

Art to understand each other.

With Akelius the artistic laboratory to learn Italian and inclusion

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A blank canvas can be transformed into a story of inclusion and learning.

Thus, the path between *Viale della Pace* and *Fiume della Condivisione* becomes a living map that not only tells the story of the arrival city of students with a migrant background, but also offers a creative vision of the Akelius path in schools.

This is the initiative of UNICEF which, in collaboration with the Comprehensive Institute 5 of Bologna, involved the urban artist Mauro Pallotta, aka Maupal, and 16 boys and girls who recently arrived in Italy.

Every brush stroke has intertwined stories, experiences and dreams, reflecting the learning and social inclusion experience of the students who have been able to train in the last three years thanks to the digital platform promoted by UNICEF.

Since 2021, Akelius has opened new doors to students newly arrived in Italy, helping them learn Italian as a second language through a mix of digital technologies and traditional methods.

The experimentation, started right in the Bologna context in collaboration with the partner AIPi, the Territorial School Office and the Municipality of Bologna.

And now its impact is wide

- 55 schools involved nationwide in partnership with the ISMU Foundation,
- over 2,500 students, and
- 600 teachers who have been able to explore a new way of teaching.

Last year, the children's perspectives on the platform were collected for the first time in a visual storytelling laboratory created and tested in collaboration with the UNICEF Innocenti Research Office and the University of Bologna, and now with Maupal, the visual language has

become the children's favorite medium to tell this journey.

The workshop brought out unexpected passions

Giada, 9, one of the workshop participants, enthusiastically shared

*I really enjoyed the songs [in the app], I became passionate about music, and it helped me learn Italian. Now I really like music.
In fact, it was important for me to add the Viale della Musica to the map.*

Mursalin, 9, also said

*Thanks to Italian I found friends, I didn't have any before.
Now I know the words of kindness.*

Nicola dell'Arciprete, Coordinator in Italy of the UNICEF Office for Europe and Central Asia

*This workshop not only allowed the children to express their experience in a creative way, but it also demonstrated how the interactive and participatory approach of digital tools such as Akelius can support language learning and facilitate the school integration of students who have just arrived in Italy.
The map created by the children is a tangible testimony of how visual language and art can build new bonds and concretely convey their perspectives, ideas and desires in their process of social inclusion.*

The canvas, once finished, was unveiled by the boys and girls during the final restitution event held at the school, with the participation of the Councilor for Schools of the Municipality of Bologna, the Headmistress, the schoolteachers involved in Bologna and the parents of the children.
Today it is exhibited inside the Comprehensive Institute 5 of Bologna.

With the start of the new school year 2024-25, UNICEF continues to promote the use of the Akelius platform to support the learning of Italian as a second language for students who have recently arrived in Italy, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Merit. With the partners AIPI and ISMU, the support for primary and lower secondary schools includes the possible supply of digital devices, the training and involvement of teachers on the use of tablets and the platform in the classroom with a hybrid approach, combined with a daily help desk service for support on technical and pedagogical aspects during the experimentation.

Maupal, stage name of the urban artist Mauro Pallotta for the Akelius project

I wanted to make the children understand that drawing is a language in all respects.

They were incredible - they urbanized their thoughts, creating a map that connects to that of Bologna.

With the symbols and icons offered by the Akelius platform, they traced their paths.

