

# THE BANGLADESHI COMMUNITY IN ITALY

Annual Report on the Presence of Migrants  
*Executive Summary*



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.

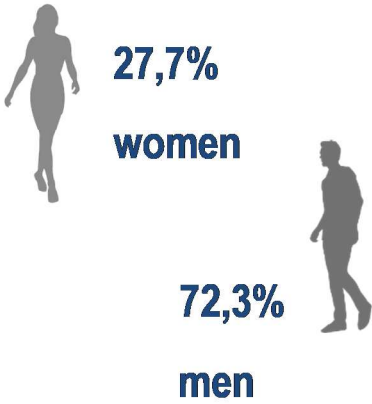
Within the ambit of the project, *Supporto nelle politiche per l'immigrazione e di cooperazione bilaterale con i Paesi di origine* (support for immigration and bilateral cooperation with countries of origin) ANPAL Servizi has drawn up and translated the 2019 edition of its *Rapporti nazionali sulle principali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

# Executive Summary



**145.707**  
legally residing Bangladeshi citizens  
*Ranking seventh for number of presences*

**3,9%** of non-EU citizens as a whole



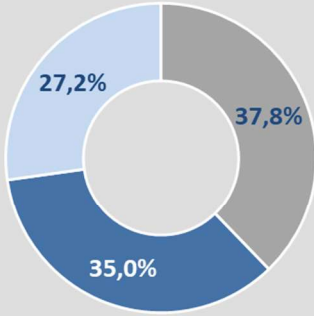

**30.395**  
minors below the age of 18  
*269 unaccompanied minors*

**17.745** Bangladeshi students (+12,4%)  
**394** enrolled for degree courses

Present in:

- 29,2%** Lazio
- 15,4%** Lombardia
- 13,8%** Veneto

**55,9%** long-term residents



- 44,1%** short-term permits
- Work (37,8%)
- Family (35,0%)
- Other reasons (27,2%)

## Demographic characteristics

As on 1 January 2019, 145,707 Bangladeshi citizens were legally residing in Italy, i.e. 3.9% of non-EU citizens as a whole.

Since January 2018, there has been a marked increase in the numbers of Bangladeshis (+4.5%), due to a significant rise in the number of admissions, and hence this community rises in the ranking from eighth to seventh for number of foreign residents in Italy.

On analysis of the main demographic characteristics of Bangladeshi citizens legally residing in Italy as on 1 January 2019, we note the following:

- a marked **gender imbalance**, the male and female components standing at 72.3% and 27.7%, respectively, this later quotient lower than that for non-EU citizens as a whole (48.3%) by approx. 21%;
- a significant **quotient of minors** (indicating the presence of families). These minors – totalling more than 30,000 – account for 1/5 of the legally residing Bangladeshi citizens. Furthermore, the mean age for this community is lower than that observed in non-EU citizens as a whole. In all, nearly ½ of the citizens of Bangladeshi origin are aged less than 30 (44.8% of the total number).

In respect of geographical distribution, the community examined here favours Northern Italy, which hosts 5 Bangladeshi citizens out of 10. Indeed, two of the top three regions for numbers of Bangladeshis are Northern Italian: Lombardia ranks second for number of Bangladeshi citizens (the region hosts 1/6 of residents and ¼ of non-EU residents as a whole); Veneto (ranking third for number of Bangladeshi citizens) presents with an incidence of 13.8% (the incidence for non-EU citizens as a whole falls to 10.4%). The Lazio region hosts most Bangladeshi citizens residing in Italy and presents with 29.2% of this community, vs 11.2% of non-EU citizens as a whole. Noteworthy is the concentration in the metropolitan city of Roma Capitale, hosting the largest community of Bangladeshis in Italy (25%). The levels for Southern Italy are also significant, standing at 16.3% (1.7% higher than for legally residing non-EU citizens as a whole), where the practically key regions are Campania (6.4%) and Sicily (5.2%).

Analysis of **residence permits** as on 1 January 2019 indicates that the process of stabilisation is still at an early stage: the quotient of long-term permit holders (holders of residence permits not subject to renewal) among Bangladeshi citizens stands at **55.9%** (vs 62.3% for non-EU citizens as a whole). As to short-term permits, **work** prevails as reason for issuance, accounting for 37.8% of the permits subject to renewal held by migrants belonging to this community (vs 31% for non-EU citizens as a whole). For 35% of the migrants belonging to this community, **family** considerations figure as reason for residence.

## Current trends

The number of non-EU legal residents in Italy was basically stable compared to 1 January 2018 (+2,472 units). In any case, this apparent stability is the result of opposing variations in the various communities. Indeed, the geography of places of origin has significantly altered. For the first time in years, these changes have altered the top 5 of the numbers ranking. The key increases regard the communities from the Indian subcontinent: Pakistanis (+4.9%), Bangladeshis (+4.5%) and Indians (+3.5%). Significant growth of the Nigerian community (+2.7%) is noted, ranking eleventh for number of residents vs fourteenth the year before.

The most significant downturns regard the Tunisians (-4.6%), Moroccans (-2%) and Moldavans (-1.8%).

Two main factors are noted in regard to trends relative to residence: new permits issued constituting an inflow into the stock of legal residents; and the granting of citizenship, conversely, determining a replacement effect, since the recipients clearly no longer count among the foreign citizens.

Regarding admissions, in 2018, 242,009 new residence permits were issued (approx. 21,000 less than in 2017). Despite the downturn, the growth trend of recent years was ongoing in regard to admissions for family reunification (+8.2% vs 2017), this being the main reason for issuance of residence permits (50.7%), while the new permits that were issued following an application for, or entitlement to, a form of protection saw a downturn (-35.9% vs the previous year). Only in 6% of cases were new residence permits issued for work reasons.

The Bangladeshi community – with its 13,189 new residence permits issued for the main part for humanitarian reasons, asylum and application for asylum (50.3%) and for family reasons (47.1%) – ranks sixth for number of admissions. However, there was a 7.3% downturn in the number of admissions of Bangladeshi citizens compared with the previous year, accompanied by a marked increase in the number of new permits issued for the purposes of family reunification (+46.5%).

## Minors and educational paths

As on 1 January 2019, the **minors of Bangladeshi origin** totalled **30,395** (3.7% of non-EU minors as a whole). Furthermore, many of these minors were born in Italy, i.e. 2,324 in 2017 (4.5% of the non-EU children born in 2017). Between 2010 and 2017, more than 19,000 Bangladeshi children in all were born in Italy.

In this community, there are very many **Unaccompanied Foreign Minors (UFMs)**. Indeed, Bangladesh ranks as tenth country of origin. As on 31 August 2019, there were **269** minors of Bangladeshi origin hosted in *ad hoc* facilities (4% of the unaccompanied foreign minors receiving care in Italy). Compared with the previous year, the incidence has fallen by 14.6%.

**Admission of minors of Bangladeshi origin into the Italian schooling circuit is rising constantly.** Bangladesh ranks twelfth as country of origin of non-EU students. 17,745 students enrolled for academic year 2018/2019 (2.6% of the non-EU student population as a whole). Compared with the previous year, the students from this community increased in number by 12.4%, presenting with a decidedly higher growth rate than that noted for non-EU students as a whole (+2.6%). The students enrolled above all in junior secondary schools (+22.3%) and as preschool infants (12.6%). The incidence of students from this community with respect to non-EU students as a whole is higher in preschool institutions (3.5% of the enrolled are Bangladeshi citizens) and is lower in senior secondary schools (falling to 1.4%).

Young people aged between 15 and 29 belonging to this community who are out of the education and training circuits and who are also unemployed (**NEETs**) make up a quotient that is decidedly higher than the mean for non-EU youngsters. NEETs with Bangladeshi citizenship come to more than 12,000, accounting for approx. ½ of this age group.

## Work and employment

The Bangladeshi community is active in key sectors of Italy's economic life, such as commerce, catering and industry. However, distribution of employees of Bangladeshi origin among the various sectors of the economy differs significantly from that noted for non-EU citizens as a whole. We note a marked involvement of this community in the *Commerce and Catering sector*, which, as a sector, is indeed the prevailing source of employment: ½ of the Bangladeshi working population (vs 24% of non-EU workers as a whole). The quotient of Bangladeshi workers employed in industry is also most significant, standing at 28% of this community's workers (vs 26% of non-EU citizens as a whole). According to the key labour market indicators, this community presents with higher levels of employees and inactive persons and with lower levels of unemployment: the **employment rate** stands at **61.1%** (vs 60.1% for the non-EU community as a whole); the **inactivity rate** among Bangladeshi citizens is higher than the mean (by more than 3%), standing at 32.9%; and the **unemployment rate** stands at 9% (vs 14.3% of the non-EU population as a whole). Within this community, there are considerable differences between the employment rate for men (84.2%) and for women (9.1%) and hence large gaps with respect to inactivity rates (8.5% and 87.6% for men and women, respectively) and unemployment (7.9% and 26.3% for men and women, respectively)

Bangladeshi workers are not among the main beneficiaries of the **wage subsidies** made over by INPS (the National Social Security Institute) in the event of interruptions or reduction of production. In 2018, only 1.2% of the beneficiaries of CIGO (ordinary redundancy fund) or CIGS (extraordinary redundancy fund) arrangements, with non-European citizenship were Bangladeshi (599). The quotient is slightly higher for Bangladeshi citizens as recipients of unemployment benefits, vs the total for non-EU beneficiaries: 3.4% (15,351). The Bangladeshi citizens mainly benefit from *Naspi* (*Nuova Prestazione di assicurazione sociale per l'impiego*, a social employment insurance scheme) (more than 90%); 8.3% are in receipt of agricultural unemployment benefits, while the remaining portion are in receipt of various other forms of compensation.

During 2018, **74,960 new employment relationships** were activated for citizens of Bangladeshi origin (21% more than the previous year). Indicating that women from this community are drawn to the labour market to a decidedly lesser extent than men, the data provided by the *Comunicazioni Obbligatorie* (mandatory notices) reveal that only 2.8% of Bangladeshi citizens recruited are women (vs 46% for non-EU citizens as a whole). Most of the new subordinate and para-subordinate jobs that began during 2018 for Bangladeshi workers were in the *Services* sector (a level approaching 66%). Gender analysis indicates that for women this level rises to 85%.

For the Bangladeshi community, we note the prevalence of *workers engaged in sales and personal services* (more than 1/3 of Bangladeshi workers (36%) vs 30% for non-EU citizens as a whole). Numerically speaking, we then note *unskilled workers* (33%). This latter value is lower than for non-EU citizens as a whole (37%). More than ¼ of employed Bangladeshis are *skilled manual workers* (27%), while the incidence for *managers and professionals in the intellectual and technical fields* stands at 4%.

Involvement of the community in question in **the world of entrepreneurship** appears to be most significant. Indeed, with its 31,264 sole proprietorships, this community ranks fourth in terms of number of sole proprietorships. The *Commerce and transport* sector is the sector within which most investment by Bangladeshi entrepreneurs takes place. 65% of sole proprietorships under Bangladeshi ownership operate in this sector, these undertakings representing approx. 12% of non-EU companies within this ambit.

## Economic conditions

Employment in the commercial and industrial sectors exposed the workers belonging to this community to negative repercussions in terms of incomes. The data indicate that Bangladeshi workers earn **monthly salaries** that are on average lower than those of non-EU workers as a whole: employed Bangladeshis earn 1,001 vs 1,166 euros for non-EU workers as a whole (i.e. 165 euros lower mean monthly remuneration). In the case of agricultural labourers, the gap (again, a negative value) stands at 111 euros. A more significant gap may be noted within the ambit of domestic work. Here, Bangladeshi workers earn 171 euros less than the average for non-EU workers as a whole. Female Bangladeshi workers also lose out when it comes to pay conditions: the gender pay gap within this community is fairly large; on average, the monthly salary of male employees exceeds that of female employees by more than 350 euros. The gap is reversed for distinct typologies of work (for home help, the gap favouring women stands at a mean of 39 euros and in agriculture 100 euros).

Among employed Bangladeshi citizens in Italy, a medium-low level of education prevails. Approx. ¾ of the workers belonging to this community received, at best, a junior secondary school leaving certificate (73.6%: more than 12% higher than for the non-EU population as a whole) Only 26.2% hold a senior secondary school leaving certificate (9.5% hold a higher education certificate).

The quotient of INPS benefits (solely assistance for the vulnerable, old-age and disability) made over to Bangladeshi citizens is rather small: 1238 (1.3% of such benefits for non-EU migrants). 54% of the instances regard constant attendance or similar supplements. Slightly more than 2/5 are accounted for by disability pensions, and the remaining 4% by pensions and social benefits.

With reference to monetary transfers to families (maternity benefits, parental leave and family allowances provided by INPS), in 2018 a total of 321,157 women received maternity benefits, 8.8% of whom were non-EU citizens (28,414) (7.6% less than the year before). During the same period, the number of beneficiaries of maternity allowances with Bangladeshi citizenship was so low that it was not recorded as a separate item in the INPS archives. As to 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). A total of 475 Albanian citizens benefited from this measure (2% of non-EU beneficiaries). 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, this being the benefit most frequently accorded). 12.4% of the beneficiaries were non-EU citizens (approx. 353,000) denoting a 3.7% increase on 2017. 12,552 members of this community were in receipt of family allowances in 2018 (3.6% of non-EU citizens as a whole; +7.8% on 2017).

As to transfers made by the Bangladeshis in Italy to their country of origin, Bangladesh ranks first as nation of destination of **remittances** sent from Italy in 2018 (more than 706 million euros), accounting for 14.4% of the total outgoing remittances (+173.5 million vs 2017).

