

# implementation of the Akelius e-learning app in Italian schools

## **Objective**

Teaching Italian in primary and secondary schools to newly arrived students in Italy.

The initiative, built on the initial results of the pilot phase launched in September 2021 and documented by UNICEF Innocenti - Global Office of Research and Foresight, was conceived as a scale-up of the Akelius project and included in UNICEF's response to the Ukrainian emergency.

Its goal is to support the learning of the Italian language and the inclusion of Ukrainian refugee children in Italy.

## **project duration**

One year, from June 2022 to June 2023

## **Project location**

The project took place in eleven Italian regions, evenly distributed between the north, center, and south of the peninsula

## Project participants

### **schools**

- 80 primary schools
- 48 lower secondary schools
- 4 Ukrainian schools

- 1 association providing language courses for migrants

### **teachers**

- 443 teachers from primary and secondary schools
- 13 teachers from extracurricular institutions

### **students**

- 1036 participating students, average age 10 years
- Predominant nationality Ukrainians with 36%

## Tools provided

- 968 tablets distributed to students and teachers
- 21 training courses for teachers
- Helpdesk service for schools

## Activities performed

### **teacher training**

The ISMU Foundation organized 24 editions of the training course for using the Akelius app.

The courses aimed to provide practical examples and proposals to integrate technology with traditional tools in teaching Italian.

A particular focus was on blended learning as an effective and inclusive way to use the Akelius app in support of frontal teaching.

A total of 456 teachers were trained, including ten Ukrainians.

Only 16% of participating teachers had specific training in teaching Italian to foreign students before.

### **Educational activities**

473 learning activities were conducted, totaling 4479 hours of Italian language teaching

44% of group activities outside the classroom

31% of individual activities outside the classroom

25% of individual and group activities in the classroom

The Akelius app was used for more than half the duration of the lesson in 68% of the educational activities.

## Project results

### *Learning outcomes*

Two evaluation tests for students' learning outcomes tailored to the Akelius app were developed.

#### **teachers evaluation**

Based on the observation of daily use of the Akelius app and the improvements achieved by students.

Approximately half of the students increased their final competencies compared to the initial course level defined by the teachers.

Teachers noted strong student engagement and improved motivation to learn the language.

#### **Italian language test**

Developed by linguistic experts, this test assessed students' receptive skills, reading, and listening.

The tests showed that 93 percent of students improved listening and reading skills by one to three levels.

### *teacher feedback*

Teachers provided positive feedback on the Akelius app as it

- Supported them in teaching Italian to students with a migrant background
- Improved their skills in managing learning processes in a mixed-learning environment
- Encouraged them to implement various teaching schemes
  
- Incentivized the use of digital technologies

Teachers evaluated the Akelius app as a tool capable of meeting the individual and group learning needs of students and the organizational needs of the school.

## *project implementation obstacles*

The main difficulties encountered were

- Low presence of teachers with specific training in teaching Italian to students with a migrant background
- Organizational difficulties in managing technological tools, such as charging, classroom transport, and storage
- Insufficient IT technical staff
  
- Insufficient financial and personnel resources
- Difficulties in scheduling school time

## Sustainability

School managers and teachers from participating schools identified four essential conditions for the sustainability of using the Akelius app after the project's conclusion

### **good technology**

- Quality and stability of the Internet connection
- Adequate number of tablets
- Availability of experts dedicated to the care and maintenance of tablets

### **good training**

- Organize training courses for teachers on using the Akelius e-learning app
- Purchase new digital devices and related support tools such as tablets, headphones, and covers
- Provide teachers with teaching materials on using the Akelius e-learning app