The first reception phase is managed by highly specialized governmental bodies appointed by the Ministry of the Interior, where the minor gains access to specialist services, from the arrival in Italy and for the 30 days thereafter. This first phase aims at ensuring their safe transfer to secondary reception facilities. UAMs are then relocated either in facilities financed by the SAI network (the Sistema di Accoglienza e Integrazione), previously known as SIPROIMI (Sistema di protezione per titolari di protezione internazionale e per minori stranieri non accompagnati) or ex-SPRAR (Sistema di protezione per richiedenti asilo e rifugiati), on the basis of available places, or in facilities managed directly by Municipalities, or, finally, in CAS reception facilities (Centri di accoglienza straordinaria) created by Prefects for those aged 14+. Usually, these facilities are managed by third sector organizations (cooperatives, associations, foundations, religious organizations, etc.) specialised in integrated reception interventions, that offer minors not only food and accommodation, but also individualized projects aimed at helping them achieve independence once they are of age.

Given this composite picture of UAM reception, the first phase of the study aimed at reconstructing, with the help of these implementing organizations, what happens to UAMs who access their facilities, with reference to access and permanence in language acquisition/literacy courses, in education and/or training, from the moment of arrival in Italy up to 30/09/2020. In order to do this, the research team created a questionnaire based on two sections. The first section, called “facility form”, included questions regarding general information on the facility and hosting organization, the places available and the UAMs hosted, and services offered to minors. The second section, called “minor form” collected information on each individual minor hosted and on the learning programmes attended.

All the facilities – the universe of 586 present in the list of facilities responsible for the reception of UAMs in Italy in 2020, a list of facilities created especially by the project’s steering committee – received, via email, an invitation to complete an online questionnaire on LimeSurvey. Each facility’s reference person or specific case worker, who had access to the information and the data required, was asked to complete the questionnaire. To ensure a representative sample of data of UAMs was collected across the nation, a stratified systematic random sample was drawn up, on the basis of the geographical location of facilities and the number of minors present in that area, in parallel with the completion of the online survey. The data collection ended on 31/12/2020. After the completed questionnaires were verified, a sample of 130 facilities and 1,400 UAMs associated with them were selected – which represent approximately ¼ of all primary and secondary reception facilities in exi-

1 For a full description, see: Ministero dell’Interno, Vademecum operativo per la presa in carico e l’accoglienza dei minori stranieri non accompagnati, https://www.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/2021-03/vademecum_operativo_per_la_presa_in_carico_e_laccoglienza_dei_msna_def.pdf; Pavese N. (2020), La scuola incontra i minori stranieri non accompagnati. Soggetti, compiti e diritti, Fondazione ISMU, Milano.

stence as of 30/09/20 – and the data was loaded into a database for the analyses presented in the paragraphs that follow.

Looking at the characteristics of the representative sample of facilities, on a total of 130 organizations who participated in the study, 23% run facilities for the first reception of UAMs, whereas 87% run facilities for secondary reception; 20% are made up of a single primary reception facility, and 52% are organizations with only a secondary reception facility. The majority of these organizations operates on the basis of a single source of funding: in particular, their funding is either from the Municipality or comes from the national public fund supporting the Reception and Integration System (SAI).

The organizations are distributed across the twenty Italian regions, with concentrations of over 10% in Sicily and Lombardy. Overall, 47.7% of sampled organizations are in the North, 33.1% in the South and in the Islands, 19.2% in Central Italy. Looking more specifically at the different regions, those with 10% or more of sampled facilities are to be found in Sicily, Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna, Piedmont and Lazio.

On average, the 130 organizations sampled have started working in on the reception of UAMs since 2011; 2014 (median value) represents the divisive year and indicates that approximately half of all organizations has been working on reception for 6 years or more, whereas the remaining half's experience in this area of intervention is of under 6 years. The organizations sampled state they can potentially offer 2,264 places for UAMs (at maximum capacity). On 30/09/2020 the participating facilities are hosting a total of 1,761 minors². The number of UAMs hosted in the facilities run by the single organization ranges from 1 to 121, with an average of 13 minors per organization.

The organizations work in a partnership network with training institutes and schools. It is important to note, moreover, that over 80% of the 130 organizations sampled operates in partnerships with CPIAs (Centers for Adult Education), with VET Centers and public organizations. Almost 65% are working with upper secondary schools and approximately 55% with lower secondary schools. Over half of the organizations in the sample works in partnership with third sector organizations.

The second phase of the study: case studies on local networks for the education and training of UAMs

To the general picture offered by the survey on reception facilities and implementing organizations, the design included an in-depth qualitative exploration based on a comparative case study. The

² The number of minors hosted by the organizations in the sample (1,761) is larger than the "minor forms" collected (1,400), because not all organizations completed a form for all the minors hosted, as some drew upon a random sample.

study examined 10 cases³, relative to local partnership networks with the main school institutions, aimed at offering UAMs basic language and literacy skills and access to education and training⁴. This phase of the study aimed at analysing similar cases, in terms of their specific characteristics, considering: schools or training organizations and their networks, the local areas and their user base, the challenges and resources of the UAMs considered, the protocols and practices of access to and entrance in schools or training institutes among UAMs, ordinary educational practices and specific projects developed for this user group in different areas.

Using the same research protocol, that is to say the same data gathering and analysis techniques, the case studies included: a) a desk research on secondary data concerning the selected school, its network and educational offer; b) a field study that included semi-structured individual or group interviews, conducted online (using a dedicated platform; i.e., Teams, Meet, etc.) with key informants (school managers, reference teachers, reference persons in reception facilities, educators and case workers in residential care homes for minors, reference persons in training agencies, etc.) who were considered able to interpret and evaluate the different local education and training organizations that UAMs would be attending.

The case studies were conducted on formal school networks that referred to the following network leaders: 4 Provincial Centres for Adult Education (CPIAs), 4 Comprehensive Institutes (IC) and 2 Upper Secondary School Institutes (IISS). These are, prevalently, interinstitutional project and collaboration networks between schools and other institutions (municipalities, communities, third sector organizations, etc.). The networks are located as follows: 3 in Northern Italy, 2 in Central Italy, and 5 in the South and the Islands. There are 2 municipal networks, 6 provincial networks, and 2 larger inter-provincial networks. How the reception system's linguistic, educational or training operates has been reconstructed via 60 interviews with informants from schools, the public sector and the third sector.

The structure of the Report

The present Report contains the main results of the two phases of the study described above. The quantitative analysis has sought to reconstruct how the reception process – with specific reference to the linguistic, educational and training integration of UAMs – operates:

- their main characteristics, Country of origin, educational level reached in their Country of origin, literacy and language skills upon arrival in Italy (par. 1);

3 This is a research strategy used to explore, analyse and interpret a "case" (i.e., a circumscribed social phenomenon, a project, a policy, an organization, an institution or a network of institutions, etc.) through various sources of evidence, secondary data, documents, primary data based on different explorative methods of data collection. Cfr. Sena B. (2016), *L'approccio del case study nella ricerca socio-economica*, in "Sociologia e ricerca sociale", n. 111.

4 The cases have been chosen within the local network groups that took part in a Ministry of Education tender to offer language and civic education training to UAMs within the ALI1 project and which were carried out via an e-learning platform, with teachers offering individual and group support.

- their presence in literacy and language acquisition courses, in standard and vocational education and training, from their arrival in Italy, considering results and potential dropouts (par. 2);
- UAM's timeframe for access to educational opportunities, a crucial issue for successful access to and integration in education and training programmes (par. 3).

With respect to the qualitative phase based on case studies, educational and training integration is investigated from the vantage point of education and training institutions, highlighting:

- the dilemmas and choices schools face with regards to access and reception of UAMs, considering the key administrative, learning and socio-educational aspects that play into the decisions surrounding UAM's school inclusion (par. 4);
- ordinary teaching practices and special projects created for UAMs, with particular attention to the moment of access and the retention of UAMs in education and training programmes over time (par. 5);
- and, in conclusion, a picture of the integration of UAMs in education and training and in their local area (par. 6), analysing the strengths and weaknesses of education and training contexts, risks and opportunities offered by local contexts, with respect to literacy and language acquisition, education and training.

1 - THE UAMs included in the survey. Characteristics, vulnerabilities, and resources



As is well known, Italy has remained one of the main reception Countries for UAMs in Europe, receiving minors both from the Balkan route and from the Mediterranean route. It is characterized by a normative framework that, in its continuous evolutions, has been particularly advanced and protective of minors that arrive in Italy unaccompanied by adult caregivers.



On 30th September 2020, according to the data from the DG Immigration and Integration policies⁵, UAMs present and registered in Italy are 5,979 of whom 95.8% males and 4.2% females. The personal or family choice of migrating abroad falls on males, due to the risks connected to the trip, crossing continents in the Balkan, Adriatic, or Mediterranean routes to reach Europe, as well as to cultural models where males are the main breadwinners, in the case of extreme poverty, since preadolescence.

UAMs in Italy are also, in large part, almost of age: 64.2% of the total are 17 years old, 23.9% are 16, 7.2% are 15, 4.4% (264 minors) are aged between 7 and 14, and only 0.4% is 6 years old or younger. Age is a crucial factor upon arrival in Italy. With the exception of a small group of minors, the majority of UAMs arrives and commences an integration programme between the ages of 16 and 17, i.e. with little time before they become of age and therefore with little time to set up and educational, training and career project. Within the time limits of the period where they are legally minors and therefore under legal protection, the transition to independence must be achieved via Italian language acquisition, mandatory school/training completion and, ultimately, initial career planning.

In terms of national origin, the official data indicate that the largest minority groups come from Albania (1,169 minors), Bangladesh (1,159), Egypt (567), Tunisia (555), Pakistan (521), the Ivory Coast (229), Somalia (217), and Afghanistan (200): these eight nationalities include approximately ¾ of all UAMs present in Italy. In terms of distribution, higher numbers can be found in Sicily (1,359 presences) which hosts 22.7% of all UAMs present in Italy, followed by Friuli-Venezia Giulia (824 minors or 13.8%), Lombardy (667 minors, 11.2%) and Emilia-Romagna (507 minors, 8.5%).

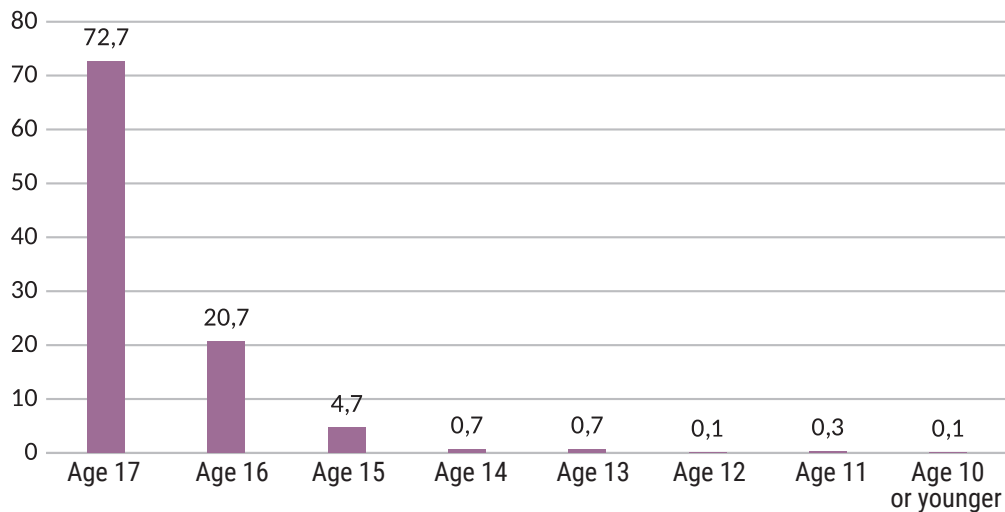
⁵ See the "Report mensile Minori Stranieri Non Accompagnati in Italia. Dati al 30 settembre 2020", <https://www.lavoro.gov.it/temi-e-priorita/immigrazione/focus-on/minori-stranieri/Documents/Report-MSNA-mese-settembre-2020.pdf>.



Profile of UAMs surveyed

What are the characteristics of the UAMs hosted by the organizations in the sample? Of the 1,400 UAMs present in the 130 organizations of the sample, 98.6% are male and 1.4% are female.

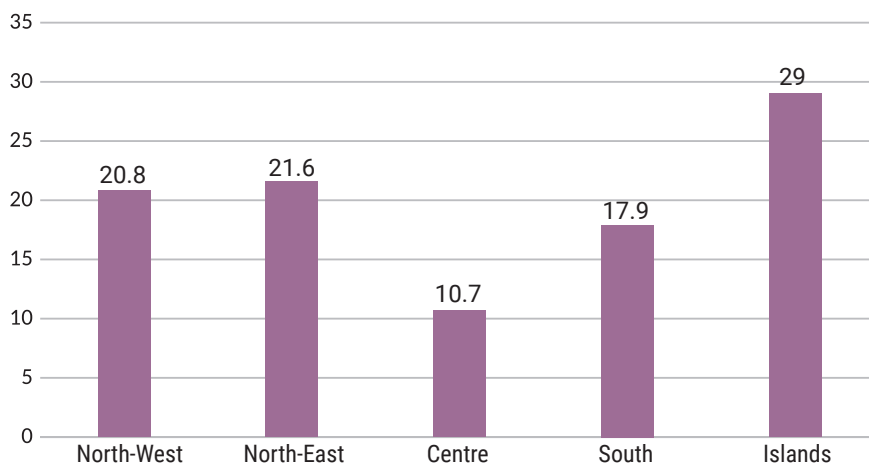
Figure 1.1 – Age of UAMs registered on 30/09/2020. %



Source: ISMU, *Survey on UAMs and access to literacy and education* (ALI 1 project - 2020).

Of these, 6.6% are 15 years old or younger and 20.7% are 16. The most numerically relevant component is made up of 17-year-olds, who represent almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of minors registered by the organizations in the sample. Minors are distributed in 75 Italian provinces: half (52.2%) are in facilities located in 10 provinces: 5 are in the South or the Islands (Trapani, Agrigento, Messina, Salerno, Catania) and 5 in the North (Milan, Novara, Udine, Pordenone, Bologna).

Figure 1.2 – UAMs registered by area. %



Source: ISMU, *Survey on UAMs and access to literacy and education* (ALI 1 project - 2020).



In terms of arrival in Italy, the largest number of minors arrived recently, between 2019 and 2020 (86%), 10.3% arrived in Italy in 2017-18, whereas the remaining 3.6% arrived in 2016 or earlier.

Main Countries of origin

Table 1.1 - Continents and Countries of UAMs in the sample

AREA OF ORIGIN	COUNTRIES
North Africa	Algeria, Egypt, Lybia, Morocco, Tunisia
Sub-Saharan Africa	Angola, the Ivory Coast, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo, Eritrea, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Togo
Asia	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, India, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey
Central-Eastern Europe	Albania, Bulgaria, Moldavia, Serbia, Kosovo
Latin America	Argentina, Brasil, Perù

Source: ISMU, *Survey on UAMs and access to literacy and education* (ALI 1 project - 2020).

In terms of continents of origin, 43% come from Africa, 34.7% from Asia and 21.5% come from Central-Eastern Europe (Fig. 1.3). Overall, 41 nationalities are represented, of whom over half refer to Countries in North Africa or Sub-Saharan Africa (Table 1.1). The three largest national groups cover over half of registered UAMs and the five largest approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total of 1,400 minors. These are: Bangladesh (343 minors), Albania (275), Egypt (168), Tunisia (128), and Pakistan (110)⁶.

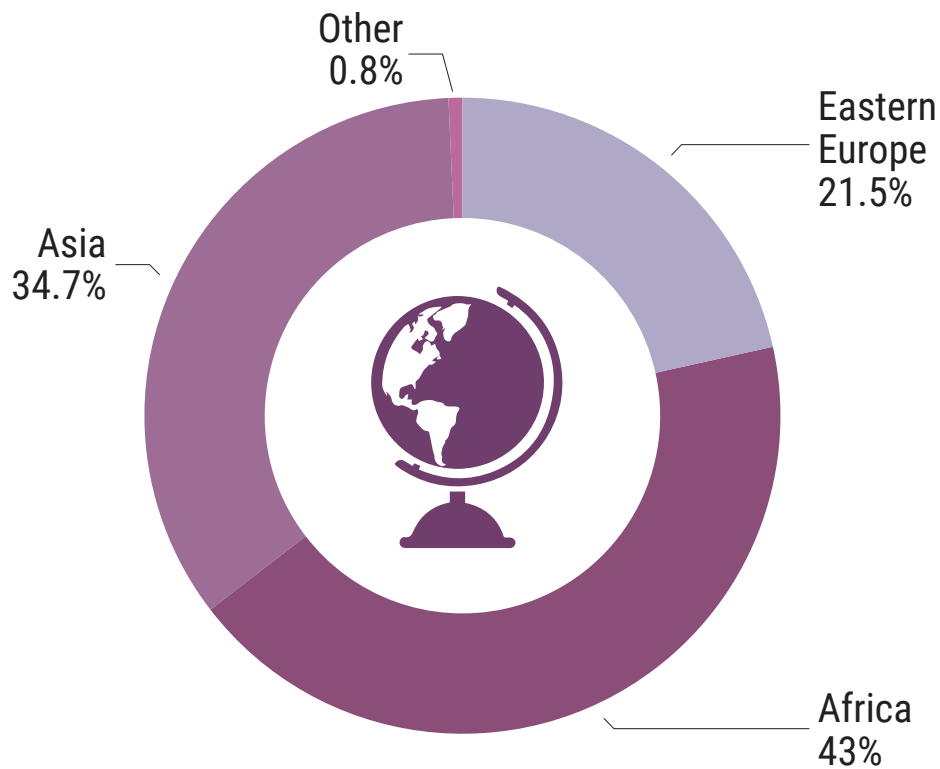


It is well know that, following the North African emergency, in 2012/13, nationalities have become more diversified and there has been a greater national and cultural heterogeneity. Previous migratory flows included arrivals mainly from the Maghreb area and Albania, with just under less than half of all asylum requests coming from minors leaving the Middle East (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, and Iraq), whereas in 2020 most UAMs come from different areas in Sub-Saharan Africa or from Bangladesh and Pakistan.

⁶ The primary nationalities in the sample coincide with those indicated in the report of the DG Immigration of 30/09/2020, albeit with some difference in order and percentage distribution: Albania (19.6% of all UAMs), Bangladesh (19.4%), Egypt (9.5%), Tunisia (9.3%), Pakistan (8.7%).



Figure 1.3 - Continents of UAMs in the sample. %



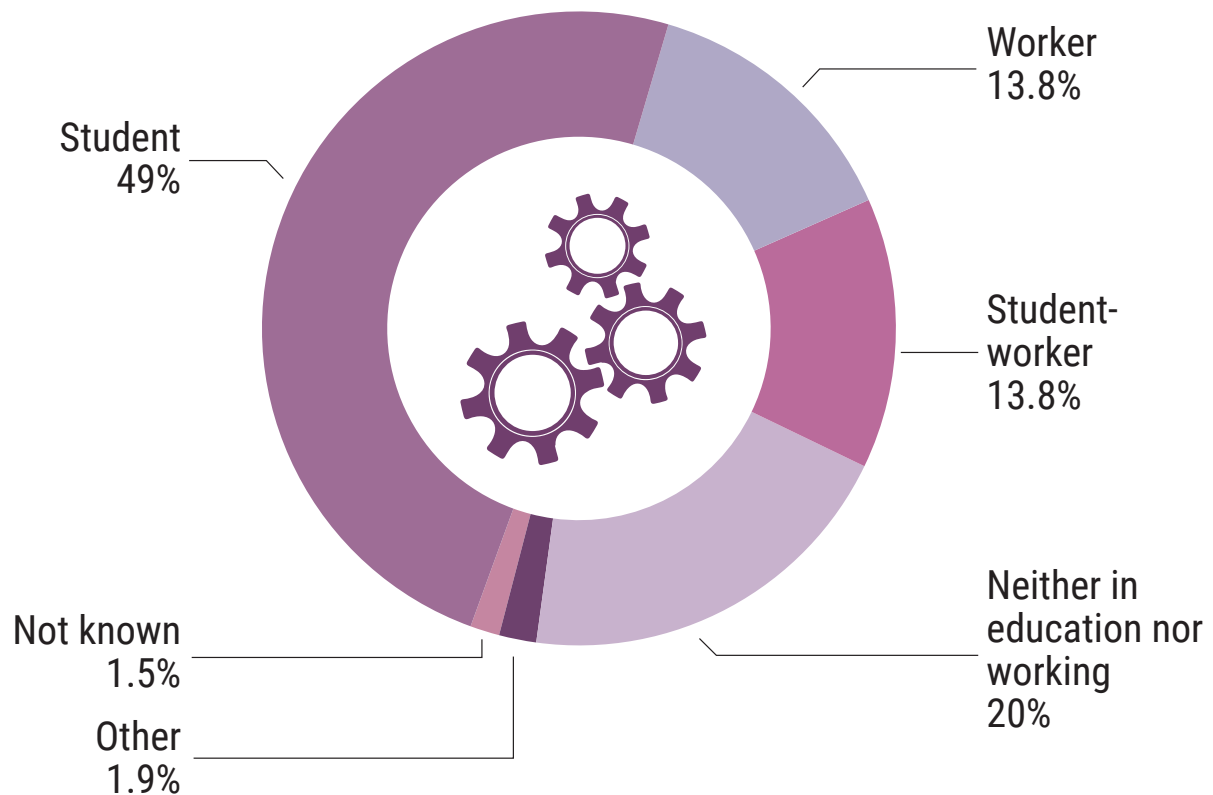
Source: ISMU, *Survey on UAMs and access to literacy and education* (ALI 1 project - 2020).

Condition and education level in their Country of origin

With respect to our study on access to linguistic literacy, education and training, it is important to emphasise that 62.8% of UAMs included in the survey was taking part in an educational or training programme or experience in their Country of origin. Indeed, 49% were full time students, 13.8% were studying and working part-time, whereas 33.8%, was either in a condition of inactivity (neither in education nor working) or was already working.



Figure 1.4 - Condition of UAMs in their Country of origin. A.V. and %

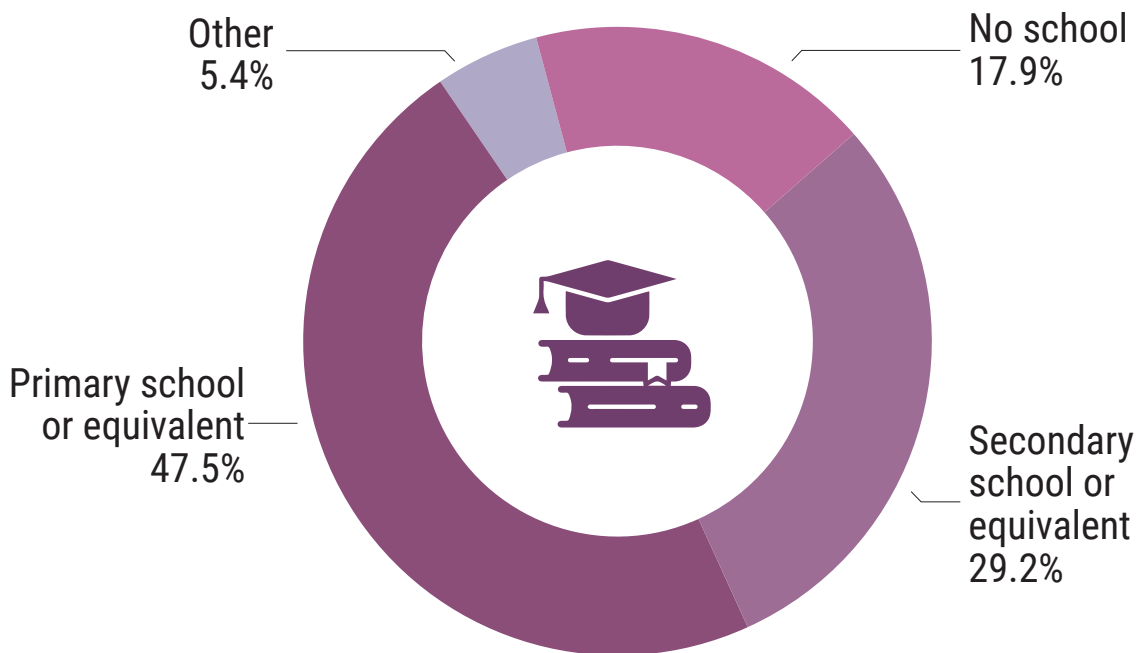


Source: ISMU, *Survey on UAMs and access to literacy and education* (ALI 1 project - 2020).

In terms of the educational level of minors hosted, organizations indicated both the level of formal education reached in their Country of origin, and the total number of years in education. This latter figure has been used as a control question, given the challenges of comparing the educational systems of different Countries of origin with the Italian school system. The UAMs in the sample, on average, spent 6 years in education. The number of minors who has never had access to formal schooling or education is significant (17%), but approximately half completed primary education. Among those who never had access to education in their home country most come from Africa or Asia: 27.1% of UAMs who have never received any form of schooling come from Bangladesh. At the other end of the spectrum, Albanian UAMs are over-represented among those who reached secondary school in their country of origin.



Figure 1.5 - UAMs registered by level of formal education completed in their Country of origin. %



Source: ISMU, *Survey on UAMs and access to literacy and education* (ALI 1 project - 2020).

Language skills

This polarized scenario, with those who lack any formal education and those who have completed basic education or reached the secondary level, is confirmed by the analysis of UAMs' Italian language skills upon entry in the reception facility hosting them. Over 80% of minors have an Alfa or Pre A1 level of Italian, which indicates they have never learned to read and write or that they received either a very poor or no adequate formal education. This group is followed by the 9.4% of minors that is distributed at the A1 level, and those at the A2 and B1 levels, which are the smallest group (approx. 8%). Levels A1 and A2 represent the first level of competence, defined as the acquisition of basic or elementary skills: they are able to interact in a simple fashion and on familiar topics, if the other person speaks slowly and clearly and is willing to collaborate. The B1 level, on the other hand, is defined as the "entry level" and supposes a good degree of independence of the speaker who, based on his or her knowledge of the language, is able to get around in everyday life, exchange information on ideas, intentions, and emotions, and conduct an independent life, both at the personal and at the social level.



Table 1.2 - UAMs by level of Italian language skills upon entry in the host organization. A.V and %*

LEVEL OF ITALIAN L2	A.V.	%
Alfa	556	40.6
Pre A1	577	42.2
A1	129	9.4
A2	61	4.5
B1	45	3.3
Total	1,368	100

Source: ISMU, *Survey on UAMs and access to literacy and education* (ALI 1 project - 2020).

*In 32 cases, the information is unknown.

Among the illiterate group, minors from Asia and Africa are most represented, whereas among those who have a level of A1 Italian or above we find those who have European origins – and among these, as aforementioned, Albanians are numerically prevalent. Moreover, in general, those who are illiterate in Italian are also illiterate in their language of origin (or have no knowledge of the Latin Alphabet), whereas those who show higher levels of Italian language skills have attended at least a few years of secondary schooling or VET courses in their home Country.

Despite the limited levels of education most have, some UAMs show significant language resources and skills. Indeed, almost 51.9% speaks at least two languages. In our sample of UAMs, the languages that are most spoken are Arabic, Albanian, French, Urdu, Bambara, English and Italian.

Table 1.3 - UAMs by number of languages spoken. A.V. and %

LANGUAGES SPOKEN	A.V.	%
1 language	651	46.5
2 languages	559	39.9
3 or more languages	169	12
No answer	21	1.6
Total	1,400	100

Source: ISMU, *Survey on UAMs and access to literacy and education* (ALI 1 project - 2020).



The group of UAMs reached by the survey thus appears heterogenous and differentiated upon arrival in Italy. On the one hand, the poor levels of formal education (when it is not completely absent), with a lack of basic literacy skills even in their language of origin, highlight a serious challenge for subsequent learning, given their limited linguistic knowledge and skills, even in their mother tongue, and is made worse by their status as UAMs, given the traumatic experience(s) of migration itself that undermine(s) motivation and investment in education, from the moment of arrival onwards. On the other hand, however, there is a significant number of minors who have managed to complete mandatory formal education in their home Country and, sometimes, have even begun post-mandatory education or training programmes, offering them a good chance of integrating their previous and current education or training projects within a wider project towards independence. These are minors that have multiple resources for learning: communication skills and multilingualism, many soft skills (independence, entrepreneurship, resilience in the face of stressful situations, the ability to adapt, openness to change, etc.) which they have developed also as a result of their migratory experience. These resources can become essential in the learning process and in their integration project in Italy.

2 - The challenges of linguistic literacy, education and training for UAMs. The current picture



The most original contribution made by the survey is, no doubt, the analysis of the data on the access to education and training among UAMs in Italy. The picture available so far, based on data from institutional sources, is quite partial, incomplete, and fragmented. The information collected within the SAI, for example, lacks data on the minors that are not part of this circuit; the national register of the CPIAs at the Ministry of Education collects distinct data for citizenship and age of those attending Italian language and literacy courses, as well as first and second level courses, but it is not known how many are also UAMs or ex-UAMs. It is possible to add the data concerning the verdicts of the DG Immigration for the conversion of a permit to stay and analyse the participation of UAMs who are almost of age to education integration projects. The information, however, covers only a small portion of minors and remains quite general with respect to education, education/training, education/work, without identifying the specific characteristics of these routes to integration.

Since 2014, when the Guidelines of the Ministry of Education were published and, subsequently, specific funding allocated to this target, local studies and monitoring began to take place regarding the presence of these minors in the education and training system, conducted mainly by Regional School Offices (Lombardy, Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany, etc.), in collaboration with Universities (University of Palermo, University of Naples Federico II, University for Foreigners of Perugia, Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, etc.). One of the most significant analyses has been the study of the University of Palermo on a sample of 500 UAMs⁷, which registers the level of literacy, language, technological and vocational skills among minors, noting how such skills have risen in function of the different offer of learning programmes in the Sicilian context.

The ISMU Foundation's national report, *Students with a migratory background in Italy. The Opportunities and the Challenges*, has also reserved an ample section to UAMs, presenting an explo-

⁷ The study is presented in detail in Di Rosa R.T., Gucciardo G., Argento G., Leonforte S. (2019) (a cura di), *Leggere, scrivere, esercizi. Bisogni formativi e processi di inclusione dei minori stranieri non accompagnati*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.



rative qualitative study⁸, which has highlighted UAMs' challenges in accessing and continuing their studies, but also the investment some of them make in this domain. Indeed, according to this report, some UAMs have the opportunity to continue their education or training not only as a result of their personal determination and talents, but also thanks to the schools that admit them and to all those figures (reception case workers, teachers, volunteers, and third sector organizations) who support them in their everyday experience⁹.

Training participation among UAMs on 30/09/2020

The photograph of UAMs – who were hosted in the representative sample of Italian reception facilities in 2020 – “taken” during the survey, highlights that, up to 30/09/2020:

- the largest quota of UAMs in Italy is enrolled in literacy courses, which take place especially within host organizations or in local CPIAs or, more rarely, by the third sector in the local area;
- secondly, we have the group of minors who are enrolled in the secondary education cycle, especially withing VET courses (13.3%), in order to complete their mandatory education;
- then we have the quota of minors who are enrolled in CPIA first level courses aimed at obtaining a lower secondary school degree or the same school level in lower secondary school;
- finally, 5.7% of UAMs in the sample appears not to be enrolled in any learning programme.

8 The study has explored the case of the Milan metropolitan city via 40 semistructured interviews with key informants and ex-minors with the aim of reconstructing positive routes to education and training integration. It also presented a case study based in Turin, with interviews and focus groups with 25 reference case workers, plus a survey of the presence of UAMs within VET courses in Turin.

Cfr. “Gli alunni stranieri non accompagnati”, in Santagati M., Colussi E. (2020), *Alunni con background migratorio in Italia. Le opportunità oltre gli ostacoli*, Fondazione ISMU, Milano. This study is based on the experience developed by ISMU on this topic over many years: see, for instance, over and beyond the numerous projects and national and international studies conducted, the contributions of Valtolina on UAMs in the ISMU reports on migrations; the research coordinated by Bichi R. (ed.) (2008), *Separated children. I minori stranieri non accompagnati*, FrancoAngeli, Milano; Valtolina G.G. (2014), *I minori stranieri non accompagnati. Sfide e prospettive*, MacGraw-Hill, Milano; and more recently: Fondazione ISMU (2019), *A un bivio. La transizione alla vita adulta dei minori stranieri non accompagnati in Italia*, UNICEF, UNHCR, OIM, Roma; Pavese N., Valtolina G. G. (2020), *Buone pratiche per l'accoglienza dei minori non accompagnati. Sistemi di inclusione e fattori di resilienza*, FrancoAngeli, Milano; Pavese N. (2020), *La scuola incontra i minori stranieri non accompagnati. Soggetti, compiti e diritti*, Fondazione ISMU, Milano.

9 See also Santagati M., Barzaghi A., Colussi E., “L'agency dei minori stranieri non accompagnati nell'accesso all'istruzione. Alternative possibili nel viaggio dal Sud al Nord Italia”, in Colombo M., Scardigno F. (2019), *La formazione dei rifugiati e dei minori stranieri non accompagnati. Una realtà necessaria*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano.

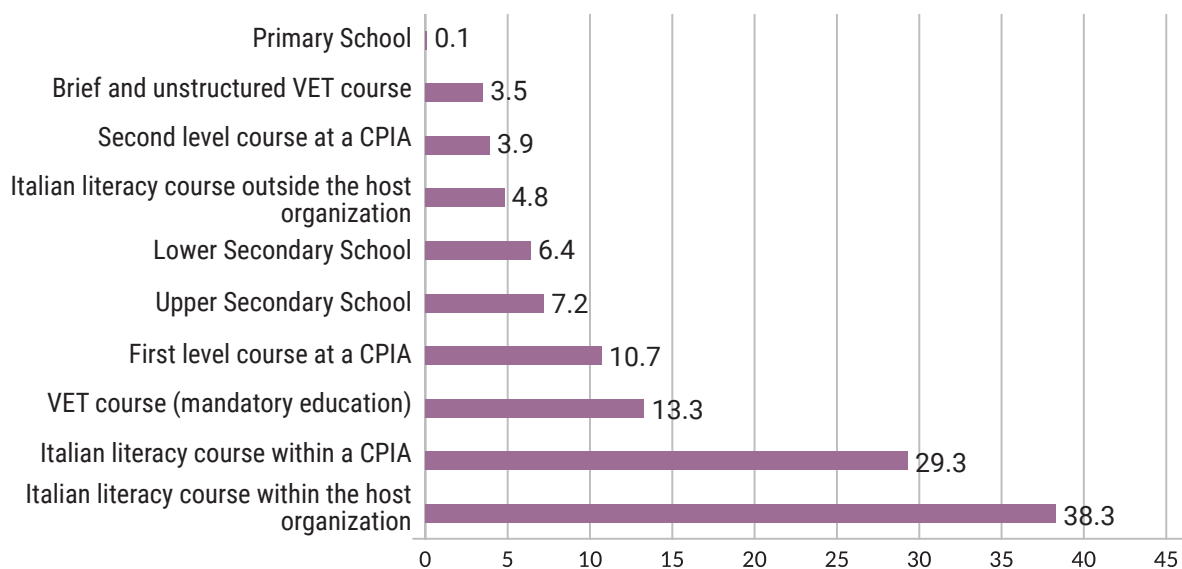


Table 2.1 - UAMs by learning programme attended on 30/09/2020 (multiple answers)

CURRENT LEARNING PROGRAMME	A.V.	%
Italian literacy course within the host organization	543	38.3
Italian literacy course within a CPIA	417	29.3
Italian literacy course outside the host organization	67	4.8
Primary School	2	0.1
First level course at a CPIA	150	10.7
Lower Secondary School	89	6.4
Upper Secondary School	100	7.2
Second level course at a CPIA	55	3.9
VET course (mandatory education)	186	13.3
Brief and unstructured VET course	49	3.5
No learning programme	80	5.7

Source: ISMU, *Survey on UAMs and access to literacy and education* (ALI 1 project - 2020).

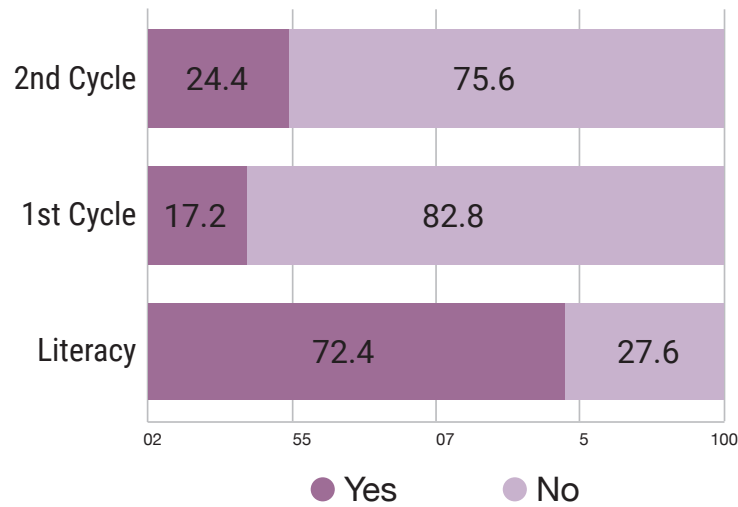
Figure 2.1 - Main learning programmes attended by UAMs registered on 30/09/2020. % (multiple answers)



Source: ISMU, *Survey on UAMs and access to literacy and education* (ALI 1 project - 2020).



Figure 2.2 - UAMs registered on 30/09/2020 by learning programmes attended. % (multiple answers)



Source: ISMU, *Survey on UAMs and access to literacy and education* (ALI 1 project - 2020).

On the linguistic literacy front, which involves the majority of the 1,400 UAMs considered, the survey data highlight that, considering Alfa and Pre A1 courses, the largest quota of minors is attending courses set up by host organizations or CPIAs. High levels of minors can be found also in A1 level courses, especially in those set up by third sector organizations or within reception facilities. The percentage of minors enrolled in Italian A2 courses, among those attending CPIAs, is also significant.

With respect to secondary schooling, the study offers some new data on a group of 191 minors distributed in classrooms: in particular, 91 in lower secondary schools and 100 in upper secondary schools, with a particular concentration in the final year of lower secondary school and in the first two years of upper secondary school.

Table 2.2 - UAMs by level of Italian courses attended by type of organization offering the course (30/09/2020). %

UAMS BY LEVEL OF L2 COURSE	COURSE WITHIN HOST ORGANIZATION	COURSE WITHIN CPIA	COURSE WITHIN THIRD SECTOR ORGANIZATION
Alfa and Pre A1	26.4	26.1	6.3
A1	61	42.9	75.8
A2	5.3	27.3	14.6
B1	6.2	0.8	-
Not known	1.1	2.9	3.3
Total	100	100	100
N cases	502	360	63

Source: ISMU, *Survey on UAMs and access to literacy and education* (ALI 1 project - 2020).



Table 2.3 - Percentage of UAMs in secondary schools by class attended on 30/09/2020. %

MSNA BY CLASS ATTENDED	%
Lower Secondary School – Year 1	13.6
Lower Secondary School – Year 2	5.1
Lower Secondary School – Year 3	73.5
Lower Secondary School – Not known	7.8
Lower Secondary School – Total	100 (N=91)
Upper Secondary School – Year 1	38.0
Upper Secondary School – Year 2	41.0
Upper Secondary School – Year 3	17.0
Upper Secondary School – Year 4	1.0
Upper Secondary School – Not known	3.0
Upper Secondary School – Total	100 (N=100)

Source: ISMU, *Survey on UAMs and access to literacy and education* (ALI 1 project - 2020).

In the general picture of education and training programmes geared at UAMs, the survey collected a general evaluation – based on the reference persons at the respondent organizations – with respect to a set of dimensions regarding minors’ participation. The dimensions considered included: the minor’s starting situation (positive or negative based on the aspect involved: e.g., positive or poor motivation), improvements or a lack thereof, and the minor’s general ability to remain involved in a stable way.

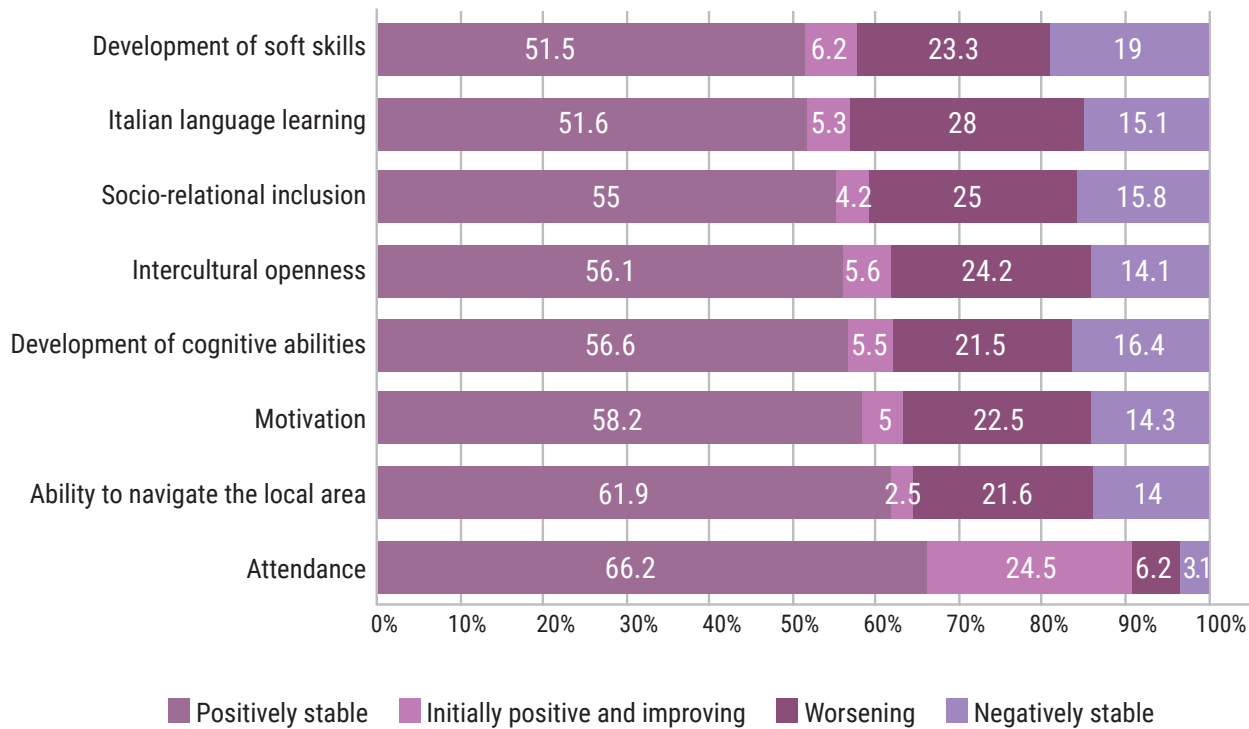
Overall, the picture painted by the organizations is relatively positive: for the majority of UAMs the situation described is “positively stable” for all the dimensions investigated in the survey. A positive evaluation that becomes increasingly widespread if we add the group of minors with a situation described as “initially positive and improving”.

There are, however, some differences in the response percentages. Firstly, we can observe an improvement independently from initial conditions, be they positive or negative, and for all dimensions, that falls around 5% for all UAMs considered. The only exception is represented by course “attendance”, whether or not this is a school programme, an aspect which has improved over time for almost one fourth of UAMs considered.

If we exclude attendance, on the other hand, a worsening in the different dimensions is reported for approximately 24% of UAMs. Similarly, the situation is “negatively stable” across various aspects of learning, except attendance, for approximately 15% of UAMs on average.



Figure 2.3 - Progression in educational participation among UAMs according to some key dimensions %



Source: ISMU, *Survey on UAMs and access to literacy and education* (ALI 1 project - 2020).

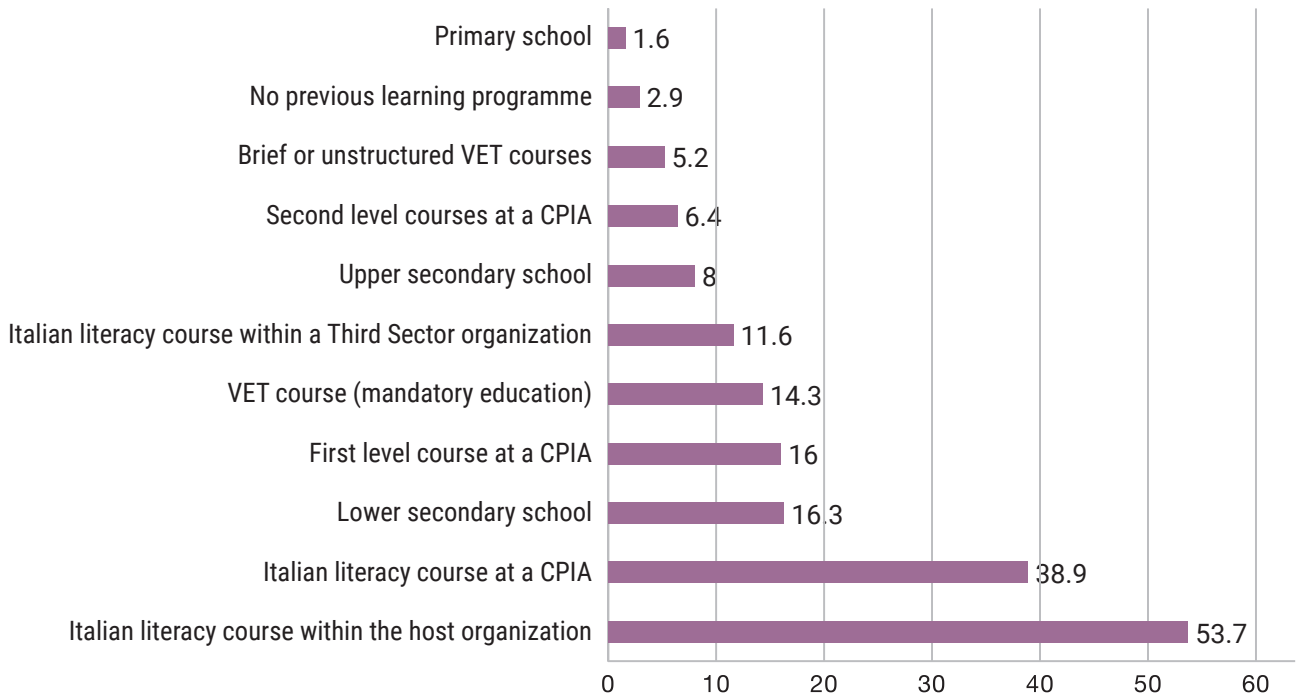
In terms of situations that are negative and stable, some critical areas include, in particular, the development of soft skills (19%) and of cognitive abilities (for over 16% of minors). On the positive side, conversely, the importance of beginning and attending a main learning programme, be it an Italian language course, elementary education or secondary education or training, ought to be highlighted. As positively stable key elements we also have the ability to navigate the local area and motivation.

Participation in education and training among UAMs since their arrival in Italy

The survey has also collected information on the type and length of learning programmes attended by UAMs from their arrival in Italy onwards. Before taking part in their current learning programme, UAMs hosted by the organizations sampled have attended mainly Italian literacy courses organized within reception facilities (53.7% UAMS have been enrolled in such courses upon arrival versus 38.3% of UAMs on 30/9/20), but also in CPIAs or in third sector organizations. Enrollment in the first cycle of education, particularly in lower secondary schools (16.3% of UAMs, considering only previous experiences, as opposed to 6.4% on 30/09/20), also appears significant.



Figure 2.4 - Main learning programmes attended by UAMs upon arrival in Italy. % (multiple answers)

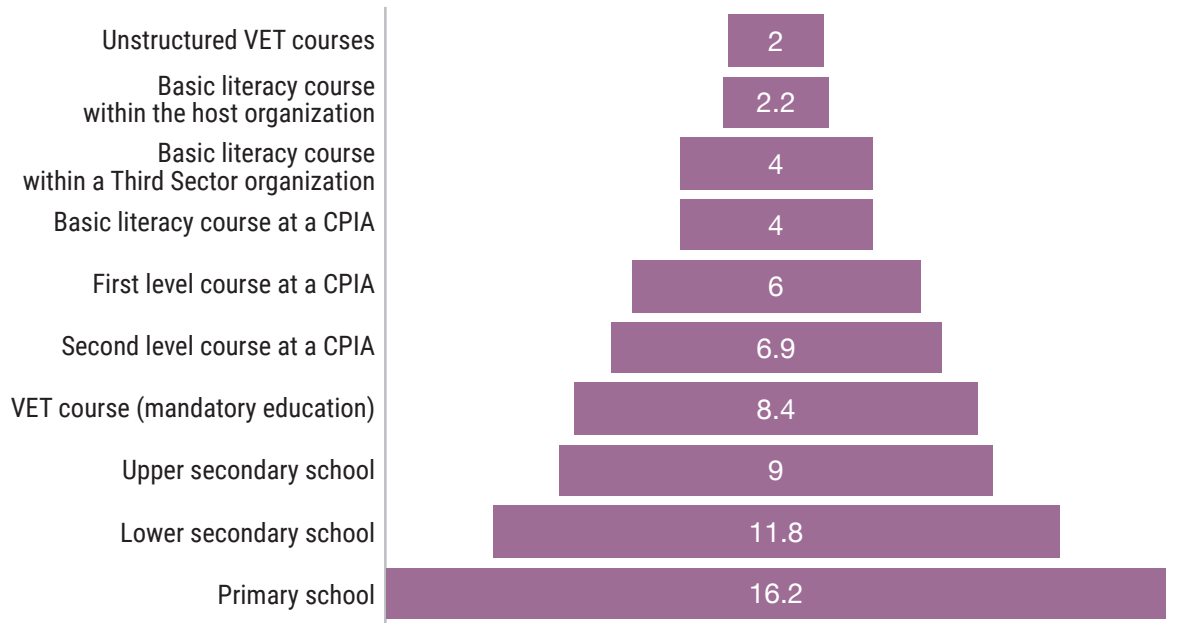


Source: ISMU, *Survey on UAMs and access to literacy and education* (ALI 1 project - 2020).

In terms of programme length, the UAMs considered have attended language literacy courses lasting 2-4 months (looking at median values in the frequency distribution), and first and second level courses at CPIAs which lasted approximately 6 months. School programmes in the first and second educational cycle lasted longer, approximately between 8 and 16 months (median value).



Figure 2.5 - Length in months of learning programmes attended previously by UAMs. Median values

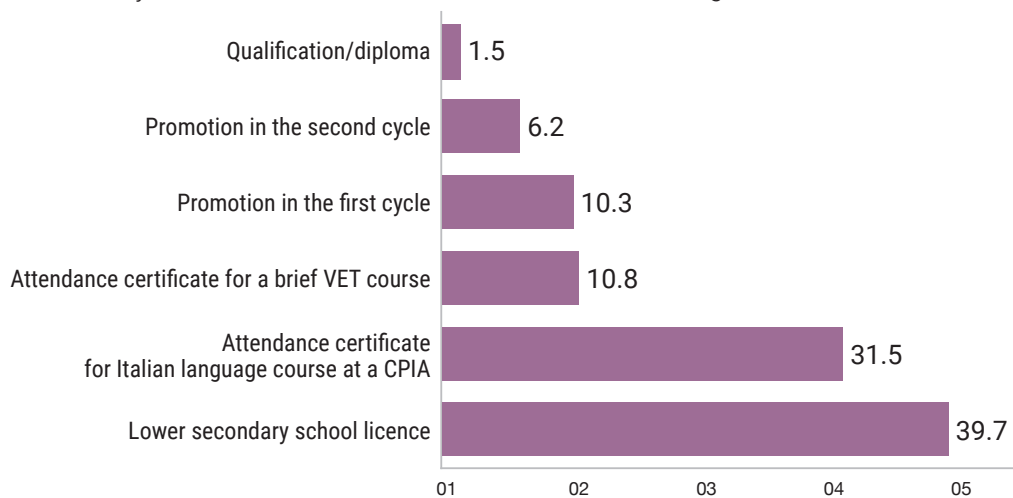


Source: ISMU, *Survey on UAMs and access to literacy and education* (ALI 1 project - 2020).

Results and interruptions in UAMs' education and training

Overall, 32.2% of UAMs considered completed their previous learning programmes (451 minors), whereas 61.8% have yet to complete them. Among those who completed their chosen programme, approximately 40% obtained a lower secondary school licence, approx. 31% obtained a completion certificate for an Italian L2 course at a CPIA and 10% for short-term VET courses.

Figure 2.6 – UAMs by results and attainments in education and training. %



Source: ISMU, *Survey on UAMs and access to literacy and education* (ALI 1 project - 2020).



If we examine the obstacles and challenges connected with learning programmes for UAMs, the organizations highlight that for 7.5% of all minors considered there has been an interruption, to which we need to add another 17% of minors for whom it is not known if there has been a suspension of their education or training programme or not. However, for over 70% of minors no discontinuity was found in the attendance of learning programmes in Italy. Among those who did interrupt their studies, over half has suspended for 3 months: the range of these responses goes from a few weeks to 36 months. These interruptions took place as a result of the extraordinary event of lockdown following the pandemic and, therefore, after the closure of school and training institutes that took place in Italy since March 2020. Other interruptions have been due to the transition of minors from first to second reception facilities, to transfers from one facility to another, or to periods when the minor was not to be found but still in Italy.

Participation in guidance counselling and vocational training programmes

Moreover, the survey analyses the participation of UAMs to VET programmes. For 17.9% of UAMs considered, guidance counselling opportunities have been offered, either by the host organizations (approx. half the sample), or by training agencies (33.5%). Such guidance has been geared at helping minors access sectors such as catering and tourism (46.5% of cases), which are increasingly important sectors both in metropolitan areas and in areas that have a solid culture or tourism industry. Other sectors include craftsmanship (15%), manufacturing (14%), building and construction (8.3%) and agriculture (5.4%).

Table 2.4 - Participation of UAMs in guidance counselling activities. A.V. and %

HAS THE MINOR PARTICIPATED IN GUIDANCE COUNSELLING ACTIVITIES?	A.V.	%
Yes	251	17.9
No	1,107	79.1
Missing	42	3
Total	1,400	100

Source: ISMU, *Survey on UAMs and access to literacy and education* (ALI 1 project - 2020).



Table 2.5 - Organizations that have offered guidance counselling for UAMs. %

TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS	%
Host Organizations	49.4
Training Agencies	33.5
Municipal Services	2.8
Employment Agencies	8.2
Upper Secondary School	6.1
Total	100

Source: ISMU, *Survey on UAMs and access to literacy and education* (ALI 1 project - 2020).

Another portion of UAMs considered (11.2%) has taken part in various vocational and pre-vocational training programmes. Mainly, these programmes are based on participation in pre-vocational training workshops, work experiences or placements, paid or unpaid. Once again, these experiences have taken place especially in the craftsmanship and the catering/tourism sectors and, albeit less so, in manufacturing and agriculture.

Table 2.6 - UAMs' participation in pre-vocational and vocational training experiences. A.V. and %

HAS THE MINOR PARTICIPATED IN (PRE)VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCES?	A.V.	%
Yes	1,201	85.8
No	157	11.2
Missing	42	3
Total	1,400	100

Source: ISMU, *Survey on UAMs and access to literacy and education* (ALI 1 project - 2020).

Table 2.7 - Types of pre-vocational and vocational training experiences UAMs have taken part in.%

PRE-VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCES	YES	NO
Pre-vocational training workshop	5.2	94.8
Unpaid work placement	3.9	96.1
Paid work placement	1.1	98.9
Work experiences in the context of an educational programme	0.5	99.5
Internship	0.5	99.5

Source: ISMU, *Survey on UAMs and access to literacy and education* (ALI 1 project - 2020).

3 – A crucial issue. Timing and access to education and training opportunities



A crucial issue in terms of UAMs’ access to education and training opportunities is timing, more specifically the time lapse between a minor’s arrival in Italy and their first access to an Italian language literacy course or in the education and training system. In the international literature this is highlighted: arriving at a young age, on the one hand, and rapid access to schooling, on the other, represent important protection factors that can facilitate the overall integration process of minors in Italy¹⁰. The following table and figure show the time necessary (in months) for the UAMs considered in the study in order to gain their first access to a learning programme. The timing goes from a minimum of 1 months (see median values) to 4-5 months for access to an educational programme leading to a lower secondary school license, to almost a year or more in order to access the second cycle.

Table 3.1 - Time between arrival in Italy and access to the first education or training programme. Mean, median, minimum and maximum length, in months

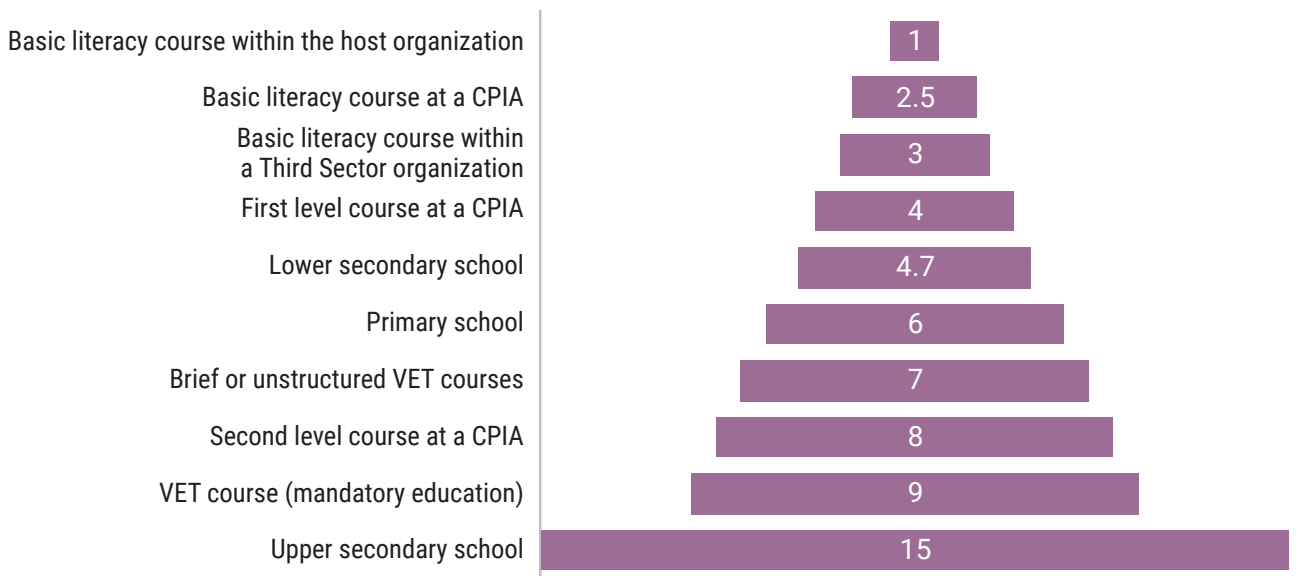
MONTHS BETWEEN ARRIVAL AND ACCESS TO FIRST EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMME	MEAN	MEDIAN	MIN	MAX
Italian literacy course within host organization	1.8	1	0	45
Italian literacy course within CPIA	4	2.5	0	53
Italian literacy course within third sector organization	4.0	3	0	25
First level course at a CPIA	7.2	4	0	120
Second level course at a CPIA	9.7	8	0	61
Lower secondary school	6.7	4.7	0	51
Primary school	12.7	6	3	39
Upper secondary school	17.1	15	0	60
Brief and unstructured vocational training	10	7	0	55
VET course (mandatory education)	11.2	9	0	50

Source: ISMU, *Survey on UAMs and access to literacy and education* (ALI 1 project - 2020).

¹⁰ See the literature review that highlights the risk and protection factors in UAMs’ migratory experiences.: cf. Santagati M., Augelli A. (2020), “Di fronte al sistema di istruzione e formazione. Nodi e chance per i Separated Children”, in Santagati M., Colussi E. (2020), *Alunni con background migratorio in Italia. Le opportunità oltre gli ostacoli*, Fondazione ISMU, Milano.



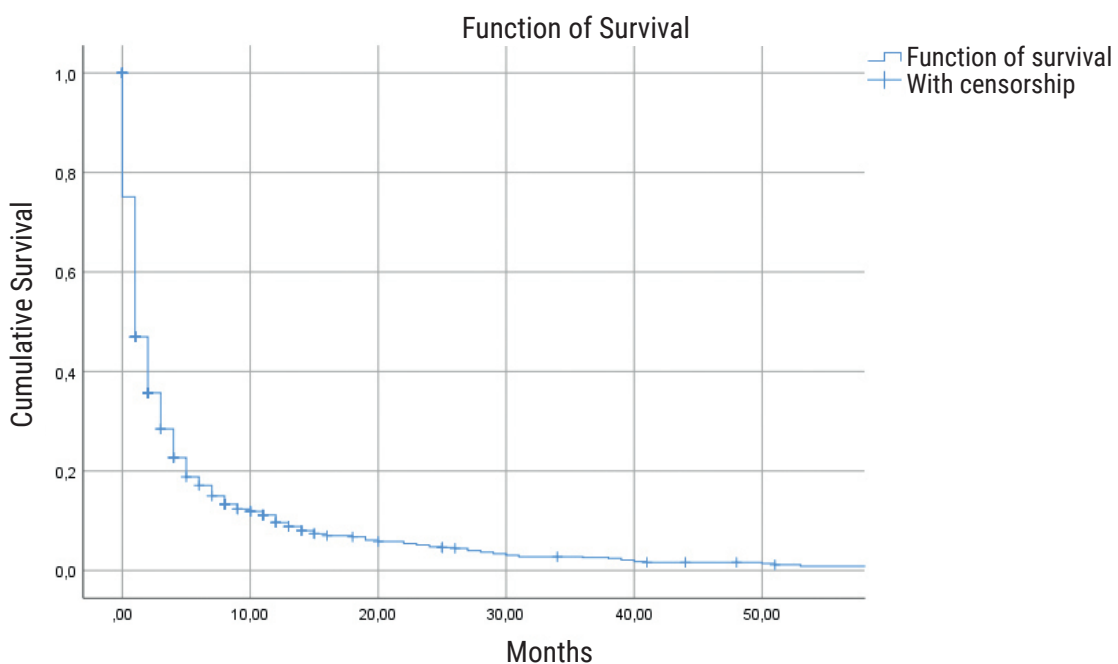
Figure 3.1 - Time lapse between arrival in Italy and access to the first education and training programme, in months. Median values



Source: ISMU, *Survey on UAMs and access to literacy and education* (ALI 1 project - 2020).

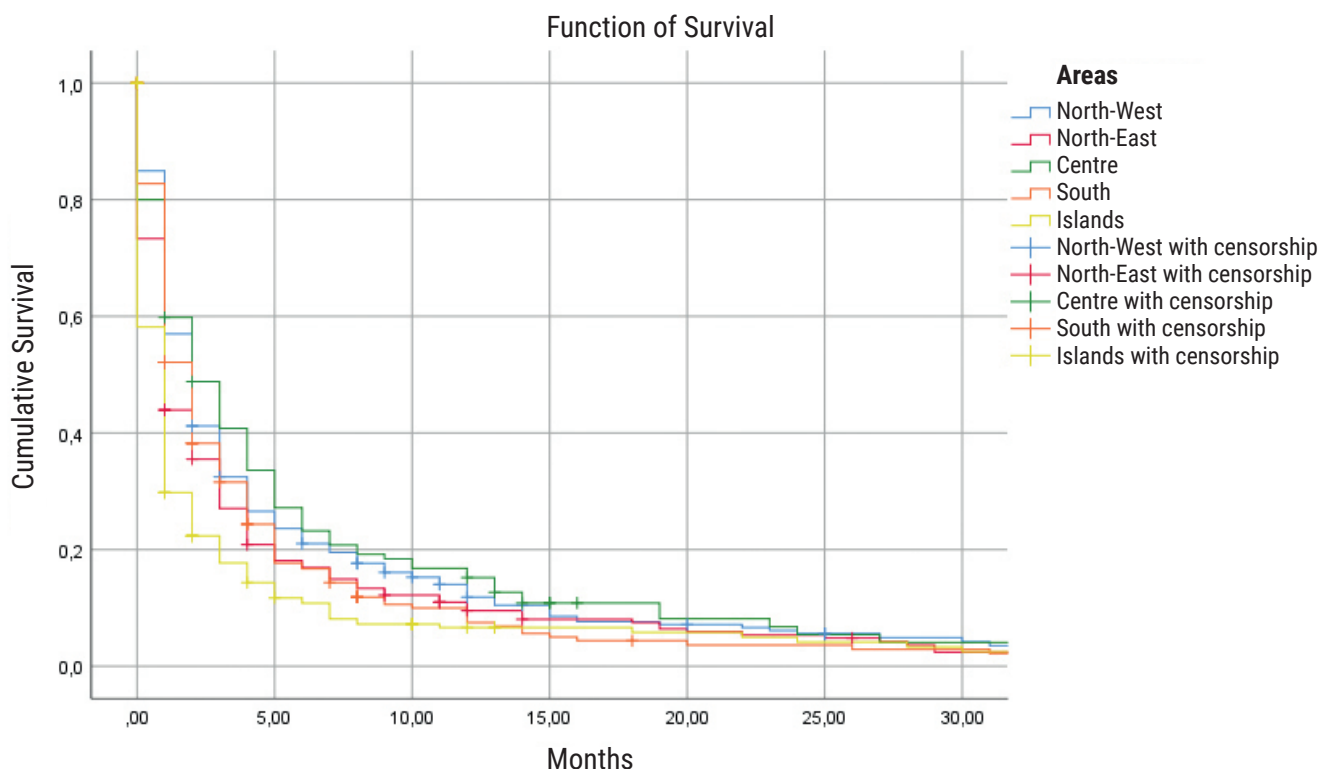
The analysis of timing of access via the Kaplan-Meier estimator allows us to evaluate the “survival function”, represented by the UAMs present in the sampled organizations that remain out of literacy courses and other education and training offers (i.e., who “survive”) over time.

Figure 3.2 - Kaplan-Meier curve: “survival” of UAMs outside Italian language literacy courses and other education and training opportunities from the moment they arrive in Italy



Source: ISMU, *Survey on UAMs and access to literacy and education* (ALI 1 project - 2020).

Figure 3.3 - Kaplan-Meier curve: "survival" of UAMs outside of Italian literacy courses and education and training opportunities from their arrival in Italy, by area



Source: ISMU, *Survey on UAMs and access to literacy and education* (ALI 1 project - 2020).

There are significant local differences, with lower access times to literacy courses especially for those minors who are hosted by organizations based on the Islands. Minors in facilities in the North West and Central Italy have greater waiting times, presumably as a result of a relocation after arriving in an Island or in the North East.

The curve shows how, as time passes, almost all minors are included in the education and training system. Moreover, the access times are quite brief: over 20% of minors gains access within the first month of their arrival in Italy and over 60% gains access within 2 months.

4 – Dilemmas and choices. Access to education and reception in education and training institutions



The picture presented by the survey, that enabled us to reconstruct the paths taken by UAMs based on original data on linguistic literacy courses, education, and VET in Italy, is corroborated by an analysis of the situation from educational institutions' point of view. The latter have to ensure UAMs are guaranteed the right to education for UAMs and face complex dilemmas and difficult choices with respect to the access and reception measures to adopt. This part of the analysis (in this paragraph and the ones that follow) is based on the qualitative analysis of the 10 case studies conducted throughout Italy, based on networks for the educational inclusion of UAMs.

The normative framework on access to education and school reception of UAMs in Italy

UAMs' access to various learning programmes has been amply regulated by Italian legislation. Faced with the common problems that UAMs pose to the school system and to those institutions involved in their care, independently of geographical location, the jurisdiction is clear: to all minors present in Italy, whatever their juridical status, access to mandatory schooling, education and training programmes must be granted up to age 18.

Law n. 47/2017 "Disposizioni in materia di misure di protezione dei minori stranieri non accompagnati" (Dispositions on protection measures for UAMs), Art. 14 confirms the right to education also for UAMs. From the moment these minors are granted a place in a reception facility, schools and other accredited education and training institutes are asked to adopt the necessary measures, with the aim of completing mandatory education. To achieve this goal, educational institutions can also devise specific projects that can include key figures such as cultural mediators.

The right to education is regulated in the "Linee guida per il diritto allo studio dei minori fuori dalla famiglia di origine" (Guidelines for minors' right to education outside their family of origin) (2017). In point 3, relative to school enrollment, the guidelines indicate that ensuring access to education for this type of student is a priority and, therefore, registration and access can occur at any moment during the school year, regardless of registration deadlines, by presenting an application directly to



the chosen school directly, effectively bypassing the mandatory online registration platform. Specific institutional measures for UAMs are aimed at speeding up access to educational programmes for those who arrive during the school year. One factor that is borne in mind is that the conclusion of educational programmes and obtainment of relative titles must take place before the minor becomes of age, given that once they are 18+ they may no longer be eligible to remain in the reception system, unless a special permit to continue has been issued or their asylum request has been successful.

Timeframes for access to education can be adapted and extended, based on the school manager's decision, in accordance with those who are responsible for the minor's care, in order to offer UAMs the opportunity to adapt to their new context and reception community. The legislation has also contemplated the challenge, common to many UAMs, of not being able to demonstrate with the adequate paperwork that they have completed mandatory education in their Country of origin. In such cases, access to educational programmes in Italy will need to take place in upper or lower secondary schools or, after their 16th birthday, in CPIAs, where they can obtain a lower secondary school license, sometimes after a preliminary language literacy course.

The norms also indicate what class they ought to be placed in, bearing in mind the educational project that has been put in place for the minor. During the reception process, the teachers' council, based on what has been communicated by the adult or organization responsible for the minor, will determine the class based on how inclusive it can be and the experience of the teachers appointed. Ministerial circular letters (including the CM n. 2/2010), moreover, offer directives aimed at planning the flow of enrollments with concerted actions between local public bodies, Prefectures and Regional School Offices. The aim of these recommendations is to ensure equal educational opportunities for all, setting a maximum limit of foreign students with a limited knowledge of Italian per each class. The norms also stress the importance of simplifying procedures for school transfers following changes in residence, forwarding all the necessary paperwork from one institution to another.

With reference to registrations in CPIAs, based on the DPR n. 263/2012, the norms state that access is possible for minors who are at least 16 years of age and are not in possession of the necessary paperwork attesting they have completed the first cycle of education. Nonetheless, following specific agreements between Regions and Regional School Offices, it is possible for those who are 15 years of age to register, should there be particular and specific motives (Art. 3, DPR n. 263/12).

The CM n. 4/2017 "Iscrizioni ai percorsi di istruzione per gli adulti a.s. 2017/2018" (Enrollment in adult education programmes, s.y. 2017/2018) emphasizes how enrollment in education programmes represents a choice for migrant citizens regarding their broader personal life and career projects and represents a relevant opportunity for dialogue with educational institutions, aimed at fostering a decision that is fully in line with individual needs, through the creation of an individualized educational plan. Moreover, it ensures the possibility that UAMs who have reached age 15 can be enrolled in first level education programmes.

Over and beyond mandatory education and the right to education, whatever the juridical status



of the minor, UAMs can access VET, according to art.38 D.lgs. n. 286/1998. In this article, educational institutions are asked to develop appropriate VET courses, in partnership with Regions and local public bodies, bearing in mind that: the law on the right to education and VET contemplates 10 years of mandatory education; this lasts until age 18, and can be completed with an upper secondary school qualification, a qualification from a VET programme lasting 3 or more years or through an apprenticeship. Moreover, VET, which is regulated by regions, can take place only after the completion of mandatory educational requirements (be it in Italy or abroad). Some exceptions are possible for some minors who are enrolled in courses held by CPIAs, where participation is possible for UAMs enrolled in first level education programmes for the obtainment of a lower secondary school license or those enrolled in CPIAs upon request of the local public administration or the host organization.

Art. 1 of the D.lgs. n. 76/2005 “Definizione delle norme generali sul diritto-dovere all’istruzione e alla formazione” (Definition of the general norms on the right-duty to education and training) ensures everyone the right to education and training, for at least 12 years or, in any case, leading up to the obtainment of a qualification from a programme lasting at least 3 years, within 18 years of age. This can take place in institutions of the first and second cycle, based on schools and other training agencies accredited by Regions or the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano, or via apprenticeships. In relation to the juridical requirements of UAMs, minors who are lacking any form of ID or a permit to stay can still enroll in schools and VET courses.

With reference to school reception, the Art. 38 of the D.lgs. n. 286/1998 “Testo unico delle disposizioni concernenti la disciplina dell’immigrazione e norme sulla condizione dello straniero” (Dispositions on the discipline of immigration and norms on the condition of the foreigner), regulates all reception activities conducted by schools. Schools are asked to integrate linguistic and cultural differences based on a principle of mutual respect, where minors’ culture and language of origin are protected, and intercultural activities are offered. Schools must be prepared also to receive adult migrants through the offer of literacy courses. The CM n. 2/2010 “Indicazioni e raccomandazioni per l’integrazione di alunni con cittadinanza non italiana” (Directions and recommendation for the integration of students without Italian citizenship) and the latest “Linee guida per l’accoglienza e l’integrazione degli alunni stranieri del MIUR” (Guidelines for reception and integration of non-Italian students) of the MIUR, 2014, passed for different types of students, includes UAMs. These documents stress that, upon beginning school it is important to give value to the cultural history and the overall biography of all students. The reception model, in the different phases detailed by the reception protocol (administrative-bureaucratic during enrollment; communicative-relational during the get-to-know each other phase; educational when the class is assigned, during reception, during intercultural education, during Italian L2 learning; social with respect to the relationship with the class), is aimed at: facilitating the inclusion of migrant students, even when they arrive during the school year, simplifying enrollment via specific instruments (multilingual models and forms) and fostering a positive climate of reception.



What dilemmas for education and training institutions?

With reference to this normative framework, the case studies highlight the challenges in translating these recommendations into practices, highlighting how some critical aspects, characteristics and experiences of UAMs, open dilemmas with no easy solution for schools and other educational institutions, faced with choices that are not always in line with what is defined in the normative framework. More specifically, there is a certain level of discretionality in choices made in the reception of UAMs concerning: a) administrative aspects, b) educational-didactic aspects, c) socio-educational aspects.

a) Administrative aspects

In terms of access to education and training, age of arrival in Italy, having a permit to stay or not, level of education reached in one's home Country, the moment of arrival with respect to the school year are the main aspects that guide access choices, according to the opinions collected during the case studies.

The age of UAMs is a determining factor for the overall integration projects and significantly affects the direction of an educational or training project. Given that many minors are aged 16 and 17, the study participants agree that most UAMs will be referring to CPIAs. CPIAs are an autonomous form of educational institution, with a specific teaching and organizational setup, articulated in provincial service networks, that fall under the legislation passed with the DPR n. 263/2012. CPIAs offer adult education and training courses for Italians and non-Italians aged 16 and above, which are suitable also for UAMs who do not have a title certifying the completion of the first cycle of education. Only in some regional contexts, as a result of specific agreements with School Offices, minors who have turned 15 are also enrolled in CPIAs. The choices of CPIAs, therefore, appear differentiated across the nation on the basis of regional legislation.

CPIAs are a place for adult education, so we accept registration only for those aged 16+. The Region has not stipulated any agreement that allows for 15-year-olds to register. In a Ministry note last year it was made clear that CPIAs cannot be considered a place where those who are having a hard time at school are relegated and ultimately marginalized (CPIA Manager, case 3 – North).

The case studies highlight that the most critical years for school enrolment are ages 14 or 15. Both lower secondary schools and CPIAs face a challenge due to these students' age. Across the nation, the choices made by lower secondary schools vary. In general, up to age 14 an effort is made to enroll the minor in ordinary education, but sometimes minors have to wait for their 15th birthday



while attending language literacy courses. Much less common, on the other hand, is access to upper secondary school and in more structured 2- or 3-year VET courses, once again due to the few years remaining before they become of age. Some regions, however, have developed specific programmes in order to register those who have just arrived in VET. Investment in post-mandatory programmes is not impossible, rather it is highlighted in various interviews.

Upper secondary schools are almost automatically excluded because it is not an educational route that fits with the needs and the target represented by these kids...VET courses often last 2 or 3 years and often they don't have all this time to invest in training, because they will turn 18 and after that the reception system changes for them. Plus, these days, in VET courses if they don't have a good level of Italian, it's hard for them to take them on (Social worker, case 2 - North).

We have a boy that recently turned 18, who is in the 4th year at a linguistic lyceum with excellent results (Reception case worker, case 9 - South).

It depends on [the UAM's] motivations, ambitions, and potential: now we are hosting two kids that attend a social sciences lyceum, who are motivated to go on to study at university. Others we enrolled in state schools where it's a long road; then there are those who are motivated to work as soon as possible and we enroll them in VET courses (Educator, case 8 - South).

On the other hand, the fact that many minors are almost 18 years old poses numerous problems with respect to how enrollment procedures ought to be put into practice based on art.13 of the Law n. 47/2017. The Juvenile Court can arrange for minors to continue being under the custody of social services. This can occur upon request of social services themselves and, in a limited number of cases, for educational reasons. In any case the time limit for custody is age 21. The motivation, generally, is more time to develop a positive project towards independence and social inclusion.

Even though the normative framework guarantees the right to education independently from juridical status and in the absence of the necessary documentation for admission, in a relevant number of case studies enrollment in education or training is conditional upon a permit to stay, some evidence of previous education completed abroad and the permanence in a reception facility. Some institutions ask for a copy of the permit to stay at the moment of registration and will refuse enrollment to UAMs who do not have the necessary paperwork. These are illegitimate practices, given that, in the prime interest of the minor, UAMs have the right-duty to access education and training programmes, according to international legislation and the right and obligation to education in Italy. The dilemma, in some Italian regions, is handled differently: here access to education and training is possible also for those who do not have a permit to stay, without any conditions regarding juridical status.



A further dilemma is represented by UAMs' whose arrival takes place after the school year has already started. The interviews suggest that if the minor arrives in autumn, a few months after the beginning of the school year, it is easier for them to gain access to an ordinary education or training programme. If the arrival is later, on the other hand, it is more likely that they will be redirected towards a language literacy course within the host facility or a CPIA, further delaying access to ordinary education and training to the next school year, should age still make that possible. There is no lack of critical voices on the rigid nature of deadlines and procedures that are not always able to adapt to the needs of managing migratory flows regarding minors.

Those minors that are placed in facilities after 15th October or at the end of November should wait a whole year to go to school (CPIA Teacher, case 8 - South).

Migratory flows should not have to follow the CPIA's or the Ministry's deadlines, but rather it is the CPIA that should have flexible deadlines throughout the year (Educator, case 8 - South).

A final element is the correspondence between age and inclusion at different levels of schooling, where documentation regarding what education was completed in one's Country of origin is a crucial element that can broaden or, often, reduce, UAM's opportunities for access to education and training, especially for those who arrive with a low (or non-existent) level of basic schooling and close to age 18. In this case, also, it falls upon schools to decide whether to apply the guidelines regarding the access to education for UAMs.

It can happen that there are UAMs enrolled in VET courses who do not have a VIII grade certificate (CPIA Manager, case 4 - Centre).

We call the closest schools and present the situation of the minor. We try and determine what routes are more appropriate according to a first skills evaluation conducted with the school to understand in what grade to put them in. The choice is made also on the characteristics of the minors, their emotional maturity and not only age (Reception case worker, case 9 - South).

b) Educational-didactic aspects

Over the years we have established such strong partnerships that the charge of the minor becomes a global charge and there is a constant exchange between the facility and the educational institution (Reception case worker, case 9 - South).



After primary reception in a dedicated facility, the aim of implementing organizations is to ensure, as soon as possible, that UAMs are taken in charge by education and training institutions. Sometimes, however, the learning programmes offered are not geared to the minor's real abilities and skills, given the lack of coordination among the network partners. In the case of institutions with greater experience in the educational inclusion of UAMs, the reception process is coordinated between teachers, teachers' councils, reception workers and facilities, through specific case evaluations, tests, skills assessments, and an analysis of the characteristics and capacities of each UAM.

The teachers' council offers their observation, often in partnership with the reception facility, and analyses the situation. They explore the minor's ability to collaborate, to socialize, their ability to adapt to new circumstances, they try to understand what channels they can use (IC School Manager, case 10 - South).

There is a screening that takes place: of hard skills, of knowledge and of soft skills. A strategy that is devised for each minor... In order to understand what is the best solution for each and every one (Educator, case 9 - South).

The screening process is generally based on a procedure whereby teachers and experts evaluate, with the aid of a narrative interview, the migrant's skills upon entry, as well as their potential and interests, to devise a personal education or training project. In particular, the screening process is important to highlight the capacities expressed by UAMs, exploring their knowledge and technical skills (hard skills) necessary to undertake any specific programme, but also their motivations, expectations, and the aforementioned soft skills. Based on this, many single local institutions (although this is not a common or widespread practice) have preferred to take in a small group of UAMs, in order to create individualized guidance projects, based on a knowledge of the biography and motivations which underpin their specific migratory experience.

From a learning point of view, understanding what the minor's previous educational career entailed in their Country of origin and what level of schooling they had reached, is fundamental. Younger UAMs and those with a regular school career are those whose have greater chances of entering school in the correct year – perhaps with some special support for L2 Italian – and to continue education up to upper secondary school. No doubt the challenge is that of offering UAMs a “vertical” progression, that goes from early literacy to a lower secondary school license and, after that, perhaps ending with a un upper secondary school diploma. Within CPIAs, in some areas, however, it is not possible to offer this kind of courses, due to a lack of personnel.

During the access phase, some schools prefer the creation of homogenous groups, according to the level of language skills, and a balanced distribution of both Italian and non-Italian students. In



order to facilitate the inclusion in the classroom and to build homogenous groups based on skillsets, some areas tried experimental “reception classes”. In these classes minors are placed in classes for a three-week observation period, after which teachers would create the final groups of classes, moving students to other classes in the same year group if necessary.

In relation to the linguistic difficulties among UAMs, identified during the reception phase, the school offers intensive Italian language learning hours aimed at fostering learning across subjects or suggesting lower language level courses that what would be age-appropriate for an Italian student.

The reception phase, however, is not only a time for ascertaining the necessary bureaucratic and linguist requirements for access but it can be a moment when some networks are busy trying to help minors understand the importance of education, not only for their socio-professional future, but especially as a means of offering emotional and relational stability and security in the present. Specific support is also offered to UAMs, through protocols and partnerships with associations and other organizations, where professionals (e.g., intercultural mediators) are made available to foster a positive interaction between minors and schools.

Reassuring more than acting, because it's clear that in the here and now we are not talking about teaching or learning, but rather of letting the minor know that they are in a place that will take care of them, that they will be with other kids their age ... in some way to help them not feel any difference with respect to their problems in that moment (Reference person for inclusion – Upper secondary institute, case 7 - South).

c) Socio-educational aspects

The instability of UAMs' presence in each area and of their permanence in reception facilities, especially in the South Italy, represents an exogenous factor that puts educational continuity at risk. Some CPIAs face this difficulty by adopting different strategies such as, on the one hand, bearing in mind the transitory nature of most minors by offering modular and repeated activities and, on the other, leaving the door open to a more structured programme for those who intend to remain over time. During reception, for teachers it is essential to guess the minors' propensities, understanding their educational needs and leveraging on the meaning and motivations for learning.

Everything is based on a type of educational approach and relationship based on the here and now. We create projects with short-term goals. All that we can do, we try to do it in a relatively brief time. Of course, during the reception phase, teachers already know if minors will remain in the area or not. Sometimes they say they plan to leave. But I'd like to stress that we work with an awareness of the uncertainty of the here and now, trying to give our best in the moment when the student is in front of us. (CPIA Manager, case 10 - South).



These kids don't understand why they have to come to school, and they come grudgingly and with scarce results, making a bit of mayhem. It's frustrating for them (CPIA Manager, case - 4 Center).

For those UAMs in Italy only in transit, the access phase is made even more difficult by the lack of an initial motivation to adhere to the education or training offers and, especially, to fit into classes that are already formed. The obstacles to overcome are not only connected with the bureaucratic-administrative complexities and the inadequate preparation at the linguistic/disciplinary level, but also to socio-educational aspects, a limited ability to find one's way round and adapt to a new context, and levels of socio-relational fit with the school community.

As Italian language knowledge improves, so does socialization with peers. This is made evident by the fact that when UAMs decide independently to tell their story, they enrich and motivate the whole class. At the same time, prejudice from the host context and their Italian peers, as well as from kids from other minority groups, make learning processes even more difficult within groups who are already formed, are at times non-homogenous in terms of linguistic skills and with an excessive concentration of non-Italian students. Here we have reciprocal relational closures, where UAMs themselves are not interested in creating relationships with their classmates.

Their life stories, for those who want to talk about them, based on what kids aged 15/16 face, are a resource for us because they make us think a lot and help us understand that we are not all the same (CPIA Teacher, case 8 - South).

Often, they enter groups that are already formed and then the attitude is provocative (CPIA Reference person for UAMs, case 1 - North).

The main problem is that they get here with an Italian language level that is low. Also at the relational level, there is a sort of closure. Then let's say that they consider school more like a civil obligation than a real need, also because often they are in transit, so sometimes they are not willing to create bonds (School reference person, case 7 -South).

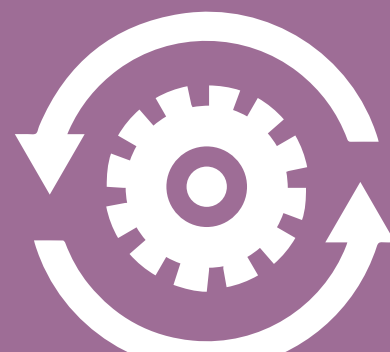
The main socio-relational challenge relative to school reception, therefore, is the distribution of UAMs in classes. In many cases we have observed how, placing more than one UAM in the same class, for example in some CPIAs, there is a risk of creating sub-groups that tend to isolate and not engage in intercultural socialization. To overcome this obstacle in the initial period, teachers try to create heterogenous classes in terms of age and Country of origin.

One strategy devised by different schools to overcome the challenges connected with reception is the creation of specific projects that, going over and beyond the standard curriculum, can



offer something more, ensuring an educational appeal. For example: training programmes also for those who have not been enrolled in the first period of schooling and reception courses during the summer; the presence of linguistic and cultural mediators, some of whom are ex-students, in order to support students with special needs also outside of school hours; placing UAMs and their socio-relational inclusion in the foreground, taking care of them and mediating their inclusion in classes that are heterogenous in terms of nationality, but homogenous in terms of skills and maturity, where inclusion and intergroup socialization are fostered.

5 – Ordinary school practices and special projects



Ordinary school practices

The case studies enabled us to create a map of ordinary school practices, which we have organized in a general framework that highlights some of the main phases of school integration. With reference to UAMs, these practices define a student's life cycle within an education or training programme¹¹, from the first contact with and enrollment in the school to the end of all activities (summarised in Table 5.1).

The *entry phase* includes those actions that refer to access and the beginning of the education or training programme. Although there are many schools that developed 'reception protocols' in order to standardise school entry and integration practices for UAMs, there are some margins of discretionality and ambiguity in activities created for this user group. No doubt, it is common for organizations and facilities responsible for the reception and hosting of UAMs to develop systematic partnerships within territorial networks made up of public and third-sector organizations fostering the positive access of UAMs in education.

By now we have a set of contacts with schools and institutions and the facility's social worker handles this aspect. We send registrations via email to the CPIA (Third Sector Reference person, case 9 - South).

The ordinary practices for access entail that the UAM, at the moment of enrollment – whether this takes place at the beginning or during the school year – is accompanied by an adult, for example a case worker from the reception facility or a tutor. The school administration desk collects the necessary paperwork and contacts the dedicated Inclusion Teams to share information on the minor's previous education and training experiences. Various schools use different intercultural instruments, such as offering the minor the possibility of completing their presentation

¹¹ The "non-Italian student's life cycle" is an expression taken from a model of analysis and intervention carried out in a project on initial VET, presented in Santagati M. (2015) (Ed.), *Una diversa opportunità. Classi multiculturali ed esperienze di successo nella formazione professionale*, Fondazione ISMU, Milano.



letter and other forms in their mother tongue. These forms are necessary for schools to acquire various identification documents, such as the fiscal code and vaccination certificate, previous qualifications, and an indication on whether or not the minor wishes to participate in Catholic religion classes.

Subsequently, schools will set up some initial interviews with the UAM, with aid of a linguistic-cultural mediator, with the goal of understanding their socio-educational needs and gleaning their level of acquired formal and informal skills. Sometimes entry tests are conducted to evaluate the UAM's level of Italian and other basic skills, such as mathematical-logical skills. Registration represents the real starting point of school reception for the minor. In this first phase, the teaching team, with the tutor or the case worker/educator from the reception facility, gives each student a diary for absences/justifications and a password to access the electronic registry.

After the individual interview, an observation phase in the classroom takes place, which enables the school to further gain an appreciation of any particular dynamics or skills the student may have (or lack) in order to put together the PEI, the Individualized Educational Plan. The PEI is the instrument used by the teachers' council in order to put in place an inclusive teaching and learning plan for disadvantaged students. It contains a coordinated summary of the learning, educational and socialization plan, as well as how curricular and extra-curricular activities will be integrated. Art.5 of the DPR 24/02/1994 and the CM n. 8/2013 also refers to students with SENs (Special Educational Needs) and those with a socioeconomic and sociocultural disadvantage, who may require a special intervention if the teachers' council saw it fit, in order to fully ensure their right to education.

The role of IncTs (Inclusion Teams, introduced by the CM n. 8/2013 "Strumenti d'intervento per alunni con bisogni educativi speciali e organizzazione territoriale per l'inclusione scolastica" - Intervention instruments for students with special educational needs and territorial organization for school inclusion) is to adapt the teaching programme for those newly enrolled students with special needs and for whom schools must offer tailored educational and teaching approaches, in coordination with the local welfare system. The previous circular letter stresses the challenges deriving from a lack of Italian knowledge by students who have recently arrived and particularly for those who entered the Italian school system during the school year. This language gap must be addressed with individualized and tailored approaches, as well as with compensatory tools and accommodations.

If necessary, the IncTs commission will proceed with the evaluation of any SENs, which will then be flagged to the teaching team.

A personalized, individual educational plan is formulated for each student ... we define the number of hours for each student, especially regarding Italian language learning, but not only (CPIA Reference person of UAMs, case 1 - North).



Table 5.1. Ordinary practices in the education and training cycle of UAMs

ENTRY PHASE: "RECEPTION"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The education or training institution is contacted by the hosting reception facility • Enrollment with the support of a tutor or delegated case worker • Creation of a file with the minor's documentation and use of multilingual forms • Initial explorative interviews with teaching or training staff, with the aid of a mediator • Evaluation of previous skills with an entry test in Italian language and, sometimes, other subjects • Observation during early access in order to identify any specific educational needs • Creation of IncTs (Inclusion Teams) for the creation of an inclusive and tailored teaching plan • Creation of the PEI and approval by the teachers' council
ONGOING PHASE: "RETENTION IN THE PROGRAMME"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of compensatory measures and accommodations: strengthening of Italian L2 as opposed to a second language • Enrollment in first and second level courses in CPIAs with additional hours to ensure literacy and develop basic skills • Language courses + enrollment in VET courses • Flexible teaching and workshops • Monitoring of progress and learning issues during distance learning • Constant relationship between schools/training institutes and educational personnel in host facilities

Source: ISMU, *Case studies on local networks for the education and training of UAMs* (ALI 1 project – 2020/21).

We do an initial trial, then we proceed in an ongoing fashion then, of course, we monitor all the various steps throughout the school year... it's a step by step programme (IC School Manager, case 7 - South).

According to article 5 of the DPR n. 89/2009, in full respect of schools' independence, the two hours that would ordinarily be dedicated to learning a second language in lower secondary school can be used to strengthen Italian language skills. This is where we have the transition to the *retention in the programme* phase. The schools that took part in the case studies reported that they ensure participation in both curricular and extra-curricular activities for all non-Italian students, including UAMs, in order to strengthen and develop basic skills and fill those gaps deriving from a lack Italian language knowledge.

When a minor is enrolled in a first level course at a CPIA, after the first teaching period (400 hours), they have the opportunity to attend a further 200 hours of basic skills training, which often translates as literacy training. Once this first period is over, the CPIA offers a limited number of students the opportunity to attend the second teaching period, in partnership with VET institutes that offer evening courses, equivalent to the first two years of upper secondary school and which would allow them, upon completion, to register for the subsequent three-year period. For those students interested in attending VET courses, but with linguistic gaps, literacy programmes are put in place, which aim to fill those gaps and give the student a first certification. Workshops are preferred as opposed to traditional frontal lessons.



Teaching is really important, but we never do frontal lessons. Or sometimes it is reduced as much as possible and tailored to the needs of our users. But there are so many ways of approaching these kids, also because they learn so fast ...for them education is something that can help them achieve some skills, but more traditional curricular activities must necessarily be integrated with workshop activities, as these can help develop other skills. Otherwise they wouldn't have enough time, because 600 hours of teaching over the course of a year would not be enough if they weren't supplemented by collateral activities. (CPIA Teacher, case 8 - South).

In terms of teaching practices, how the COVID-19 emergency was managed by schools and training institutes with regards UAMs would require opening a whole other, separate chapter. During distance learning, some minors had no problems adapting and quickly demonstrated their strong digital literacy. Others, on the other hand, did not manage to find or use the necessary IT equipment to continue their studies, and found it hard to work on new learning content without a real-life support person for tests or homework. For the whole of the school year, the teaching staff were in contact with the educators in reception facilities, in order to monitor UAMs' progress or the lack thereof.

Special projects and local actions for UAMs

Over and beyond ordinary practices, schools, CPIAs, public-private local networks, made up by Third Sector organizations, universities, local institutions, the health service, social services, training agencies, and prefectures, are involved in specific projects and local actions for UAMs, some experimental, others more consolidated and long-lasting, that all fall under the umbrella term: "extraordinary school practices", i.e., specific projects and initiatives for UAMs.

Among those analysed in the case studies, there are two types of projects that have been recognized at the national level. The first is made up of *programmes financed with European funds* and carried out by CPIAs or schools, individually or in partnership with different public or private local organizations. These include, for example: extracurricular activities for the acquisition of vocational skills through *on the job training*, paid job placements or internships, undertaken in those sectors that are most vibrant in the various local contexts (agriculture, building and construction, dairy, bakeries, etc.); theatre workshops on self-presentation, through the creation of recitals presented to the public; curricular programmes on sustainability, that included the creation of creative recycling workshops and the participation of students from certain schools at the European Week for Waste Reduction.

The second type of projects highlighted by the case studies, include actions financed by the *National Operative Programme (PON) for Inclusion* and by the *Fund for Asylum, Migration and Integration (FAMI)*. These are actions carried out by CPIAs, school and local networks, in the context of



a linguistic intervention, through the offer of Italian language courses for minors and teachers' training, in order to improve UAMs' learning experience. Within this second line of interventions, various trials have been conducted: thanks to a large number of participants, these projects have been able to strike a balance between minors' desire for independence and their need for support, while at the same time considering the needs of the job market, the interests and languages used by kids during socialisation, including forms of cultural and artistic expression, that lead them to take part in football or theatre clubs in the neighbourhood.

Within narrative workshops, UAMs can recount their migratory experience and – most importantly – their home Country and themselves, in a meeting between equals where it's not about curiosity or pity, but about creating dignity around one's identity and fostering connections. These moments forged friendships and the kid was invited to football club, he became part of the small group that became a friendship group and this created other connections, interrelationships. (Educator, case 6 - South).

These special projects create opportunities for local integration through the participation in extracurricular projects (sports, art, intercultural education, autobiographical narrative workshops, world cuisine, etc.) that respond to an individual need to build on one's potential and develop one's expressive, relational and communication skills and abilities. In some areas it was possible to create a space for dialogue between young people with different backgrounds and experiences, strengthening the partnership between reception facilities and schools. In other cases, UAMs received specific support in integrating training and work experiences, learning some day-to day things in their work and training placements, made up of direct experience and real working practices. In this area we have the crucial phase regarding guidance counselling upon completing education/training and interventions aimed at fostering a smooth transition to the workplace.

6 – The integration of UAMs in schools and local areas. strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats



In the final section regarding the material that emerged from the case studies, we will offer an analysis of UAMs' reception and integration in terms of the socio-relational dynamics that take place between education and training institutions and other local actors. The analysis is conducted using the SWOT (*Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat*) model, which aims to highlight the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats present in the areas considered by the case studies. The socio-educational processes that emerge are examined in light of the internal dynamics of the school system, but are also evaluated in relation to local social factors (i.e. those conditions external to UAMs' education and reception system).

In particular, from the analysis four crucial factors that affect the educational integration of UAMs emerged: 1) the variability of migration flows concerning UAMs and their number in different areas of Italy; 2) the effectiveness of partnership networks and differences in participation across schools, training agencies and local communities; 3) the characteristics of the education and training offer for UAMs, bearing in mind the extreme differences that exist between metropolitan areas and more rural areas; 4) the strategic role of the personnel involved in the educational work with UAMs, which is influenced by training and experience levels.

First factor: Variability in migration flows and distribution of UAMs across the nation

The education and training contexts analysed in the case studies are characterized by large variations in the number of UAMs, given the lack of homogeneity in the distribution of UAMs in the Centre, North and South of Italy.

A larger number of UAMs is at one and the same time a strength and a weakness for educational and training contexts and specific local areas. The areas where there are most arrivals, from both land or sea routes – such as Sicily, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, etc. – appear to be the most specialized in the offer of services and offer opportunities to access ordinary and extra-ordinary programmes of secondary reception, over and beyond primary needs, that really focus on access to



education and training, personalized literacy programmes and inclusion in the workplace. In these regions schools and training institutions have a long-standing and broad experience in the reception and integration of UAMs and in the offer of specialist programmes in language literacy, education and training.

The number of arrivals, combined with their unpredictability over time, however, also represents an extremely weak point of the system: a sudden fall or rise in the number of incoming migrants does not always translate into an efficient reorganization of practices for access to the education system, given the unpredictability of expected arrivals. To this we must add the high dropout rate among UAMs, due to the transitory nature of their permanence in some facilities or their relocation in other areas.

Table 6.1. Variability in migration flows and distribution of UAMs across the nation. SWOT analysis

FAVOURABLE ELEMENTS	UNFAVOURABLE ELEMENTS	
STRENGTHS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING CONTEXTS	WEAKNESSES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING CONTEXTS	INTERNAL CONDITIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidated and widespread experience of educational and training access for UAMs in certain areas • Presence of schools specialized in the reception and integration of UAMs • Creation of literacy courses, ordinary and extraordinary teaching programmes, both in school and training institutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variability in the presence of UAMs and unpredictability of access to education and training • Instability due to the fall of UAM arrivals/registrations in some areas and rapid increase in others • School dropout among UAMs due to their transitory status or relocation to other areas or facilities • Obstacles to school attendance in person and distance learning for minors hosted in facilities in rural areas, with a lack of personnel, learning material and adequate IT tools 	
OPPORTUNITIES IN LOCAL CONTEXTS	THREATS IN LOCAL CONTEXTS	EXTERNAL CONDITIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of specialised facilities targeted at UAMs in rural and urban areas, close to areas of arrival from sea and land routes • Offer of specialist services during primary and secondary reception • Transition from large-scale reception facilities to smaller socio-educational communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complexity of bureaucratic procedures and issue of what happens after age 18 • Lower availability, in areas with more UAMs, of dedicated residential places and resources • Challenges in access to education services for minors in reception facilities based in rural or marginal areas 	

Source: ISMU, *Case studies on local networks for the education and training of UAMs* (ALI 1 project – 2020/21).

In some cases, the fall in presences over the past few years has facilitated the reorganization of the reception system in some areas, with the transition from large reception facilities with a high number of minors to smaller socio-educational communities, which are able to offer services that are more tailored to individual needs, assistance and support, also in the educational realm. The fact reception has been spread out across various areas, however, does not always coincide with the



presence of schools with adequate personnel, teaching and IT tools, within easy access of minors in facilities located in rural or isolated areas.

These problematic elements of educational contexts can interact with certain characteristics of the local area and produce a negative impact in terms of:

- complexity of the bureaucratic procedures that can slow down or hinder a successful reception programme or the completion of an educational or training programme by age 18. This latter issue is particularly complex, given that once a migrant is of age this can determine an exclusion from the reception system for those who have not obtained a special permit to continue or whose asylum application has not been successful;
- a nonhomogeneous distribution of minors across different areas – given that their presence is greater in areas where most arrivals take place from either land or sea routes – is connected to a relative lack of homogeneity in services and difficulties in accessing the education and training offer in those areas where reception facilities are most crowded, be they in urban, suburban or rural areas;
- relocation in other facilities, or even relocation to other European Countries, which can entail dropout from education or training programmes and, in some areas, the cancellation of all UAM registrations, rendering the participation of some schools and the special projects created for UAMs poor or meaningless;
- the lack of places and personnel in facilities in those areas with a larger presence of UAMs, whereas in other sites the number of linguistic-cultural mediators and other personnel is inadequate.

Second factor: networks for the educational, social and workplace inclusion of UAMs

Any integration process is always a challenge. It requires the participation of all the actors involved at different levels (Reference person upper secondary school, case 7 - South).

When you create a really strong system, with a lot of actors taking part, it's hard for the kids to get lost, because there are always nets, networks to support them (Reception case worker, case 9 - South).

The analysis of the role of territorial networks that operate for UAMs highlights that a strong point is the number of public and private sector actors involved, both by mission or normative mandate, in planning, offering and managing a complex system of services in their favour. In relation to their management of UAMs, local organizations, especially if they are responsible for the SAI project, generally work, in partnership with local institutions and third sector organizations, to ensure services in order to guarantee the minor's juridical status is recognized and a gradual progress towards



independence and inclusion in the social fabric is achieved. Both in those areas where there are consolidated territorial networks, that are active in ensuring migrants’ rights right from the beginning, and in those contexts where immigration is a more recent phenomenon, the complex reception needs of UAMs make it necessary for Prefectures, local public bodies, universities, schools, third sector organizations, and other actors that are involved in employment policy and services, such as accredited training institutes and employment agencies to collaborate, in partnership also with different actors from the private sector.

In particular, the services include: first contact and immediate reception; identification and registration; residential admission to a facility; social protection (socio-psychological and health assistance); legal aid (in order to obtain a permit to stay, asylum or international protection, fostering or other forms of care); literacy, education and training; guided socialization and dialogue with the local area; actions towards empowerment, guidance and entry in the workplace.

Table 6.2. Networks for the educational, social, and work inclusion of UAMs. SWOT analysis

FAVOURABLE ELEMENTS	UNFAVOURABLE ELEMENTS	
STRENGTHS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING CONTEXTS	WEAKNESSES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING CONTEXTS	INTERNAL CONDITIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plurality of public and private sector actors, all involved in planning, offering and managing educational, school and training services for UAMs • Presence of consolidated local networks • Connection between schools and employment services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of networks between actors with little or no experience • Weak networks between schools/training institutes and reception facilities • Little connection between schools and other local and employment services 	
OPPORTUNITIES IN LOCAL CONTEXTS	THREATS IN LOCAL CONTEXTS	EXTERNAL CONDITIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed networks with a consolidated experience in planning, offering and managing services for UAMs • Strong project development skills and abilities in intercepting funding, especially in areas where migration is more consolidated • Crucial role of the Third Sector in ensuring an offer of extra-curricular activities and the creation of welcoming contexts • Analysis of minors’ needs and skills in relation to the job market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges in offering job placements or other measures to facilitate UAMs’ access to the workplace • Difficulties for local communities to get involved in the management of UAMs, little collaboration between employment centres and training organizations • Unemployment and inherent difficulties of the local economy • Ineffective measures for access to the workplace • Unwelcoming local communities 	

Source: ISMU, *Case studies on local networks for the education and training of UAMs* (ALI 1 project – 2020/21).

In the case studies considered, school networks operate in close collaboration with associations, third sector organizations, municipalities, etc. – through the subscription of protocols, conventions, etc. – in order to respond to the education and training needs of UAMs, and in some areas they



demonstrate strong abilities in developing new projects and intercepting public funding. Schools, who are usually the project leaders, benefit from the services that are generated and implemented through the networks, especially if they are located in areas where there is a greater number of migrants and a high rate of school dropout.

We have a longstanding relationship with the schools in this area, in this neighbourhood. We have a common language and a working model that enables us to place the kids at the centre of everything (Reception case worker, case 9 - South).

Those interviewed also mention the presence of other educational agencies, connected to charities, such as churches and oratories, that are particularly active in small urban centres, and are able to offer services and cultural and recreational spaces to UAMs after school and during periods when schools are closed. Schools and civil society often represent the “educating community” that receives UAMs, promoting openness in the local contexts, even when tensions emerge, and ensure that the gravest forms of disadvantage and social weakness are protected. This partnership is useful in contrasting the challenges connected to prejudice, closure and conflict that schools have found themselves facing, especially in the first phases of work with UAMs. Further problems arise in those territories where schools participating in the networks have little experience of working with UAMs or don’t have any connections with reception facilities or other local services.

On the other hand, the networks that some schools have created with accredited training agencies and employment services are significant. These actors work to promote the qualification of UAMs, their social integration, to contrast school dropout; as well as to guide those students who do not have a family on measures to promote entry in the workplace. The schools interviewed appear to be in dialogue with their local area, both in terms of partnerships with institutions and in terms of exchanges with the third sector and the private sector composed of small and medium sized businesses in the agriculture, artisan, building and construction, catering and tourism sectors.

These actions are all created in partnership with the local area. The local area comes to us with their requests and then we train the minors. Because often they arrive with the need to work but without knowing anything about the world of work. We develop this dual path: literacy and, at the same time, VET courses, that offer the key tools in order to get a job. (Educator, case 6 - South).

On the one hand, organizations analyse the needs of and the skills necessary for what is available in the local job market, creating projects based on paid or unpaid job placements or internships; on the other hand, the job opportunities present do not offer any secure prospects for the future. Given the high levels of unemployment in many areas in Italy, especially in the South, institutional programmes do not always manage to offer good employment opportunities to UAMs.



Despite ample networks created between schools or training institutions and businesses and various private sector associations, offering work to scarcely qualified non-Italian young people is challenging, not least because hiring them entails a set of bureaucratic hurdles that can put potential employers off. Although job centres, training organizations and employment agencies mediate between supply and demand (collecting CVs, doing preliminary interviews, communicating employment, offering training aimed at employment), that are fundamental to ensure employment opportunities for more disadvantaged users, they operate in an independent fashion, without connections between them.

Third factor: the characteristics of the education and training offer in metropolitan cities and internal areas

A further dimension that has both strengths and weaknesses is the education and training offer for UAMs and its differences across Italy, both in the central areas (e.g., in metropolitan cities) and in marginal and internal areas.

Table 6.3. The education and training offer across Italy. SWOT Analysis

FAVOURABLE ELEMENTS	UNFAVOURABLE ELEMENTS	
STRENGTHS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING CONTEXTS	WEAKNESSES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING CONTEXTS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ample and flexible linguistic-educational offer • Personalized educational programmes • Intercultural learning • Giving value to the skills and agency of UAMs • Central role of CPIAs to bridge the gap in literacy and education • Training agencies connected with local businesses for vocational qualifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A school offer that is not always flexible • Difficulties in accessing the offer during the school year • Concentration of UAMs in certain classes and linguistic dishomogeneity between classes • Challenges in giving value to UAMs' skills • Inadequate internet connections in schools 	INTERNAL CONDITIONS
OPPORTUNITIES IN LOCAL CONTEXTS	THREATS IN LOCAL CONTEXTS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of technological devices in hosting facilities • Actions to contrast educational poverty and foster intercultural exchange • Extra-curricular educational activities fostering integration • Local job market in relation with training agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of adequate infrastructures in reception facilities • Lack of possibilities for educational and professional growth in some local areas • Widespread presence of irregular work, sometimes managed by criminal organizations, with the risk of serious exploitation or to health • Lack of reception facilities with an adequate internet connection 	EXTERNAL CONDITIONS

Source: ISMU, *Case studies on local networks for the education and training of UAMs* (ALI 1 project – 2020/21).



One strong point, that is intrinsic to the whole system's articulation, is a broad and varied linguistic-training offer across the nation: lower and upper secondary school programmes, adult education courses in CPIAs and mandatory VET courses, plus trial programmes offered by schools or institutions in partnership with the third sector or with training agencies.

The offer is also flexible according to a UAM's age, qualifications completed abroad, when enrolment takes place during the school year, Italian language skills, soft skills and attitudes, offering: first level education courses aimed at achieving the qualification for completion of the first cycle and the certification attesting the acquisition of basic skills, connected with mandatory schooling; second level education programmes, aimed at achieving a technical, vocational and artistic education diploma; literacy and Italian language courses to attest a level of Italian language knowledge no lower than an A2 level; VET courses within mandatory schooling. The opportunity to integrate education and training gaps for those who did not complete the necessary education and/or training to access the workplace has made CPIAs a point of reference for both UAMs and for reception facilities. CPIAs have worked hard to create uniformity in organization and teaching practices across branches, as well as creating learning programmes and tools that could respond to the needs of non-Italian users.

A further strength is the use of experimental educational models, used as tools to contrast educational poverty and foster intercultural exchange, characterized by competence-based and intercultural learning, that is flexible in how it is taught, can be tailored to individual needs, and is offered across disciplines. These interventions are characterized by an attention to motivation and values, to different learning styles, to technical skills – useful in accessing the workplace – and to minors' soft skills and educational agency. These programmes, as an interviewee suggests, can be the route to valuing the resources of UAMs who are interested in continuing education.

In middle school we try to intercept those kids who have potential [to continue with regular education]. Why do we necessarily have to send them over to VET? This is not to bash VET, it gets them jobs and that's great, but are they really all blue-collar workers or skilled workers ...why should that be, if they are extremely intelligent people? We should have scholarships also for UAMs ... in this way we could really help those kids who have no other form of support ... Can we try and build upon their potential by offering them a different form of education? A different career path and, ultimately, life? It's a challenge we could take on (Member of local government, case 2 – North).

By operating in a network with public and private organizations, the local education and training systems offer UAMs the opportunity to overcome linguistic barriers, to take part in various courses simultaneously and/or of gaining qualifications in those sectors that are most in demand in the job market. Over and beyond this, moreover, some case studies highlight the offer of IT and digital literacy courses, that are increasingly offered to those non-Italian students with scarce or no



digital skills. The combination of face-to face learning (in a classroom with a teacher) and technology-based education enables users to reap the advantages of both, such as the interaction between teacher and student on the one hand, and the possibility, for an adult target of users, to manage their study time independently.

In light of the data that emerged in the case studies, it's important to complete the analysis considering also some context elements that can impact negatively, in terms of UAMs' opportunities to use and make the most of the education and training offer. The introduction of distance learning, which took place after the COVID-19 pandemic and for all the time schools were closed, highlighted some weaknesses in the education/training and reception systems, namely: the absence of individualized teaching plans and homogenous learning classes, with a small number of UAMs and the crucial role of internet connection difficulties, that affected UAMs more compared to their Italian counterparts. These issues, made worse by the absence of adequate infrastructures, led many UAMs to leave Italy. Hosting organizations, especially those managing facilities in rural areas, have not been able to ensure a good, free wi-fi connection, nor adequate support to ensure continued learning by supporting UAMs in taking part in lectures, doing their homework and using the materials offered by teachers.

We are talking about really small villages in the middle of the woods where, if there is the internet, if you can even get a connection, it's still hard. The kids used their bikes to go to the main road (CPIA reference person for UAMS, case 1 - North).

This condition, like that of recently arrived minors or UAMs who are close to age 18, led to a reduction in attendance and higher rate of dropout from education and training. The need to find a job to support their family, sometimes, leads UAMs to accept a badly paid, irregular occupation, sometimes in sectors under the control of criminal organizations. This can, in turn, lead to them entering the circuit of labour exploitation that, according to police investigations, affects the regions of Calabria, Lombardy, Puglia, Sicilia e Veneto, often in a larger transnational network where minors from the poorest areas of the world become victims of trafficking. Unskilled, manual labour is the most affected by exploitation, where UAMs or asylum seekers are employed in some of the humblest occupations, especially in the agricultural, fruit-picking, dairy, manufacturing, textile and construction sectors. The strongest protection against this risk, as some interviewees state, is an integrated and well-functioning education and training system.

The risk that these kids are lured by easy money or criminal organizations exists. The risks are reduced if we work on reception, it's a defence we can put up (Reception case worker, case 9 – South).



To help contrast this submerged economy, as the case studies testify, schools work in a network with local public bodies, associations, and other local actors, to remove victims of trafficking from conditions of economic need and social isolation that make them more vulnerable. Some minors have been able to leave Italy and some reception facilities have been at the centre of some investigations, accused of having had an active role in recruiting workers to employ in the black market.

Fourth factor: the expertise of personnel involved and the educational challenges in working with UAMs

The last dimension of the analysis focuses on the professional profiles of the personnel that offers primary and secondary reception to UAMs. In particular, case studies assign a central role to the heterogeneity of personnel involved in the care and support of UAMs, which can be divided in: specialized personnel, such as social services case workers, psychologists, legal tutors, teachers and other members of the teaching staff, linguistic-cultural mediators, educators; non-specialized workers employed in reception facilities, legal consultants, managers of various services, guidance counsellors, volunteers.

Table 6.4. Professionals and other personnel involved in working with UAMs. SWOT Analysis

FAVOURABLE ELEMENTS	UNFAVOURABLE ELEMENTS	
STRENGTHS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING CONTEXTS	WEAKNESSES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING CONTEXTS	INTERNAL CONDITIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of teachers who are experts in the field of L2 Italian language learning and/or in intercultural learning, linguistic facilitators • Coordination between teachers and reception case workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generically trained personnel without adequate experience of working with UAMs • Excessive turnover in some CPIAs and in Italian language courses in some reception facilities and within the Third Sector • Insufficient personnel in schools • Simplified approach towards UAMs, considered a priori as not interested in education and training 	
OPPORTUNITIES IN LOCAL CONTEXTS	THREATS IN LOCAL CONTEXTS	EXTERNAL CONDITIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of experienced case workers, qualified in the field of migratory policies • Heterogeneity of personnel and professionals involved • Coordinated efforts among different personnel • Use of mediators to facilitate the interaction between UAMs and service networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited personnel because of lack of specific funding • Little training among currently employed personnel • Little attention to UAMs' entry and access in education and training among reception case workers 	

Source: ISMU, *Case studies on local networks for the education and training of UAMs* (ALI 1 project – 2020/21).



The constant flow of UAMs and the complexity deriving from their juridical condition impact strongly on local welfare and educational systems and require a large number of resources, necessary to offer them protection, assistance, support, education, training and guidance for entry in the workforce. The teachers from schools and CPIAs constantly interact with case workers from reception facilities, who are responsible for supporting UAMs in their studies.

We should give them the opportunity of being supported and accompanied, especially upon entry, with a specific project, made especially for them. We need professional, digital, economic and instrumental resources, both for schools and for the local area, where there is not full awareness of the challenges these kids face, and therefore also of the facilitations they need to face day-to-day life (Upper secondary school reference person, case 7 - South).

Collaborations among personnel are considered a fundamental primarily to ensure UAMs' goals and objectives are shared but also to manage their involvement and participation in extra-curricular activities, the employment of teaching tools, the potential involvement of social services, etc. A common trait among all of the professionals and workers involved with UAMs is that they work in close contact with people and institutions, and share a strong ethical motivation and a propensity to help others and respect the dignity and diversity of all persons. They are conscious of the responsibility inherent in their role with minors and, therefore, are respectful of professional codes of good practice.

There are, however, deep differences between the case studies with respect to the previous experiences of the personnel involved, individually or in teams, in the offer of services for UAMs. In general, important resources come from the third sector, from associations and charities who offer personnel with a longstanding experience of working with migrants. In some areas of the South, where UAMs have recently been allocated to new facilities, on the other hand, school staff appears to be trained more generically in educational consultancy, with an experience of offering services to migrants but without specific skills connected with working with UAMs. On the other hand, in some networks it has been flagged that there are teachers who are experts in intercultural exchange, linguistic facilitators and Italian L2 teachers who are sometimes employed as volunteers or substitutes, in temporary forms of employment and with an excessive turnover within some CPIAs.

There is a will to do our best and get out of our comfort zone. In schools we already have L2 teachers because we are facing this reality (School reference person, case 9 - South).

Some of those interviewed emphasise that part of the teaching staff adopts a simplifying, "hasty and dismissive approach" that tends to see UAMs as inherently uninterested in learning, education and training. Those teachers that fall in this camp are generally not willing to take on any further responsibility of class management, which has become more complicated due to the presence of UAMs.



Probably the weakness is not being able to always get everyone on board with respect to the importance of inclusion as a form of enrichment, not as a waste of time or taking something away from someone, including and not excluding (Upper secondary school reference person, case 7 - South).

In those areas where there is a greater concentration of UAMs, working conditions can get worse due to a lack of personnel that is adequately trained and experienced in working with this specific user group. Reception facilities and schools are sometimes not prepared in spotting and quickly offering support to minors with specific and often unrecognized or unknown vulnerabilities, albeit with their personal resources. In areas where there are infrastructural lacks, the CPIA networks, who do not have independent branches, lack a good wi-fi connection and personnel, and rarely use other professionals, such as linguistic-cultural mediators. An attention to the qualification of services offered by the network is based on the culture of each organization, the level of quality of the service one wants to offer through trained personnel and the involvement of mediators, who are present only in some examples of best practice and in the most successful programmes.

The key issues we should work on are teachers' skillsets. It's not easy to measure skills that are not school skills ... One aim will be to build experience for teachers in this area. Teachers cannot do it alone. We would need projects where experts in this sector could work with teachers to build profiles to spot their informal skills. This is a weak point (CPIA Manager, case 10 - South).

Despite the teaching staffs' efforts in ensuring an ample educational and training offer, the need to work more synergistically to ensure the success of UAMs through the regular presence in CPIAs of linguistic-cultural mediators and psychologists, who are considered fundamental to ensure the student's wellbeing, is generally considered important. Their involvement would be indispensable in some key moments, such as during first interviews and in the evaluation of the best education and training programmes to choose which are closely connected to the minor's life project. Some documented interventions are carried out independently in some experiences funded by the third sector and in projects with Universities, aimed both at students and teachers, but are limited to single interventions, that never become part of systemic actions in effectively improving the school access and reception of UAMs. The investment towards a systemic approach, therefore, appears crucial to manage the positive educational challenges of working with UAMs.

When you can sit round a table with a teacher, an educator, a psychologist – when needed – and think about what is the best integration project for a minor, then 80% of the job is done (Reception case worker, case 9 - South).

in conclusion

Where are we at in terms of education and training access for UAMs in Italy?

The results of the “Explorative study on UAMs in Italy and access to education and training” presented in this Report enables us to reconstruct a novel and in-depth picture of the routes of UAMs in literacy courses and in the education and training system in Italy.

The national study, based on a representative sample of first and second reception facilities, offers an analysis of the characteristics of 1400 UMAs present up to 30/9/2020, almost all male and 75% of whom are 17-year-olds, distributed in 75 provinces from Southern to Northern Italy and, at the same time, concentrated in the main areas of arrival from land or sea. These are minors that come from 41 different countries – from Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe – with a prevalence of migrants from Bangladesh, Albania, Egypt, Tunisia and Pakistan.

The group of UAMs considered in the study appears heterogenous and differentiated, even if we consider their condition and level of education reached in their Country of origin. On the one hand, the sample is made up of a relevant quota of minors who are workers (13.8%) and of minors that were out of the education and training system already in their home Country (20%), who left their home Country with little (if any) schooling and in conditions of illiteracy (17.9%), important elements of vulnerability in the definition of subsequent Italian literacy programmes. Over 80% of these 1,400 minors had, upon arrival, a level of Alfa or Pre A1 Italian, as they had never learned to read or write or they did not receive adequate formal education.

On the other hand, within the group involved in the study, we have minors who were students (49%) and who attended a secondary school or equivalent in their home Country (29.2%). This latter group appears to have many resources for learning (from multilingual skills to soft skills such as independence, entrepreneurship, etc.), essential for their integration process in Italy. In the sample considered, 51.9% of UAMs speaks at least two languages, the most common of which are: Arabic, Bengalese, Albanian, French, Urdu, Bambara, English and Italian.

In terms of education and training access, on 30/9/2020, 72.4% of all UAMs considered is at-

tending language literacy courses, 24.4% are enrolled in the second cycle of education¹², and 17.2% is enrolled in schools of the first cycle: particular concentrations of minors can be found in the 3rd Year of lower secondary school and in the first two years of upper secondary schools. For 17.9% of UAMs considered, moreover, guidance counselling activities have been put in place, half of which were conducted by host organizations or by training agencies (33.5%).

In terms of results, 32.2% of UAMs, or 451 minors, completed their previous learning programmes, whereas 61.8% is still completing them. Among those who completed a programme, almost 40% achieved a lower secondary school license, approx. 31% obtained a certificate for an Italian L2 course at a CPIA, and 10% a certificate for a brief VET course.

In terms of the timeframes between the arrival in Italy and first access to language literacy, education or training programmes, the study highlights that the range goes from a minimum of 1 month for access to literacy courses to a maximum of 4-5 months for access to the first cycle of education, and up to a year or more to access the second cycle. However, 20% of minors gains access within the first month of arrival in Italy and over 60% appear to have accessed within 2 months of arrival. The study suggests that participation in education and training is positive overall and attendance improves over time, as does UAMs' ability to navigate the local area, their motivation to learn and the development of their cognitive abilities.

To the overall picture offered by the survey, we have some elements of detail that come from the qualitative phase of the research, conducted on 10 local networks led by schools working with UAMs across the whole nation. Despite the many dilemmas they face to ensure minors' the right to education and training, schools and training institutions involved have to face daily administrative, teaching and educational hurdles, and have developed a wide range of ordinary practices both in terms of the entry phase of reception of the minor (contact, enrolment, paperwork, initial interview, class observation, creation of a PEI, etc.), and during the ongoing phase of retention in the programme (compensatory tools and accommodations, extra Italian language classes both during and after school hours, workshop-based learning, monitoring school progress, a constant relationship with case workers in reception facilities, etc.). Over and beyond these activities, there are numerous specific initiatives for UAMs, such as projects financed with European funds, PON and FAMI, that support minors in the acquisition and strengthening of their linguistic and vocational skills, responding also to their socialization needs and fostering their expressive, communication and relational skills.

In conclusion, the analysis allows us to identify four crucial factors that the educational and training integration of UAMs is based upon: 1) the variability of migration flows concerning UAMs and their number in different areas in Italy; 2) the effectiveness of partnership networks and differences in participation among schools, training agencies and local communities; 3) the characteristics of the education and training offer for UAMs, bearing in mind the extreme differences that exist between

12 A minor can attend more learning programmes simultaneously.

en metropolitan areas and more rural areas; 4) the strategic role of those workers and professionals involved in the educational work with UAMs, that is influenced by training and experience levels.

Without forgetting that there are, no doubt, critical aspects and risks both in schools and in the local areas considered, amply described in Par. 6, we believe it is important to conclude emphasising the strengths of the education and training contexts and the opportunities highlighted in the areas considered. This exercise – condensed in the text that follows as a conclusion to the Report – allows us to trace the “best possible scenario” of educational and training integration of a UAM in Italy and represents a model to tend towards in any area where UAMs are present.

The Unaccompanied Minor – supported by the case workers of the host organization and their tutor – needs to be informed on mandatory education and training and other educational and integration opportunities available in Italy. They need to be able to easily find – upon arrival in Italy in those areas of arrival by land or sea, as well as in the second phase of reception – education and training institutes that are specialized in the reception and integration of UAMs, who are able to bear in mind their specific characteristics and to foster and protect their right to education.

These institutions operate within local networks made up of public and Third Sector actors, who are called upon to plan, offer and manage educational, school and training services for all minors, intercepting local, national, and European funding for the development of specific activities with UAMs.

Within these education and training and local contexts, we have school managers, teachers who are experts in L2 Italian teaching and intercultural learning, linguistic facilitators and other professionals (ie., psychologists, educators, etc.) , who are constantly coordinating their efforts with the reference person of the organization hosting the minor, with reception case workers, educators and other experts qualified in the field of migratory policies, supported by mediators who can facilitate the interaction between the minor and the network of services.

Schools and training institutes are capable of quickly activating a wide-ranging, flexible and highly personalized linguistic-educational offer for the minor in question because they are characterized by consolidate practices for access to their learning programmes, be they a language course, or a school or training programme. Listening to the minor – from the very beginning and throughout the process – giving value to their background, resources and previous skills, creating an adequate personalized educational plan, adopting an intercultural approach as an inspirator of both classroom contents and climate, are all elements that – among many others – ensure an initial positive experience of access to education

and training for UAMs. Over time, daily support and encouraging an active participation, together with a careful adult observation both inside and outside school contexts, aimed at disclosing and helping the minors themselves discover their strengths, foster attendance to the educational or training programme and the maintenance over time of the motivation to learn.

Education and training institutions, moreover, operate in partnership with local organizations to deliver special projects that respond to the need for Italian language learning among UAMs, to offer practical experiences for vocational qualifications, and to create opportunities to meet and socialize with their Italian peers.

The minor, therefore, is part of a network of schools and local services and has access to and attends educational and training activities and extra-curricular activities with natives, in protected and welcoming environments that foster their experience of growth, integration and participation in Italy.



The ISMU Foundation is an independent scientific body that promotes studies, research, training and projects on multiethnicity and multicultural societies, with a particular attention to international migrations. ISMU works with institutions, public administration, the Third Sector, school and training agencies, businesses, international agencies and Italian and international scientific research centres.