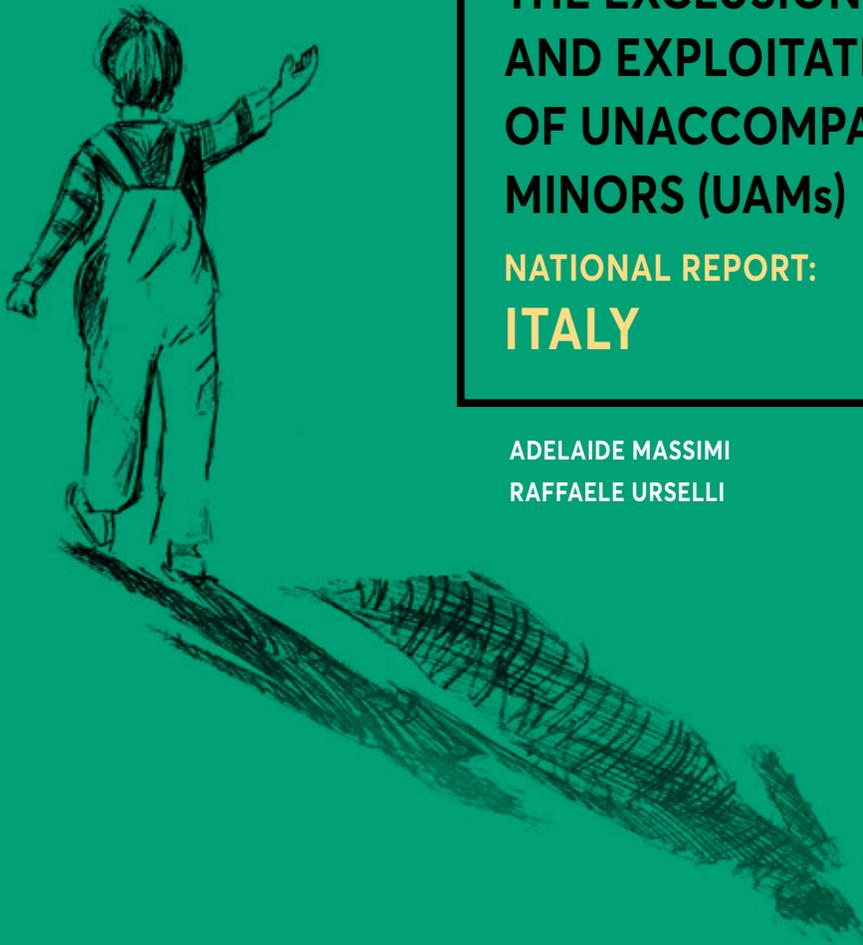


CHILDREN CAST ADrift



THE EXCLUSION
AND EXPLOITATION
OF UNACCOMPANIED
MINORS (UAMs)

NATIONAL REPORT:
ITALY

ADELAIDE MASSIMI
RAFFAELE URSELLI

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NOVEMBER 2019

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“

You can understand the complexity of certain dynamics only from a qualitative methodological point of view. Those who work in the social sector must take into account that the results of an intervention could be different from what is expected... you cannot pretend to save people... an intervention doesn't produce any ordered and concise results mechanically, as if it were a lifeless social engineering project. Who am I to dictate your familiar relationship? [...] My anthropological view is that when facing a nuanced category, linked to the lack of a specific law – seeing as there is no law that formalises economic migrations – the more the social structures detect this internal flexibility, openness to social inclusion and civil rights, the more useful you are.

”
Interview with A., anthropologist,
director of a UASC Community, Rome (June 2018)

Methodological premise

This preliminary consideration coherently presents the methodological approach to this research. The opinion of A.A., anthropologist, reveals the complexity and challenges related to a qualitative methodological position, necessary for social research and public intervention actions in the field of migration and minor protection. The more intervention strategies are built up without sufficiently taking into account the phenomenon at different levels and the more the boundaries of the intervention are systematically hardened, the worse what you can offer becomes. “Nuances must be processed by qualitative flexibility,” claims A.A.

In order to understand social intervention nuances and flexibilities from a qualitative perspective, we addressed key informants, namely people who offer useful general interest knowledge about local conditions in which the research is carried out.¹ The other class of interviewees we have addressed is the “privileged witness”, a person who gives “specialist” information, directly relevant to the objectives of the study, chosen on the basis of their strategic position in the community, group, or institution.

Interviews with professionals and semi-structured talks with key or privileged witnesses were carried out in Rome, Catania, Vittoria and Ventimiglia.² This geographical distribution has been adopted in order to allow for the fullest possible representation of the entire migration cycle in Italy, from the landing countries (Sicily) to the transit borders (Ventimiglia), passing through the capital, the fundamental stage in the majority of minors’ migratory itineraries.

1. See Gianturco, G. (2005), *L'intervista qualitativa. Dal discorso al testo scritto*, Milan: Guerini Scientifica.

2. The professionals we interviewed were social workers, educators, psychologists, directors, public executives, protection authorities and lawyers who have worked in the UASC sector for at least two years.

[1]

Data on unaccompanied and abandoned migrant children in Italy

[1.1] General data: Age range, gender, nationalities

At the end of June 2018, 13,151 unaccompanied migrant minors were living in Italy, of whom 92.5% were boys and 7.5% were girls. 92.8% of Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) in Italy are aged 15, 16 and 17, 6.4% are aged from 7 to 14 and only 0.8% are aged from 0 to 6.³

The majority of UASC in Italy originated in Albania (11%), the Gambia (10.3%), Egypt (9.3%), Guinea (8.8%), Ivory Coast (8.2%), Eritrea (7.2%), Nigeria (6.7%) and Mali (5.7%).⁴

The countries of origin of UASC in Italy changed greatly from early 2000 onwards. In 2006, the majority of UASC came from Albania, Morocco and Romania (75% of UASC belonged to these three nationalities). Since 2008, major flows of Afghan minors began arriving in Italy and in the following years the vast majority of boys and girls arriving in Italy were from Egypt, Bangladesh and, once more, Albania. The increase in sea arrivals caused a rise in the number of children crossing the Mediterranean Sea from Libya to Italy. Of those, the majority came from West Africa (Gambia, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Guinea, Mali, and Senegal) and from the Horn of Africa, mainly Eritrea. It is worth noting the case of children coming from the Gambia: in 2010 only 10 children came from this country, while in 2017 they were 2,350.⁵

3. See monthly report on UASC in Italy, June 2018. Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

4. Ibid.

5. See Dati dei minori stranieri non accompagnati. Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche sociali.

COUNTRY	ESTIMATE	%
ALBANIA	1517	11.5
THE GAMBIA	1353	10.3
EGYPT	1225	9.3
GUINEA	1153	8.8
IVORY COAST	1081	8.2
ERITREA	953	7.2
NIGERIA	879	6.7
MALI	748	5.7
SENEGAL	624	4.7
SOMALIA	542	4.1
TUNISIA	441	3.4
PAKISTAN	368	2.8
BANGLADESH	367	2.8
KOSOVO	277	2.1
AFGHANISTAN	275	2.1
GHANA	219	1.7
MOROCCO	213	1.6
SUDAN	167	1.3
SIERRA LEONE	102	0.8
CAMEROON	71	0.5
ETHIOPIA	51	0.4
GUINEA-BISSAU	42	0.3
BENIN	37	0.3
ALGERIA	35	0.3
SYRIA	29	0.2
IRAQ	29	0.2
CHAD	22	0.2
LIBERIA	21	0.2
BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA	21	0.2
NIGER	21	0.2
TOGO	17	0.1
CONGO	16	0.1
UKRAINE	15	0.1
BRAZIL	15	0.1
LIBYA	14	0.1
MOLDOVA	13	0.1
Others	109	0.8
TOTAL	13,151	100

[1.2] Data on unaccompanied girls

In June 2018, 982 girls were registered in reception facilities in Italy. Unaccompanied girls arriving in Italy are generally younger: As can be seen in the table below, the age of 15.1% of them ranged from 7 to 14, while, considering the whole group of UASC (boys and girls), only 6.4% are in that age range. 48.3% of the girls were 17 years old.

The majority of unaccompanied girls are from Nigeria (36%), Eritrea (17.8%) and Albania (8.9%), followed by girls from Ivory Coast and Somalia. Few girls originated in the Gambia and Egypt, which are the countries of origin of the majority of unaccompanied boys.⁶

NATIONALITY	ESTIMATE	%
NIGERIA	362	36.9
ERITREA	175	17.8
ALBANIA	87	8.9
IVORY COAST	84	8.6
SOMALIA	62	6.3
MOROCCO	30	3.1
GUINEA	16	1.6
THE GAMBIA	15	1.5
MALI	13	1.3
SIERRA LEONE	12	1.2
BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA	10	1.0
CAMEROON	8	0.8
GHANA	8	0.8
CONGO	8	0.8
TUNISIA	8	0.8
BRAZIL	7	0.7
ETHIOPIA	7	0.7
others	67	6.7
TOTAL	982	100

6. See monthly report on UASC in Italy, June 2018. Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

[1.3] Unaccompanied children arriving by sea

From 1 January to 30 July 2018, 2,809 unaccompanied minors arrived on the Italian shores, while the total number of sea arrivals during the same period was 18,392. UASC arrivals make up 15.2% of total sea arrivals. UASC represent more than 83% of all minors that arrived in Italy. The data confirm the trend of UASC arrivals in Italy: In 2017 of the 17,337 children who arrived in Italy 15,779 (91%) were unaccompanied or separated.⁷

The numbers of UASC arrivals this year has decreased considerably compared to the same period last year, when 12,583 UASC reached Italian shores.⁸ However, in relation to sea arrivals, they have increased (15%) in comparison to the first seven months of 2017 (13.2%). This decrease is mainly due to the overall drop in the number of people crossing the Central Mediterranean since July 2017, when the Memorandum signed by the Italian government and Libyan authorities in February 2017⁹ entered in force. Most UASC arriving by sea are boys and are 16 and 17 years old. However, exact figures on gender of UASC arrivals are currently unavailable.¹⁰

UNHCR data show that UASC arriving by sea in the first four months of 2018 most commonly originate in Eritrea (353), Tunisia (293), Guinea (120), and Ivory Coast (105). UASC from these four countries combined represent 61% of all UASC sea arrivals in 2018 so far. Eritrean UASC were the most common UASC group disembarking in 2017, while Guinean and Ivorian UASC were also numerous last year. However, high numbers of Tunisian UASC are a more recent trend: In the first four months of 2017, only 10 had reached Italian shores. During the first four months of 2018 significant numbers of UASC arrivals also originated in Mali (86), Somalia (58), Sudan (55), Sierra Leone (52), the Gambia (49), and Pakistan (42).¹¹

7. See Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe. Overview of Trends, 2017. UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM.

8. See Cruschetto statistico giornaliero, Ministero dell'Interno.

9. See Italy-Libya agreement: the Memorandum text, ASGI.

10. See Italy Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC) Dashboard, UNHCR.

11. Ibid.

[1.4] Regional distribution of UASC facilities

90.8% of unaccompanied and abandoned children living in Italy on 31 December 2017 (18,303) were being hosted in reception facilities, and 3.1% were living with foster families.¹² 60.1% of UASC were in second reception facilities, and 30.6% in primary reception centres.

As we can see in the table below, the vast majority of UASC are hosted in Sicily (43.3%), while some regions (Valle d'Aosta, Abruzzo, Trento and Bolzano, Molise) host a small percentage of the children arriving in the country.¹³ If we compare these data to those of previous years, we find that the regions with higher percentage of UASC in reception centres are always the same.¹⁴ In 2014, an agreement on regional distribution of asylum seekers was achieved by the Unified Conference between the State and the Regions, but the Conference could not come to an arrangement about the distribution of UASC. So far, each region can declare the availability of reception places for minors receiving partial contribution from the state. The lack of political agreement on this issue led to the concentration of almost half of UASC in the region of first arrival, although between 2015 and 2017 the absolute number of UASC in Sicily almost doubled.

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12. See monthly report on UASC in Italy, December 2017. Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. The Ministry does not have information on the reception facilities where about 6.1% of minors living in Italy are hosted. See Direzione Generale dell'immigrazione e delle politiche di integrazione. Report di Monitoraggio, 31 Dicembre 2017.
 13. See monthly report on UASC in Italy, June 2018. Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.
 14. See monthly report on UASC in Italy, December 2017. Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. The Ministry does not have information on the reception facilities where about 6.1% of minors living in Italy are hosted. See Direzione Generale dell'immigrazione e delle politiche di integrazione. Report di Monitoraggio, 31 Dicembre 2017.

[1.5] Drop out data

According to data from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, in June 2018¹⁵ 4,677 unaccompanied minors were reported missing or unaccounted for. This number represents the total number of unaccompanied children who dropped out of reception centres registered over the years: Missing minors remain in the database until they turn 18 or until they are tracked down by the authorities. The latest available data that analyse the dropping out phenomenon in detail (2014)¹⁶ show that the majority of missing UASC dropped out of primary reception centres and reception centres located in the south of Italy and on the islands (Sicily and Sardinia).

In 2014 the total number of missing children was 3,707: 40.6% of minors hosted in Sicily (the region that hosted 43% of unaccompanied minors in Italy) dropped out of reception facilities, in Calabria more than half (51.3%) of UASC hosted in facilities abandoned the system, as did 35.7% in Puglia. Meanwhile, in Emilia Romagna, a region with a strong welfare system, only 11% of UASC decided to leave the reception facilities.¹⁷

As a preliminary remark, it is important to highlight that the widely held notion is that minors leaving the reception facilities are the ones who arrive in Italy with the aim to cross the border into other European countries where they have family members or a structured national community waiting for them. However, a recent survey shows that not all of those who drop out cross international borders or already have an idea about their future.¹⁸

Minors interviewed during the survey mentioned above, declared that the main reasons for leaving the centres and heading north are the con-

15. See monthly report on UASC in Italy, June 2018. Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

16. See Direzione Generale dell'immigrazione e delle politiche di integrazione. Report di Monitoraggio, 31 Dicembre 2014.

17. See ANCI, *I comuni e le politiche di accoglienza dei minori stranieri non accompagnati*, VI rapporto, 2016. Edited by Monia Giovannetti.

18. See Situation Overview: Unaccompanied and Separated Children Dropping Out of the Primary Reception System, February 2017, UNICEF, REACH.

ditions in primary reception centres, including limited access to education and healthcare, a lack of clarity surrounding asylum procedures, and a mistrust of primary reception centre staff because staff members often do not speak the children's languages and there is a lack of cultural mediators and translators.

As we will examine in depth below, the Italian reception system presents different levels and standards depending on multiple factors, such as the general conditions of the region where the centres are situated, the authority responsible for facilities, the available funding, etc. This situation is also due to the history of the system, originally conceived to assist and receive Italian abandoned children and since then expanded to address UASC arrivals. If, on the one hand, the aim was to create a consistent multilevel system, on the other, it was also to respond to contingent emergencies.

[2]

**Italian legal framework:
institutional tools
supporting inclusion and
their effectiveness**

[2.1] Fundamental principles

Italian legislation defines unaccompanied children as “citizens of non-EU countries or stateless, below the age of eighteen years, that are, for any reason, inside national territory without care and legal representation”.¹⁹ The legislative framework for UASC in Italy is composed by international, European and national laws on child protection, and by international, European and national laws on migration, international protection, and protection for the victims of trafficking.

The non-discrimination principle contained in the Convention on the Rights of the Child²⁰ recognises the social and economic rights of each child and its right to be protected from any kind of abuse, mistreatment and exploitation. Furthermore, fundamental rights are recognised for all children, irrespective of their legal status or having a residence permit.

Italian legislation, too, enshrines the universality of rights, protection and assistance to unaccompanied and abandoned children: Unaccompanied migrant children and Italian abandoned children have the same access to rights and assistance (health, education, reception).

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Italy with Law 176/1999, establishes that, “in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration”, and recommends that states parties “ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards es-

19. Art. 2, Legislative Decree no. 142/2015.

20. “States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child’s or his or her parent’s or legal guardian’s race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.” See UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, art. 2, par. 1.

established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision”.

The evaluation of their best interest shall take into account the right of children to be heard and to express their ideas, “in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law”.²¹ This principle, according to the UN’s Committee on the Rights of the Child, “creates an intrinsic obligation for states, is directly applicable (self-executing), and can be invoked before a court.”²²

The Committee underlines that the child’s best interest is a threefold concept: A substantive right, a fundamental interpretive legal principle, a rule of procedure.

The European Charter of Fundamental Rights also states that “in all actions relating to children, whether taken by public authorities or private institutions, the child’s best interests must be a primary consideration”.²³

In Italy, the legislation concerning adoption (Law 184/1983) and the Civil Code contain the concept of the child’s best interest constituting a fundamental legal principle.

21. See UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, art. 12, par. 1.

22. See General comment No. 14 (2013) on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration (art. 3, par. 1).

23. See Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union (art. 24).

[2.2] The right to legally reside in Italy

According to Italian law, the expulsion and the pushing back of unaccompanied minors is prohibited.²⁴ As a consequence of this principle, unaccompanied children have the right to hold a residence permit as underage migrants, and this allows them to remain in Italy until the age of 18.²⁵

UASC and UAM have the right to seek asylum in Italy as stated by the Geneva Convention on Refugees and by the European Directives²⁶ received in Italy with the Legislative Decree No. 142/2017.

UASC and UAM are considered vulnerable persons and the best interest of the child shall be a primary consideration during the procedures for obtaining international protection.

UASC and UAM shall submit applications for international protection on their own behalf or assisted and represented by a legal representative: Law 47/2017 allows children to lodge an asylum application with the assistance of the legal representative of the reception centre, without waiting for a guardian to be appointed, a process that may take several months.

The Dublin III Regulation, establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the member state responsible for examining an application for international protection, is directly enforceable as law in Italy and in all member states.

The practical implementation of the principles mentioned above and of the Italian legal framework on legalisation options and international protection has some strong points and some critical issues: Although the prohibition of expulsion of minor migrants and their right to hold a resi-

24. Legislative Decree 286/1998 (Art. 19), Decree of the President of the Republic 394/1999 (Art. 28), Law 47/2017.

25. Article 32 of the Consolidated Law on Immigration (Legislative Decree 286/1998) and article 28 DPR 394/1999, if the conditions are not met to issue a residence permit for other reasons.

26. See Directive 2013/33/EU laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection. See also Directive 2013/32/EU on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection (recast).

dence permit are generally respected, on many occasions the duration of asylum procedure is excessive, lasting several months:

“Documents are the main problem [...] and after a while they lose faith and trust in the centre, they believe that we do nothing, that we are not taking care of their situation. [...] The way these documents arrive, it is not logical: Some only wait three months, some are still waiting after a year [...] One year later none of them have a guardian.”²⁷

This issue also affects the efficiency of Dublin procedures, as we will see below.

Another critical issue, especially in reception centres in the south, is the lack of clear and sufficient information about legalisation opportunities, the abuse of international protection, and little consideration of the other legalisation opportunities (residence permit for underage foreign nationals, residence permit for studying/training). In the first reception centre, minors are interviewed by social services which yields some details on the specific situation of the children. This talk and an assessment concerning the country of origin makes it evident when a child is a potentially asylum seeker. However, this mainly happens in Rome and in the north. According to many interviewees, in the south the asylum request is often made regardless. This is not to be considered “good practice”,

“because very often the residence permit is denied, even if a humanitarian document is given because they came as a minor so they have a certain level of vulnerability, as Egyptians do not want the humanitarian document or the asylum request, because they want to be able to go back to their country, they want to be able to keep the passport; they want to be able to talk with the embassy’”.²⁸

What is key, as the majority of professionals underline, is, therefore, to always try to understand and explain to the UAM all the consequences of their choices and requests, and also to grasp what they expect, what they prefer. This is a fundamental issue from a practical analysis point of view: Asking for asylum for a child who comes from a country where

27. Interview with P., social worker, Sicily (June 2018).

28. Interview with M., legal advisor, Rome (May 2018).

there are no conditions that would merit seeking asylum, means destroying the possibility for it to return to its country of origin. When you ask for asylum because of alleged persecution or dangerous conditions you faced in your country, then you can hardly cross the border to return.

“Improper asylum requests present some aspects of the history of the children, possibly even of their future, which we must pay particular attention to. [...] But why should a child have access to humanitarian protection when it can ask for a residence permit converted for studies,²⁹ training, work ...?”.³⁰

For UASC not asking for international protection, a critical moment is when they turn 18, because they find themselves without assistance and reception opportunities, and without any kind of support in applying for a residence permit for studying, training or work. Without proper information and support, they lose the opportunity to legally reside in Italy and to continue their inclusion process.

29. When children have not resided in the national territory for at least three years and they have not applied for asylum, they can ask for the conversion of their residence permit by demonstrating the activity they actually carried out – study, work, training – so that they can continue to stay in Italy legally, even when they become young adults.

30. Interview with S., public executive, Rome (April 2018).

[2.3] Reception conditions

European Union Directives No. 2013/33/EU and No. 2013/32/EU,³¹ incorporated into national legislation with Legislative Decree No. 142/2015, define the procedures for granting a safe place to unaccompanied and abandoned minors arriving in Italy.

In the first reception centre, common standards towards all minors shall be respected, as established by the Ministry of Interior following international and European conventions and directives. Minors shall have the possibility to talk with psychologists, cultural mediators and translators.

The same decree clarifies that an unaccompanied minor cannot be detained in repatriation centres for irregular migrants.

The protection and assistance of unaccompanied and abandoned minors is also stated in the Italian Civil Code³² and in Law No. 184/1983³³, on the child's right to grow up in a family. The law also establishes that unaccompanied minors have to be trusted to the care of a family and that a child shall be hosted in a foster home or in a residential facility only as a final option.

An agreement reached in 2014 between the state and the regions on reception measures for asylum seekers and migrants,³⁴ establishes the extension of the Protection System for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (SPRAR) to all unaccompanied minors, seeking to create a unique reception system for all UASC, going beyond the distinction of minors based on their legal status. Once the child is hosted in a reception facility, it shall have access to all social and economic rights Italian children do, following the principles analysed above.

The practical implementation of European and Italian standards and legislation on reception facilities faces several obstacles. A first critical is-

31. See Directive 2013/32/EU on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection (recast) and Directive 2013/33/EU laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection.

32. Article 403, Civil Code.

33. See Commissione parlamentare per l'infanzia L. 4 maggio 1983, n. 184 (1).

34. See Conferenza unificata Stato-Regioni, Piano Nazionale Accoglienza, Luglio 2014.

sue is represented by reception and identification procedures developed in “hotspot centres”, introduced in Italy in 2015. It must be noted that since 2015 different practices and reception standards have been registered in hotspot centres. In all five centres, migrant detention – including UASC detention – is practiced for periods lasting from a few days to several weeks, before, during and – in some cases – after identification.³⁵

Contrary to the provision of Law No. 184/1983, UASC and UAM are generally hosted in reception centres and there are few opportunities for them to be hosted in families.

The reception system is very heterogeneous. Its differentiations depend on the overlapping of several financing channels, the presence of several agents,^{36 37} and different regional implementations of the standards, mainly due to the differences between regional welfare systems. The geographical location of the community also clearly affects minor possibilities. “There is nothing structured to foster real integration, everything we do remains in a community setting, you are not able to involve people from the outside.”³⁸ In many cases UAM remain in first reception facilities for 7-8 or even 10 months. Some professionals highlight problems related to a reception system “focuses on migrants, not people”,³⁹ seeing them as migrants with basic needs. UAM all follow the same standardised path, and it is as if this artificial mechanism deprives them of “subjective complexity”, of desires and expectations, and of wills

35. See Hotspot Lampedusa - Progetto in limine.

36. Police stations issue the residence permit and are also competent for identification processes; prefectures are competent both for the implementation of the asylum policies and for the reception financing; local authorities are obliged to take care of children; juvenile courts are responsible for legal protection and age assessment; the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI) manages the SPRAR system, and, lastly, the regions, the larger administrative divisions, are very important because they legislate on the reception standards. Regions are normally competent regarding reception shelters for minors, as well as concerning norms in residence buildings; generally, regions are exclusively competent regarding integration policies, pertaining, for example to training and work.

37. To focus on the role played by local policies see Giovannetti, M. (2012), *I comuni e le politiche di accoglienza dei minori stranieri non accompagnati. Un'analisi longitudinale a guida dei percorsi futuri*, Rome, Cittalia

38. Interview with D., legal advisor and street operator, Ventimiglia (June 2018).

39. Interview with C., psychologist, Rome (July 2018).

and difficulties. Another problem is the inability to build a relationship of trust between professionals and minors. This lack of trust is often exacerbated by the absence or insufficiency of cultural mediators and translators.⁴⁰ In cases of high migration flows (as in 2016), the authorities opened emergency centres without respecting minimum standards.

40. Ibid.

[2.4] Institutional tools supporting inclusion

- The ministry opinion is a tool to “certify” the youth inclusion path. The opinion is a document issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies through the General Directorate of Immigration and Integration Policies, and is fundamental, but not binding, for the issuance of a residence permit to young adults for the purposes of studying or working. According to the opinion issued, the minor must show they want to stay in Italy and follow an inclusion path. If a UAM has been in Italy for more than three years and they have followed a positive path, the opinion is not required, but if the UAM has followed a path that has been shorter than three years – which is the case with most minors – they must demonstrate that they attended an Italian course or some training, etc. At the same time, they must also prove they have not committed any crimes. The opinion is suspended if the minor is accused having committed a crime, until the case has been ruled upon. However, this certainly undermines the issuance of a positive opinion. The opportunity that the opinion request offers is to integrate the records related to the integration path in order the UAM to continue or complete primary education or start professional training. The opinion is therefore mandatory but not binding, namely, the request is compulsory, even if police hold a discretionary power that supersedes the opinion. The critical point concerning this tool is the lack of awareness in reception staff, mainly in the south, about how the process works and what the possible benefits and possibilities are for the children.
- Access to social and health services: The equality of minors regardless of their legal status implies a principle of universality (non-discrimination principle) of services in terms of guarantees and protection: Minors, both Italians and foreigners, have access to all social, health and education services, and to all the system of protection designed for unaccompanied minors. Furthermore, reception centres – even if they respond to the needs of the children – are not able to provide valid alternatives to minors:

“When they enter the centres they go to school, and that’s it! Four hours a day; the rest of the time they can do anything, so they start going to Termini, and they realise that you can make at least 10 euros a day, maybe even a lot more. So, put four hours of school up against 10-20 euros a day, and it becomes clear what carries more weight. I am not saying that centres do not provide valid support, but they are limited to welfarist answers and services. With adults this generally tends to dynamically flatten, dehumanise and weaken people, removing their ability to actively and consciously create a programme for their life. So imagine what it does to a minor that starts off down this path.”⁴¹

In general terms, Italy has quite an extensive child protection system, even if the chaotic nature of migration policies too often compromise the effectiveness of rights and procedure efficacy too often.

- The tools that have been designed can potentially work, especially as regards job opportunities: It is clear that in such places where the labour market still offers opportunities, where the circuits of youth professional training offer the possibility of concretely fostering active labour policies,⁴² if this works for Italian children, it will also work for foreign children; if it does not work for Italians, it will not work for UASC either.

41. Interview with C., psychologist, op. cit.

42. The initiatives put in place by the institutions, national and local authorities promoting employment and work inclusion.

[2.5] Family reunification and repatriation

The right of unaccompanied migrant minors to find and join their family members, is recognised by international, European and national laws and conventions.⁴³

Council Directive 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003 (transposed in Italy by Legislative Decree No. 160/2008) on the right to family reunification establishes criteria and procedures by which to grant refugee unaccompanied children the right to have their first-degree relatives in direct ascending line reunified with them,⁴⁴ in accordance with the obligation to protect the family and respect family life enshrined in many instruments of international law.⁴⁵

National legislation grants the right of family reunification, under certain conditions, to third country nationals residing lawfully within the territory of the state. The best interest of minors is of primary consideration when an unaccompanied child is identified within a state's national territory: The National Committee for minor migrants, in accordance with Article 33 of Legislative Decree 286/1998, is also responsible for lo-

43. *"States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is seeking refugee status or who is considered a refugee in accordance with applicable international or domestic law and procedures, shall, whether unaccompanied or accompanied by his or her parents or by any other person, receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights set forth in the present Convention and in other international human rights or humanitarian instruments to which the said States are Parties. 2. For this purpose, States Parties shall provide, as they consider appropriate, co-operation in any efforts by the United Nations and other competent intergovernmental organisations or non-governmental organisations co-operating with the United Nations to protect and assist such a child and to trace the parents or other members of the family of any refugee child in order to obtain information necessary for reunification with his or her family. In cases where no parents or other members of the family can be found, the child shall be accorded the same protection as any other child permanently or temporarily deprived of his or her family environment for any reason, as set forth in the present Convention."* See UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Art. 22.

44. See Council Directive 2003/86/EC of 22 September 2003 on the right to family reunification, Art. 9.

45. See European Convention on Human Rights, Art. 8.

cating family members of children in their countries of origin or in third countries, in cooperation with national and international organisations, and can also adopt decisions concerning voluntary return, with the aim of protecting and granting family unity, in accordance with the principle of the child's best interest.⁴⁶

Article 18 of Legislative Decree 142/2015, incorporating European Union Directives 2013/33/EU⁴⁷ and 2013/32/EU⁴⁸ on the rights of asylum seekers, affirms that during the implementation of assistance and reception measures, the child must be heard in order to verify the possibility of family reunification, in accordance with its best interest. Article 19 of the same decree, states that when an unaccompanied child seeking asylum is identified, the authorities, in cooperation with NGOs and international organisations, shall make every effort to locate family members, and to ensure the security of the child and of its family.

The results from hundreds of family inquiries carried out every year⁴⁹ show that there are very few effective repatriations, because in order for them to be accomplished the child must agree, the family must be available to welcome it back, social services and the juvenile judge must be in agreement, and the ministry must authorise it along with the re-integration programme. It is a long and difficult process. A minors' lawyer, with 20 years of experience in the field of unaccompanied minors, claims that:

“The hypothesis is about trying to understand what is happening on the other side through contact with families there. [...] Turin, for example, used to do this with Moroccan youths through the educator, who used to go to Morocco at the expense of Turin City

46. See DPCM 535/99, Regolamento concernente i compiti del Comitato per i minori stranieri.

47. See Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast).

48. See Directive 2013/32/EU on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection and Directive 2013/33/EU laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (recast).

49. Family inquiries are requested by the courts, by local authorities, and even by the Dublin unit.

Council, which is even cheaper... But in order to do so you need consent from the minor and the family... And over the years this procedure transformed itself into overprotection.”

The opportunity for UASC seeking asylum to safely join their relatives in other European countries, following the Dublin procedure, is often compromised by the long duration of asylum processes. In some areas UASC have to wait several months before applying for asylum. After this first step, the Dublin procedures take months to conclude the family inquiries. During this period, UASC have to wait in facilities with insufficient information and they often decide to attempt their journey alone.⁵⁰

[2.6] Age assessment

Law 47/2017 clearly defines the procedures to be implemented to assess the age of UASC and UAM: If a minor arrives in Italy without identification documents, a social and medical age assessment may be required by judicial authorities when there are well-founded doubts concerning age. The assessment shall be carried out through a multidisciplinary approach by professional and, if needed, a cultural mediator. Minors shall be informed about the objectives, method and consequences of the procedure. If doubt persists, the person shall be treated as a minor. The decision concerning age is adopted by the judicial authority and it shall be made known to the child and/or the guardian who can appeal it. After more than one year, the new procedure has been only partially implemented: In some hotspots it has been reported that age assessment is carried out using the previous processes, based on X-ray examinations, and that the assessment is requested by the police, not the judicial authority. X-ray examinations have proven ineffective as the age range determined is too broad (two years) and it does not take into account psychological, social and other medical issues.⁵¹

50. Interview with E., legal consultant (June 2018).

51. Ibid.

[2.7] Italian guardianship system and the voluntary guardian: Groundbreaking but risky

The Civil Code⁵² and Law 184/1983⁵³ state that a guardian is appointed by the tutelary judge to the minor when both parents are dead or when, due to other reasons, they cannot exercise their parental responsibilities. The guardian must be “a person suitable for the role, with unobjectionable conduct, who must safeguard the child’s right to education and protection, and take into account his/her capacities, desires and aspirations”.⁵⁴ The judge can provide for institutional guardianship, nominating as guardians the public local authority or, temporarily, the head of the reception centre or residential facility where the child is hosted.

The responsibilities of the guardian are: The care of the minor, their legal representation in all civil acts, and the administration of their property. The guardianship must be free of charge and, therefore, voluntary.

Article 19 of Legislative Decree 142/2015 contains the processes for the appointment of the guardian for unaccompanied migrant and asylum seeker children. Public authorities must immediately inform the tutelary judge of the presence of an unaccompanied minor and the judge shall appoint a guardian who shall assist unaccompanied minors in all the processes related to asylum application.

Law 47/2017 states that every juvenile court shall establish a list of “volunteer guardians” selected and trained by the Regional Ombudsman for Children: The function of the voluntary guardian, as controller of the public system, represents a challenge for the Italian legal system: it is as groundbreaking as it is risky. It holds a high potential benefit for minors: If the system works and the voluntary guardian can really guarantee a whole series of steps and requests – approaching the health system, re-

52. Articles 343–389 of the Civil Code.

53. See Commissione parlamentare per l’infanzia, L. 4 maggio 1983, n. 184. Diritto del minore ad una famiglia.

54. Ibid.

requesting an identity card, these are things that could be very difficult for a minor – that also guarantees minors the chance to be heard. “There is everything to be gained by implementing relationships, by structuring a path. As soon as turned 18 you would have a lifeline, should your network flake out.”⁵⁵ The idea of voluntary guardianship with a 1:1 ratio was conceived precisely to encourage child inclusion, in an effort to avoid keeping them waiting for too long in an unchanging situation, locked up inside residential structures.

The critical issue is that there is no effective awareness on the part of the volunteers about child vulnerabilities, their experiences, the migratory project, and the system dynamics in which the children are placed.

55. Interview with I., project coordinator in a UASC facility, Rome (May 2018).

[3]

Professionals' opinions on child inclusion

[3.1] Obstacles, risks and vulnerabilities

- UASC, as an artificial category, need to be deconstructed and carefully analysed. First of all, there are three main groups in UASC: those in transit (who are in Italy but are determined to leave for other European countries),⁵⁶ those seeking asylum, and groups of minors who are economically motivated and are not seeking asylum. Many professionals throughout the interviews have questioned the concept of the “unaccompanied minor” category:

“Minor is based on something false, it’s like a margin, a mark... You say, ‘if I’m younger, I’m under this mark so I have a series of guarantees, therefore I will try to do everything I can to be recognised as minor’; so, a minor for whom? This is about childhood anthropologies”.⁵⁷

Some interviewees also question whether they are really alone, emphasising the social, family, and national network, which *de facto* “accompanies” minors’ movements and choices. The importance of the family mandate appears to be clear if seen from this point of view and questions the idea of minors/adolescents/children, supposing that it is different in each culture and dependent on life experience; in some situations adolescents perceive themselves as adults with enormous responsibilities towards their families. The family mandate issue recurs systematically in the interviews with professionals. The great economic need arises from a family mandate that leads minors to very quickly pay off the debt they have contracted for the trip. It is often families, communities, or, in some cases, whole villages that try to regain a social stature.

56. In-transit UASC do not have a guardian because they are not interested in living in Italian territory.

57. Interview with L., social worker, Rome (April 2018).

- From a psychological point of view, they are not accustomed to having strong relationships. They do not have a perspective of the future. "They have learned to be surgeons, gardeners, they cut things off with an ease that is scary, they also cut you off, the project they gave everything they had to, so there is a lot of uncertainty about everything".⁵⁸ One of the main causes of uncertainty, as evidenced by most of the interviews, lies in the vagueness of a "buffer period". This waiting time is very long due to bureaucratic and administrative processes and it generates unease, in the form of intense psychosocial distress. You experience a period of limbo, a feeling of "having been parked", which UASC continuously ask to leave behind.

A factor that plays an important role is the access to correct or improper information. Often UAM have a background of knowledge and information that comes from someone else's experience; this information exerts enormous influence on the imagination of young migrants. On the other hand, they often have limited access to clear information about their legal condition, their rights and their opportunities from institutional actors. The requests operators receive from minors concern a broad range of issues and possibilities: They ask if they can move around alone even if they have provided their fingerprints, what the risks are, what would happen if they crossed the border, what they should do if the police stop them, what to say, what their rights are, what they should expect to be guaranteed, and what the possible "illegitimate practices" of the police are. Often, misunderstandings and myths are created, rumours circulate among UASC on what is convenient to say and what is not. "They think that saying, 'I wanted to study', is more honourable than telling the truth about the torture and abuse they suffered in Libya. They think talking about their dream is more beautiful."⁵⁹

- UASC all follow the same standardised path and it is as if this artificial mechanism deprives them of the "subjective complexity", of their desires and expectations, their will and the difficulties they face.

58. Interview with P., op. cit.

59. Interview with R., psychologist, educator and street operator, Rome (May 2018).

Difficulties are linked to a discrepancy in time between UASC and the system: The system is slow and it takes long, while their expectation is as short as possible. This is one of the main reasons leading to dispersion and withdrawal from the centres. However, this is also provoked by an inability to build a trusting relationship between professionals and minors, “because they do not feel they are equal in the conversation, they do not feel actively involved in their integration path”. Therefore, a compromise is needed between the institutional model of inclusion and the minors’ expectations, which is aimed more at work integration. Although it is very often in a context of exploitation, it provides more immediate answers.

- When the system is slow and complicated, its shortcomings are compensated for by paths of deviation. When minors are excluded from society, they are simultaneously included in other circuits (ghettos, informal settlements, organised crime circuits, labour exploitation, etc).

The greatest risk in reception centres is for the minors to become isolated in the systems, not open to the outside, but rather locked up in a sort of “parallel world” that does not create inclusion, but marginalisation.

Even if centres provide valid support, they are limited to welfarist answers and services. This dynamic generically tends to flatten, dehumanise and weaken people, removing their ability of actively and consciously programming their life.

- Often minors are placed in communities where the legal services work very well, so in a very short time period they have the necessary document, but there is not tangible project of inclusion and integration. There is no social infrastructure outside the community for them to play football, to go to the cinema, etc. There is nothing structured to foster real integration, everything remains within a community setting, they are not able to involve people from the outside. The geographical location of the community also clearly affects possibilities for minors: “If it is a small village in the Sardinian mountains, it may work very well on a legal level, but then you have to clash with the harshness of a

small and closed community, in which racism, distrust, and marginalisation all overlap with each other.”⁶⁰

- The young adult issue concerns those who reach the adulthood and therefore have to leave the minor protection system. This mechanism opens a series of critical issues across the reception system. In the vast majority of cases, minors leave the country of origin aged 17 and a half – this happens mostly in Egyptian migration, because this is the age best-suited for them to “negotiate” their presence in Italy. Technically they arrive at 16/17, they already know that they will stay in the reception facilities where they can attend school, have a residence permit, and then, just after turning 18, they can choose what to do. Switching back when you reach the age of 18 is the most confusing and misleading thing for an adolescent.

All respondents are in agreement that the young adult category is the most vulnerable target; they are particularly fragile and at risk. Anyone becoming an adult ends up on the street overnight and is exposed to great risk of exploitation. Unfortunately, there is no policy or service truly able to “accompany” young adults. On the contrary, an attempt is being made is to unburden the system.

Below is a characteristic incident of the situation young adults find themselves in:

“When they realise at the age of 17 years and 11 months that they followed a path that led them nowhere, something similar happens to what we faced one night in Rome, when we met a boy who was almost 18 at the food distribution for poor and homeless people: ‘What are you doing here, shouldn’t you be in the family home?’, we asked, and he answered, ‘I’m hardening myself and getting used to the cold. In a month, when I leave the reception community, at least I will have people who know me, I won’t have to start from scratch, I will have contacts, and I already know how this place works.’ This is these guys’ perspective.”⁶¹

60. Interview with S., public executive, Rome (April 2018).

61. Interview with R., psychologist, educator and street operator, op. cit.

[3.2] Trafficking

From the data of the Department for Equal Opportunities, as part of the National Anti-Trafficking Plan,⁶² it emerges that in 2017 minors in protection who fell victim to trafficking and exploitation reached a total of 200, of whom 196 were girls and 4 were boys. 46% of the minors were sexually exploited. 93.5% of them are Nigerian girls between the ages of 16 and 17.⁶³ The victims of trafficking come directly through a system they are already linked to, particularly those from Nigeria.

The journey to reach Europe managed by the trafficking circuit, “must be redeemed by those who take them to Italy, who finance the journey. From Libya they arrive in Italy, where the organisation insiders reach them. But first they let them pass through the reception circuit, so that they can access the asylum request and the residence permit.”

When the girls arrive at the police station, they fill out form C3,⁶⁴ get a temporary residence permit, escape from the centres, and reach the *madams*,⁶⁵ who then put them on the street. For years they remain tied to their *madam*, until they pay their debt back.

The experience of R., a street social worker with many years of intervention experience in the circuit of prostitution and sexual exploitation, clearly explains this mechanism through one such episode:

“Once I had a social talk with a girl who had already run away from the madam and had asked for help. She arrived in Rome and that is where we met her, in Termini Station; I carried out an interview and then we placed her in the reception circuit. This girl had al-

62. See Dipartimento per le Pari Opportunità, *Piano nazionale d'azione contro la tratta e gravesfruttamento*. See also Save the Children (2018), *Piccoli schiavi invisibili. Rapporto 2018 sui minori vittime di tratta e sfruttamento in Italia*, Rome: Save the Children Italia Onlus.

63. See EASO Rapport d'information sur les pays d'origine (COI) Nigeria. For a focused ethnopsychiatric analysis on young Nigerian girls involved in prostitution trafficking, see also Taliani, S. (2012), “Coercion, fetishes and suffering in the daily lives of young Nigerian women in Italy,” *Africa* 82 (4): 579-608.

64. C3 is the asylum request form.

65. The *madams* mediate and control the trafficking and exploitation of girls. By “sponsoring” their journey the *madam* imposes a debt that is very hard to get rid of.

ready freed herself from the exploitation network, but not from the jujù;⁶⁶ she was 16 and, afraid of the jujù, she kept saying she was 23... It was as if she were split: 'Juj must feel I'm 23', but at the same time with the non-verbal communication she made gestures saying, 'I'm not 23 years old!' [...] When the girl is still under the influence of the madam, the jujù works as a parallel dimension; it certainly inhibits you, but the girls on the street somehow have a pragmatic approach to the whole thing, it is like a chain that keep them locked down."⁶⁷

[3.3] Intervention and support action

- The strategies of intervention are extremely delicate and fragile, the margins for action are very narrow, and the possibility of gaining confidence is significantly limited in street intervention. An interviewee with field experience with a female victim of trafficking provides a good explanation:

"When a girl agrees to receive help, if she accepts condoms, if she trusts us and agrees to come to the hospital, we go for broke. There we have a three-hour window of opportunity during which we are no longer the social workers who intercept the girl for a limited time... We have three hours during which plans change considerably, we work on the relationship, on credibility, on the dignity of the girl, trying to rebuild that which criminal organisations destroy and take apart; because a victim of sexual exploitation or trafficking undergoes systematic psychological devastation and annihilation. This is especially true in the Romanian organisations, but the Nigerians are also getting more and more refined. They carry out incredibly underhanded psychological manipulation of the victims. So you implement this process of rehabilitation through the

66. In western African mythology, the *jujù* is the spirit dwelling within any object or fetish that is worshipped superstitiously. In the Nigerian connection it shapes a "*dispositif of power*" used to coerce and control girls. See Taliani, S. (2012), op. cit.

67. Interview with R., psychologist, educator and street operator, op. cit.

relationship with the girl, and it takes time, and it is difficult to complete, because the time the girl can devote to you is linked to whether the healthcare cycle allows you a greater time frame... A pregnancy termination means at least 3 medical accompaniments.”⁶⁸

Intervention strategies therefore depend on the practical possibility of intimately entering into contact with the minor, building a stable and trusting relationship.

- Professionals normally carry out “support” action and avoid, or should avoid, intrusive entry into traumatic experiences by simply requesting a voluntary tale. According to an interviewee:

“The risk is to re-traumatise the person. Instead, support means creating the right conditions for them to explain the symptoms that upset them; often children feel that something has changed and are afraid of this. But there is also a difficulty in communicating. This approach reduces the frightening nature of symptomatology, does not heal it, but ‘supports’ it.”⁶⁹

68. Ibid.

69. Interview with C., psychologist, op. cit.

Case studies

Roma Termini railway station

The phenomenon of Termini railway station in downtown Rome has a long history in the city. If in the 1970s and 1980s it was a centre of attraction and deviation for many minors who had emigrated from other Italian regions, it has now – since the end of the 1990s – started to involve foreign minors. It is mainly the minors who enter and leave the system, boys with an addiction, criminal problems, or with very difficult family situations that usually end up in Termini.

The station, for all those children who pass through it, represents a chance to be recognised, to have a role, and to be part of a group that gives you an identity. So, it became a place of opportunity for those converging randomly. There are boys dedicated to male prostitution, they are involved in drug dealing, they gain experience with robberies. It is “a map, a mosaic, where every square metre had its own specificity. [...] Now, Termini is the place of a thousand opportunities, you are there, and you are ready for anything, you quietly move from selling drugs to robbery, from robbery to prostitution etc. Termini gives you answers, gets you back into the game, it ‘activates’ you.”⁷⁰

70. Interview with I., project coordinator, op. cit.

Ventimiglia border

Ventimiglia is located a few kilometres from the Italian-French border. It represents a widely known passage through the migratory routes winding from Mediterranean Europe further into the hinterland. By November 2015 – following the terrorist attacks in Paris – France had declared a state of emergency and restored internal border controls, suspending the application of the Schengen Borders Code.⁷¹ The consequences were an almost complete inability to cross the border, a tight check at overland crossings, and a daily *refoulement* of all “irregular” migrants intercepted on the verge of crossing over.

Despite this block, Ventimiglia remains a transit city attracting many people heading to the western gate of Europe. “Ventimiglia continues to be a permeable border, in various ways that we do not even know about, but it is still a ‘bottleneck’; the presence is smaller, but it is still a city of interest to those in transit.”⁷²

By August 2017, 252 UASC were being hosted all around Liguria.⁷³ Data on “in transit” minors are more relevant and worrying – there are between 1,500 and 2,500.⁷⁴ “The situation in Ventimiglia is quite paradoxical,” argues the regional childhood commissioner, “because there is a centre that could host minors, but it is rarely full; sometimes only two beds are filled, while in the Roja camp,⁷⁵ in a state of dangerous proximity to adults, you find many minors.”⁷⁶

71. For a further focus, see Oxfam Briefing paper, June 2018.

72. Interview with D., op. cit.

73. See data from the Ministry of Labour.

74. Regarding the condition of in transit UASC, see Intersos, I minori stranieri non accompagnati lungo il confine settentrionale italiano.

75. Campo Roja is an informal settlement which gave shelter to migrants trying to cross the border. It was cleared in April 2018.

76. Interview with D., regional childhood commissioner, Ventimiglia (June 2018).

Sicily

Sicily is the Italian region of greatest interest due to UASC presence: More than 40% of unaccompanied migrant children are hosted in reception facilities in Sicily, where they have to face different critical difficulties. The first critical moment is the disembarkation processes:

“In 2016 I was working at the pier in Augusta [...] There were some tents, in 2016 many minors stayed there. The longest period was 21 days. They were living on the pier because there was no room at the reception facilities here and they could not be moved to other regions because the local authority is the one responsible for unaccompanied migrant children.”⁷⁷

In Augusta, Catania and Palermo first identification procedures take place on the pier, while in Lampedusa, Trapani, Messina, and Pozzallo migrants are transferred to hotspot centres immediately after their arrival at the pier. In hotspot centres UASC are, in many cases, detained without any official order and in breach of the legislation mentioned above.

In many cases UASC remain in primary reception facilities for 7-8 or even 10 months, and often they wait from 3 to 10 months for their guardian appointment;⁷⁸ furthermore, they have to wait several months to receive a residence permit or to submit an application for international protection. “Documents are the main problem [...] and after a while they lose faith and trust in the centre, they believe that we are doing nothing, that we are not taking care of their situation.

77. Interview with R., psychologist, educator and street operator, op. cit.

78. Ibid.

[...] The way these documents arrive, it is not logical: Some only wait 3 months, some are still waiting after a year [...] A year later none of them have a guardian.”⁷⁹ When the minors do indeed turn 18, “the destiny of 80%, 90% of them is to end up in the Mineo centre, and this means that everything you created until that moment is thrown into the garbage... [...] because the Mineo centre is a death sentence for civil rights, it is a hellish place”.⁸⁰

79. Interview with P., op. cit.

80. Interview with R., op. cit.

Further reading

On the local policies for the reception of minors in Italy, see: <http://bit.ly/2G3TF2q>.
For a focus on the movements of minors between Greece and Italy, see: <http://bit.ly/2V0zRI8>.

For a UASC Atlas, see: <http://bit.ly/2GXZUpb>.

UASC operator guidelines: <http://bit.ly/2LktPjf>.

For a socio-juridical analysis of the UASC system in Italy: <http://bit.ly/2IXBUVo>.

Data on UASC from Egypt: <http://bit.ly/2V17u6B>.

Overview of UASC in Ventimiglia: <http://bit.ly/2Ybf14L>.

For a review of the monitoring practices implemented in UASC reception facilities in Sicily, see: <https://uni.cf/2VKi9qt>.

Updated monthly report on UASC (data of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy) at: <http://bit.ly/2GVxX07>.

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CHILDREN CAST ADRIFT

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The mapping of the child protection framework in Italy – or lack thereof – highlights how malpractices lead minors to social exclusion and even exploitation. The lack of clear guidelines, pathways, the stark incoherence between the legislative framework and the practices followed in day-to-day reality, the lack of an efficient guardianship system to guide the child through the extremely complex reception and asylum procedure in Greece, the extremely poor identification and reception conditions, together with the lack of individualised treatment and mapping of durable solutions, including minors' own needs and desires, has led to a fragmented ad hoc child protection system, filled with shortcomings, greatly dependent on individual persons; persons – sometimes randomly chosen – who will greatly affect a child's life.

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