



## Monitoring Report on the Project **Percorsi II**

Social and labour integration paths for unaccompanied foreign  
minors and young migrants

## CONTENTS

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Project contents</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Focus group results</b> .....	<b>5</b>
3.1. Apprenticeships .....	5
3.1.1. The apprentices' perspective .....	5
3.1.2. The proponent bodies' perspective .....	7
3.1.3. The companies' perspective .....	8
3.2. Development of competences .....	9
3.2.1. The apprentices' perspective .....	9
3.2.2. The proponent bodies' perspective .....	11
3.2.3. The companies' perspective .....	11
3.3. Network and governance .....	12
3.3.1. The apprentices' perspective .....	12
3.3.2. The proponent bodies' perspective .....	12
3.3.3. The companies' perspective .....	13
3.4. Procedural aspects .....	13
3.4.1. The apprentices' perspective .....	13
3.4.2. The proponent bodies' perspective .....	14
3.4.3. The companies' perspective .....	15
<b>4. The external observers' perspective</b> .....	<b>16</b>
4.1. The academic perspective .....	16
4.2. SPRAR's Central Service's perspective .....	17
4.3. CoNNGI's perspective .....	18
<b>5. Summary of the main focus group results</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>Focus group methodological note</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>Annex I – Training, labour and integration paths for young migrants</b>	

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to present the information collected during the focus group dedicated to the project **Training, labour and integration paths for young migrants**,<sup>1</sup> organised on October 3, 2018, by ANPAL Servizi s.p.a. (Division for Transitions – Directorate for the transition of vulnerable segments – *Operational Unit Policies for UFM, holders of international and humanitarian protection and for asylum seekers*), with the active participation of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (Directorate General for Immigration and Integration Policies – Division II) and with the contribution of a few qualified observers.

After the publication of a detailed monitoring report on the first phase of the project *Percorsi*,<sup>2</sup> the mentioned focus group was formed with the direct involvement of the subjects participating in the project (apprentices, representatives of the proposer bodies and representatives of the companies hosting the apprenticeships). The aim of the focus group was to share information on the experiences had during the project. In particular, group interviews were used - given the explorative potentialities of verbal and non-verbal interactive communication - allowing the facilitator to receive feedback from the participants. Therefore, the main purpose of the meeting was to compare the participants' experiences, highlighting the positive as well as the most relevant critical aspects of the project, so as to evaluate the possibility of improvement for the future projects and to capitalise the knowledge acquired for the project replicability.

---

<sup>1</sup> All information and documents relating to the project “Training, labour and integration paths for young migrants” are available on the institutional website of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (at the following link: <https://www.lavoro.gov.it/temi-e-priorita/immigrazione/focus-on/politiche-di-integrazione-sociale/Pagine/Attivita-e-servizi.aspx#5>) and on the Migrants Integration Portal (at the following link: <http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/Progetti-e-azioni/Pagine/Percorsi-di-integrazione-socio-lavorativa-per-minori-non-accompagnati-e-giovani-migranti-.aspx>).

<sup>2</sup>The Assessment Report on the first phase of the project *Percorsi* is available at the following link: [http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/Attualita/Approfondimenti/Documents/Report\\_Monitoraggio\\_Percorsil\\_%2030\\_6\\_2017.pdf](http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/Attualita/Approfondimenti/Documents/Report_Monitoraggio_Percorsil_%2030_6_2017.pdf)

## 2. PROJECT CONTENTS

The project “Training, labour and integration paths for young migrants” (see Annex I) was promoted by the Directorate General for Immigration and Integration Policies of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, in collaboration with ANPAL Servizi s.p.a.. The aim of the project was to foster social-labour integration of unaccompanied foreign minors in transition to adulthood and of young migrants up to 23 years old, who entered Italy as unaccompanied foreign minors. Therefore, the project intended to guide and support the recipients in their path towards autonomy after having turned 18 years old and in exiting the reception system as envisaged by the relevant regulations, in view of their legal residence on the national territory and of preventing the risk of their exploitation.

The project was based, on the one hand, on personalised plans that entailed the recipients’ participation in apprenticeships and the supply of a series of related and integrated services; on the other hand, it was based on strengthening the network between institutional actors (in particular, local bodies) and key stakeholders, by drawing up and sharing a sustainable project model likely to be replicable at the national level, solidly rooted within the system of labour, training and integration territorial services aimed at the integrated take in charge of young migrants and their social-labour insertion.

The project was implemented through the publication of a public call addressed to subjects authorised to carry out intermediation activities at national level, as well as to public and private subjects accredited by the Regions to supply employment and labour services (the so-called proponent bodies). Moreover, it provided for a monetary endowment for each launched path amounting to € 5,000, and divided between the proponent body (€ 2,000, for carrying out activities aimed at fostering the recipient’s social-labour insertion), the recipient (€ 500 a month, for carrying out a 5-month apprenticeship) and the company hosting the apprenticeship (€ 500 for tutoring the recipient).

The project was divided into three phases: the first phase, launched in October 2016, envisaged the realisation of 960 integration paths; the second phase, launched in June 2017, envisaged the implementation of 850 integration paths; the third phase, launched recently with the publication of a new call, envisages the funding of an additional 170 paths. To date, 1,604 apprenticeships have been concluded, against a total of 3,120

applications. Moreover, during the first two phases, 1,797 apprenticeships were activated, while 193 were interrupted before the 5-month term.

### 3. FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

After having acquired the points of view from the representatives of the three involved categories (apprentices, proponent bodies, companies), the focus group highlighted strengths and weaknesses of the project and the paths. The following represents the main covered themes:

- apprenticeships;
- development of competences;
- networks and governance;
- procedural aspects.

#### 3.1. Apprenticeships

##### 3.1.1. The apprentices' perspective

In general, the youngsters participating in the focus group highlighted that their apprenticeship represented a great opportunity for personal and professional enrichment, as well as an effective instrument for social inclusion and for reaching autonomy. With regard to the professional aspect, the youngsters emphasised that the activities concerning the learning and the developing of competences required on the workplace were an important factor for personal development. Indeed, they were able to improve the already possessed technical and language skills and to acquire new ones, thus increasing their knowledge and cultural background. More specifically, in some cases, the sector in which the recipients carried out their apprenticeship coincided with their *desiderata*; in other cases, the apprentices complained a scarce correspondence between the new training path and their preferences or previous experiences. However, this aspect sometimes turned out to be positive, as the youngsters had the possibility to evaluate new paths and to be guided towards an employment choice more in line with their interests and skills.

Apprenticeships as an integration instrument resulted to be useful also in terms of relationships. Various apprentices identified in the proponent body's person of reference or in the company tutor a point of reference also from a personal viewpoint, sometimes feeling as if they had been hosted in a family.

The most highlighted critical aspect concerned the duration of the experience. Indeed, in the young migrants' opinion, a 5-month apprenticeship may be insufficient to acquire new competences and to be able to continue the employment relationship with the host company. Moreover, the apprentices manifested their concern with regard to their sense of uncertainty after the conclusion of the apprenticeship and the risk of losing what learned.

Here is what some apprentices said:

- *“The apprenticeship helped me develop something I already liked: technology. So when I approached photography, I understood that it is possible “to write” with an instrument.”*
- *“I found the apprenticeship useful because I had no idea of how to make a coffee before working in a bar ... now I do. I even make cocktails.”*
- *“When I started my apprenticeship, they welcomed me not as a worker, but as if I were their child.”*
- *“I found the apprenticeship very useful. Initially I wanted to study engineering, but I did not succeed. The apprenticeship helped me understand that it was not the right path for me.”*
- *“The apprenticeship helped me grow personally and now I have two experiences.”*
- *“I discovered a new vocation.”*
- *“I found a new passion.”*
- *“I thought I could realize a dream by entering the labour market.”*
- *“I faced my new life in a better way.”*

### 3.1.2. The proponent bodies' perspective

Even according to the proponent bodies' perspective, the apprenticeship is an excellent instrument for the young migrants' social inclusion. Indeed, it enables them not only to develop new technical competences, but also to approach the labour market and to understand its mechanisms and functioning.

However, various weaknesses and aspects that need to be improved were highlighted. As a matter of fact, the proponent bodies, participating in the focus group emphasised the limitedness of the training experience with regard to its duration and to its connection with the youngsters' path, background and ambitions.

Indeed, the brief duration of the apprenticeship resulted to be impedimental to a complete acquisition of the competences necessary to work at the host company. Moreover, with reference to the younger apprentices, the fact of completing the apprenticeship before turning 18 years old made it sometimes more difficult to continue their relationship with the company and to sign an employment contract.

Furthermore, the proponent bodies expressed the need to further develop the initial orientation with the aim to evaluate the youngsters' competences in advance in a more careful and well-pondered way, so as to ensure that their take in charge is very tailored to their needs. This aspect is so important as the recipients need to be prepared and made more aware of the importance of the training path that they are about to carry out. Besides, the youngsters' formal or non-formal competences already acquired in Italy or in the Country of origin need to be kept into due account, as well as their interests and ambitions. To this regard, the bodies participating in the focus group highlighted that an accurate initial orientation has been also affected by the difficulty to find companies available to host apprentices. Indeed, such research was sometimes trivial and time-consuming, thus compromising the conduction of an adequate analysis of the recipients' specific initial situation. As a consequence, also the identification of a sector corresponding the recipients' needs ended up being compromised.

Here is what some proponent bodies said:

- *“Often the apprenticeship is an opportunity for the youngsters to understand how the labour market in Italy works. Sometimes, it coincides with their first access, allowing them to understand what it means to have an employer, to have working hours. It is a very useful tool that should last a bit more. With regard to the youngsters’ competences, it is important to highlight that to offer apprenticeship only to enable them to do something, is useful up to a certain point. The sustainability of a path has to start from the desiderata or from the competences that the youngsters already possess, otherwise there is the risk that it won’t be completed. Therefore, it is worth to work on this aspect.”*
- *“I would have wanted a more certain things to come.”*
- *“It is necessary to make a distinction between “a gym apprenticeship” which is useful for youngsters that are a bit weaker and need help in understanding their competences, and an apprenticeship aimed at employment. In the future, it would be interesting to have longer and more disjointed periods.”*

### 3.1.3. The companies’ perspective

The companies hosting the youngsters for their training experiences, as well, highlighted the positive impact of the project and the effectiveness of the apprenticeship. In particular, the implemented model resulted to be useful and suitable also for the companies, especially for those particularly sensitive to migrants’ social inclusion.

Similarly to what underlined by the other subjects participating in the focus group, even this category considered the brief duration of the apprenticeship and its non-extendibility as weaknesses, as well as the sense of uncertainty following its conclusion.

Moreover, with the aim to improve the project, it was proposed to provide incentives for companies that decide to continue their employment relationship with the youngsters following the conclusion of the apprenticeship.

## **3.2. Development of competences**

### **3.2.1. The apprentices' perspective**

According to what emerged by the testimonies of the youngsters participating in the focus group, the apprenticeship contributed positively to the development of new competences and to the consolidation of those already possessed. In particular, this experience not only allowed them to acquire technical knowledge, strictly connected to the type of activity carried out, but it also determined a development of their language skills.

Indeed, the youngsters indicated the workplace, together with the school and the reception centre, as one of the places where they had the greatest opportunity to learn Italian. The apprenticeship also allowed them to learn the host company's specific sector jargon.

Moreover, the apprentices highlighted that their apprenticeship was fundamental for the development of their soft skills. In particular, it helped them open up to a new culture and relevant values, increase their knowledge of the Italian social context, learn common rules of behaviour and communication. The youngsters stated that, owing to their experience at the host company, they understood the importance of respecting each other - in particular the employers, colleagues and customers - and of paying attention to their language when entering into a relationship with others. They also emphasised the importance of being punctual, flexible, clean and, especially, patient at work, all necessary qualities for personal improvement.

Furthermore, the apprentices proposed to further develop the orientation phase prior to the beginning of the apprenticeship, in order to learn the jargon used at work, and to better understand the working organisation and dynamics. Indeed, this would allow them to improve their behaviour within the professional context and to mitigate the fears they have before starting the training experience. They also stressed the issue concerning the recognition of the competences acquired. In fact, the youngsters highlighted the need to be receive a certification, at the end of their apprenticeship, attesting the activities carried out and the specific skills acquired, so as to show evidences when searching for a new job opportunity.

Here is what some apprentices said:

- *“The first thing we learned is how to behave and how to apologise.”*
- *“The first thing I learned is to respect others in the work environment.”*
- *“Competences require time”*

When the facilitator asked, *“According to your opinion, where have you learned Italian the most?”*, the apprentices answered:

- *“At school and at work. When I say something wrong at work, they tell me “That’s not the right way to say it.”*
- *“I learned at school and at home. We all have different dialects, so among us we communicate in Italian.”*
- *“At work, even if it’s not Italian ... it’s Neapolitan!”*

When the facilitator asked, *“What should youngsters be taught first in future apprenticeships,”* the apprentices answered:

- *“How to behave. Respect.”*
- *“Respect and not to say swearwords.”*
- *“That not everything is easy, but eventually one improves. Initially, the teachers and I were not fond of each other and this led me to be anxious ... afterwards, things improved and I think that it will be the same for others as well. We must have patience because everything requires time.”*
- *“To be committed in training. Us apprentices have to be patient and flexible.”*
- *“At the beginning it is not easy. The most important thing is patience and respect.”*
- *“Behaviour and communication.”*

- *“For me the most important thing to teach is that customers must be respected as first.”*
- *“I would say, that it is necessary to always keep everything clean. To listen to the masters and do what they say.”*

### 3.2.2. The proponent bodies’ perspective

The proponent bodies highlighted the need for the young migrants’ path to begin in duly advance compared to the apprenticeship’s start. Indeed, this would allow to increase the value of the training experience and the likelihood of its good outcome. It was suggested, by way of example, to involve the youngsters in a preliminary training session on soft skills, organised for restricted groups. Soft skills turned out to be fundamental for the recipients’ positive inclusion in the work environment.

### 3.2.3. The companies’ perspective

The companies’ representatives many times underlined the importance of the apprentices’ language skills, both general and technical with regard to the specific work environment. In particular, they emphasised how such skills frequently resulted to be insufficient both before the apprenticeship and after its completion. Therefore, the companies stressed the need to intensify the teaching of the Italian language, through the youngsters’ intensive and targeted training before entering the company.

The companies’ representatives also highlighted the apprentices’ lack of a full knowledge of the Italian social-cultural context, which sometimes determines a slackening of their social and labour insertion path.

Here is what some companies said:

- *“The apprentices need much higher language skills. The competences that I saw in this room are not sufficient. Language skills with social interaction. Otherwise, the companies end up having to organise a period of social-language training.”*

- *“In order to facilitate interaction, I believe that it is fundamental to know the social situation in which we live. To understand how the country works. To know when holidays are.”*

### **3.3. Network and governance**

#### **3.3.1. The apprentices’ perspective**

The apprentices highlighted that the proponent bodies’ persons of reference and the employers were a constant and fundamental point of reference during the entire path. Also the relationship with colleagues was considered important for the good outcome of the experience. Some of the apprentices participating in the focus group emphasised the relevance of the tutor’s guidance and support during their social-labour inclusion.

#### **3.3.2. The proponent bodies’ perspective**

The proponent bodies complained the weakness of the network created among the institutional subjects, competent for the realisation of the project. More specifically, they stressed the scarce involvement of Municipalities, despite the contribution that they could have given in finding project recipients, considering their fundamental role in taking charge and hosting unaccompanied foreign minors. Indeed, an active participation of the host communities would have certainly incentivised the youngsters’ adhesion to the project and would have contributed in fostering the establishment and strengthening of the trust relationship between youngsters, proponent bodies and companies. Instead, according to what referred by the proponent bodies, many local authorities, sometimes even within the SPRAR network, had not provided information on the project and, even if they had, the subjects sometimes showed scarce interest towards it.

Analogous perplexities were raised by the proponent bodies with regards to the non-dissemination of the project information to Employment Centres (*Centri per l’impiego*-CPI): many procedural difficulties were identified, mainly connected to the issue concerning the

Declaration of Immediate Availability to Work (*Dichiarazione di immediata disponibilità al lavoro* - DID).

Therefore, the proponent bodies insisted on the need for involving all territorial competent actors when coming to the take charge of unaccompanied foreign minors and their job orientation, first of all by providing them with more information, so as to create a solid and effective network.

### 3.3.3. The companies' perspective

The companies participating in the focus group highlighted the positive relationships established with educational tutors and the proponent bodies representatives. However, they regretted the lack of feedback from the latter on involved youngsters' progress and their competences' acquisition or consolidation, as well as the lack of a follow up on their job insertion at the end of the apprenticeship. With regard to the sense of uncertainty upon the conclusion of the training experience, the companies manifested the need to remain in touch, also at the end of the path, with the proponent body's responsible person. The latter, indeed, can act as point of reference if, for any reasons, it becomes necessary to postpone the entering into an employment contract for the former apprentices, or in order to foster their mobility among the various companies involved.

## 3.4. Procedural aspects

### 3.4.1. The apprentices' perspective

The main critical aspect identified by the apprentices with regard to the procedural aspects concerned the delayed payments of the apprenticeship endowments, to be paid monthly in view of the participation in the training experience at the host company.

### 3.4.2. The proponent bodies' perspective

The proponent bodies highlighted, first of all, problems deriving from the excessive delay of ANPAL Servizi s.p.a. in issuing the clearance document allowing the start of the social-labour insertion path. Indeed, they underlined how such slackening sometimes led the beginning of the apprenticeship to be postponed, or, in some cases, to the definitive impossibility to start it. In particular, they emphasised that the delay in granting authorisation to conduct the apprenticeship risks to thwart - in the event of rejection, or exhaustion of fundable paths, or the youngsters' sudden lack of interest - the complex hosting procedure and the definition of the Personalised Individual Plan (Piano Individuale Personalizzato - PIP), already shared by the proponent body with the potential recipient.

Moreover, if the beginning of the apprenticeship is postponed, the proponent bodies suffer from an additional waste of time and resources, since they have to newly enter the data relating to the path on the specially dedicated PLUS platform. To this regard, it was suggested to consider the possibility to indicate, when first entering the data in the mentioned system, a longer timeframe for starting and completing the apprenticeship.

Furthermore, according to what reported by proponent bodies, the postponement of the apprenticeship's beginning or the definitive impossibility to carry it out was sometimes due to delays in the issuance of the residence permit by the Questura of competence.

The proponent bodies also highlighted critical aspects relating to the access in Employment Centres (Centri per l'impiego - CPI) for the issuance of the Declaration of Immediate Availability to Work (Dichiarazione di immediata disponibilità al lavoro - DID), which is required in order to begin the apprenticeship. With specific reference to minors, the differences between regional regulations and compliance with compulsory schooling make this procedure even more complex.

Moreover, the bodies focused on the strictness of the procedure for host companies that must register the apprentices' activities. In particular, it emerged that, in many cases, the delayed payment of the apprenticeship endowment was due to the need to correct mere factual errors made when filling in the registers. Sometimes, also the lack of

coordination between the structures hosting the recipients and the Municipalities responsible for their take charge gave rise to difficulties in compiling the social services' documentation, this causing delays in the payment of the apprentices' endowment as well.

Lastly, a further procedural aspect of the project that needs to be developed concerns the communication with the actor managing the project. Indeed, the bodies expressed the need to have more frequent and direct communication with Anpal Servizi s.p.a., so as to receive support especially in solving the technical problems identified in the various phases.

### 3.4.3. The companies' perspective

At the procedural level, the companies mainly highlighted the complexity of the procedure for registering the data on the apprentices' activities. They suggested to simplify the relevant registers and to provide for the drawing up of a weekly report, instead of a daily one.

The different categories of subjects participating in the focus group highlighted the following critical aspects:

- *“Delay in the arrival of the clearance form.”*
- *“The need to improve and facilitate the bureaucratic part.”*
- *“It is necessary to have personnel capable of giving answers in a short timeframe.”*
- *“The filling in of the register.”*
- *“The submission of reports. When everything is blocked on the platform, there is no one to whom to refer.”*
- *“The most negative aspect was communication.”*
- *“The phase relating to the submission of the clearance document.”*
- *“The recognition of education qualifications, of a certificate that proves the training path carried out.”*
- *“What happens following the conclusion of the apprenticeship? Do I stay at home?”*

- “*The need to extend the apprenticeship, to learn Italian better and to include an experience in the CV that may result effective.*”

#### **4. THE EXTERNAL OBSERVERS’ PERSPECTIVE**

Along with the categories of actors directly involved in the implementation of the project - apprentices, proponent bodies and host companies - three external observers participated in the focus group. After observing the work carried out, they expressed their points of view on the project and its possible future developments. In particular, the observers had different profiles and competences: one was from the academic context, another represented the SPRAR’s Central Service, and the third observer was a representative of the National Coordination for the New Italian Generations (*Coordinamento Nazionale Nuove Generazioni Italiane-CoNNGI*).

##### **4.1. The academic perspective**

The expert from the academic environment highlighted three aspects that emerged during the focus group on the basis of the testimonies of the subjects involved in the project. The first aspect concerned the competences acquired by the recipients in their Country of origin, before beginning the migratory path and arriving in Italy; the second aspect concerned personal aptitudes; and the third element, added to the previous ones, involved expectations. In particular, reference was made to the youngsters’ initial expectations while still in the Country of provenance, which influence the adaptation process in the host Country.

The observer then lingered over five key words, indicative of just as many founding elements of the project:

- ***flexibility***, a term used several times, especially by the apprentices, to describe the main competences acquired during the apprenticeship at the host company. The term refers to the diversity of migrants’ cultural traditions and the need, as well as the importance, to consolidate soft skills for the foreign youngsters’ effective insertion in the society and in the labour market;

- **expectation**, a concept that highlights the importance, in a project such as this examined one, of carrying out an accurate orientation action together with the recipient before starting the apprenticeship; it is therefore necessary to evaluate the reality of the situation with a view to make a clear distinction between what one thinks and expects on the one hand, and what can happen in practice, on the other hand;
- **profiling**, an expression used to refer to the analysis of the youngsters' aptitudes; in particular, the observer suggested to involve a psychologist, as the latter can provide a useful contribution in such operation;
- **training**, a concept differently interpreted by the involved companies and by the subject that developed the project and drew up the public call for its realisation; the observer highlighted that, in the focus group, the term was used to indicate both the recipients' apprenticeship and their process of "acculturation," consisting in the intersecting of the different cultural practices of the subjects involved in the project;
- **afterwards**, a term used many times by the participants in the focus group, aimed at evoking the sense of uncertainty following the conclusion of the apprenticeship.

#### 4.2. The SPRAR's Central Service's perspective

The representative of SPRAR's Central Service highlighted that the overall theme covered in the focus group concerned welfare. In fact, the main critical aspects identified during the debate among the participants concerned, by way of example, the difficulties identified in the relationship with the Employment Centres, the issue of the DID, and compliance with compulsory schooling as a condition for minors to work.

The observer emphasised the importance of passing from the recipients' "dreams to needs," stressing that the recipients need to be provided with means to reach autonomy, being aware that they belong to a weak segment of the population. In accordance with the

principle of universality of services, it is therefore necessary to promote and guarantee the recipients' access to a variety of services (e.g., school bus, playroom, etc.).

Within the SPRAR, where the experiences relating to the integrated taking charge of the young migrants have been standardised, a personalised integration project is drawn up for each recipient. In particular, the taking charge of the youngsters' social-educational path is unavoidable for their social-labour inclusion. SPRAR's autonomy in activating apprenticeships with its own resources and the consequent speeding up in launching them and in paying endowments - which must necessarily be linked to the reception timeframe and to the youngster's personalised educational plan – was very likely a factor contributing to the lack of a significant and constant cooperation between the system and the proponent bodies involved in the project *Percorsi*.

Moreover, the observer highlighted the unawareness emerged with regard to the apprenticeship as a facilitating contractual instrument. Indeed, upon the conclusion of the apprenticeships within the scope of the project *Percorsi*, such instrument was not exploited, despite several companies intended to continue the job relationship with the apprentice.

Lastly, according to the expert, the choice of an integrated and multilevel project is excellent. In particular, it is necessary to increase the promotion of the project on the territory, actively involving the competent subjects ranging from reception actors to companies. The observer also stressed the usefulness of the proponent bodies' meetings in which they have the opportunity to share opinions, knowledge and best practices.

### 4.3. CoNNGI's perspective

The representative of the National Coordination for the New Italian Generations (*Coordinamento Nazionale Nuove Generazioni italiane - CoNNGI*) - a social promotion association made up of associations of youngsters with migratory background - called the participants' attention on the transition to the labour market, highlighting its crucial relevance for all youngsters.

The observer first of all reasserted the need to offer an effective orientation, keeping into

account also the companies' needs. Then, the observer lingered over the theme of competences, suggesting the need to work on this aspect by considering young recipients not simply as a blank page, but also enhancing their knowledge and ambitions.

Moreover, according to CoNNGI's expert, it is important to provide the youngsters with knowledge instruments, so that they may decide with awareness on the reorganisation of their objectives. Indeed, if the training and labour insertion path disregards the valorisation of the person carrying it out, the latter will not reach the integration objective. Starting from the concept of valorising young migrants in view of their integration, it would be important to involve in similar projects also youngsters that did not manage to conclude successfully the social inclusion paths followed in the past.

## 5. SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

Summarising the information provided by the apprentices, proponent bodies and companies, it is possible to highlight the main suggestions emerged from the focus group, to be kept into consideration when programming further projects for the young migrants' social-labour insertion. In particular, it appears advisable:

- to extend the duration of the training apprenticeship, since a 5-month path is considered insufficient for the apprentices' actual acquisition of new competences and the continuation of their job relationship with the host company;
- to strengthen the balance between competences and orientation prior to the apprenticeship. This would allow to guarantee greater coherence between the youngsters' background and ambitions on the one hand, and their experience at the host company on the other hand; moreover such balance needs to be strengthened also after the apprenticeship, with the aim to facilitate the search for new job opportunities;
- to issue, at the end of the path, a certificate proving the activities carried out and the competences acquired by the recipients, so that they may use it when searching for further opportunities in the labour market;

- to develop the learning of the Italian language, and especially the jargon connected to the sector in which the apprenticeship is carried out; moreover, also the training related to soft skills and the Italian social-cultural context needs to be developed, in order to maximise the contribution of the young migrants' experience and to simplify their social-labour insertion;
- to strengthen at territorial level the network between the subjects of competence involved in migrants' reception and labour orientation, in order to consolidate the good outcome of the project; the recipients need to be easily identified and the procedural problems need to be solved without difficulty;
- to foster the implementation of the project, preventing and correcting technical-procedural issues, mainly related to the timeframe for the issuance of the clearance document allowing to start the apprenticeship, to the timeframe for paying apprenticeship endowments (the delay of which is one of the factors causing the early interruption of the path), and to the technical support provided to the proponent bodies.

## **FOCUS GROUP METHODOLOGICAL NOTE**

The proponent bodies involved in the focus group were selected on the basis of two criteria: on the one hand, their geographical position, such to guarantee, out of the total 7 bodies involved, the presence of organisational realities representative of all the macro-areas of the territory (North, Centre and South); and on the other hand, the proactivity and virtuous cooperation emerged during their participation in the project.

With regard to the apprentices' participation, the selection was carried out on the basis of their completion of the apprenticeship path. This caused several problems as to availability, mainly due to the fact that, since a long time had elapsed from the conclusion of the apprenticeship, many youngsters were already engaged in other activities (labour paths or training courses distant from Rome). The apprentices participating in the focus group amounted to 9, coming from 8 different Countries (Afghanistan, Albania, Cameroon, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Pakistan), among whom only one had not yet turned 18 years old and was thus accompanied by the person of reference of the community of belonging.

The companies' selection was carried out on indication of the proponent bodies, which were asked to identify realities different from those in which the apprentices participating in the focus group had operated. This criterion was adopted in order to allow the youngsters to express their opinions in total freedom, without any conditioning deriving from the presence of their employers. However, the impossibility to be absent from the workplace represented the main cause that led almost all the companies contacted to refuse the invitation to participate, leading to finally renounce to the criterion initially defined. The companies that accepted the invitation were only two, coming respectively from Rome and Naples. Moreover, the focus group was carried out in the presence of three qualified observers, invited to take part on the basis of their competences and of their engagement in immigration and labour inclusion. The observers came from the academic context, from SPRAR's Central Service, and from the National Coordination for New Italian Generations (*Coordinamento nazionale nuove generazioni italiane - CoNNGI*).

The contributions in the focus group were managed and moderated by Anpal Servizi s.p.a.. The programming of the focus group (drawing up of questions, setting organisation, modality for the participants' involvement in the debate) was realised with the aim to foster the emergence of old critical aspects and new perspectives, to be overcome and improved in consideration of the new phase of the project (Percorsi III). The themes of the debate, selected also on the basis of the Assessment Report on the project Percorsi I, were therefore developed and integrated through a process aimed at identifying any factors capable of innovating the social-labour integration paths. For example, with reference to the theme of competences, the results of Percorsi I highlighted the qualification of the chain of services proposed and their consistency with the recipient's needs; at the same time, they emphasised the importance to provide further services, aimed at supporting the social integration process through the development of specific competences. In this case, the questions proposed in the focus group were aimed at understanding, first of all, how and how much the apprenticeships enhanced the competences already possessed by the recipients (e.g. basic knowledge of the Italian language) and, in particular, what

competences were developed owing to the apprenticeships, in part, and those that instead resulted in need for further development.

It was decided to formulate the questions on the basis of the utmost clarity, both with regard to language and syntax, with the aim to overcome any comprehension obstacles and to facilitate the apprentices in formulating and expressing their perspectives.

The setting and the organisation of the meeting room pursued the aim to facilitate the participants' debate and interaction, therefore it was decided to have them sit at an "imperial table" (with a U form). The observers and the auditors sat behind the participants in reserved chairs. In order to make sure that everybody could hear and in order to manage the time at disposal for each contribution, a microphone was used, handed to those invited to speak directly by the moderator. This avoided the overlapping of the contributions and fostered an ordered and clear conduction of the focus group.

## ANNEX I

### Training, labour and integration paths for young migrants

#### 1. Project contents and structure

The project “Training, labour and integration paths for young migrants” fell within the scope of the initiatives promoted by the Directorate General for Immigration and Integration Policies aimed at fostering the social-labour integration of vulnerable migrants. The aim of the project was to consolidate the measures and services provided for the social-labour insertion of unaccompanied foreign minors and young migrants, in order to guide and support them in their path towards achieving autonomy after turning 18 years old and after exiting the reception system as provided for by relevant regulations, in the perspective of their legal residence on the national territory and for preventing the risk of their exploitation.

The project was launched in October 2016 with two specific aims:

- to realise personalised plans entailing apprenticeships and a series of related and integrated services for unaccompanied foreign minors in transition to adulthood (starting from 16 years old) and young migrants (up to 23 years old), who entered in Italy as unaccompanied foreign minors, including international protection holders and seekers, in condition of non-employment or unemployment;
- to strengthen and qualify the governance between institutional actors (with particular regard to local bodies) and key stakeholders by drawing up and sharing a sustainable project model replicable at national level, solidly rooted in territorial labour, training and integration services aimed at the taking charge of unaccompanied foreign minors and their social-labour integration.

With regard to the modalities adopted for realising the project, it is important to highlight that:

- the project was implemented following a public call addressed to subjects authorised to carry out intermediation activities at national level as well as

- to public and private subjects accredited by the Regions to supply employment and labour services (the so-called proponent bodies);
- the instrument used was the so-called “individual endowment,” providing for the payment of a series of services relating to three specific areas (reception and hosting; training; labour), the payment of a grant to the proponent body (€ 2,000, for carrying out activities aimed at fostering the recipient’s social-labour insertion, up to a maximum of 64 hours), of an attendance allowance to the recipient (€ 500 a month, for carrying out a 5-month apprenticeship), as well as of a grant to the company hosting the apprenticeship (€ 500, for carrying out tutoring and apprenticeship, up to a maximum of 16 hours);
  - the intervention was funded by the European Social Fund (€ 9,000,000.00).

Therefore, the model proposed was based on the consolidation of the social capital both of the individual and of the context in which the latter lives: a strategic investment capable of building a social and relational bond, with the aim to contribute towards an effective inclusion process.

## 2. Project results and assessment

Table 11 – Results of the project “Training, labour and integration paths for young migrants.”

	<i>PERCORSI PHASE I</i>	<i>PERCORSI PHASE II</i>	TOTAL
<b>PATHS THAT CAN BE FUNDED</b>	960	850	<b>1,810</b>
<b>APPLICATIONS RECEIVED</b>	1,670	1,450	<b>3,120</b>
<b>APPRENTICESHIPS ACTIVATED</b>	944	853	<b>1,797</b>
<b>APPRENTICESHIPS CONCLUDED</b>	865	739	<b>1,604</b>
<b>APPRENTICESHIPS INTERRUPTED</b>	79	114	<b>193</b>

The first phase of the project *Percorsi I* ended in August 2017. The first considerations on the relevant results were collected in the Assessment Report, published on the institutional website of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies and available at the following link: <http://www.lavoro.gov.it/temi-e-priorita/immigrazione/focus-on/politiche-di-integrazione-sociale/Documents/Report-Monitoraggio-Percorsi-I-30062017.pdf>. The assessments carried out by the categories of actors involved in the project (proponent bodies, companies, apprentices), analyzed in the mentioned report, highlighted the impact of the project on the recipients’ integration path, allowing to identify strengths and critical aspects also in

consideration of a future replication of the project.

In particular, with regard to the positive effects of the measure, it is important to highlight that the path carried out:

- allowed to improve life conditions, not only from an economic viewpoint, but also in terms of relational capital;
- allowed to develop language skills and technical-vocational skills, sometimes also enhancing past training experiences (formal and non-formal);
- represented an opportunity for immediate income;
- helped the recipients to build a perception of their employability and increased their autonomy in searching for opportunities after the conclusion of the apprenticeship.

At the same time, several critical aspects emerged, mainly represented by:

- the brief duration of the apprenticeships, hindering the apprentices' complete and effective insertion in companies;
- the apprentices' scarce language skills and the absence of an adequate prior guidance capable of promptly identifying competences and ambitions, which turned out to be impedimental to the optimisation of the training experience;
- the non-homogeneous territorial distribution of the paths and a significant concentration of the same in Italy's Southern regions (in particular in Sicily), characterised by a lower employment rate.

Following the conclusion of the second phase of the project, a focus group was formed in October 2018 in order to acquire the perspectives of the involved actors: proponent bodies, companies and apprentices.

The third phase of the project has been recently launched with the publication of a call for the funding of an additional 170 paths.

The measure realised is consistent with the recommendations provided at European level: in fact, the project fell within the scope of the "Action plan on unaccompanied foreign minors (2010-2014)" adopted by the European Commission, which highlights the need to identify long-lasting

solutions for unaccompanied foreign minors and to support them in their social integration path. Moreover, on the basis of an *ex post* assessment, the project "*Percorsi*" appears to be fully in line also with the content of the more recent communication issued by the European Commission, "*The protection of unaccompanied foreign minors*," which stresses the need for a prompt integration of minors and the aim to support them in their transition to adulthood and exiting from the welfare system.