



PREVENTING AND FIGHTING EARLY LEAVING  
FROM EDUCATION & TRAINING WITH AI

**stAI**

Act before it happens: Preventing and fighting Early  
Leaving from Education and Training with Artificial  
Intelligence

ELET Risk Factors National Report - Italy

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EDUCATION FOR THE FUTURE

## PROJECT INFORMATION

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## Summary of ELET Desk Research

### 1. ELET - General National Scope

Italy faces a significant challenge with early school leaving (ESL) and school drop-outs.

According to the 56th Report on the social situation of the country by CENSIS, Italy's ESL rate for young people aged 18-24 is 12.7%, rising to 16.6% in southern regions, compared to the EU average of 9.7%.

diploma

The percentage of 25-34 year-olds with a diploma in Italy is 76.8% (71.2% in the South), below the EU average of 85.2%.

For tertiary education, 26.8% of 30-34 year-olds in Italy hold degrees, dropping to 20.7% in the South, against the EU average of 41.6%. Italy also has the highest number in Europe of NEETs (youth not in education, employment, or training) at 23.1%, with the southern regions reaching 32.2%, compared to the EU average of 13.1%.

For the implementation of "Actions to prevent and combat early school leaving", the Ministry of Education and Merit has allocated €500 million through the Ministerial Decree 170 of 24 June 2022 with which it funded 3,198 educational institutions.

Guidelines and operational instructions have been issued as well to schools to address territorial differences and reduce drop-out rates.

**Table 1: Early School Leaving and Educational Attainment in Italy**

| Indicator                     | National Average | Southern Regions | EU Average |
|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------|
| ESL Rate (18-24 years)        | 12.7%            | 16.6%            | 9.7%       |
| Diploma Holders (25-34 years) | 76.8%            | 71.2%            | 85.2%      |
| Degree Holders (30-34 years)  | 26.8%            | 20.7 %           | 41.6%      |
| NEETs (15-29 years)           | 23.1%            | 32.2%            | 13.1%      |



## 2. ELET Risk

## Factors

### 2.1 Socio-Demographic Factors

The risk of ESL is significantly influenced by socio-economic status, parental education level, family income, and employment status. In Italy, foreign-born youths face higher dropout rates (34%) compared to natives (14.8%). Males are also at a higher risk of dropping out than females, with dropout rates of 20% for males and 13% for females.

**Table 2: Early School Leaving by Demographics**

| Demographic Group  | ESL Rate (%) |
|--------------------|--------------|
| Foreign-born Youth | 34           |
| Native Youth       | 14.8<        |
| Males              | 20           |
| Females            | 13           |

### 2.2 Institutional Factors



needs in

Schools must adapt to meet diverse student a rapidly changing technological landscape.

Educational institutions face challenges such as outdated facilities, overcrowded classrooms, and under trained teachers. Italy's education spending (4% of GDP) is below the European average, hindering infrastructure and educational innovation.

## 2.3 Individual and Family Factors (Academic Performance and Engagement, Attitudes towards Education and Training, Family Dynamics and Support, Mental Health and Well-being)

The number of foreign minors in Italy has consistently risen, now exceeding one million. They account for approximately 35% of the foreign population, compared to Italian minors who represent about 15% of the Italian population. Despite a decline in elementary school attendance among foreign students, they remain a notable portion of the student population, especially in kindergarten and elementary school.

Overall, efforts to integrate foreign students still face challenges, with higher risks of early school leaving and repetition compared to Italian peers.

**Table 3: School Dropout Rates by Parental Education**

| Parental Education Level | Children at Risk of Poverty/Social Exclusion (%) |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| ISCED 0-2                | 52                                               |
| ISCED 3-4                | 30                                               |
| ISCED 5-6                | 9.5                                              |

## 2.4 Community and Societal Factors

Young people drop out of school due to a mix of personal and external factors. Personal factors include learning difficulties, lack of support and guidance, poor study habits, and low motivation. Societal factors, such as economic and sociocultural conditions,

student-  
to

dropout rates.

teacher preparedness, and the quality of  
teacher relationships, also significantly contribute

## 2.5 Technology and Digital Divide

The digital divide exacerbates educational disparities, particularly for families lacking access to technology. During the COVID-19 lockdown, 12.3% of young people (20% in southern regions) did not have a computer at home, and 57% did not have a personal computer.

**Table 4: Digital Access Among Young People**

| Indicator                          | Percentage |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| Young People without a computer    | 12.3       |
| Young People without a personal PC | 57         |

## 3. Current Trends, Implications, and Perspectives in Addressing Early Leaving from Education and Training (ELET)

### 3.1 National Public Incentives and Initiatives

- **National Operational Programme For Schools (2014-2020):** €2.8 billion allocated for over 52,343 projects across 8,000 schools, benefiting over 2.39 million students, teachers, and adults.

- **Ministry of Education and Merit:** Funded 1,600 projects targeting school drop-out factors, focusing on social inclusion and hardship in disadvantaged areas.
- **Intervention Plan for Reducing Territorial Gaps (2020):** Aimed at improving learning outcomes in Calabria, Campania, Puglia, Sardinia, and Sicily, initially starting with Campania and Sicily.

### 3.2 Private Incentives and Initiatives

- **Save the Children Italy's "Fuoriclasse":** Targets school dropout in disadvantaged areas, emphasizing continuous evaluation and expansion to combat educational poverty.
- **Diverse "Best Practices":** Documented by the Autorità Garante per l'Infanzia e l'Adolescenza, highlighting effective national practices.

### 3.3 Concrete Experiences and Practices

- **FaSI - Fare Scuola Insieme:** Research report analyzing databases of good practices against early school leaving.
- **Gold Database of INDIRE:** Over 700 educational experiences in various fields, including environmental education and new technologies.
- **Heritage and Intercultural Project:** National observatory on cultural institution-school partnerships.
- **LOST Project:** National survey on the economic cost of school dropouts and third-sector roles.

### 3.4 Challenges and Obstacles

- **Six Key Correlations:** Poverty, lack of systemic actions, weak preventive interventions, standardized education systems, disjointed restorative actions, and coordination issues.
- **Implicit Dropout:** Students who graduate but lack essential skills, contributing to over 20% of the dropout rate.
- **Addressing Implicit Dropout:** Requires early assistance and targeted measures throughout the educational process.

## 3.5 Policy Implications and Recommendations

- **Increasing Flexibility in Education:** Policies promoting alternative education and improving systems for recognizing students' skills.
  - **Non-formal and Informal Educational Strategies:** Programs like the Doors Project and Fuoriclasse emphasize motivational workshops and study support.
  - **"Our Good Star" Project:** Building educational communities to combat school dropouts.
- 
- **Monitoring and Intervention Actions:** Initiatives from regions like Friuli Venezia Giulia and the municipality of Milan, with support from third-sector actors like the Observatory on Educational Poverty.
  - **National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP):** Funding to increase kindergarten places, reduce class sizes, extend full-time education, and enhance digital equipment and STEM skills.

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## Result from interviews with school teachers

### 1. Background and context

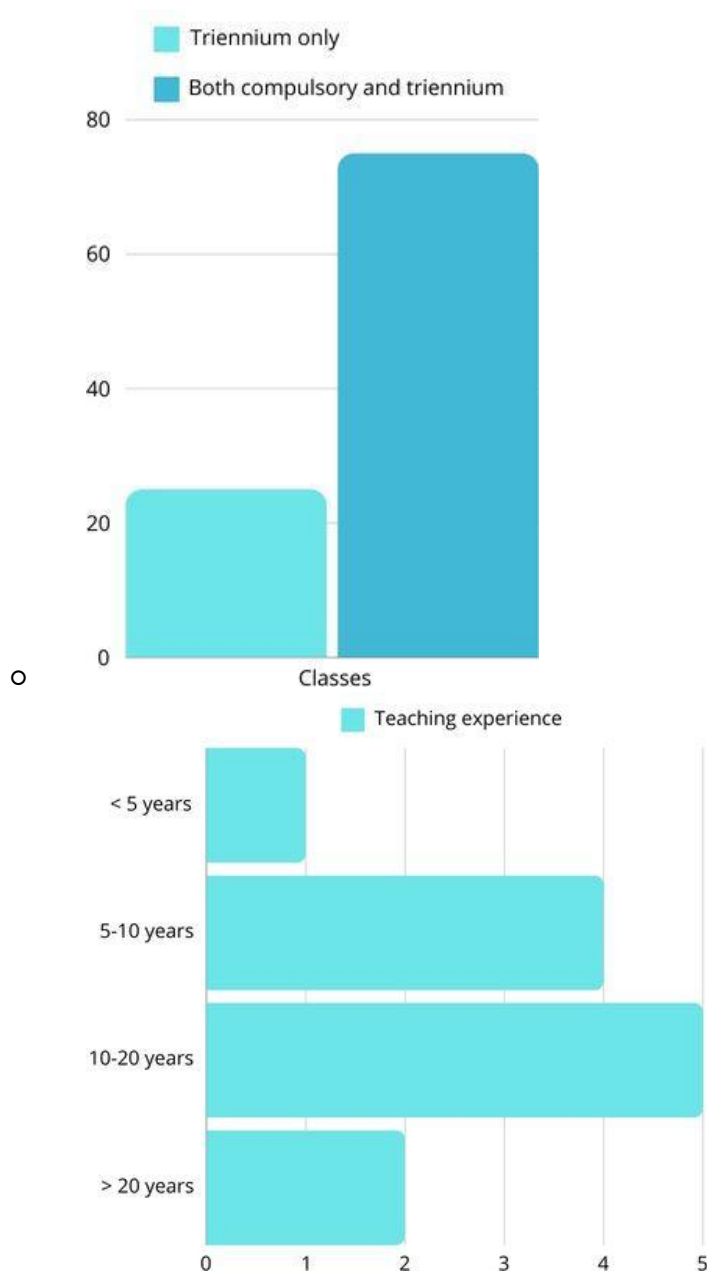
#### 1.1 Analysis of the interview sample

In Italy, 12 teachers in total were interviewed on the topic of ELET: 3 from the North, 5 from the South, and 4 from the Central regions of the country. The majority of the sample (9 teachers) work with both compulsory school students and those in the final three years of secondary education. Most participants have been teaching for 10 to 20 years, while 2 teachers have over 20 years of experience in predominantly big schools, with a student population ranging from 500 to over 1,000.

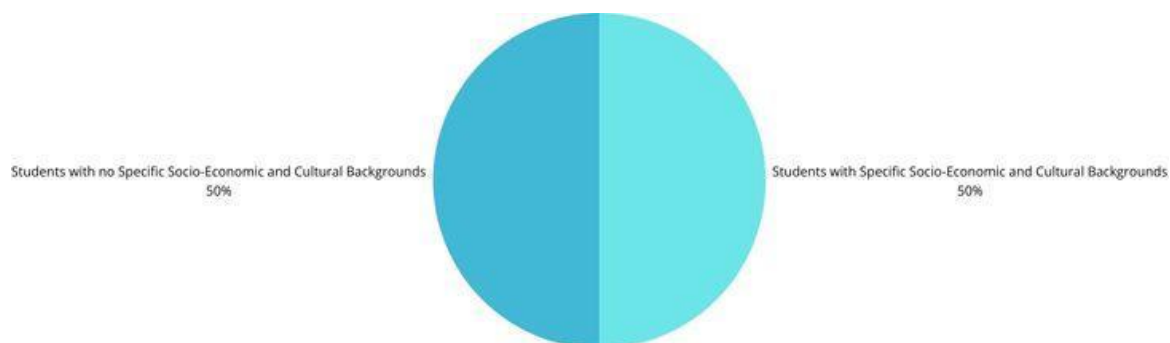
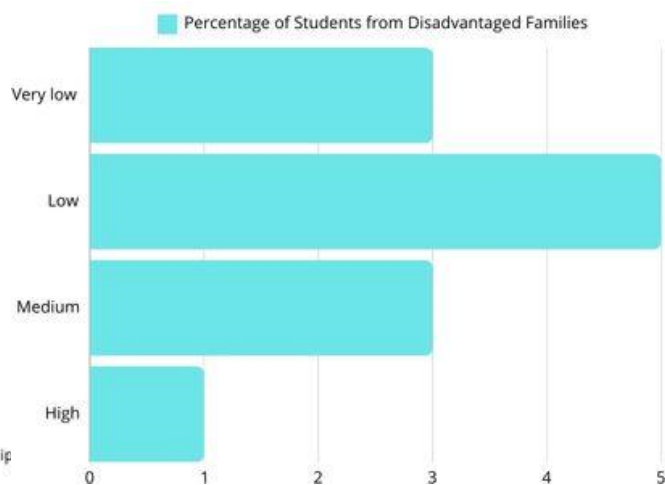
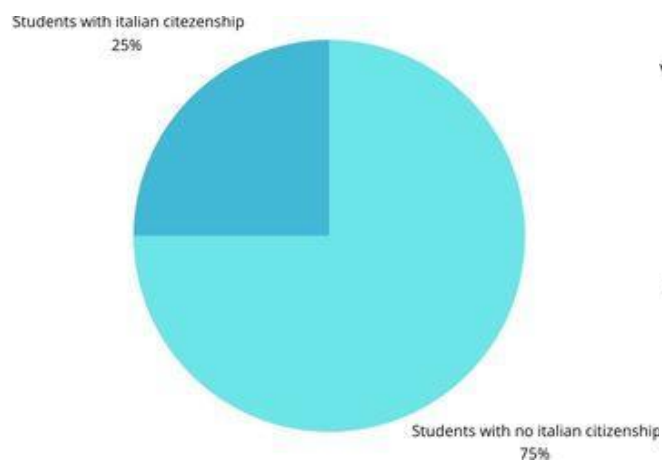
All the respondents find the teaching profession either very gratifying or at least somewhat satisfying: all participants agreed that the most rewarding aspect of their job is working with the students, while they are strongly discouraged by the educational system organization. The socio-economic background of the students predominantly indicates a low percentage of families from disadvantaged socio-economic environments, with an average percentage of students holding non-Italian citizenship.

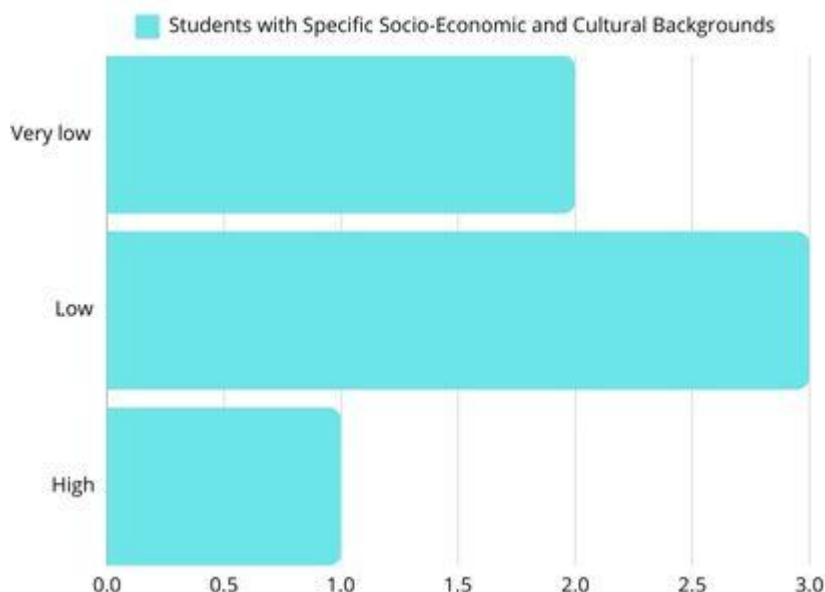
All the respondents reported having students from disadvantaged families in their schools, though these constitute a low percentage overall. Non-Italian students are present in 9 out of the 12 schools, with an average representation. Half of the schools have low percentages of students from challenging socio-economic backgrounds. Notably, one school reports a high percentage of students, children of convicts.

## 1.2 Teachers' profile



## 1.3 Students' profile





## 1.3 Observations

The distribution of teachers across different regions provides a comprehensive perspective on educational experiences and challenges.

The consistency in finding teaching rewarding suggests a general level of satisfaction in exercising this profession, despite the varied socio-economic contexts.

The presence of students from disadvantaged backgrounds and foreigners highlights the diversity within the school population and underscores the need for tailored educational strategies.

## 2. Main factors influencing school avoidance and dropout

### 2.1 Dropout Rates Among Students: Perspectives from Interviewed Teachers



School dropout represents a significant challenge for the Italian educational system. 83% of interviewed educators report facing school dropout in their respective schools. In the few instances where the phenomenon was not reported, the educators primarily work in “Licei”, high schools that generally prepare students for university and where academic motivation is typically higher. These institutions invest significantly in redirecting struggling students to prevent dropout.

## 2.2 Factors Influencing School Dropout

Analysis of the data provided by teachers working in schools with dropout cases highlights a range of heterogeneous factors with common points:

1. **Personal and Family Factors:** Academic performance and student engagement, attitudes towards education, family dynamics and support, as well as mental health and well-being are all critical elements. Students who exhibit poor performance in various subjects and face family issues are those “so called” at risk.
2. **Inappropriate Choice of School Curriculum:** A common factor identified refers to the inappropriate choice of school curriculum. When students opt for a path that does not align with their expectations or (learning) abilities, they often lose motivation. In such cases, reorientation or mentoring can be effective solutions. However, after the age of sixteen, many students with low academic interest tend to leave school and directly enter the workforce.
3. **Emotional Fragility and Depression:** Some students, particularly those who are more emotionally fragile, suffer from depression and other psychological diseases. The lack of a clear boundary between compulsory and non-compulsory schooling complicates the situation, making communication between school and families complex, especially when not compulsory.
4. **"Implicit" School Dropout:** A concerning phenomenon is the "implicit" school dropout, where many students attend classes but do not achieve significant results, especially during the two years of compulsory education. These students participate only because they are required to, without gaining any kind of benefit from the school environment.

## 2.3 Special Social Situations

Students from fragile social backgrounds are those most susceptible to dropping out of school.. These include:

- **Disadvantaged Socio-Economic Contexts:** Families children that are unable to adequately support their both psychologically and economically.
- **Family Issues:** orphaned or parentless students, students experiencing situations of violence, children of prisoners or separated parents.

### 3. School support systems for reducing school dropout and Family Involvement

#### 3.1 Evaluation of School-Family Communication

When teachers were asked to evaluate school-family communication in their own institution, they all provided very positive feedback: 67% of respondents rated it as "Excellent," while the remaining 33% considered it "Good." This consensus indicates a high level of

satisfaction with the available communication tools and methods.

#### Tools and Methods Used:

- **Electronic Register:** Widely used, it allows parents to constantly monitor grades, absences, and disciplinary notes. This tool provides timely notifications regarding critical situations.
- **Institutional Channels:** The school's official website and social media channels serve as informational platforms and provide much useful information.
- **Periodic Meetings:** Parents and teachers can meet throughout the school year to discuss student progress.
- **Translation for Foreign Families:** For families who do not speak Italian, translations and linguistic support are organized to ensure effective communication.

#### 3.2 Importance of School-Family Communication in Preventing School Dropout

All interviewed teachers believe that good communication between the school and the family is crucial for preventing and combating school dropout. Constant and transparent communication is seen as a key component for the educational success of students, especially those who show emotional fragility or learning difficulties.

#### Motivations and Benefits:

in

must collaborate with the school to help the student

progressing and improving.

- **Awareness and Monitoring:** Effective communication makes parents aware of their children's difficulties, allowing timely interventions. Monitoring absences and academic results helps prevent dropout situations.
- **Prevention of Demotivation:** The family can be involved in establishing common strategies before the student loses motivation, intervening quickly when signs of difficulty arise.
- **Collaboration and Synergy:** Open and constant communication creates a support network between school and family, facilitating the understanding and management of the student's issues.

### 3.3 Challenges and Limitations:

- **Parental Disinterest:** Some teachers report that parents do not always respond to communications, nor show interest in their children's issues, increasing the risk of school dropout.
- **Language Barriers:** For foreign families, language can be a barrier, but schools are making significant efforts to overcome this obstacle through translations and linguistic support.

In conclusion, school-family communication is considered not only indispensable due to the available tools but also essential for preventing school dropout. It actively involves families in their children's educational journey and addresses potential difficulties promptly.

### 3.4 Evaluation of National Education Systems for Addressing School Dropout

When asked to assess the effectiveness of the systems provided by the National Education System to combat school dropout, teachers gave varied responses. 7 out of the 12 teachers interviewed considered these systems to be effective.

### 3.5 Strengths and Advantages of the National Education System



The teachers who evaluated the existing educational systems positively offered several justifications:

- **Attention to Students in Difficulty:** In recent years, school leaders have demonstrated significant attention toward students facing difficulties, including those engaged in competitive activities or coming from foreign families.
- **Mentoring:** The one-on-one mentoring activity, introduced this year, has been deemed crucial for supporting students.
- **Willingness to Continue:** The effectiveness of the systems largely depends on the willingness of both parents and students to continue their studies. However, limitations exist in extracurricular training, indicating a need for a more structured after-school program.
- **Material Support:** Providing books and materials to students is another form of support recognized as beneficial.
- **Use of NRRP Funds:** Some teachers appreciate the use of NRRP funds to address school dropout, including supplementary psychological support.
- **Diverse Experiences:** Recent years, despite being negatively impacted by the COVID situation, have seen the implementation of various supportive activities.

### 3.6 Criticisms and Areas for Improvement

Despite the positive feedback, some teachers raised criticisms:

- **Teacher Training:** There is a lack of adequate training for teachers, which should be more actively promoted.
- **Student Overload:** The availability of afternoon courses may be excessive, risking the overload of students.
- **Insufficient Resources:** Current resources are not always sufficient to meet all needs.

### 3.7 Problematics of National School System

Conversely, some teachers believe that the national systems are inadequate for addressing school dropout:

- **Inadequate Institutional Support:** Teachers feel abandoned at the institutional level, lacking the necessary support. For example, the presence of a

psychologist is limited due to a heavy workload.

- **School-Level Commitment:** Greater commitment often comes from individual schools rather than from the ministry. Bureaucracy frequently hinders the effectiveness of interventions.
- **Bureaucratic Hurdles:** The complexity of bureaucracy and institutional processes limits the effectiveness of school initiatives.

In summary, while a significant portion of the educators acknowledges the effectiveness of the national systems implemented to combat school dropout, highlighting various useful tools and initiatives, others believe that substantial improvements are still needed, particularly in terms of institutional support and available resources.

## 4. Teaching practices and education assessment

### 4.1 Teaching Practices and Assessment in Maintaining Student Motivation

The interviews conducted with teachers unequivocally indicate that teaching practices and educational assessment both play a crucial role in maintaining student engagement and motivation. The majority of responses underscore several critical aspects pertaining to this matter.

- **Fundamental Importance:** All respondents agree that effective teaching practices and assessment are essential for maintaining student involvement and motivation. These tools help educators understand student progress and counteract disengagement.
- **Adaptation and Modernization:** There is a consensus that teaching methods must evolve with societal changes and the needs of students. Modernizing teaching approaches and assessments to reflect current realities is crucial. Assessments today are not only about performance but also about effort and overall improvement throughout the year.

## 4.2 Assessment Methods:

- **Impact on Awareness:** Evaluations play a key role in making students more aware of their efforts. Some educators have noted that students prefer numeric grades over competency-based assessments because numeric grades better quantify their efforts. This highlights the importance of clarity in how students' work is assessed.
- **Complications with Numeric Grading:** While numeric grading is commonly used, it often does not fully represent students' preparation and can involve psychological components. There is a need for more comprehensive evaluation methods that align with students' actual competencies.

## 4.3 Challenges and Limitations

- **Lack of Engagement:** When students are not interested or motivated, changing teaching methods may not always resolve the issue. In such cases, some educators believe that vocational paths might offer more success and satisfaction for disengaged students.
- **Administrative and Financial Constraints:** Educators face challenges such as inadequate compensation, excessive bureaucracy, and insufficient psychological support for students. These issues hinder their ability to implement innovative teaching practices effectively. Furthermore, there is a call for the Ministry of Education and Merit to provide better financial support and clearer guidelines on assessment practices.

## 4.4 Importance of Communication and Human Connection:

- **Building Relationships:** Effective communication and a strong personal connection between teachers and students are essential. Educators emphasize that a lack of communication can negatively impact student motivation and engagement.
- **Teacher Roles in Student Engagement:** Especially in high school, where students face a different environment compared to earlier schooling, the role of the teacher becomes crucial. The achievement of students, particularly



motivation

those who are fragile or struggling, is greatly enhanced by ensuring they receive support and

## 4.5 Need for Intrinsic Motivation:

- **Improving Internal Drive:** There is an emphasis on encouraging intrinsic motivation rather than relying solely on external evaluations. Self-assessment and understanding the purpose behind their learning are seen as important factors in sustaining student motivation.

## 4.6 Conclusions

In summary, the interviews underscore that effective teaching practices and assessment methods are central to student engagement. The common threads in the responses point to the need for modernized teaching approaches, clear and meaningful assessment methods, improved support for educators, and the importance of strong teacher-student relationships in maintaining student motivation.

## 5. Main Challenges Faced by Teachers

Teachers face a variety of challenges within their schools, each linked to complex and dynamic factors. The principal difficulties encountered by teachers include:

### 5.1 Adaptation to Curricular and Methodological Changes

- **Impact of New Subjects:** Teachers consider it essential to guide students in selecting subjects to prevent them from struggling with topics for which they are inadequately prepared. Providing clear guidance before students make definitive decisions is crucial.
- **Educational Flexibility:** Adapting teaching methods to meet the needs of new generations and evolving circumstances is a constant challenge. Education must be flexible and keep pace with social and technological changes.

### 5.2 Relationships with Students and Families

- **Charismatic Role:** Teachers need to be recognized as positive and charismatic figures who can build a trustful relationship with students. This is vital for maintaining a motivating learning environment.
- **Communication with Families:** Establishing and maintaining effective communication with families is essential. Teachers must create a bond with parents to support students, especially in the presence of difficulties.

### 5.3 Inclusion and Adaptation to Students

- **Student Diversity:** Including students with diverse backgrounds and various difficulties, such as disabilities or language barriers, represents a significant challenge. Teachers must adapt their teaching to meet the individual needs of each student.
- **Guidance and Support:** Providing personalized support, such as remedial and enrichment courses, is crucial to help students overcome difficulties and prevent school dropout.

### 5.4 Resource Management and Bureaucracy

- **Resource Limitations:** The available resources are not always sufficient to address all student issues. Teachers must manage the resources effectively and seek additional support when necessary.
- **Bureaucracy and Delays:** Bureaucratic hurdles and institutional red tape can hinder the effectiveness of interventions. Teachers often report that the lack of institutional support and delays from social services further complicate the situation.

### 5.5 Student Motivation and Attention

- **Digital Distractions:** Students are frequently distracted by technological devices and the digital world, making it more challenging to maintain their attention and interest in lessons.



engaging.

- **Motivation and Engagement:** It is essential to find strategies to motivate and engage students, using tools such as technology to make teaching more

## 5.6 Professional Training and Development

- **Teacher Training:** Continuous professional development is necessary to improve teachers' skills and ensure that everyone works in the same direction. Training should also include techniques for personalizing teaching, not just for certified students.

In summary, teachers face a range of complex challenges, from adapting to curricular changes and managing relationships with students and families to navigating bureaucratic difficulties and motivating students. Each aspect requires careful consideration and targeted actions to ensure an effective and supportive educational environment.

## Results from interviews with policy makers

### 1. Background and context

This report presents the findings from interviews conducted with six policy makers regarding the phenomenon of school dropout in Italy. The interviewees primarily hail from the North and South of the country: 67% of them work in school management, while the remaining 33% operate at an administrative level. The majority of participants

have over 10 years of professional experience.

A central point of the interviews concerned the understanding of the school dropout phenomenon in Italy, focusing on its social and structural motivations, as well as possible educational and institutional solutions. More than half of the interviewees expressed the opinion that school dropout is not yet fully understood in the country, both in terms of its causes and potential solutions.

All interviewed policy makers agree that the phenomenon requires further investigation and significant interventions, emphasizing the urgency of addressing it with greater depth and commitment.

## 2. Causes and challenges

### 2.1 Main causes of school dropout

The data collected highlight various factors influencing the phenomenon of school dropout.

Among the primary socio-demographic factors are age, gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, and cultural background. In particular, the cultural background of the family of origin has been identified as the most significant element.

In addition to these, institutional and individual factors are also highlighted, such as academic performance and engagement, attitudes towards education and training, family dynamics and support, mental health, and well-being. Community and social factors, including peer influence, employment opportunities, cultural attitudes towards education, and social support networks, also play a significant role. Among these, the social degradation of the context of origin is indicated as one of the main causes of student demotivation. Peer relationships and students' personal attitudes follow.

Finally, the crucial role of educational policies and practices in addressing and mitigating the phenomenon of school dropout is emphasized.

### 2.2 Risk factors analysis

The insights gathered from interviews with policy makers highlight several key risk factors for students who intend to drop out of school.. Among these, students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and those with family problems or dysfunctional families emerge as the most prominent.

those with low levels of linguistic competence or literacy, are particularly vulnerable. Students with diagnosed mental disorders and those belonging to ethnic or cultural minorities are also at risk. Another critical aspect is the "invisible dispersion," where students fail to achieve the required/expected competencies by the end of their educational path.

Policy makers have also indicated that in areas with high socio-cultural degradation, students are further exposed to the risk of school dropout and are often targeted by dangerous activities.

Finally, it was emphasized that the age group most vulnerable to jeopardizing school is between 15 and 18 years old, followed by the age group between 11 and 14 years old, which represents 33% of the total.

## 2.3 Main challenges

The main challenges facing the Italian education system regarding the issue of school dropout are numerous and complex. The lack of qualified personnel has been

identified as the most significant issue, followed by resistance to change within educational institutions. Limited financial resources represent an additional obstacle, especially when it comes to providing support to students with special educational needs or from difficult family backgrounds. Despite efforts to improve through the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), which includes significant funding for guidance, there is a clear need to invest more in teacher training, encouraging more modern teaching methods beyond traditional lectures.

A crucial aspect highlighted during the interviews is the need for increased communication and collaboration among various stakeholders. Indeed, schools cannot combat dropout rates on their own; they must actively engage with local authorities, community organizations, and social services. Only through a well-coordinated support network can there be hope of effectively addressing this complex issue.

## 3. Policy effectiveness

## Italian

### 3.1 Evaluation and Enhancement of Policies to Combat School Dropout

Current policies and programs within the Italian educational system aimed at preventing and combating school dropout have received differing evaluations from the interviewed policymakers.

Nearly all respondents confirmed the existence of such initiatives, but perceived effectiveness varies significantly. Some view the policies as relatively ineffective, noting that while programs like Erasmus and other innovative initiatives can be motivating, their practical implementation is not always consistent.

Others, however, regard the policies as moderate to highly effective, especially when ministerial programs and initiatives such as the National Recovery and Resilience Plan

(NRRP) are properly applied. For instance, the Orientalife program from the USR Campania, which focuses on orientation and local networks, is considered a positive measure.

To enhance effectiveness in addressing school dropout, policymakers suggest several changes. Recommendations include increasing financial resources, providing more extensive staff training, and implementing new technologies. Additionally, the importance of collaborative and inclusive strategies is emphasized, involving all stakeholders and the local social fabric. Investing in networks of public and private entities to ensure that students feel part of a life project is deemed crucial for preventing dropout.

While no specific regional or local policies were highlighted as particularly effective, the value of provincial and regional steering committees and support groups for inclusivity of students with special educational needs is acknowledged.

### 3.2 Data Collection and Monitoring Practices for School Dropout Rates

The data used to measure and monitor school dropout rates primarily include enrollment and attendance statistics, with variations depending on the source. Most policymakers indicated that data on enrollment and attendance are the core metrics utilized. Some also incorporate graduation rates and frequency data. Official data from INVALSI

are particularly noteworthy, as they track performance in second-grade classes and compare these with third-year middle school data, also monitoring repetition rates.

Regarding the types of student data collected in schools, responses varied but commonly included academic performance and absenteeism. Other schools also gather information on behavior, with some monitoring class coordinators focusing on absenteeism and related issues. A comprehensive approach includes demographic characteristics, behavior, academic performance, and attendance records.

Access to student data varies. Generally, it is not accessible for external entities, although there is a national standardization effort, particularly through the INVALSI assessments and the SIRI system, which collects and integrates data at a national and sometimes European level. However, standardization of data collection is not consistently applied at the local level.

Regarding the collection of data on key risk factors for school dropout, most responses indicated that schools do not systematically collect those. While some schools are aware of family backgrounds, a structured approach to capturing and analyzing risk factors related to dropout remains limited.

### 3.3 Current and Future Role of Technology in Addressing ELET

Current utilization of technology to support efforts in reducing school dropout rates varies significantly. While some respondents indicated that no specific technological tools are currently employed, others highlighted the use of advanced software, particularly those leveraging artificial intelligence (AI), to enhance educational personalization and student monitoring. These AI-driven tools are envisioned to assist teachers by providing customized learning experiences and real-time student monitoring, although their effectiveness may be limited in addressing psychological and relational issues.

When considering future roles for technology and data analysis in preventing school dropout, there is a strong consensus on the potential for real-time monitoring and personalized interventions. The application of predictive analytics and AI is anticipated to play a crucial role, allowing for targeted actions based on data insights. AI could be instrumental in customizing educational programs and facilitating better school-to-work



transitions, though its integration needs careful consideration and study to optimize its use as a supportive tool for educators.

In the long term, strategies to effectively prevent and combat school dropout include increasing financial resources, enhancing staff training, involving families, and implementing continuous support programs. The integration of new technologies, such as AI, should be coupled with a strong focus on building supportive educational

communities and maintaining good relationships among students and educators. These combined efforts are seen as essential for creating a more comprehensive approach to addressing school dropout rates.

## Conclusions

The insights from interviews with teachers and policymakers on the issue of early school leaving present both overlapping perspectives and divergent points of emphasis. Teachers, working directly with students, often highlight immediate, observable factors contributing to dropout rates, such as lack of student motivation, family support, and engagement in the learning process. They point to challenges like adapting to curricular changes, building strong relationships with students and their families, and managing resource limitations effectively within the school environment. In contrast, policymakers tend to focus more on broader socio-economic and structural factors. They emphasize the role of socio-demographic elements like age, gender, socio-economic status, and cultural background, pointing out how these factors influence the educational trajectory and dropout rates. Policy discussions often revolve around the effectiveness of existing policies, the need for comprehensive data collection and monitoring, and the potential of technology in addressing dropout rates.

Both target groups acknowledge the significance of family dynamics and socio-economic status as critical factors, but while teachers focus on the day-to-day interactions and immediate interventions needed within the school context, policymakers are concerned with long-term strategic solutions and policy efficacy. Teachers stress the importance of maintaining student motivation and engagement through innovative teaching practices and continuous professional development, highlighting the psychological and relational aspects of teaching. On the other hand, policymakers are more likely to discuss structural changes, such as improving the socio-economic conditions of disadvantaged areas, enhancing educational policies, and ensuring sufficient funding and resources for educational institutions.

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Moreover, while both actors recognize the need  
collaboration, teachers focus on the necessity of  
communication and connections with families and local

communities to support students effectively.

Policymakers, however, emphasize the need for a coordinated approach involving various stakeholders, including local authorities, community organizations, and social services, to create a supportive network for students.

Additionally, both teachers and policymakers agree that providing robust orientation programs during middle and secondary school can significantly reduce dropout rates and motivate students to complete their studies.. These programs can help them make informed decisions about their educational paths, thereby fostering a more engaging and supportive learning environment.

Thus, while the views of teachers and policymakers align in recognizing the multifaceted nature of early leaving from education and training , they diverge in their focus on immediate versus long-term solutions, the emphasis on personal versus structural interventions, and the specific challenges and strategies they prioritize in addressing this critical issue.