

Multi-ethnic background in Italian schools and young Italian leaving the country

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20th November 2017

Immigration is a relatively **recent issue** for Italy. Immigration flows have indeed been steadily increasing between **1995 and 2010**, with a significant increase declining only after **2011** because of the economic downturn.

The **rapid growth** in the number of pupils with a migrant background has brought about profound modifications in the educational system. Data from the Italian Ministry of Education (2014) reveal that the number of immigrant students enrolled in school rose to 8.8% of the total.

Italy performs differently if compared to other European states and to the United States, where the presence of foreign students in the educational system lasted longer than in Italy and has less **ethnic heterogeneity** and more concentration of national groups in local contexts (Chaloff & Queirolo Palmas, 2006; Colombo & Santagati, 2012)

In Italy students with a foreign background belong to almost 200 nationalities, have diversified migratory experiences, study in different levels and types of school and live in different parts of the nation.

On the other hand one and more young Italians are leaving their country because they cannot get a job. Currently, about 300,000 young Italians may be living abroad.

According to a new report by Caritas, a Catholic organization focused on social services and development in the country, hit by high unemployment and some of the lowest wages in Europe, young Italians make up nearly half of Italy's poor. **One in ten young Italians are poor** and one in ten Italian families where the main breadwinner is under 34 also live below the poverty line.

So what are the competence the youth really need to live in “plural different settings”?

What kind of identities do they need?

Pluricultural and Plurilinguistic education:

- Multiple belongings
- Culturally mixed traits
- Plural identities
- Plurilinguism
- Global English as lingua franca