



# THE NIGERIAN COMMUNITY IN ITALY

Annual Report on the Presence of Migrants  
*Executive Summary*



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For nearly a decade, the *Direzione Generale dell'immigrazione e delle politiche di integrazione* (general immigration and integration policies directorate) has aimed to provide a detailed and balanced account of the complex phenomenon of the presence of foreigners in Italy and to do so by setting forth the various distinct aspects of the question while analysing the characteristics noted and also anticipating today's trends. The directorate does so by means of its *Rapporto nazionale sui migranti nel Mercato del lavoro italiano* (national reports on migrants in the Italian labour market) (ninth edition), the *Rapporti nazionali sulla presenza in Italia delle principali Comunità straniere* (national reports on the main foreign communities in Italy) (eighth edition) and the *Rapporti sulla presenza dei migranti non comunitari nelle 14 città metropolitane italiane* (reports on the presence of non-EU migrants in the 14 metropolitan cities of Italy) (fourth edition).

The series of national reports on the presence of the main foreign communities aims to investigate and study in depth the presence on Italian soil of the more numerically significant non-EU nationals: Moroccans, Albanians, the Chinese, Ukrainians, Indians, Filipinos, Bangladeshis, Egyptians, Pakistanis, Moldovans, Nigerians, the Senegalese, Sri Lankans, Tunisians, Peruvians and Ecuadorians.


For each grouping, the main features from the socio-demographic and employment angles are considered, alongside presence of minors and their education, occupational integration, welfare policies and processes of integration. Each report starts with comparison among the various communities.

Again, this year we duly acknowledge the contributions of institutions and bodies that have provided information in their possession. These entities include the Italian National Institute of Statistics; the general statistical and actuarial coordination body of INPS (National Social Security Institute); the Ministry of Education, University and Research; the Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture; the international political studies organisation, CeSPI; the trade unions CGIL, CISL, UIL and UGL; and the *Divisione Studi e Ricerca* (study and research division) of ANPAL Servizi. We are also most grateful to dottor Daniele Frigeri, the Director of the *Osservatorio Nazionale sull'Inclusione Finanziaria dei Migranti* (national observatory on financial inclusion of migrants) who drew up the focus reports on remittances and access to credit.

The full series of *Rapporti Comunità* (community reports), editions 2012 - 2019, can be accessed – in Italian and in the main foreign languages – in the areas *Paesi di origine e comunità* (countries of origin and communities) and *Rapporti di ricerca sull'immigrazione* (immigration research reports) on the institutional portal, [www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it](http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it). This portal also provides access to a statistical annex providing information that supplements the reports or that, within a comparative framework among the main national communities considered, enables in-depth study of the data analysed.


Within the ambit of the project, *Supporto nelle politiche per l'immigrazione e di cooperazione bilaterale con i Paesi di origine* (support for immigration and bilateral cooperation with countries of origin) ANPAL Servizi has drawn up and translated the 2019 edition of its *Rapporti nazionali sulle principali Comunità straniere* (national reports on the main foreign communities) – analytic reports provided in summary form.

# Executive Summary



**106.788**  
legally residing Nigerian citizens  
*Ranking eleventh for number of presences*

**+2,7% of Nigerian presences compared to 2018**



**41,8%**  
women

**58,2%**  
men

*55% below the age of 30*

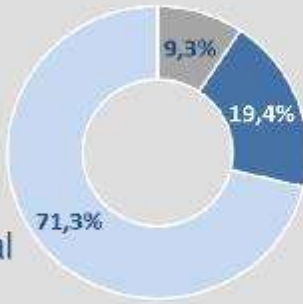
**24.543**  
minors below the age of 18  
*23% of total no. of Nigerians in Italy*



**16.331** Nigerian students  
**591** enrolled for degree courses

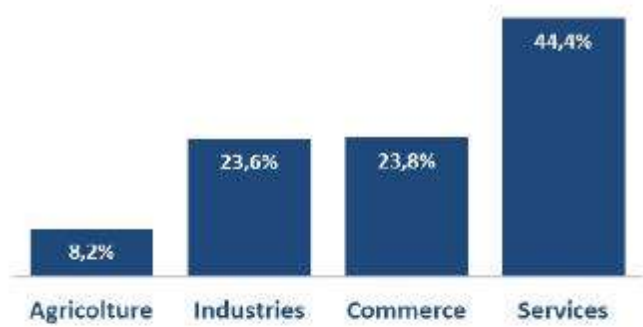
Present in:  
Veneto **15,5%**  
Lombardia **14%**  
Emilia-Romagna **13%**

**63,3%** permits subject to renewal




**36,7%** long-term permits

- Work
- Family
- Other reasons




**48,1%** employment rate  
*56% male 40,3% female*

**48%** employed in **personale services**



**38,2%** unskilled agricultural workers

**Ranking ninth for number of sole proprietorships (3,8%)**



**14.345** sole proprietors (+5%)  
*42,6% Nigerian female sole proprietors*

**73,4%** sole proprietors in the **Commerce and Transport sector**

## Demographic characteristics

**106,788 Nigerian citizens** are holders of a residence permit valid as on **1 January 2019**, accounting for 2.9% of the non-EU citizens in Italy.

The Nigerian community **ranks eleventh for number of legally residing members** (it ranked fourteenth the previous year). The low degree of entrenchment or settlement indicates that the Nigerians make up one of the – in this sense – least stable foreign communities, this also being due to its relatively recent inclusion in the social fabric of Italy. This community has seen rapid growth over the last few years and is one of the most rapidly growing communities in terms of number of presences vs 2018 data: +2,803 or +2.7% vs the previous year, within the context of basic stability in the number of legally residing non-EU citizens as a whole.

Various indicators underscore a low level of stabilization of Nigerians in Italy. Socio-demographically speaking, we note:

- a **gender imbalance, with men predominating** (men make up 58.2% of this community). The figure for women (41.8%) is lower than that for non-EU migrants as a whole (48.5%);
- a **mean age of 28**, i.e. a much lower mean age than that of non-EU citizens as a whole (34).

As to geographic distribution, **this community favours Northern Italy**, where almost 6 out of 10 Nigerian citizens reside. Accordingly, three of the regions with most Nigerians are northern: Veneto (hosting 15.5% of all Nigerians present), ranking first; Lombardia (with a similar value; 14%), a close second; and Emilia-Romagna (13%). In any case, there is a marked presence both in the Region of Lazio, which is the region ranking fourth in terms of number of Nigerians present (10%), and generally in Southern Italy (hosting 20% – a value nearly 6% higher than that for non-EU citizens as a whole).

The fact that the process of stabilization of this community in Italy is at a very early stage is confirmed by analysis of **residence permits**: the quotient of **long-term residents** (holders of residence permits not subject to renewal) stands at **36.7%** of Nigerian citizens, as on 1 January 2019 (vs 62.3% of non-EU citizens as a whole). Regarding short-term permits, those issued due to an **application for, or entitlement to, a form of protection** clearly prevail, i.e. more than 2/3 of permits subject to renewal among migrant members of this community (**67.8%**, vs 38% in 2015). The quotient among non-EU citizens as a whole stands at 18.7%. Among citizens holding a residence permit issued on the basis of asylum/application for asylum/humanitarian reasons, the incidence of Nigerians is high: 17.5%. Work permits, on the other hand, account for only 9.7% of entitlements (vs 31% for non-EU migrants as a whole).

## Current trends

Compared to 1 January 2018, the number of non-EU citizens in Italy is basically stable (+2,472 units). This apparent stability is in any case the result of the algebraic sum of opposing variations in the diverse communities. Indeed, the geography of origins of migrants sees significant changes taking place. For the first time, changes are noted also in the top 5 in the ranking for number of presences. The key increases are noted in the communities from the Indian subcontinent: namely, the Pakistani community (+4.9%), the Bangladeshi community (+4.5%) and the Indian community (+3.5%).

The most significant downturns regard the Tunisian, Moroccan and Moldavan communities (-4.6%, -2% and -1.8%, respectively).

Two factors are of greater significance with respect to trends displayed by number of presences. These factors consist in, on the one hand, the new permits issued attesting to an inflow impacting the stock of legally residing foreigners, and, on the other, in the granting of citizenship (which latter practice of course removes those who become Italian citizens from the stock of foreign citizens).

Turning to admissions, in 2018, 242,009 new residence permits were issued (approx. 21,000 less than during 2017). Despite the downturn, the growth trend remains, as noted over the last few years, regarding family reunification (+8.2% vs 2017), which is the reason for issuance of most of the new residence permits (50.7%). There is a downturn in the number of applications for, or entitlements to, a form of protection (-35.9% vs 2017). Only 6% of the new residence permits were issued on the basis of work-related considerations.

With its 15,532 new residence permits – the large majority of which linked to an application for, or entitlement to, a form of protection (the quotient standing as high as 74.8%) – the Nigerian community ranks third for numbers of new permits. We note, however, a marked downturn in the number of Nigerians admitted vs the previous year (-42.1%), due specifically to a drastic fall in the numbers of Nigerians arriving by boat over the last few years.

**Mixed marriages** are frequent, involving members of this community. **687** took place in 2017<sup>1</sup> with at least one of the spouses being a Nigerian national: nearly **60%** regard a bride of Nigerian citizenship and a non-EU groom; approx. 26% regard an Italian citizen marrying a Nigerian bride; slightly more than **15%** regard a Nigerian groom and an Italian bride. Weddings with at least one Nigerian spouse account for **4%** of all marriages with at least one non-EU citizen.

## Minors and educational paths

**24,543 Nigerian minors** make up 23% of the total number of Nigerians citizen in Italy. This percentage value is higher than the non-EU mean (21.8%). Many Nigerian children were born in Italy (2,482 in 2017, or 4.8% of non-EU births that same year). In all, between 2010 and 2017, almost 16,000 Nigerian children were born in Italy.

A fairly significant issue in regard to this community concerns the presence of **unaccompanied foreign minors (UFMs)**, since Nigeria ranks eighth as country of origin. As on 31 August 2019, **316** minors of Nigerian origin were accommodated in *ad hoc* facilities (almost **5% of all UFMs accommodated in Italy**). However, there has been a downturn in numbers vs the previous year (almost -60%). Particularly noteworthy in regard to this community is the fact that 44.6% of the UFMs are female; **Nigeria ranks first as nation of origin of female UFMs hosted by Italy.**

**16,331 students of Nigerian origin** enrolled for academic year 2018/2019 (**2.4%** of the non-EU school population as a whole). Compared to the previous year, the students of this community increased by 3.4%. The growth rate was higher than that displayed by non-EU students as a whole (+2.6%). The number of students **rose** above all in **senior secondary schools**, by more than 17% vs 2018. The **incidence** of students from this community vs non-EU students as a whole is **highest in preschool institutions** (in which **3.5%** of enrolled children are of Nigerian citizenship). Conversely, the lowest level is noted in senior secondary schools (1.7%).

In regard to **university education**, while the number of Nigerians enrolling at Italian universities is constantly rising (+8.2% vs the previous academic year, as opposed to 5.7% for non-EU university students as a whole), the incidence of Nigerians vs non-EU university student as a whole remains very low (**below 1%**, i.e. **591 students enrolled**).

This community presents with a high rate of **NEETs** (more than 42% of Nigerians aged between 15 and 29 are NEETs, vs 34.6% of non-EU citizens in the same age bracket as a whole).

## Work and employment

On analysis of the available labour market data, the conditions relating to work and employment in Italy for the Nigerian community are more critical than for the non-EU population as a whole. The **employment rate** is lower, accompanied by higher levels of inactivity and unemployment. Only **48.1%** of the Nigerian population in the 15-64 age bracket in Italy are employed (a level as much as 12% lower than that noted for the non-EU population as a whole: 60.1%). Turning to the **unemployment rate**, this community presents with jobseekers standing at **30.7%**, i.e. a value much higher than that noted for the non-EU population as a whole (14.3%). There are significant differences in this community between the employment rates of men and women (56% and 40.3%, respectively), reflected in part in the unemployment rate (26.3% and 36%, respectively). The **inactivity rate** of this community stands at **30.6%**, in line with the mean value for the non-EU population as a whole (29.8%). Compared with the finding for non-EU **women** as a whole (43.1%), Nigerian women present with a more encouraging inactivity rate (slightly more than **37%**). In regard to distribution by sector of activity, the rates (%) basically parallel those of non-EU workers as a whole, excepting in the sector of **Transport and Business Services**, where the Nigerian community stands at **27%** (vs 12%

<sup>1</sup> The last year analysed.

among non-EU workers as a whole), and **Public, Social and Personal Services**, employing almost one non-EU worker out of three (31%) but only **18%** of Nigerian workers.

Involvement of the community in question in **the world of entrepreneurship** is notable. Indeed, with its **14,345 owners of sole proprietorships**, this community ranks ninth in terms of number of new non-EU sole proprietorships. The role of females is notable in this regard. Women make up 42.6% of the number of Nigerian owners of sole proprietorships. Indeed, this community ranks third in regard to numbers of female owners of sole proprietorships as on 31 December 2018.

Nigerian citizens account for only 0.6% of the beneficiaries of **wage supplements** among non-EU nationals. Only 332 Nigerians are in receipt of these supplements (approx. 83% are men). These beneficiaries are mainly in receipt of CIGO (ordinary redundancy fund) payments (271), while 61 are in receipt of CIGS (extraordinary redundancy fund) payments. Nigerian nationals account for approx. 1.3% of non-EU recipients of unemployment benefits: 5,753 beneficiaries receive mainly NASPI payments (*Nuova Prestazione di assicurazione sociale per l'impiego*, a social employment insurance scheme) (almost 5,000) and *Disoccupazione agricola* (agricultural unemployment) payments (770).

**39,915** Nigerian citizens engaged in **new employment relationships** in 2018 (approx. +76.4% vs the previous year). Indicating a decidedly more modest presence of women in the labour market than is noted for men, the data obtained by means of *Comunicazioni Obbligatorie* (mandatory notices) reveal that a mere **24.6%** of the hirings of Nigerian citizens regard the female component of this community (vs 46% for non-EU citizens as a whole). **43.2%** of the contracts activated for Nigerian men were in the **Services** sector (the level for women approaches **78%**). The sector ranking second for hirings of women is **Agriculture (17.7%)**. Female involvement in industry is indeed minimal (4.1%).

Analysis of qualifications vis-à-vis placement of Nigerian nationals reveals a marked prevalence of **unskilled workers engaging in farming, gardening activities etc.**, accounting for more than **38%** of placements (reflecting the agricultural quotient reached, with the involvement of skilled and unskilled farmworkers). Ranking second as placement sector we have **Cleaning (13.7%)**. The fields in which – vs non-EU nationals as a whole – most skills are noted for this community regard the arts (**comparto artistico-espressivo (6.5%)**).

For the Nigerian community, 4,465 **tirocini extracurricolari** (vocational training periods) were implemented in 2018 (**13.2%** of the training periods implemented for non-EU nationals). This community therefore **ranks first** among the main non-EU communities for attendance of vocational training courses. In all likelihood, a key determinant is the high number of participants who have applied for international protection or who are unaccompanied foreign minors of Nigerian citizenship, since these training periods are considered a valuable resource capable of enabling employment for such categories as these.

## Economic conditions

The high incidence, in percentage terms, of unskilled manual workers in the Nigerian community clearly lowers remuneration levels: according to the data, the monthly salaries of employees from this community are much lower than those of non-EU workers as a whole (the gap is as large as 286 euros). The situation is similar among agricultural workers. The gap between Nigerian and non-EU workers as a whole stands at 273 euro. A less marked gap – which is nevertheless disconcerting – regards home helpers (193 euros). Gender pay gap data indicate that female Nigerian workers earn more than Nigerian males both in the home-help and agricultural sectors. However, among employees the gap between men and women (in excess of 230 euros) favours men.

Among Nigerian nationals employed in Italy, the level of education is decidedly in the medium-low range: more than 73% of workers of this community obtained a junior secondary school leaving certificate at best (this value being almost 12% higher than for non-EU workers as a whole). Approx. 20.5% hold at least a senior secondary school leaving certificate (6.3% engaged in higher education).

The quotient of IVS (disability, old-age and survivors') pensions that are made over to non-EU citizens has always been rather small. In 2018, this quotient stood at 0.4% of the total (out of almost 14 million pensions, 56,071 regard non-EU citizens). Non-EU citizens receive old-age pensions (in 42% of such cases), followed by survivors' pensions (36.3%); 21.6% are in receipt of IVS pensions, provided for migrants with non-EU citizenship during 2018, and linked

to disability. As to the Nigerian community, the number of migrants in receipt of IVS pensions is so low that the total has been recorded in disaggregated form in the INPS archives.

1,403 social assistance pensions were made over in 2018 to Nigerian nationals (approx. 1.5% of such pensions made over to non-EU migrants). In 52.5% of the cases, assistance took the form of constant attendance supplements or similar benefits; almost 45% took the form of disability pensions, and the remaining 2.6% took the form of social benefits and pensions (vs the much higher quotient of 38.1% for non-EU citizens as a whole).

There was a rise in the incidence of parental leave. In 2018 there were a total of 344,529 such beneficiaries, denoting a 6.2% increase vs 2017, 6.8% of whom were of non-EU origin (23,445). Among non-EU nationals, the number of those in receipt of parental leave rose significantly vs the previous year (+12.7%). A total of 599 Nigerian citizens benefited from this measure in 2018 (2.6% of non-EU beneficiaries). For this community a 9.7% increase is noted vs the previous year. The benefit that is most frequently received consists in family allowances. During 2018, as many as 2,836,868 beneficiaries were in receipt of family allowances (a value that was basically stable vs the year before). 12.4% of the beneficiaries were non-EU citizens (353,000) denoting a 3.7% increase on 2017. Within this community, there were 6,292 members in receipt of family allowances in 2018. The incidence vs non-EU populations as a whole came to 1.8%. The number rose by 4.4% vs 2017.

As to transfers made by the Nigerians in Italy to their country of origin, Nigeria ranks eighteenth as nation of destination of **remittances** sent from Italy in 2018 (**approx. 74 million euros**), accounting for 1.5% of the total outgoing remittances (+50.9 million vs 2017).

