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## Educational technology for the social inclusion of children in Italy: the Unicef report

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ROME\ aise\ - It is called "New Horizons for learning. The use of educational technology to support language learning and social inclusion of disadvantaged children in Italy" is the new report published by Unicef Italia , which presents the results of the first year of the experimentation of Akelius, the digital platform for learning foreign languages.

Between 2014 and 2020, more than 700,000 asylum seekers and migrants arrived in Italy and, according to data from the end of November 2022, around 49,400 refugee minors from Ukraine entered Italy. From 2016 to 2021, an average of approximately 20,000 newly arrived students (NAI) enrolled in schools in Italy each year. Many children still encounter difficulties in acquiring the fundamental skills of the Italian language. This is especially true for foreign students, who represent one in ten students in public schools.

The report is based on the Akelius trial in 2021/2022 which involved over 400 students in two comprehensive schools in Rome and Bologna, here in partnership with the social cooperative Agire Insieme Per l'Intercultura (AIPI). Since then, Unicef has extended the use of the platform to another 60 Italian schools and Ukrainian associations, in collaboration with the ISMU Foundation, involving over 1000 newly arrived students.

Akelius helps students learn the language in a fun way thanks to the innovative blended learning teaching approach, which integrates the use of tablets and interactive content in combination with classroom lesson materials.

From the analysis conducted by the Unicef office for Europe and Central Asia in collaboration with the Unicef Innocenti Research Office, the use of the digital platform in classrooms has accelerated students' learning of Italian and English through personalized courses also suitable for girls and boys with special educational needs. Akelius has also improved student motivation to learn, largely due to gamified content and instant feedback.

Unicef Italia is a member of the Unicef network, which is the largest and most active in the world. It is the only one in Italy that has been recognized as a member of the network since its creation in 1979.

their lessons by considering both how digital learning content can enrich teaching and how digital devices will be used in the classroom. Finally, teacher training on digital learning should be practical and focus not only on basic digital skills, but also on how to effectively integrate the use of educational technology within the school environment.

The report, with full research findings, is [available here](#). (aise)

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