

Analytical Report on Education

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1. Executive Summary

For many years, the number of non-Italian pupils in schools remained very low (it will exceed ten thousand students only in the 1988/89 school year) due to the fact that the first set of migrants to arrive tended to do so alone (as is usually the case with the first generation of immigrants to arrive) and only after they had settled for some time in the new country, did they bring their families over or set up new ones. The Italian case has not been an exception to this aspect of migratory movements and the constant increase in the numbers of non-Italian students in schools of all levels in the last ten years reflects the stabilization process underway. The recent character of this presence in Italian schools has also implications for both policy development and implementation as well as for research and documentation. A simple illustration of this aspects is the prevalence of policies and initiatives aimed at facilitating and accelerating the learning of Italian as an additional language.

For many years, there was no specific legislation defining the conditions of access to education by non-Italian pupils and suggesting solutions to the needs, challenges deriving from this presence and how to maximize the new opportunities it presented. The educational authorities filled the legislative vacuum through a number of circulars that introduced new and important concepts for the Italian system at the time and which were later incorporated into the national law regulating migrants' access to education. Some of the policy innovations introduced through circulars included provisions to promote and support the in-service training of teachers on intercultural themes, introduction at the pre-primary and primary levels of educational and didactic activities on the subject of racism and anti-Semitism, set up documentation and resource centres and actively promote the dissemination of knowledge of intercultural issues, initiate a critical review of texts used in schools both in terms of the contents and the language and make efforts to improve the participation of migrant parents and organisations of civil society in part of school life.

In general, legislation and policies of relevance for the integration of migrants in this sector are positively inclusive while on the contrary, their implementation has fallen below the spirit of such legislation. Fundamental educational principles sanctioned by the Italian Constitution such as the State's duty to ensure a school network open to all without distinction; the duty of parents to educate their children for at least eight years and the cost-free nature of compulsory education offered by State schools, are upheld even for all foreign minors. The educational system has undergone some reforms in recent years and the latest of the two reforms is at the beginning and its consequences for non-Italian pupils is not yet clear.

The main source of data on education of non-Italian minors is the Ministry of Education and it is gradually increasing the types and quality of data it provides on the phenomenon. An example of a new additional information the ministry now makes available is data related to educational performance expressed in terms of the percentage of pupils who are promoted to the next grade and the rate of disaffection and drop-out from school. While this kind of data is limited at the moment, the little available indicates that non-Italian pupils have higher percentages of failures (not being promoted to the next grade) than the natives and the same is true of disaffection and drop-out rates. Though the performance of non-Italian pupils is lower than that of the entire school population, in particular at middle

school level, and it worsens from pre-primary to high school level, the situation has constantly improved in the last three school years for all levels.

One of the few researches on pupils' performance at school carried out in 2001 found that while for middle and upper social classes, Italian pupils performed better than non-Italian ones, for lower social classes, the percentage of pupils with low scores was the same for both groups. The authors conclude that non-Italian pupils from lower socio-cultural backgrounds perform better than their Italian peers from similar socio-cultural conditions. Besides, according to this study, foreign students from socially integrated families with higher incomes (mainly from Europe and other developed countries) record similar performance as their Italian peers from similar social and income backgrounds.

The above research identified a number of factors which were found to have influenced positively the educational achievements of pupils surveyed. These included, for foreign pupils: high social (but not cultural) extraction, the decision to continue to high school, commitment to studies and above all, a regular school career, intended as not having had any interruptions due to failure in a class. For Italian pupils, the factors that positively influenced their achievements were: a high social and cultural extraction, commitment to studies, regular school career and most of all, the desire to continue on to high school.

Knowledge of direct discrimination in the education sector is scarce and fragmented. There is neither systematically collected data nor research focusing on the subject. The education sector is certainly one of the most investigated by research and though there has been much attention on the integration of non-Italian pupils into schools and the education system in general, little attempt has been made to analyse the specific dynamics and impact of direct discrimination on vulnerable groups. In spite of this information gap, there is anecdotal evidence of discrimination on grounds of national, ethnic and / or racial origin.

A form of indirect discrimination that emerges from both ministerial and independent research findings is the adoption of knowledge of Italian language as the only criterion to determine in which classes non-Italian pupils should be placed. This practice is against the provisions of the law and ministerial circulars on the subject which provide that both the specific competences of the child as well as the educational level already attained before arriving in Italy should be taken into account. This practice is putting many non-Italian pupils at a disadvantage, especially in cases where the age difference with their Italian classmates is up to two years or more and may be partly responsible for disaffection and drop-out of some non-Italian pupils. Other forms of indirect discrimination reported include difficulties in accommodating the different dietary needs pupils (such needs in many cases, have to be either justified for medical reasons) and the teaching of Catholic religion. Here again the law provides that parents can decide that an alternative lesson be offered to the children during the Catholic religion lesson but in practice, it is very difficult to for non-Catholic parents' wishes to be respected, especially in classes where only a child, often the non-Italian pupil, is exempted from the lesson on Catholic religion. In any case, Catholic religious symbols such as the crucifix, are displayed in many schools and classrooms. Besides, the Roma face particular discrimination – direct and indirect – in the education sector. There is no official data on the presence of Roma pupils in schools and while Roma parents are subjected to the same duty to send their children to compulsory level schools, few specific measures are taken to encourage them to effectively do so. Not all schools accept Roma children and in other

cases where they are accepted, they are frequently given different educational objectives. One of the outcomes is that there is hardly a Roma at the upper high school level.

The integration of non-Italian pupils into schools and the educational system in general has, for many years, been the focus of public attention both in terms of policy at different levels and projects by various actors. Most of the initiatives and good practices in this sector refer though to teaching and / or learning Italian as an additional language and intercultural education. There is evidence of a large number of initiatives and practices of the above kind but very few provide evaluations of their effectiveness. In spite of this, there is every indication that language teaching and learning will remain at the centre of public policy to fight educational disaffection, high drop-out rates and underachievement by non-Italian pupils.

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3. Glossary of terms and concepts used in this report

Direct discrimination: treating someone less favourably than another is, has been or would be treated in comparable circumstances because of the former's real or presumed ethnic, racial, national, religious or cultural belonging.

Discrimination is defined in general terms as any "behaviour which *directly or indirectly* causes distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, ancestry, national or ethnic origin, religious belief or practice, having the aim or effect of destroying or hindering the recognition or exercise - under equal conditions - of fundamental human rights in the political, economic, social and cultural fields as well as in any other public sector" [Consolidated Act on the status of foreigners, Law nr. 286/1998; article 43.].

Ethnic Minority or Minority Group: A community whose members are united by a common origin (real, presumed or imaginary) and/or common language, customs, religion, and that suffers from a status of inferiority, discrimination, inequality, dependence on the dominating community. The sociological concept of a minority group does not depend on its statistical dimensions. It does not therefore refer to smaller communities but to *dominated* communities; just as the concept of majority does not imply a larger group but rather a *dominant* one¹.

Indirect discrimination: the adoption of regulations, criteria or practice which, irrespective of intentions, put people belonging to a particular group disproportionately at a disadvantage than another is, has been or would be and where such regulations, criteria or practice can not be objectively justified by a legitimate aim and the means of achieving that aim are proportionate and necessary.

National minority: the Italian Constitution recognizes national linguistic minorities who form long-standing components of the Italian population and in some cases such as Alto Adige / South Tyrol and Val d'Aosta such minorities have ample autonomy and protection under the law. Italy has no national minorities that are, as minorities, exposed to the risk of discrimination. Though some Roma populations have enjoyed Italian citizenship for generations, they are not recognized neither as a linguistic nor an ethnic minority group.

New minorities generated by recent migration: this phrase identifies all non-native minorities of immigrant or refugee origin, identified in official documents on the basis of their nationality and not as minorities. The Italian Constitution recognises and protects "linguistic" minorities and does not make any reference to "ethnic" minorities.

¹ See Simon, P.-J. (1995) "Minorité", in: *Pluriel Recherches. Vocabulaire historique et critique des relations inter-ethniques*, cahier n.3, pp. 50-61.

Non-Italian pupils or students: these terms identify school children of different nationalities characterized in official educational statistics as “pupils who do not have Italian citizenship”. The category includes people who have EU and non-EU nationalities.

4. Introduction

The presence foreign students in Italian schools of different levels and types is relatively recent when compared to other EU countries that experienced immigration well before Italy. This presence was so small that for many years, the Ministry of Education did not collect data systematically on the characteristics of foreign students in schools at all levels and it was only during the 1983/84 school year that it started to do so. For many years, the number of non-Italian pupils remained very low (it will exceed ten thousand students only in the 1988/89 school year) due to that process characteristic of the first phase of immigration, in which the first set of migrants to arrive tend to do so alone and only after they have settled for some time in the new country, do they bring their families over or set up new ones.

The Italian case has not been an exception to this aspect of migratory movements and the constant increase in the numbers of non-Italian students in schools of all levels in the last ten years reflects the stabilization process immigration into Italy has been undergoing since the late '80s. The recent character of this presence in Italian schools has also implications for both policy development and implementation as well as for research and documentation. A simple illustration of these aspects which we shall see better further ahead, is the prevalence of policies and initiatives aimed at facilitating, and most of all, accelerating the learning of Italian as an additional language. This aspect is so much at the centre of attention that issues such as discrimination and racist incidents are, at times, explained in terms of lack of understanding due partly to low knowledge of Italian by foreign students.

This study identifies the main source of information on the presence of foreign students in the education system and tries to assess the policies, strategies and legislative measures taken to ensure that new minorities generated by migration have equal access to education, particularly at the compulsory levels. It draws on research findings, statistical information from public authorities, project reports and surveys on non-national minorities in the education system. Information from these sources is assessed both in terms of their content as well as with regard to their implementation and the documented effects they had or could have in the future.

It is organised in five distinct chapters which review legislative and policy measures that have been put in place in recent years and which are relevant to discrimination and / or promotion of equal treatment in the education sector (chapter 2). Some important policy documents (ministerial circulars) that tried to regulate the phenomenon at a time when there was no specific provisions in the legislation are also presented. In chapter 3, the study describes existing data and sources, the educational system in general and the last two reforms, including a new legislation which, when all the implementation decrees are in place, will change key aspects of the system that has been in place until now. It presents an overview of the presence of non-Italian pupils and analyses some aspects of this presence. Furthermore, it examines some recently published research on the educational performance of non-Italian pupils².

² The official statistics of the Ministry of Education, University and Scientific Research distinguishes between "Italian students" and "students who do not have Italian citizenship"; in this report, we will at times use a shorter expression - "non-Italian pupils or students" - to indicate

Chapter 4 examines direct and indirect discrimination in the education system and the absence of systematically collected statistical data on discrimination against non-national minorities (or any other category of pupils), knowledge of discrimination against minorities in the education system is derived mainly from anecdotal and circumstantial evidence, few research findings and information from NGOs working in the sector. Chapter 5 discusses some strategies, initiatives and good practices that have been put in place or are being implemented with the aim of improving in various aspects, the presence and performance of migrant minorities in the school system. The last chapter draws some conclusions based on the findings in the previous chapters and presents some recommendations with the aim of contributing to creating the conditions that will lead to better opportunities in education for all non-Italian and Roma pupils in the country.

Due to the fact that the present report is being written at a time (May 2003) when data on the current academic year has not yet been released by competent authorities, even though the school year is almost coming to an end, the main information base on non-Italian pupils in schools (official statistics) will be the last school year for which data is available and that is the 2001/2002 school year. A limited number of tables drawn from data sources referring to the same period have been used in the text to facilitate understanding of the various aspects treated.

exactly the same category of pupils or students identified in official statistics as not having Italian citizenship.

5. Legislation and policies in the area of Education

In general, legislation and policies of relevance for migrants in this sector are positively inclusive while on the contrary, their implementation has fallen below the spirit of such legislation. This means that fundamental educational principles sanctioned by the Italian Constitution such as the State's duty to ensure a school network open to all without distinction; the duty of parents to educate their children for at least eight years and the cost-free nature of compulsory education offered by State schools, are upheld even for all foreign minors³. On the basis of a law passed in 1999, all foreign minors within the national territory have the same right to education (and the same compulsory education requirement) as Italian children, regardless of their legal status⁴. Besides, both foreign children and nationals may register in school at any time during the school year. However, emerging patterns of lower than average attendance and achievement, and higher drop-out rates among non-Italian children, indicate that full and equal access to public education for all children in practice is yet to be achieved⁵.

A major policy paper which marked a turning point in the attention of national education authorities to non-Italian pupils was a ministerial circular⁶ of 1989 which focused on learning of Italian language by non-Italian students. This policy document was issued shortly before the approval of the first law that tried to deal with immigration in a comprehensive way was enacted and almost a year after, it was followed by another circular⁷ which, for the first time, introduced the concept of "intercultural education" in an official policy paper. This document stresses the importance of stimulating interaction between Italian and non-Italian pupils as a mutually enriching process. The National Education Council (C.N.P.I.)⁸ adopted a number of resolutions on intercultural education and introduced awareness raising activities about racism and anti-Semitism. In a resolution of 1993⁹, it urged the Ministry to, among others:

- promote and support the in-service training of teachers on the above themes;
- extend educational and didactic activities carried out at the secondary level on the subject of racism and anti-Semitism to the pre-primary and primary levels;

³ UNESCO (2000): Italy; available at www.ibe.unesco.org (10/05/2003).

⁴ DPR 394/99, articolo 45 (Decree of the President of the Republic nr. 394 of 1999, article 45). See also Eurispes / Fondazione Liberal (2003): *Primo rapporto nazionale sulla scuola 2003*; Roma, p. 191 (First National Report on Education 2003).

⁵ Open Society Institute (2002): *The situation of Muslims in Italy*, p.240.

⁶ Italy, Ministerial Circular nr. 301, of the 8 September 1989: Integration of foreign pupils into compulsory schools: promotion and coordination of initiatives for the exercise of the right to education; available at: www.edscuola.it/archivio/norme/circolari/cm301_89.html (10/05/03)

⁷ Ministerial Circular nr. 205, of 26 July 1990: Compulsory schools and foreign pupils. Intercultural Education; available at: www.edscuola.it/archivio/norme/circolari/cm205_90.html (10/05/03)

⁸ Resolution of the National education Council on intercultural education in schools, 23rd April 1992; available at: www.comune.bologna.it/iperbole/immigra/scuola/cronolog.htm (10/05/03)

⁹ Resolution of the National education Council of 24 March 1993: "Racism and anti-semitism: the role of schools. Available at: www.comune.bologna.it/iperbole/immigra/scuola/cronolog.htm (10/05/03)

- set up documentation centres and actively promote the dissemination of knowledge of these issues;
- initiate a critical review of texts used in schools both in terms of the contents and the language;
- promote joint initiatives between schools and Jewish community and other minority organisations involving students, teachers and parents;
- raise awareness of media operators on the contribution media can make to develop and promote intercultural dialogue and anti-racism.

A different category of policy papers deal with some of the specific problems non-Italian pupils face at school. One of the outstanding problems is the enrolment in schools of all levels of non-Italian students who started their school life in the country of origin. Particularly difficult was the position of pupils whose parents had no legal title to stay in the country. For a long time, there were no guidelines on from the ministry on what to do and each local educational authority decided on its own what was an appropriate solution. A ministerial circular¹⁰ clarified that all pupils, irrespective of their parents' status, were entitled to enrolment in schools without discrimination.

The framework for intercultural education and the right/duty of non-Italian pupils to education was finally integrated into national legislation in the 1998 Immigration Act¹¹. The Act affirmed the principle of “equal treatment” for foreigners in “access to public services” (*article 2(5)*), albeit “within the limits and modalities defined by the law”. It explicitly placed a duty on the “regions, provinces, municipal authorities and other local authorities” to take measures aimed at eliminating the obstacles that “hinder from enjoying full recognition of the rights and legitimate interests accorded to foreigners in the territory of the State (.....), in accordance with the fundamental rights of the individual” (*article 3(5)*).

With reference to education, it brings together earlier provisions contained in circulars and resolutions besides giving some practical indications on steps to be taken to ensure the integration in school of non-Italian pupils. Article 38 of the Act, among other things, states that:

- non-Italian minors are subject to compulsory education throughout the national territory. The right to education is upheld by organising specific courses and initiatives for the learning of the Italian language;
- the educational system welcomes linguistic and cultural differences as fundamental values underlying mutual respect, exchange between cultures and tolerance; with this aim it promotes and encourages welcome initiatives for minority pupils, respect for the culture of the country of origin and the creation of common intercultural activities;

Formatiert: Nummerierung und Aufzählungszeichen

¹⁰ Ministerial Circular nr.5, of 12 January 1994: - Enrolment in schools of all kinds and levels of foreign pupils without residence permits.

¹¹ D.Lgs. 25 luglio 1998, n. 286, Testo unico delle disposizioni concernenti la disciplina dell'immigrazione e norme sulla condizione dello straniero. G.U. del 18 agosto 1998, n. 191. *Italy, Legislative Decree 25th July 1998, nr.286 – Unified or Consolidated Text of provisions concerning immigration and provisions on the status of foreigners; O.G. of 18th August 1998, nr.191*. Available at: <http://www.stranieriinitalia.com/leggi/testounico.html> (10/05/2003).

- initiatives and activities are defined and implemented taking into account local needs and an integrated territorial approach involving associations of foreigners and voluntary organisations.

Besides, it provides for Italian language courses for adults and additional courses for the compulsory level diploma, professional re-qualification and vocational training. With regard to teachers, local education authorities are charged with organising refresher courses and defining the criteria for the adaptation of teaching programmes. Schools are to define communication channels with the families of non-Italian pupils, using intercultural mediators to facilitate the process where necessary.

The implementation decree of the above law deals with the problem of placement of non-Italian pupils who start schooling before arriving in Italy. It specifies that the enrolment of non-Italian minors in schools of all levels and types is done following the same modalities and conditions as those for Italian pupils and the enrolment of these minors is not subject to the possession of a legal title to stay. They are enrolled on “condition” if they do not have personal identification papers and this is without prejudice to their sitting for and obtaining the school leaving certificate for all school levels. Furthermore, the decree provides that non-Italian pupils are, at the compulsory schooling level, placed in classes corresponding to their ages; the board of teachers may decide for placement in a class corresponding to one year above or below the pupil’s age taking into account the following:

- the educational system and national curriculum of the country of origin of the pupil;
- the assessment of the competences, skills and level of preparation of the pupil;
- years of education already completed by the pupil in the country of origin and;
- the certificate already obtained.

Formatiert: Nummerierung und Aufzählungszeichen

The board of teachers is responsible for determining the distribution of non-Italian pupils in the classes. It is forbidden to distribute pupils in such a way as to have classes of only or predominantly non-Italian pupils.

The main legislative development in 2003 has been the approval of a decree¹² outlining key aspects of a proposed reform of the entire educational system. This law authorizes the Government to adopt measures to reform the educational system within eighteen months from date of entry into force of the law, following the criteria and the principles set out in the above law. The changes introduced by the new law will gradually go into effect beginning from 2003/2004 school year. It should be noted though that the system currently in place was introduced only in 1999. For details of the changes in the educational system introduced since 1999¹³, see Appendix 1 – 3.

¹² Legge 28 marzo 2003, n.53 - *Delega al Governo per la definizione delle norme generali sull'istruzione e dei livelli essenziali delle prestazioni in materia di istruzione e formazione professionale; Gazzetta Ufficiale n.77 del 02 aprile 2003* (Law nr. 53 of 28th March 2003 – Authorization to the Government to define general norms on education and essential levels of services on the subject of education and professional training).

¹³ The extension of compulsory education up to 15 years of age was sanctioned by Law No. 9 of 20 January 1999. The new structure of the education system was approved by Law No. 30 of 10 February 2000.

Pre-primary schools accept all children between the ages of 3 and 6 years, including those with special needs and learning difficulties. Attendance at state pre-schools is free of charge; a contribution is requested from families for transportation and meal services provided by the municipality. The State does not, however, cover the requirements of the entire 3-6 age group. Approximately 50% of the children attend non-state institutes (local organizations, associations and private schools). These institutes receive State subsidy through the municipal administrations, provided that certain basic conditions, including the principle of non-discrimination, are ensured. The only significant change at this level contained in the 2003 reform concerns the age at which children can enter the system. It lowers entry age, beginning from the 2003/2004 school year, to 2 years and six months for parents who so desire.

Primary education covers five years and attendance is compulsory for all children aged between 6 and 11 years. Compulsory education may also be carried out in non-state schools or through education organized by families. In the latter case, the State has the right to monitor the levels of competence reached by pupils by means of a final examination. Classes are made up of no more than twenty-eight pupils, with a limit of twenty pupils for classes hosting up to three special needs children. This five-year cycle ends with a final primary school leaving certificate examination which pupils are required to pass in order to go on to lower secondary or middle school. The latest reform provides that passage to the middle school will be automatic without this examination at the end of the fifth year. Under the new scheme, there will be an internal evaluation of pupils' performance every two years in order to determine if a child has to repeat a class or go on to the next two-year period¹⁴.

The lower secondary or middle school is, together with the primary cycle, compulsory for all pupils 11-14; it is free of charge and lasts three years. The requisite for admission is the possession of the primary school-leaving certificate, which is normally obtained at age 11. The reform that entered into force in 2001 extended that compulsory schooling period to age 16 and at the end of this period, education can be continued either at the upper secondary level or by going into basic vocational education. The latest reform enacted in 2003 merges the primary (5 years) and lower secondary (3 years) schools into a single cycle, with a final examination at the end of the eight-year cycle.

There are a variety of educational channels available at the upper secondary level. After the lower secondary school examination, successful students may undertake courses of study lasting three to five years. All schools offering post-compulsory instruction are part of upper secondary education, and include the following categories: (a) classical, scientific, and primary or pre-school teacher training school (commonly designated as the 'classical' category): *Liceo classico* (five-year course), *Liceo scientifico* (five-year course), *Istituto magistrale* (four-year course), *Scuola magistrale* (three-year course); (b) artistic education: *Liceo artistico* (four-year course) and art schools (*Istituti d'arte*, four-year course); (c) technical education: technical schools (*Istituti tecnici*, five-year course); (d) vocational education: vocational schools (*Istituti professionali*, three- or five-year course)¹⁵.

¹⁴ Legge 28 marzo 2003, n.53, op. cit., articolo 8(1).

¹⁵ UNESCO (2000): op cit.

In a separate reform process (*Progetto Brocca*¹⁶), the primary or pre-school teacher training school has undergone far-reaching transformations. Since 1999, all former *Istituti magistrali* offering four-year courses to qualify as primary school teacher have been transformed compulsorily into a *Liceo* system with three strands – pedagogic, linguistic and social –, offering five-year courses. One of the reasons behind the change is that in the future, even primary school teachers will have hold university qualifications.

Under the 2003 reform, compulsory schooling has been extended until age 18 and a half years. In practice, a student may choose to go through the upper secondary cycle until age 18 – 19 or complete the compulsory schooling period in technical education, apprenticeship or by alternating between work and vocational training. Students may pass from the *Liceo* system to technical training or in the opposite direction. Students entering the lyceum will have eight different courses from which to choose: classic, scientific, linguistic, artistic, human sciences, economic, musical and technological. The second cycle will culminate in the final State examination. Students following technical and vocational training will continue, after four years, with higher technical training. If students wish to go on to university, a fifth year is foreseen, culminating in a State examination giving access to university studies. One aspect of the reform that is causing much controversy is the provision that school programmes will include a core component defined at the national level, and a second component defined by Regional governments. This is seen as yielding to pressure from the Northern League Party which is part of the governing coalition and is known to be a regionalist movement.

There is no monitoring system of any sort in place charged with checking discrimination in schools and within the educational system or society at large. At the time of writing this report (May 2003), a legislative proposal meant to transpose EU Directive 43/2000/CE on the principle of equal treatment irrespective of racial or ethnic origin includes a provision on setting up a national equality body charged with monitoring discrimination on the above grounds. While the Ministry of Education, University and Research (M.I.U.R) has started systematic monitoring of various aspects of the presence of non-Italian pupils in schools since 1998/99 school year, such activity does not include monitoring of discrimination in the education system.

¹⁶ See <http://www.bdp.it/~dgic0001/maxi.html> (25/05/2003)

6. Existing data and sources in the education sector

The Ministry of Education, University and Research (M.I.U.R) collects, processes and publishes quantitative data on the presence of the number of non-Italian pupils registered in schools, from pre-primary to upper secondary school level. According to the statistics from the Information System of the Ministry, the number of non-Italian pupils registered in schools has increased enormously over the past ten years, from 25,756 (or 0.27% of total school population) in the 1991/1992 school year to 181,767 (or 2.31% of total school population) in the 2001/2002 school year¹⁷ [Table 1]. In spite of this increase, non-Italian pupils make up a very small percentage of the total student population of state and non-state schools.

Table 1 – Non-Italian pupils – Time series

School year	European pupils		Non-EU pupils		Non-Italian pupils – Total amount	Index number basis 1983/84=100	Incidence of Non-Italian pupils on the school population
	Total value	Percentage	Total value	Percentage			
1983/84	2.706	44,33	3.398	55,67	6.104	100	0,06
1984/85	2.792	43,17	3.676	56,83	6.468	106	0,06
1985/86	2.914	41,35	4.135	58,65	7.050	115	0,07
1986/87	3.097	41,72	4.327	58,28	7.424	122	0,07
1987/88	3.605	40,20	5.362	59,80	8.967	147	0,09
1988/89	4.559	38,67	7.232	61,33	11.791	193	0,12
1989/90	4.988	36,49	8.680	63,51	13.668	224	0,14
1990/91	6.044	32,16	12.750	67,84	18.794	308	0,19
1991/92	8.351	32,42	17.405	67,58	25.756	422	0,27
1992/93	11.045	36,16	19.502	63,84	30.547	500	0,32
1993/94	14.938	39,86	22.540	60,14	37.478	614	0,41
1994/95	18.161	42,42	24.655	57,58	42.816	701	0,47
1995/96	21.736	43,19	28.586	56,81	50.322	824	0,56
1996/97	24.423	42,40	33.172	57,60	57.595	944	0,66
1997/98i	30.134	42,65	40.523	57,35	70.657	1.158	0,81
1998/99ii	35.687	41,73	49.835	58,27	85.522	1.401	1,09
1999/00	51.361	42,92	68.318	57,08	119.679	1.961	1,47
2000/01	64.342	43,65	83.064	56,35	147.406	2.415	1,84
2001/02	80.622	44,35	101.145	55,65	181.767	2.978	2,31

Source: M.I.U.R. Information System – Non-Italian pupils – school year 2001/2002.

With regard to the country of origin, non-Italian in schools come from 186 countries, with those from European countries accounting for 44.35% while non-Europeans represent 55.65%. Among students who have a European citizenship, EU pupils accounted for only 2.71% of total foreign students population as against 41.64% of non-EU European pupils,

¹⁷ At the time of writing this report, the last school year for which is available the 2001/2002 academic year and the data for the 2002/2003 academic year will be released later in the year.

and those of African and Asian origin represented 45 percent of total population of non-Italian students¹⁸ [Table 2].

Table 2 - Non-Italian pupils by geographic area of origin (school year 2001/2002)

School year	Europe		Africa	America	Asia	Oceania and stateless
	UE	Non-Ue				
2001/2002	2.71%	41.64%	28.43%	12.01%	15.06%	0.15%

Source: M.I.U.R. Information System – Non-Italian pupils – school year 2001/2002.

The distribution of non-Italian students by school level in the 2001/2002 academic year is as follows: 20.26% in pre-primary school, 42.17% in elementary school, 24.33% in lower secondary or middle school, and 13.24% in upper secondary or high school [Table 3]. Compared to the distribution of all pupils at the different levels, the number of non-Italian pupils was highest at the elementary level, with a 10 percentage point more than the overall presence of pupils at same level and least at the upper secondary or high school level and at less than half the total population of pupils at same level. This data reflects some of the key changes in the characteristics of immigration to Italy in the last ten years and in particular, the increase in family reunion on the part of many who first arrived alone and the stabilization process which has enabled many to set up families.

Table 3 - Distribution of school population by school level (school year 2001/2002)¹⁹

Percentage distribution of pupils by level of school		
School level	Total All pupils	Non-Italian pupils
Pre-primary school	17.82	20.26
Elementary school	32.49	42.17
Lower secondary or middle school	20.80	24.33
Upper secondary or high school	28.89	13.24
Total	100.00	100.00

Source: M.I.U.R. Information System – Non-Italian pupils – school year 2001/2002.

An important element that emerges from the above distribution is that an increasing number of non-Italian pupils who will be in the two secondary levels in the coming years will have started their educational life (or part of it) in Italy and this will have important implications for their knowledge of the language, performance, kind of difficulties they may encounter and for specific educational policies targeting these children.

In terms of the territorial distribution of non-Italian pupils, we find that in the 2001/2002 school year, more than a third were in the North West, followed by the North East and the Central regions. The situation is different when we consider the incidence of non-Italian pupils per 100 pupils attending. The North East becomes the area with the highest concentration of non-Italian students. With reference to single regions, Lombardia (with about 25 percent of the total) has the largest population of non-Italian pupils while Emilia Romagna records the highest incidence (4.8 percent)²⁰.

¹⁸ M.I.U.R. (2002): Alunni con cittadinanza non-italiana – a. s. 2001/2002 (*Ministry of Education University and Research: Pupils of non-Italian citizenship, school year 2001/2002*); www.istruzione.it/pubblicazioni/2002.shtml (26/05/2003).

¹⁹ See Table 5.1 in Annex 3 for the same data and their incidence in State and non-state schools.

²⁰ See Table 5.2 in Annex 3 for the same data for all regions.

Table 4 - Territorial distribution of non-Italian pupils (and percentage) school year 2001/2002

Territory	Absolute values	Percentage values	Incidence per 100 pupils attending
North West	68.523	37,69	3,60
North East	52.487	28,88	4,06
Centre	42.395	23,32	3,13
South	12.789	7,04	0,58
Islands	5.573	3,07	0,49

Source: M.I.U.R. Information System – Non-Italian pupils – school year 2001/2002.

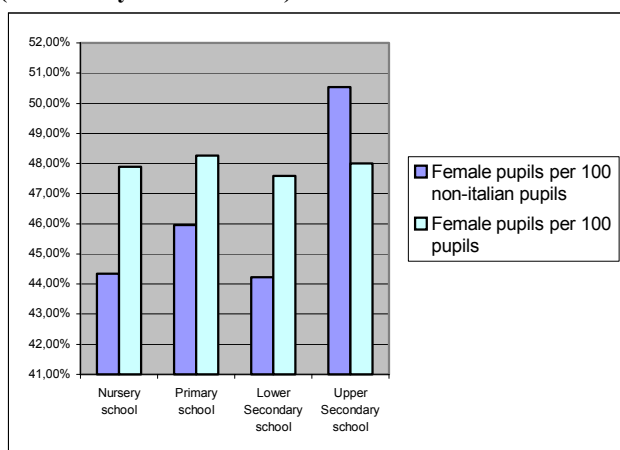
In terms of gender composition of non-Italian students [Table 4], female pupils accounted for 45.82 percent and this is slightly lower than the incidence of female students on the entire school population (47.98 percent). The incidence of female students is lower at all school levels except at the upper secondary where non-Italian female students accounted for 50.53 percent and this is also higher than the incidence of female students on the entire school population (48.01 percent) [Graph 1].

Table 5 - Incidence of female students for all and non-Italian pupils by school level (academic year 2001/2002).

School level	All pupils	Non-Italian pupils
Pre-primary school	47.89	44.35
Elementary school	48.27	45.96
Lower secondary or middle school	47.59	44.22
Upper secondary or high school	48.01	50.53
Total	47.98	45.82

Source: M.I.U.R. Information System – Non-Italian pupils – school year 2001/2002.

Graph. 1 - Incidence of female students for all and non-Italian pupils by school level (academic year 2001/2002).



6.1. PERFORMANCE AT SCHOOL

The official statistics of the Ministry of Education (M.I.U.R) considers being promoted to the next grade as well as scores obtained in various subjects as indicators of success at school for all pupils. Available reports on the achievement at school for all pupils and non-Italian pupils separately at the primary and middle school levels²¹ (Table 1) show that the latter do worse than their Italian schoolmates and that drop-out rate is higher amongst non-Italian pupils. Though the performance of non-Italian pupils is lower than that of the entire school population, in particular at middle school level, the situation has constantly improved in the last three school years.

A recent three-year study²² in the province of Turin showed that a higher percentage of foreign pupils than Italians is not promoted from one class to the next and the percentage of non-Italian pupils failed at the end of the year increases from primary to high school.

Table 6 - Comparison between the total population of pupils and non-Italian pupils in the school years 1999/2000 and 2000/2001

Type of school	Pupils promoted per 100 examined			
	School year 1999/2000		School year 2000/2001	
	All pupils	Non-Italian pupils	All pupils	Non-Italian pupils
Primary school	98,92	95,99	98,93	96,64
Middle school	95,55	86,20	96,07	88,42

Source: M.I.U.R. - *Non-Italian pupils 2001/2002*; p. 34

During the period from 1997 to 1999, an average of 8.6 percent of all non-Italian students were not promoted to the next grade and separate figures for the two most represented non-Italian nationalities in schools - Albanians and Moroccans – show failure rates of 1.1% at primary level, 9.8% at middle school and 22.9% at high school for Albanians and 0.7%, 19.6% and 24.7% at the respective school levels for Moroccans²³.

Table 7 - Causes of failures at school for Italian and non-Italian pupils 2001

Cause of failure	Italian pupils	Non-Italian pupils
School objectives not achieved	57.6	47.9
Lack of commitment of pupils	54.6	24.4
Lack of interest of families	32.3	23.0
Irregular attendance	24.4	24.9
Inadequate teaching methodologies	9.7	24.0
Insufficient integration	4.3	18.2

Source: M.I.U.R. (2001), 5,361 schools

In a study on the transformations taking place in Italian schools in recent years, school heads and teachers interviewed rated the causes for Italian and foreign pupils as in Table 7 above. These ratings do not give any insight into the number of non-Italian pupils who are placed in lower classes than they should be doing and who, quite often, have

²¹ M.I.U.R (2002): Op. cit., p.34

²² Giovannini G., Queirolo Palmas L., (eds): *Una scuola in comune: esperienze scolastiche in contesti multietnici Italiani* (A School in Common: Schooling Experiences in Italian Multi-ethnic Contexts), Turin: Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 2002.

²³ Open Society Institute (2002): Op. cit p.

knowledge of Italian language as the only objective to be met and as such, are not evaluated in the various subjects. The relatively high rating of inadequate teaching methodologies suggests that educational authorities are aware of the schools inability to offer equal opportunities to all students and this is important as it can inform positively policy decisions on the subject by same authorities.

In another study based on a survey²⁴ of 954 third-year middle school pupils of Italian and non-Italian citizenship in equal numbers, carried out in Turin, Genoa and other cities, students were asked to give a self-evaluation of their performance at school and the scores students obtained in different subjects except Italian language were used as objective indicators of performance²⁵ in the single subjects considered. Italian language was excluded from the subjects considered in order to eliminate a possible source of distortion due to the advantage mother tongue speakers may have over pupils for whom Italian is a second language. They found that while for middle and upper social classes Italian pupils performed better than non-Italian ones, for lower social classes, the percentage of pupils with low scores was the same for both groups. The authors conclude that non-Italian pupils from lower socio-cultural backgrounds perform better than their Italian peers from similar socio-cultural conditions. A separate analysis of the results from each of the cities included in the sample confirms this conclusion. Besides, according to this study, foreign students from socially integrated families with higher incomes (mainly from Europe and other developed countries) record similar performance as their Italian peers from similar social and income backgrounds.

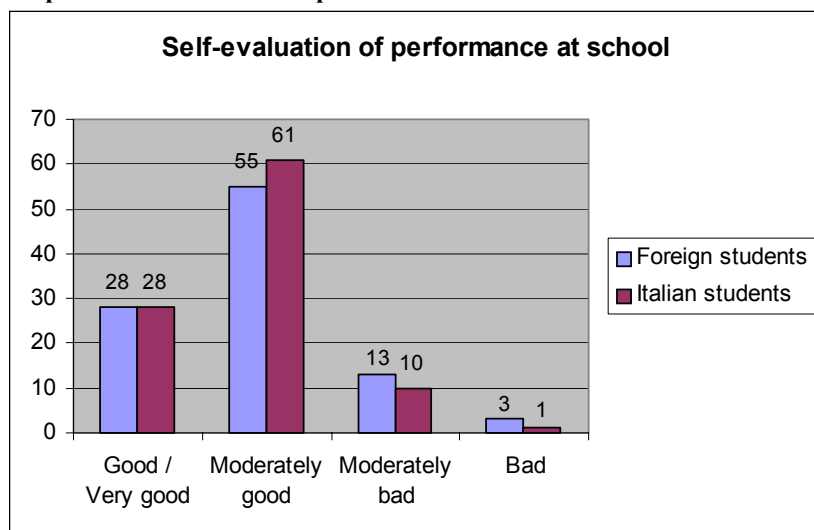
Regarding self-evaluation, while both groups of pupils over-estimate their performance, the perceptions of non-Italian pupils turned out to be closer to their objective performance as defined above than those of their Italian peers.

From a gender perspective, female non-Italian students did better in general terms than their male counterparts. In particular the difference in performance between female and male students was quite significant in Genoa and the other cities grouped together while in Turin, the difference was less accentuated though it remain in favour of female students. The performance of female and male Italian students followed the same pattern with female pupils doing significantly better in Genoa and the other cities while in Turin differences in performance remain minimal.

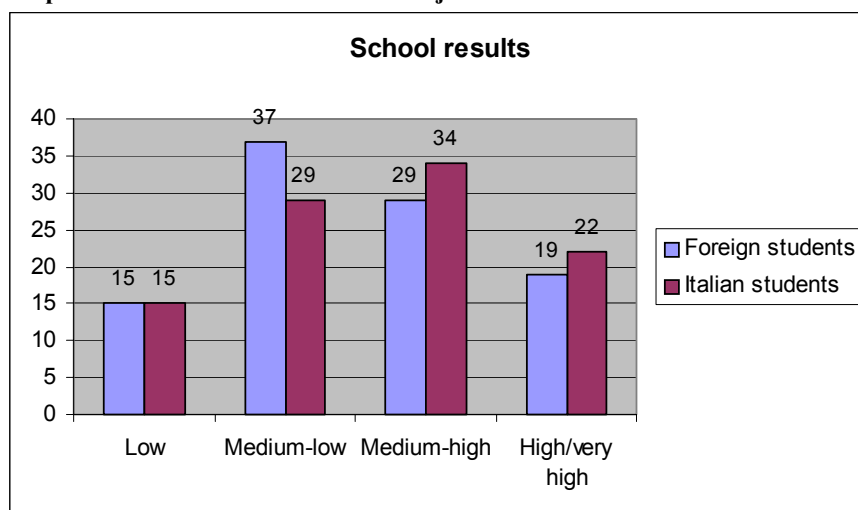
²⁴ Fischer L., Fischer M. G. (2002): *Scuola e società multi-etnica. Modelli teorici di integrazione e studenti immigrati a Torino e Genova* (School and multi-ethnic society. Theoretical models of integration and immigrant students in Turin and Genoa), Edizioni Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli; pp. 52 – 57.

²⁵ Fischer L., Fischer M. G. (2002): Op. Cit., p.53

Graph 2 - Self-evaluation of performance at school



Graph 3 - Performance in different subjects at school

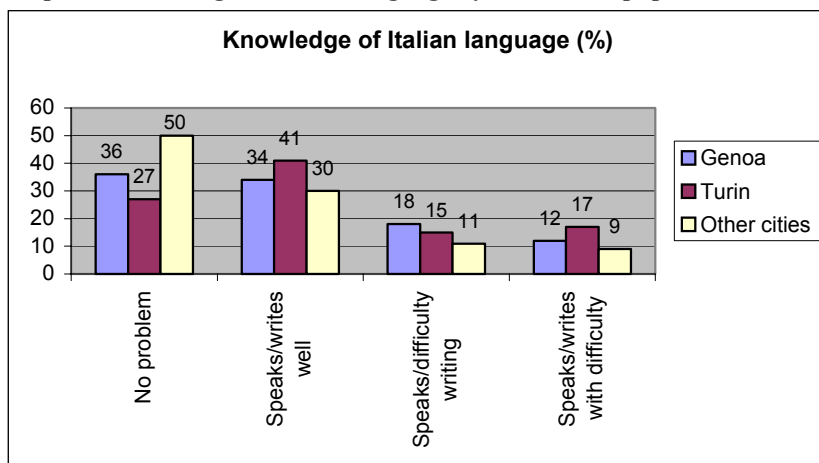


Source: L. Fischer, M. G. Fischer (2002): *Op. cit* p.54

One of the factors identified as negatively influencing the performance of non-Italian pupils is their knowledge of the language. The research in Genoa, Turin and other cities indicate that difficulty with the language was greater for pupils who were not born in the country and who had been here for less number of years and that it decreases with time. The difference in terms of knowledge of Italian language by foreign students in Genoa, Turin and other cities is partly explained by the fact that the percentage of the sample of foreign students who had been in the country for more than three years was 56% for Genoa, 50% for the other cities and 46% for Turin. Differences were also noted with regard to gender and country of origin for non-Italian students who had been here for

shorter periods. In Genoa, female students did significantly better in terms of knowledge of the language than their male counterparts and the situation in the other two groups was similar though less accentuated. In all three groups, it was found that pupils who speak Italian even at home were predominantly from high socio-cultural backgrounds. Regarding country of origin, students from Eastern Europe and North Africa were found to be at an advantage over the peers from Asia for whom the language barrier remains a serious problem.

Graph 4 - Knowledge of Italian language by non-Italian pupils



Source: L. Fischer, M. G. Fischer (2002): *Op. cit* p.51

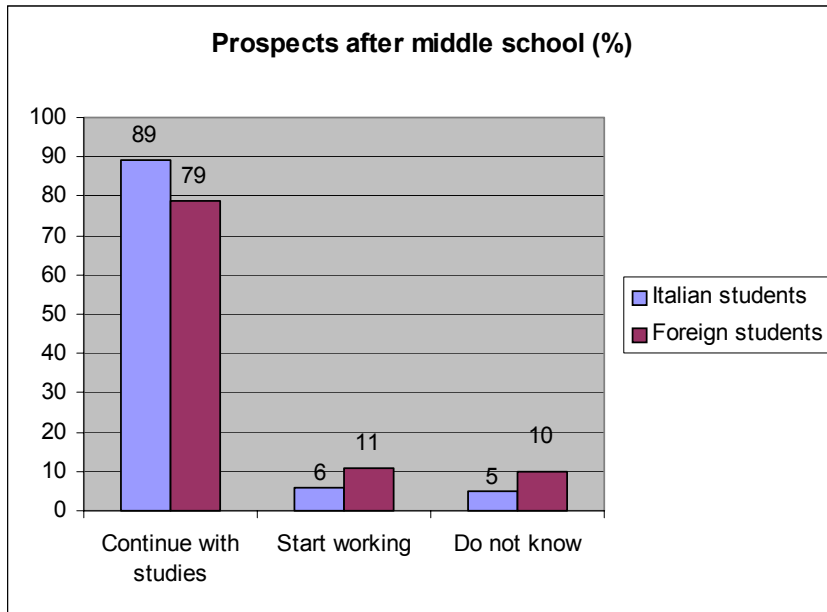
The above research identified a number of factors which were found to have influenced positively the educational achievements of pupils surveyed. These included, for foreign pupils: high social (but not cultural) extraction, the decision to continue to high school, commitment to studies and above all, a regular school career, intended as not having had any interruptions due to failure in a class. For Italian pupils, the factors that positively influenced their achievements were: a high social and cultural extraction²⁶, commitment to studies, regular school career and most of all, the desire to continue on to high school.

In terms of prospects after leaving middle school, more than 80% of students interviewed had already decided to continue to high school and female students showed a higher percentage than the male ones, particularly amongst foreign students, 83% of girls and 75% of boys. The factors that seemed to have influenced the decision to continue studying were: a high social extraction, a positive evaluation on the part of teachers, commitment to studies, gender, young age and good level of integration into group of

²⁶ The authors of the research defined a socio-economic status index (SESI) used to measure the socio-economic status of the families of the students interviewed. The index was constructed using the educational qualification (diploma) possessed and the occupation of both father and mother of each student. For non-Italian students, researchers considered the occupation of their parents in Italy and not the former in the country of origin. For a detailed description of the methodology used in the research, see Mancini T. (2002): *Il percorso metodologico della ricerca: l'analisi dei dati (Methodological approach of the research: analysis of data)*, in: Giovannini G., Queirolo Palmas L., (eds): *op. cit*; pp. 208 – 239.

peers. The relevance of age here is due to the fact that the average age of foreign students in the sample was 15 years and 22% of the same group were 16 years or above. The authors of the research do not give any indication of the average age of Italian pupils in the sample. The findings on the desire to continue studying indirectly confirm that a large number of foreign students is placed in classes lower than their age would require in accordance with ministerial circulars on placement of students in the primary and lower secondary levels. This practice is known to negatively influence performance of students affected, their interaction with younger classmates and the decision to continue studying and to favour disaffection and dropping out of school.

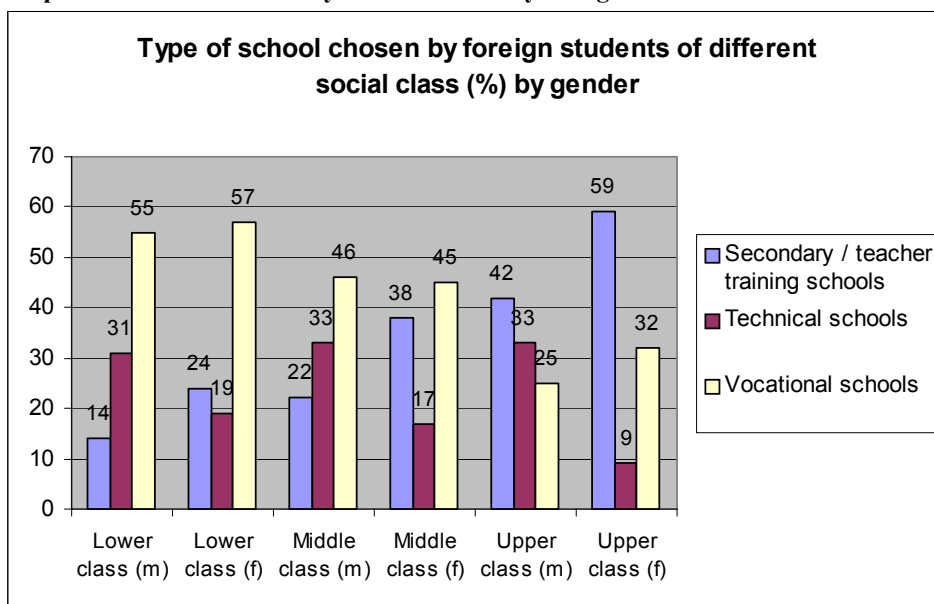
Graph 5 - Prospects after leaving middle school



Source: L. Fischer, M. G. Fischer (2002): *Op. cit* p.69

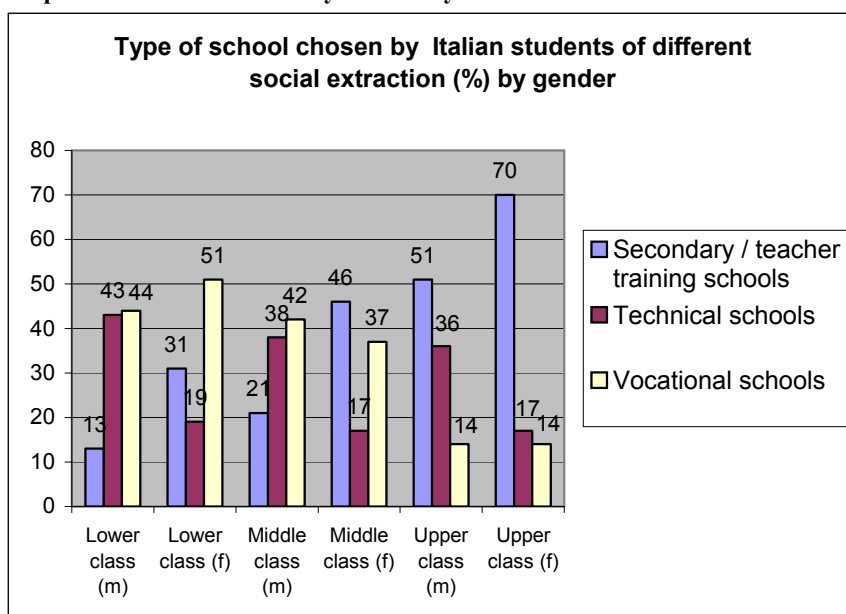
Another aspect that offers useful and important information on future prospects of the students interviewed is the type of school they choose to go to and here we find very significant differences between Italians and non-Italians, socio-cultural conditions being equal. Data from the research indicates that more Italian pupils than their foreign peers choose to enter the *Liceo* system and more female students from both groups do so than male ones and the teacher's specific advice to continue to high school is said to have a positive influence on the type of school chosen.

Graph 6 - Choice of secondary schools chosen by foreign students



Source: L. Fischer, M. G. Fischer (2002): Op. cit p.71

Graph 7 - Choice of secondary schools by Italian students



Source: L. Fischer, M. G. Fischer (2002): Op. cit p.72

7. Direct and indirect discrimination

Knowledge of direct discrimination in the education sector is scarce and fragmented. There is neither systematically collected data nor research focusing on the subject. The education sector is certainly one of the most investigated by research and though there has been much attention on the integration of non-Italian pupils into schools and the education system in general, little attempt has been made to analyse the specific dynamics and impact of direct discrimination on vulnerable groups. In spite of this information gap, there is anecdotal evidence of discrimination on grounds of national, ethnic and / or racial origin, from teachers, ethnic minority parents and NGOs working with schools. The media have also reported some cases.

Indirect discrimination can be identified, on the other hand, by analysing policy documents from educational authorities and practices and procedures in use within educational institutions. We discussed in an earlier chapter the practice of placing non-Italian pupils in classes lower than their age and/or past school experience in the country of origin would suggest, because of their insufficient knowledge of Italian language. The adoption of knowledge of Italian language as the only criterion to determine in which classes non-Italian pupils should be placed is against the provision of the law and ministerial circulars on the subject which provide that both the specific competences of the child as well as the educational level already attained before arriving in Italy should be taken into account. This practice is putting many non-Italian pupils at a disadvantage, especially in cases where the age difference with their Italian classmates is up to two years or more. Other forms of indirect discrimination reported include difficulties in accommodating the different dietary needs of pupils (such needs in many cases, have to be either justified for medical reasons).

In classes with one or more pupils formally certified as having special needs, the presence of a support teacher is provided, in order to foster integration and learning. To qualify for such support, a child has to be certified as having special needs and the consent of the parents is required to do so. Quite often, parents refuse to give their consent because once certified, it becomes part of the child's curriculum and some parents fear that it could be used to discriminate against the child in the future. In recent years, some school authorities have tried to use this instrument as a means of obtaining language support teachers for recently arrived non-Italian pupils who encounter difficulties with the language. These attempts have confirmed the controversy around the issue as well as the difficulty in defining in objective terms what should or should not fall under the category of "special needs". Many migrant parents faced with similar situations have tended to react along the same lines as native parents, by looking at such requests with suspicion for fear that the certification implied could have negative (discriminatory) consequences in the future.

At the same time, many schools have resorted to "cultural and linguistic mediators" as external language support providers for pupils who have been in the country for a short time. The "cultural and linguistic mediator" is usually an adult of the same nationality or language group as the non-Italian pupils, who speaks Italian and is charged with teaching these pupils Italian as well as helping them in their studies of some subjects; besides, cultural and linguistic mediators are used to facilitate relationship between school authorities and non-Italian parents who do not speak the language well or have problems

understanding the functioning of schools and the educational system in general²⁷. The use of these mediators as language teachers has been criticised by many because in most cases, the mediators do not possess any specific competences neither as teachers nor as experts in teaching languages and there is no common standard on how such people with different educational backgrounds can be trained to undertake an important task such as teaching Italian as a second language. In spite of these criticisms, cultural and linguistic mediators have become increasingly popular with teachers who have in their classes, recently arrived non-Italian pupils and educational authorities who prefer mediators to language support trained teachers because the former cost less as they are paid by the hour while support teachers have to be employed by the ministry of education²⁸.

Catholic religion is taught in Italian schools and religious symbols such as the cross is hung in some schools and classrooms across the country. Non-Catholics have the right to be exempted from such classes by declaring so at the time of registration. There are problems though as often teachers and heads of schools tend to encourage parents not to exempt their children from religious lessons because such children could feel excluded and in turn suffer psychologically. In a wide survey involving school heads and principals, Italian parents and pupils, it was found that some parents and teachers consider the choice of being exempted from attending Catholic religion classes as an indicator of their willingness to be integrated or not²⁹. The survey quotes one parent interviewed as saying that in his/her daughter's class, "there is a girl who belongs to a different religion and whose parents did not exempt her because they wanted her to learn about a different religion" and a teacher made similar remarks saying that her "chinese students calmly sit in the class during religion classes even though they are not Catholics and this is because they want to get integrated". By a similar token, children of other religious denominations, particularly Muslims, whose parents ask for exemption are perceived as being "fundamentalist" in their faith and not open to other religions. Asked to rate the chances of getting integrated of non-Italian pupils from different continents, pupils from North Africa were rated by 69.4% of school heads and principals interviewed as having high or sufficient chances of getting integrated while those from Subsaharan Africa rated in a similar manner by 59.1%, the least for all groups. Asians were given the same chances by 63.1%, non-EU Europeans 80% of the interviewed, South and Central Americans 75.7% and North Americans 71.8%³⁰.

According to the same report, many teachers interviewed said that the age of non-Italian pupils is inversely correlated to the chances of getting integrated. They say that while at pre-primary level non-Italian children do not present any significant differences with their Italian mates regarding the possibility of being integrated, significant differences begin to emerge at the primary level and claims like the above were justified with statements such as: "it is more difficult at primary school to integrate them because they are usually older" or "it is important that Italian children are at a very young age because it is easier then for them to accept their non-EU mates".

²⁷ Open Society Institute (2002): op. cit. p.243.

²⁸ M.I.U.R. Dipartimento per lo Sviluppo dell'Istruzione (2001): *Le trasformazioni della scuola multiculturale, Agenzia per la Scuola, Roma, giugno 2001, rapporto di ricerca* (Ministry of Education, University and Research, Department of Educational Development (2001): The Transformations of a multicultural school, research report), p.123.

²⁹ M.I.U.R Dipartimento per lo Sviluppo dell'Istruzione (2001): Op. cit, p.112.

³⁰ M.I.U.R Dipartimento per lo Sviluppo dell'Istruzione (2001): Op. cit, p. 75 – 76.

Interviewed about the Roma, respondents are said to have concentrated on them “the most intense negative experiences and the strongest cultural resistance recorded throughout the survey”. The attitude of some teachers, especially those who had had Roma pupils in their classes are reported to be one of outright negative motivated by their firm belief that the Roma are neither interested nor capable of integrating into the dominant culture. For this reason, some of them define Roma children as “dangerous for Italian pupils and for society in general and do not represent neither an opportunity nor a model for their Italian mates”. Throughout the survey, it was only for the Roma that the proposal of separate classes was made, suggesting explicitly that classes are organised inside the camps where many Roma live.

8. Strategies, initiatives and good practices

The integration of non-Italian pupils into schools and the educational system in general has, for many years, been the focus of public attention both in terms of policy at different levels and projects by various actors. Most of the initiatives and good practices in this sector refer to teaching and / or learning Italian as an additional language and intercultural education. There is evidence of a large number of initiatives and practices of the above kind but very few provide evaluations of their effectiveness. We will present a selection from a rather numerous collection, drawing from among those that are better documented.

ACCEPTING DIVERSITY³¹

This is an interactive on-line manual meant for those working to promote a positive reaction to diversity by young people. These may be school teachers or people who organize and run different kinds training courses on diversity. The manual is not meant for any particular age group as it is up to educators to decide on this aspect, in view of the specific needs and contexts in which the activities will be implemented. It is interactive because the editors offer hints, suggestions, and examples and they incorporate feedback from users of good results obtained and suggestions of possible variations to the original proposals. In other words, the manual offers the opportunity not only to draw from it but also to feed into it and improve it for other users.

Each chapter is subdivided into various sections as follows: a first section defined as *basic ideas* which expresses, in very simple language, the fundamental concepts that need to be transmitted to the children on the theme treated. The second section titled “*more about*” develops the basic ideas into more complex arguments and in some cases, refers the user to first-hand quotations which offer further insights into the arguments. Materials from this section can be used to conduct debates when working with younger students who may find them too abstract and difficult. These materials are helpful in organizing the structure of the arguments in favour of the *basic ideas* as well as in stimulating group discussions. A third section provides *examples* that illustrate the basic ideas introduced earlier and these examples are defined in such terms that each educator will have to adapt them to the specific context in which the activity is carried out. This section is followed by another offering *exercises* with the aim of the involving children in group activities and role-playing which in turn reinforce the *basic ideas* by giving them a concrete form. Educator can contribute to the development of the manual by sending feedback on the outcome of such exercises. Each chapter ends with a section on quotations providing passages of various lengths that enhance or reinforce the sense of the previous parts and such passages can be philosophical quotations, anecdotes and stories, research reports, etc.

³¹ Eco U., Colombo F., Le Goff J. (eds): *Accepting Diversity: an interactive handbook in progress*; available at:
<http://www.tolerance.kataweb.it/eng/intro.html>

LE STESSE DIFFERENZE (THE SAME DIFFERENCE)

This project is promoted by the Regional Education Office of Lombardia region, in partnership with Ismu Foundation, the Ministry of Education and the British Council. It aims to promote exchange of information and experience on intercultural education practices and improve the performance of non-Italian pupils. Activities programmed under the project include a study visit by a group of Italian teachers and senior executives of the regional education office to British schools, training sessions during such visit and an international seminar titled “The same difference. Managing diversity at school in Italy, Spain and Britain”, exchange of good practices on the promotion of educational success of foreign students at all levels and on models of teaching English as an additional language.

AGORÀ – WELCOME APPROACHES AND INTEGRATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR FOREIGN MINORS AND ADOLESCENTS

The *Agorà* project is promoted by the municipality of Milan and implemented in eight different districts of the city. It was initiated in 2002 and involves a consortium of local organisations coordinated by Centro COME. The aim of the project is to promote appropriate welcome and integration practices for foreign minors in schools and the wider social contexts of the city of Milan, through a range of services, opportunities to meet and interact with peers, language learning support activities, intercultural education etc. The activities carried out in the eight districts include after-school recreation initiatives throughout the year for Italians and foreigners, language learning support activities for foreign minors, support for pupils’ parents when dealing with the school administration, intercultural games for pupils, operators and teachers, training of operators etc.

INTERCULTURAL LIBRARY WORKSHOP (LABORATORIO DI BIBLIOTECA INTERCULTURALE)³²

This is an initiative promoted by a school district which aims to develop intercultural awareness in teachers and students. Specific objectives are to develop and / or define an intercultural dimension or perspective in such subjects as literature, history, geography, history of religions, music, figurative arts, mathematics, science subjects, physical education etc., through reading and analysing different texts and other materials. The activities carried out in the framework of the project are coordinated by a teacher and they include:

- the setting-up of a multicultural bookshelf and kit by re-organizing, from an intercultural perspective, the library of each school in the district, acquisition of new books and magazines, setting-up of a mobile library (the intercultural kit) which charged with delivering to the various schools the books needed for each activity;
- design and implementation of training modules for teachers;
- definition of intercultural reading guide and suggestions for classes not directly involved in the project.

Formatiert: Nummerierung und Aufzählungszeichen

³² Available at: www.bibliotecaintercentrale.it

The project is expected, among others, to produce a change in attitude and in particular, help users develop an open attitude instead of a stereotyped perception of others, a better understanding of the complex dynamics that characterise migratory movements, improve their capacity to accommodate different views, lifestyles, models etc., encourage positive interaction with other cultural groups etc.

ALIAS: APPROCCIO ALLA LINGUA ITALIANA PER ALLIEVI STRANIERI³³ (APPROACHES TO ITALIAN LANGUAGE FOR FOREIGNERS)

Initiated in the 1998 / 1999 academic year, the ALIAS project is a joint project of the *Ca' Foscari* University of Venice and the Ministry of Education (MIUR) which deals with themes and problems related to teaching Italian as an additional language. Its aims include training of teachers using both face-to-face and web-based courses, research on language teaching methods, production of materials on teaching Italian as additional language, provide on-line assistance for teachers, develop a resource centre on the subject, produce theme-specific and intercultural bibliographical references, develop materials for distance learning and promote didactic and action-research in the field of language teaching and intercultural education.

³³ Available at: <http://venus.unive.it/aliasve/index.php>

9. Summary and conclusions

Government reports for the last school year for which data is available indicate that at all school levels, the population of non-Italian pupils has continued to increase and at the same time, they performed worse than their Italian peers and recorded a higher drop-out rate, though the situation has constantly improved in the last three years. Other official reports identified a weak knowledge of the language, among others, as a major factor behind the negative performance. Independent research on the same aspects has shown that while there are differences in performance between Italian pupils and non-Italian ones, such differences are not as big as they may appear at first glance. In particular, when other factors such as social and cultural extraction of pupils, knowledge of Italian language, gender and interaction with peers and teachers are taken into consideration, the differences turn-out to be better articulated, highlighting that, for lower social classes recording low performance, non-Italian pupils do better than their Italian mates in the same social and cultural conditions.

Equally, it was found that problems with the language tend to be far more serious at the early stage after arrival but later, gradually reduces. In view of this, it will be helpful to set up a national language training system for pupils recently arrived from other countries, before they begin schooling. The Government could encourage foreign parents who wish to have their children of school age join them here to organise things in such a way that these children arrive here after regularly ending a school year in the country of origin and at least a month before the a new school year begins here, so that they can benefit from a short language course before they enter school. The language course offered to adult immigrants through the public television channel RAI Educational³⁴ does not seem to be able to respond to the specific needs of children about to enter school.

Tackling language difficulties will not be enough to bring a radical change to the achievement rate of non-Italian pupils. It is essential that implementation of existing laws is monitored and that Government takes measures to ensure that they are implemented. Of particular concern is the practice of placing non-Italian pupils in classes that are lower than their ages would suggest, in violation of ministerial dispositions. The de-moralising effect of such practice is certainly one of the reasons behind disaffection and high drop-out rates among foreign pupils.

Regarding data collection on the performance of pupils at school, the Ministry needs to change the present approach whereby it simply calculates the different percentages of failures and drop-out rates for Italian and non-Italian pupils. Specifically, it is necessary to collect such useful information as the social and cultural conditions of pupils' parents, including their educational qualifications as well as past school records of pupils not born in the country.

In the absence of monitoring of discriminatory acts in the education system and data so derived, the study has drawn some examples of discrimination against some of the new minorities generated by migration from circumstantial evidence in such aspects as placement in classes, educational career orientation, lack of religious pluralism or expressions of hostility towards particularly vulnerable groups such as the Roma. Even in

³⁴ See www.educational.rai.it/ioparloitaliano

this case, existing laws should be applied and individual schools could not only undertake courses to help them learn to identify and prevent or fight discrimination but also mission statements clearly outlining their position in favour of equality of opportunity and treatment irrespective of ethnic or national origin, race or colour and in favour of cultural diversity and mutual respect for all. Such mission statements should be translated into different languages and made known to parents, teachers and students of the school. Though there are only anecdotal evidences and media reports of racially motivated harassment and bullying, verbal attacks against pupils wearing visibly different cultural attires, graffiti etc., educational authorities should start promoting projects aimed at preventing such acts, as well as develop clear procedures for handling similar incidents when they occur.

Besides, there is need to take specific policy measures to tackle the perpetuation of prejudice and stereotypes against Roma populations; such measures should be part of the national curriculum especially at the elementary and middle school levels and should clearly outline that discrimination and racism against these groups constitute a violation of their human rights. The above measures should include positive action provisions meant to ensure that Roma children have access to schools like others. The particular conditions (camps) in which most Roma live should be borne in mind when designing extracurricula support programmes for Roma pupils.

A recent decree has set aside some resources to be used as incentive to teachers working in classes with large numbers of non-Italian pupils. While the initiative is laudable, it would appear to be more urgent that education authorities invest more financial resources and better qualified human resources in tackling the myriad of problems faced by many non-Italian pupils, including as discussed above, the perceptions some of their teachers, school heads, principals and parents of their Italian peers hold of them. Cultural and linguistic mediators certainly have a role to play in facilitating relations between families and school authorities in cases where such parents do not speak or understand Italian language sufficiently to act on their own. They should not be used as language support teachers because they do not have the training and competences needed to teach Italian as an additional language.

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List of organisations

C.N.P.I. – Consiglio Nazionale Pubblica Istruzione – National Council for Public Education

Eurispes - Istituto di Studi Politici Economici e Sociali (Institute of Political, Economic and Social Studies)

Fondazione Liberal – Liberal Foundation

Istituto per la formazione professionale dei lavoratori – Isfol - Institute for workers' vocational training

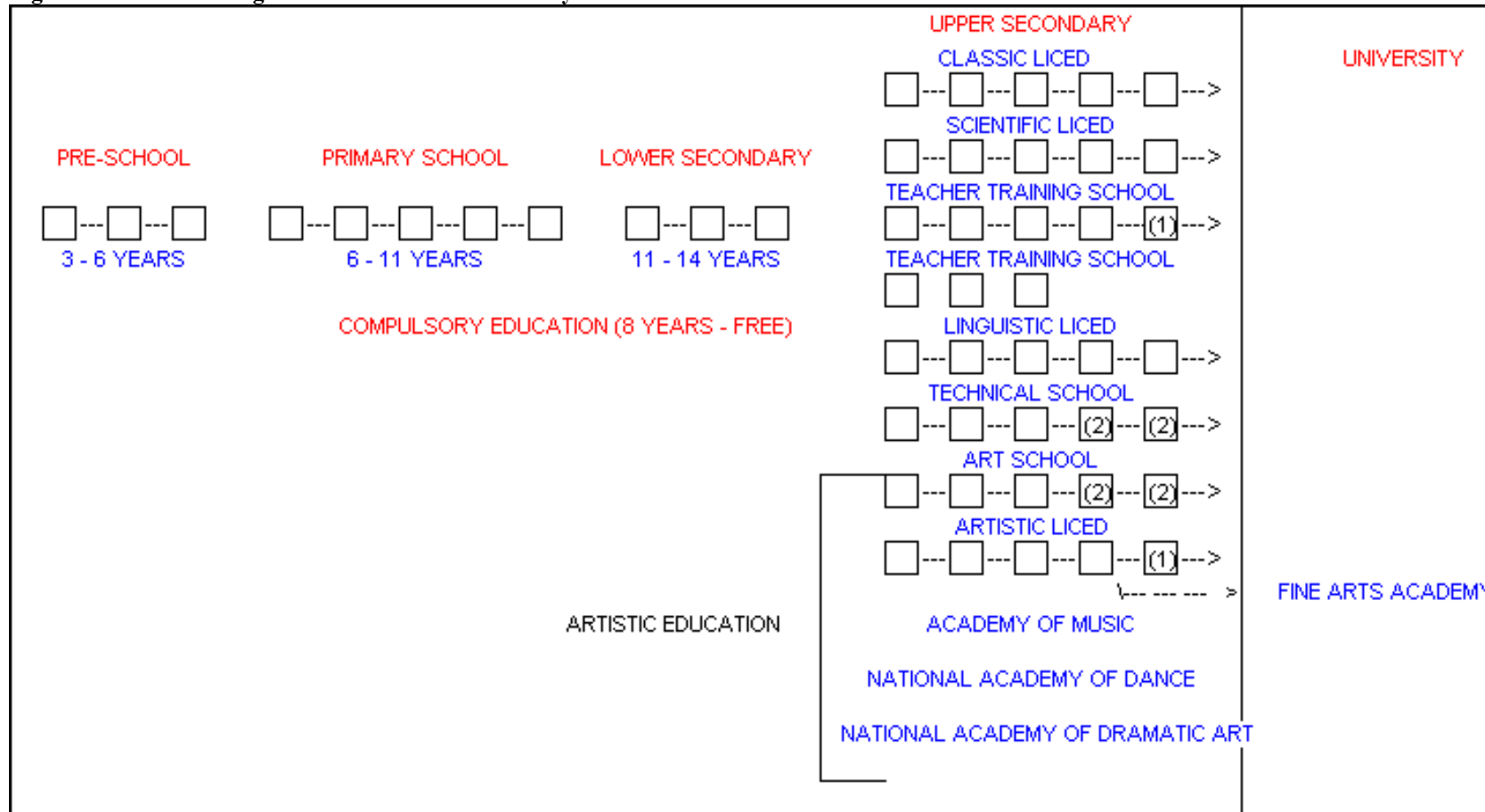
M.I.U.R. - Ministero dell'Istruzione, Università e Ricerca - Ministry of Education University and Research

Unesco – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Vis – Volontariato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo – International Volunteers for Development

11. Annex 1 - Structure and organisation of the educational system

Fig. 1: Structure and organisation of the educational system before 1999 reform

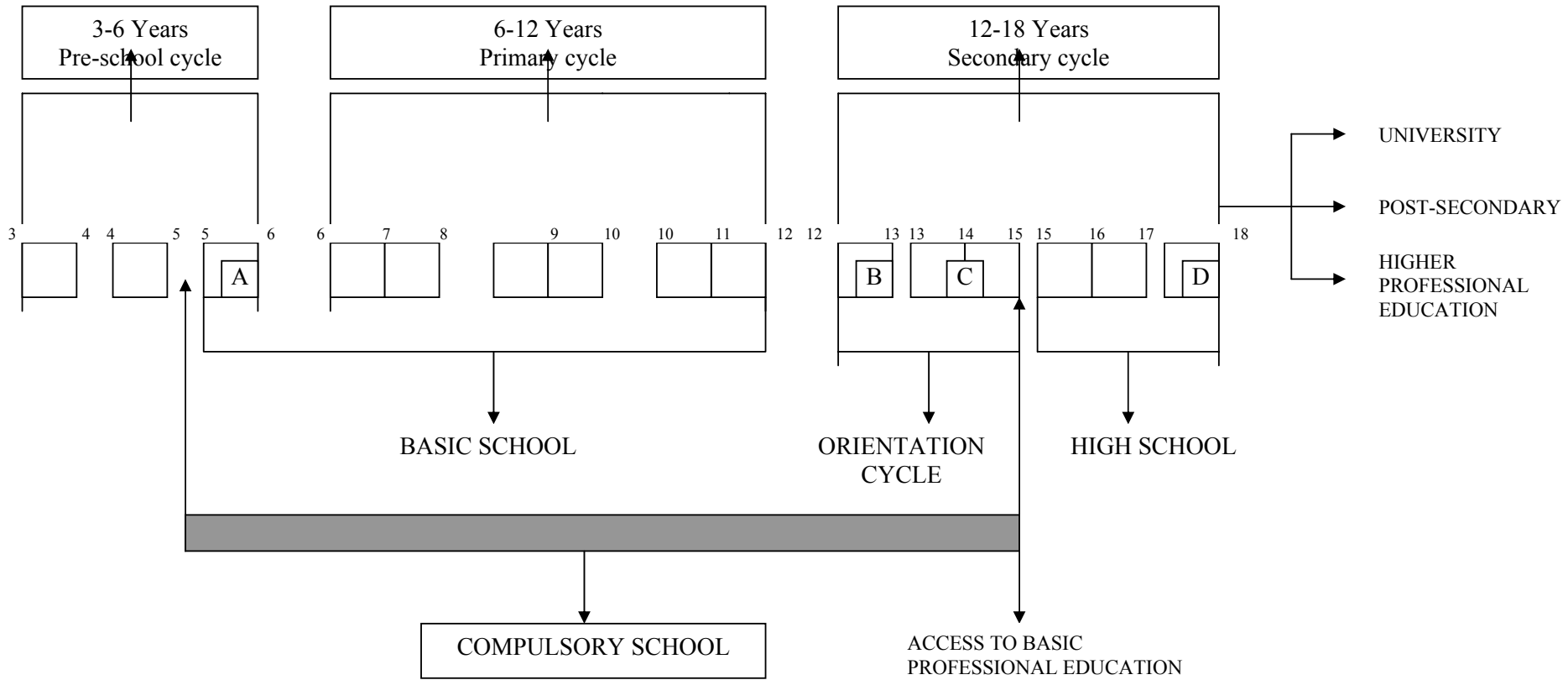


(1) Complementary year (necessary to gain access to any university degree course).

(2) Post-qualification cycle to complete the five-year course.

Source: UNESCO, 2000, op. cit.

Fig. 2 - Structure of the educational system – The proposed reform 2001



A Preparatory year

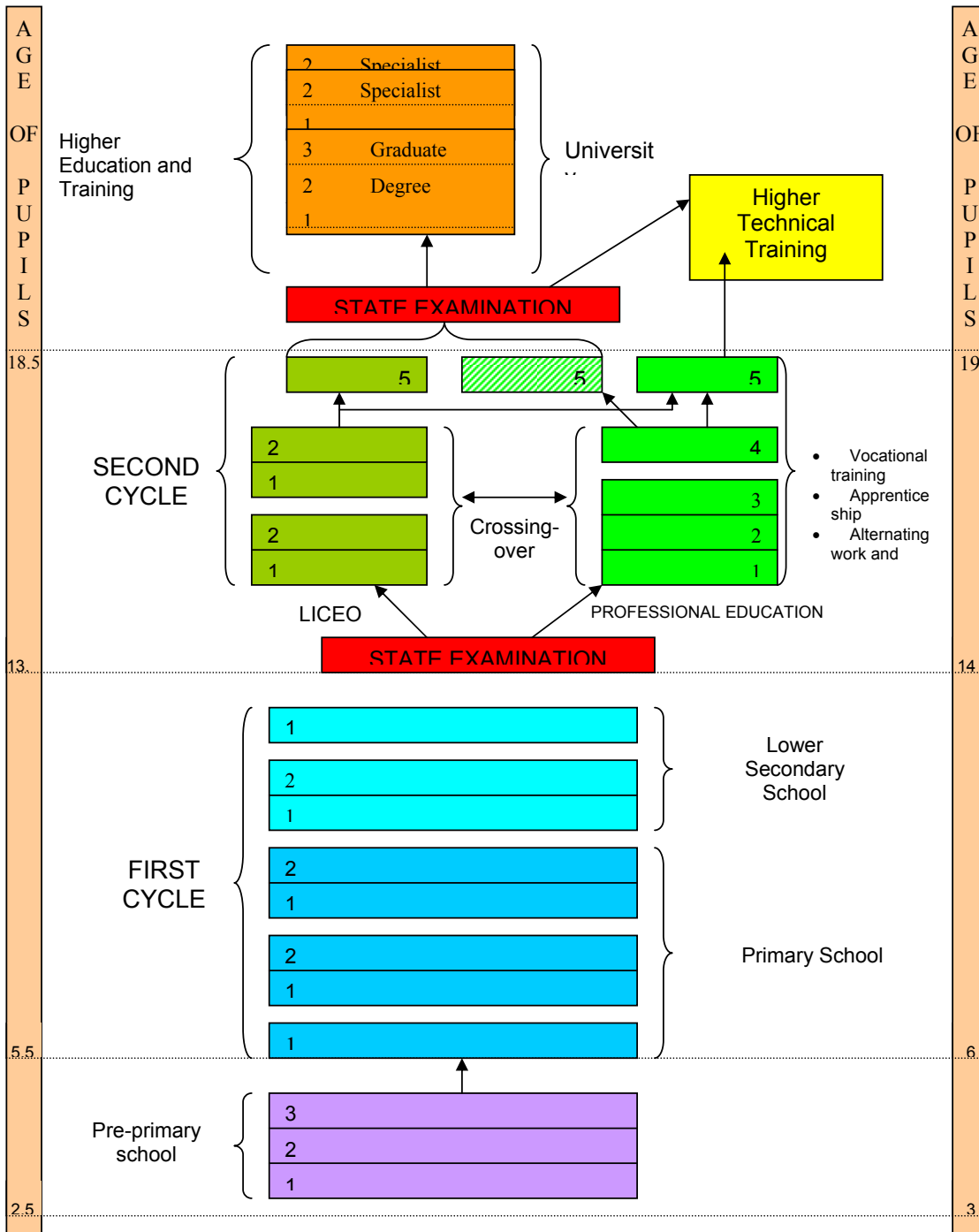
B General orientation year including options in terms of subjects

D Focus biennium, divided into 4 autonomous terms, implying a choice between different streams: classic, scientific, artistic, technic, vocational etc.

C University orientation year and choice of degree course.

Source: Unesco - Report on education in Italy – April 2000

Fig. 3 – The new system of education and training – Law nr.53 of 28th March 2003



In case of entry at age 2.5 years

12. Annex 2- Italian University System - Foreign students in Italy

MIUR – OFFICE OF STATISTICS

During 2001, a total of 171.806 students either graduated or obtained a university diploma in Italy (of which 97.183 were women). Of these, 1.779 (963 women) were foreign citizens; in particular, 782 were from EU countries (408 women).

The following two tables provide some data on foreign graduates and diploma holders from Italian universities.

For more details, consult http://www.mur.st.it/scripts/iu/iu2002_stranieri.htm (section on “Laureati”).

Tab. 2.1. - Foreigners who graduated or obtained a diploma during 2001 by faculty, course of study and gender

FACULTY	COURSE OF STUDY						TOTAL	
	GC		DC		OTHER		Male	Female
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
AGRICULTURE	14	4	1	0	0	0	15	4
ARCHITECTURE	44	41	2	4	0	0	46	45
ECONOMICS	95	68	5	9	0	0	100	77
PHARMACY	47	54	0	0	0	0	47	54
LAW	81	65	7	0	0	0	88	65
ENGINEERING	98	23	17	1	3	0	118	24
HUMANITIES	35	151	0	1	0	0	35	152
ITALIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE	0	0	2	19	0	0	2	19
FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES	7	51	0	3	0	1	7	55
MEDICINE AND SURGERY	225	202	25	106	0	0	250	308
VETERINARY SCIENCE	13	6	1	0	0	0	14	6
PSYCHOLOGY	4	30	0	0	0	0	4	30
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
BANK, FINANCIAL AND INSURANCE SCIENCES	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
COMMUNICATION AND SHOW SCIENCES	1	5	0	0	0	0	1	5
EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES	5	33	0	4	0	1	5	38
MATHEMATICAL, PHYSICAL AND NATURAL SCIENCES	27	38	3	1	0	0	30	39
MOTORY SCIENCES	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1

POLITICAL SCIENCES	47	22	0	2	0	0	47	24
STATISTICS	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	2
HIGH SCHOOL OF MODERN LANGUAGES FOR TRANSLATORS AND INTERPRETERS	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	13
SOCIOLOGY	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2
TOTAL	748	811	65	150	3	2	816	963

NOTE: GC = Graduate courses – DC = Diploma courses – Other = Specialist courses or first degree courses.

Date last updated: 09/01/03

Tab. 2.2. - Foreigners who graduated or obtained a diploma during 2001 by citizenship, course of study and gender

COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP	COURSE OF STUDY						TOTAL	
	GC		DC		OTHER		Male	Female
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Albania	44	41	7	1	0	0	51	42
Algeria	6	2	0	0	0	0	6	2
Angola	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Saudi Arabia	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Argentina	5	6	0	3	0	0	5	9
Armenia	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	1
Australia	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Austria	2	2	0	3	0	0	2	5
Azerbaijan	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Bangladesh	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Belgium	4	4	0	2	0	0	4	6
Benin (Dahomey)	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Bhutan	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Belarus	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Bolivia	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	4	0	0	0	0	1	4
Brasil	1	7	0	3	0	0	1	10
Bulgaria	5	10	0	0	0	0	5	10
Burkina Faso (Alto Volta)	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	7
Burundi	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	2
Cameroon	33	21	1	4	0	0	34	25
Canada	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	4
Cape Verde	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	2

Czech Republic	2	7	0	0	0	0	2	7
Chile	6	0	0	1	0	0	6	1
China	2	3	0	1	0	0	2	4
Cyprus	3	1	0	0	0	0	3	1
Colombia	3	4	0	6	0	0	3	10
Congo	2	1	0	1	0	0	2	2
Democratic Republic of the Congo	2	0	1	0	0	0	3	0
South Korea	2	3	0	0	0	0	2	3
Ivory Coast	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Costa Rica	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Croatia	17	55	2	5	0	0	19	60
Cuba	1	3	0	0	0	0	1	3
Denmark	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Dominica	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Dominican Republic	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Ecuador	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Egypt	3	0	0	1	0	0	3	1
El Salvador	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Eritrea	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0
Ethiopia	1	4	2	0	0	0	3	4
Philippines	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	4
Finland	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
France	15	16	5	0	0	0	20	16
Gabon	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Germany	33	58	1	6	0	0	34	64
Japan	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Jordan	5	0	1	0	0	0	6	0
Greece	268	253	18	29	0	0	286	282
Guatemala	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Guinea	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
India	3	5	0	14	0	0	3	19
Iran	13	22	2	2	0	0	15	24
Iraq	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Ireland	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Israel	39	3	1	0	0	0	40	3
Jugoslavia	10	9	0	1	0	0	10	10
Kenya	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0
Kuwait	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Lebanon	21	4	1	0	0	0	22	4
Lithuania	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1

Macedonia	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	2
Madagascar	1	1	0	4	0	0	1	5
Mali	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0
Malta	3	2	0	0	0	0	3	2
Morocco	8	6	2	1	0	1	10	8
Mexico	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	5
Moldova	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	2
Mozambique	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Nigeria	2	0	0	1	0	0	2	1
Norway	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2
Netherlands	3	5	1	0	0	0	4	5
Paraguay	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Peru	3	5	0	6	0	0	3	11
Poland	3	24	0	6	0	0	3	30
Portugal	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
United Kingdom	6	8	0	2	2	0	8	10
Romania	7	23	2	3	0	0	9	26
Rwanda	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Russia	12	15	0	1	0	0	12	16
San Marino	24	32	3	1	0	1	27	34
Senegal	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1
Syria	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2
Slovakia	1	6	0	1	0	0	1	7
Slovenia	4	9	0	1	0	0	4	10
Somalia	15	8	1	0	0	0	16	8
Spain	8	9	4	2	0	0	12	11
Sri Lanka (Ceylon)	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	2
United States of America	11	12	0	1	0	0	11	13
Sudan	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Sweden	1	5	0	1	0	0	1	6
Switzerland	38	36	2	9	1	0	41	45
Taiwan	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Tanzania	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Togo	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0
Tunisia	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0
Turkey	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	2
Ukraine	1	3	0	0	0	0	3	3
Uganda	2	0	1	0	0	0	4	0
Hungary	4	7	0	3	0	0	1	10
Uruguay	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	1

Venezuela	2	4	0	2	0	0	0	6
Vietnam	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Stateless	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TOTAL	748	811	65	150	3	2	816	963

*NOTE: GC = Graduate courses – DC = Diploma courses – Other = Specialist courses
rof first degree courses.*

Date last updated: 09/01/03

Annex 3 - Figures on the presence of non-italian pupils in the Italian schools

Tab. 5.1. – Non-Italian pupils and their incidence on the school population by type of school, state and private – school year 2001/2002

Type of school	State schools		Private schools		Total amount	
	Non-Italian pupils	Non-Italian pupils per 100 attending	Non-Italian pupils	Non-Italian pupils per 100 attending	Non-Italian pupils	Non-Italian pupils per 100 attending
Nursery school	24.435	2,79	12.388	2,35	36.823	2,62
Primary school	73.703	3,08	2.959	1,75	76.662	2,99
Lower secondary school	43.112	2,75	1.107	1,51	44.219	2,70
Upper secondary school	22.942	1,08	1.121	0,71	24.063	1,06
Total	164.192	2,36	17.575	2,01	181.767	2,31

Source: M.I.U.R. – Non-Italian pupils – school year 2001/2002.

Table 5.2. - Regional percentage distribution of the non-Italian pupils in the school year 2001 – 2002.

Region	Non-Italian pupils per 100 attendants
Emilia Romagna	4.80
Umbria	4.31
Lombardy	3.80
Marche	3.80
Tuscany	3.71
Veneto	3.66
Liguria	3.48
Friuli Venezia Giulia	3.41
Piedmont	3.21
Lazio	2.34
Abruzzo	1.62
Puglia	0.65
Calabria	0.55
Sicily	0.53
Molise	0.44
Basilicata	0.40
Sardegna	0.34
Campania	0.30

Source: data reprocessed by Focal Point based on a M.I.U.R. research, “Non-Italian pupils - school year 2001/02”; the system does not include Val d’Aosta and Trentino Alto Adige, therefore, they are not reported in this table

Table 5.3. - Most represented nationalities in Italian schools. School year 2001-2002

N°	Nationality	Total value	% out of the total amount of foreign pupils
1	Albania	32,268	17.75
2	Morocco	28,072	15.44
3	Former Yugoslavia	18,557	10.21
4	China	9,795	5.39
5	Romania	8,804	4.84
6	Former Russia	4,871	2.68

Source: Data processed by Caritas / Statistical Dossier on Immigration 2002 based on a M.I.U.R. research

Table 5.4. - Most represented nationalities in Italian schools. Time series.

Country	School year						
	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02
Albania	4,141	5,761	8,312	13,551	20,859	25,050	32,268
Morocco	7,655	9,115	11,086	15,133	20,705	23,052	28,072
Former Yugoslavia	9,266	9,707	9,544	9,186	15,119	16,225	18,557
China	2,941	3,633	4,178	6,148	8,207	8,659	9,795
Romania	885	1,088	1,408	2,299	4,137	6,096	8,804
Former Russia	660	764	979	3,504	2,433	3,387	4,871