



COUNTRY REPORT ON THE ACTION PLAN ON ADULT LEARNING: ITALY

(March 2011)

This report - as well as the reports from 30 other countries that were represented in the working group on the Adult Learning Action Plan - has been carried out, on behalf of the European Commission, by GHK in cooperation with Research voor Beleid.

This product has been more specifically drawn up on the basis of country-experts' analysis of existing national literature and the Confintea IV-report. In finalising the report, comments and feedback from the National Authority have been taken into account as much as possible; however, the report does not necessarily reflect an official position of the Member State.

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1 CONTEXT

1.1 Socio-economic context

Italy has a calculated land mass, which excludes the independent states of the Vatican and San Marino, of 301.336 sq km. It consists of the mainland and islands, the two main islands being Sardinia and Sicily. There are the central authority, regional authorities, provinces and *comuni* (communes). The main religion is Roman Catholicism but this is not enshrined in the Constitution and is therefore not a State religion. Having said this, the "New Concordat" of 1984 (undersigned by Bettino Craxi) has kept intact the Catholic Church's predominance within the Italian state. Article 8 of the Italian constitution affirms the liberty of all religions, but this article integrates the preceding one regarding the agreements of the Catholic Church with which the Italian state has a concordat. The state also has agreements with the other religions.

To date, no legislation has been enacted to establish parity and equality between the different official religions present in Italy. The presence of the Catholic Church and its organisations is very strong at territory level and in the area of adult education.

The official language is Italian which is used as the language of instruction for most of Italy's educational system. However, in certain areas traditionally inhabited by people who speak different languages (e.g. German and Ladino in Trentino Alto Adige), use of these other languages is authorised for administrative and educational proceedings.

According to ISTAT, the official government statistics agency, the population for 2009 was 60,325,805. The majority is female: 31,043,612. There are more females than men in all areas of the peninsula and islands, the largest number of females being in the North West, amounting to 8,224,980. The North West has the largest population: 16,009,931. This area contains the traditional heartland of Italian industrialisation and includes Lombardy and Piedmont as well as Liguria. These regions are characterised by their manufacturing cities of Milan, Turin and the port city of Genoa that together form the 'industrial triangle.' (Veneto, in the North-East, is also being spoken of in the same breath because of its strong SME-driven economy). The second largest concentration is in the South with 14,165,085 people and females amounting to 7,285,922. Italy has the highest percentage of older adults (65+) in the European Union. The percentage difference between the 0-14 year age group and the 65+ age group has been rising steadily from 135.9 per cent in 2004 to 137.8 per cent in 2005 to 139.9 per cent by 1 January 2006, a situation that has implications for adult education provision in the country.

Like many other European countries, especially Southern European countries, Italy has been transformed from a country of massive emigration to one of immigration. Internal migration from South to North has been an important feature of Italy for most of the 20th century. This type of migration has progressively been diminishing from the 70s onward but has experienced an increase in recent years. Furthermore, the lack of work opportunities is compelling highly qualified young people and researchers to leave the country for the USA and elsewhere. The percentage of such

a 'brain drain' is higher than in other EU states. Italy, however, has experienced high levels of immigration for years, with many immigrants entering at Lampedusa, a frontier island with regard to immigration from North Africa. The largest percentage of immigrants given 'permessi di soggiorno' (permission to stay) is that of citizens from Eastern and Central Europe (40 per cent) amounting to 625,899 immigrants. Africans, including Sub-Saharan African migrants and North Africans, come second with 570,799. In January 2007, there were also 537,922 migrants from countries in the EU and 419,964 migrants from Asia. The Romanians, with their country of origin now being an EU member, are the largest group of more than 600,000. They are followed by the Moroccans (387,000) and Albanians (381,000). The presence of migrants is uniformly distributed throughout the peninsula.

There are 2194,000 unemployed as per official statistics released by ISTAT in March 2010. The rate of unemployment in the 15-64 age group is 8.8 per cent. The rate of unemployment among the male population is around 7.8 per cent while that among women is 10.2 per cent. There is a growing unemployment rate among youngsters in the 15-24 age bracket with the rate of unemployment standing at 27.7 per cent. The highest levels of unemployment are in the Southern regions. What these statistics do not tell us is the amount of people among the unemployed who are engaged in the 'underground economy' which has traditionally been very rampant in the Southern regions, but extends to all regions in the country. This hidden, underground sector is an important feature of the Italian economy and is believed to amount to somewhere in the region of 27 per cent of the country's GDP. The ISTAT statistics have also been criticised on the grounds that they do not include among the unemployed those people who have given up on registering for employment. The relevant figures feature among those concerning the 'inactive population.' According to estimates in 2009, the GDP per capita was 23,000 Euro.

1.2 Historical-ideological context

Italy experienced a post-war shift from being a monarchical state to being a republic. Italy's post-war politics was marked by the hegemony of the Christian-Democratic party at the helm of a centrist coalition involving alliances with liberals, social democrats and republicans. The 1993 reform sought to lead to greater stability with alternations between centre-left and centre-right governments. Nevertheless there is still political instability.

Adult Education (referred to in Italy as *educazione degli adulti* or EDA-) has had an interesting history, mainly characterised by the *territorio* approach, meaning that there are variations in adult education provision available from region to region and locality to locality.

There are landmarks in Italy's adult education history, notably the attempts at radical industrial democracy during the revolutionary Turin years after the first World War through the factory councils. During this period, a more liberal form of adult education, provided through so-called popular universities, made its presence felt and varied from place to place. The post-war period was characterised by several initiatives in adult education. Many attempts were carried out to combat illiteracy, which was widespread throughout Italy and especially in the Southern regions. There was a shift in Italy at the time, from the popular schools established in 1947, to courses in basic education intended to enable learners attain a primary school level of education.

As a result of negotiations between the metal workers and employers in 1973, Italy witnessed the introduction of the "150 hours" (collective remunerated leave for study purposes), a radically innovative and critical experience with respect to the classist nature of instruction and society, brought about by the workers' movement as a trade union achievement guaranteeing the right to study to all and collective cultural

development. The 150 hours were intended not for vocational purposes but to allow workers to attain the recognised level (*titolo*) of secondary education first grade. Many courses were held by women for women both at the level of higher secondary school and at university level (known as *corsi monografici* or monographic courses). The courses were open to young women, unemployed women and housewives and have contributed to the formation of a collective feminist consciousness.

The post war period was characterised throughout Europe and the rest of the world, by educational efforts geared towards 'social reconstruction' and de-Nazification. Aldo Capitini who was a peace and anti-fascist activist, set up a series of adult education centres called Centri di Orientamento Sociale (COS - Centre for Social Orientation) intended as sources of education for a grassroots 'bottom-up' democracy (*Omnicrazia*). These centres initially started in Perugia and subsequently spread beyond this city to other localities in Umbria and beyond. The drive to tackle widespread illiteracy continued in the 1960s through what was then regarded as an innovative means: the use of television which made its mark in Italy in the late 1950s. Alberto Manzi devised a programme of teaching literacy via Italy's State television channel, Rai, called 'Non e mai troppo tardi' ("it's never too late to learn"), earning a UNESCO award. Other important landmarks are the experiments in social and community activism, containing an obvious adult learning component, developed and engaged in by Danilo Dolci in Trappeto and Partinico near Palermo.

In more recent years, mainstream adult education has been developed within the context of lifelong learning as presented by the EU, and very much dependant on ESF funding made available through Regions, Provinces and Communes. More recently, we have seen the establishment of the Centri Territoriali Permanenti (CTPs or Permanent Territorial Centres), which were intended to foster a more integrated approach to adult education including various agencies in the *territorio* such as schools (*scuole serali*), universities and vocational education agencies. More recently they have been reorganised as 'provincial centres for the instruction of adults' (CPIA), in an effort to improve the nature of governance with regard to adult education in the territories. They have been granted administrative, organisational and didactic autonomy, as they are accorded a pivotal role in what is envisaged as a network of adult education providers in the provinces.

In 2009, the social partners devised activities to help training workers and fight the effects of the economic crisis, mainly through the use of inter-professional funds (*Fondi paritetici interprofessionali*) for continuing training. The law, no.2 of 2009 - concerning measures against the crisis – establishes that such funds should encourage workers' participation in training activities during a work suspension period. Therefore in 2009 some of these funds have financed the training activities for different categories of potential beneficiaries, such as workers on redundancy funds, on short or no working hours, on solidarity contracts, on apprenticeship contracts or project workers.

That same year, the social partners have sought to strengthen the process of bilateral organisations aiming at assigning tasks not only relating to vocational training in different sectors/branches¹, skill needs and training promotion, but also relating to the concrete organisation and management of welfare activities and/or services.

Since their establishment in 2004, the inter-professional funds (*Fondi paritetici interprofessionali*) have substantially increased the number of enterprises and

¹ Such as metal products, machinery, food products, market and non-market professional services, and training services.

workers that have been assisted²; these funds have allocated more than 1,000 million euro for the financing of workers' training. Despite these developments and the public assistance provided to enhance continuing training, smaller firms and those operating in traditional sectors are not inclined to let their employees be trained as they often do not enjoy the necessary economies of scale to do so. While larger enterprises (i.e. those having more than 250 employees) are led to consider training both as a recurrent activity³ and an element of strategic planning for the enterprise's competitiveness, only 23.3 per cent of small firms offer training opportunities to their personnel, just one out of seven employees being thus involved.

On 17 February 2010, an agreement on training guidelines ("Linee-guida per la formazione nel 2010") was introduced so that social partners can encourage investments in training and education.

This agreement by the government, regions and social partners, to pursue a more efficient synergy between public and private resources for training, provides for the definition of a shared organisational model for implementing activities and using resources. In line with this agreement, social partners intensified their efforts to promote workers' training in 2010, and ensure the relative funding through the strengthening of the means to inquire about the situation of sectors/branches (i.e. setting up new observatories and reinforcing those already in place), the establishment of new bilateral tables and the reinforcement of bilateral systems already in place, and training of shop stewards operating at company level on matters relevant for training and labour policies.

The Ministry of Labour is planning to start a number of activities in 2010 to encourage social dialogue and reinforce information and training addressed to social partners' representatives on issues concerning training and labour policies.

In accordance with the above mentioned Agreement and with the primary objective of harmonising and coordinating individual planning (regional and Funds-related), four regions signed agreements with the social partners and Inter-Professional Funds. Other regions have opened the required negotiations to this end, setting up specific (and permanent) discussion tables with a view to sharing strategies for training and labour policies.

Activists, often connected with social movements, can also be found who provide a learning dimension within their work. Their activities revolve around such issues as solidarity with Third World countries and movements, social solidarity economy, fair trade, community theatre (e.g. Teatro Giolli) and other social justice and environmental issues. Other important institutions are the Universities of the Third Age and the age non-specific Università della Libera Età which are adult education agencies catering for people of all ages and not just older adults. Finally the Catholic Church and its organisations have a strong presence in the various territories. They make their presence felt also in adult education. The courses they provide are mainly in such areas as the preparation for marriage, becoming parents etc. There is a strong presence, especially in the North, of Catholic voluntary organisations which, with other Catholic associations, are involved in the education of immigrant foreigners, including adult education.

² At present, about 42 per cent of enterprises and 59 per cent of employees are assisted by these type of funds.

³ 80.7 per cent of large enterprises have provided some opportunity for training, with the involvement of 40 per cent of their personnel.

2 POLITICAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Policies and strategies

In more recent years, one finds mainstream adult education being developed within the context of lifelong learning as presented by the EU and very much dependant on ESF funding made available through the regions, provinces and communes. Lifelong learning is the all-embracing concept characterising the school reform resulting from law no. 53 of 2003. The dominant discourse, as elsewhere, is neoliberal, which also reflects the discourse of the current centre-right government.

There does not seem to be an all embracing strategy for lifelong learning in Italy at the moment. Initiatives with regard to lifelong learning are left to the various agencies within the different territories throughout Italy in what seems to be conceived of as a series of different networks of adult education providers. These networks include evening courses (*corsi serali*) to help persons over the age of 16 to complete their school leaving certificate and also attend courses intended to lead to the acquisition of higher diplomas. The CTPs and now the CPIAs are meant to be at the heart of this system of governance, based on a network conception of different adult education provision. Within the networks, one can find courses that lead to certificates representing the successful completion of the first cycle of instruction (primary and secondary first level), courses leading to the attainment of certificates representing the successful completion of secondary education (second level), courses in functional literacy, and literacy courses for immigrants. There are authors who have criticised recent documents and working groups (such as the Minister's White Book on Welfare and the De Rita Study Commission's Report on the future of VET in Italy) for placing too much emphasis on the role of companies in catering for the education of adults rather than providing an all-embracing and systematic strategy for permanent education. In February 2010, the National Guidelines on Vocational Training were defined.

As far as vocational adult education is concerned, article 5 of law 53 (8 March 2000) stipulates that employees in public and private employment, who have worked for five years with the firm can request suspension from work as educational leave for a total period, throughout one's working life, that does not extend beyond eleven months. Educational leave is geared towards the completion of compulsory education, the obtaining of a second grade *titolo*, the *laurea* diploma (degree) and to participate in educational activities that are different from those imposed and financed by the employer. During this period, the employee retains his place of work. The employer can deny such leave in the case of clear administrative exigencies.

Article 6 of the same law states that workers, both employed and unemployed, have the right to follow vocational education courses throughout their life in order to enhance their knowledge and professional competencies. The State, regions and local entities ensure provision in this regard is in keeping with article 17 of law no. 196 enacted on 24 June 1997. Provision must be made for personalised learning pathways that are certified and credited in accordance with national and European practices. The formation can be chosen either by the employee or else provided by the firm in accordance with regional or specific plans agreed with the social partners.

A reform of university education is being proposed by Minister Gelmini. The reform calls for cuts in the number of courses being offered by universities. It remains to be seen what effects this reform will have on the development of university continuing education.

As indicated earlier, the system of adult education in Italy is now about to be reformed, with the transition from CPTs to CPIAs. The centres will enjoy autonomy in terms of their set-up and didactical approaches.

2.1 Legal framework

A Ministerial Ordinance of 1997 saw to the functioning of the CTP to provide a direct service in adult education and combine the right to learning among adults with the right to obtaining vocational preparation and guidance. A 2000 accord involving government, regions, provinces, communes and communities (see Eurydice-Italia, 2009/2010), p. 52) was meant to convert the system of adult education provision from that of a 'closed system' to that of 'network organisation' so that the education of adults will benefit from the bringing together of both the formal and non-formal aspects of a person's learning. As a result, persons can develop personal competencies in different areas which can be certified and are transferable. Law 53 of 2003 concerning school reform includes among its principles the idea of lifelong learning. To this end, the law stipulates the need for a systematic plan of funding to boost higher technical education and adult education.

A ministerial circular of 2006 assigns a pivotal role to the CTPs for the integration of foreign youth between 15-18 years through the relations which these centres have established with vocational education agencies in the territory. In October 2004, the education ministry (MIUR) and other ministries, including those of work and social policy, as well as representatives of regions and the *comuni* struck an accord, regarding the evaluation of prior learning credits obtained, with a view to enabling 18 year-olds to further their education to the highest levels of learning possible. (EC, 2008-2009, p. 163).

The legal structure for the administration of adult education is as follows:

- National level assigned to the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, and the Regional Representative Body;
- At the regional level, responsibility for action regarding adult education is assigned to the various suitable agencies. The regional government also defines the criteria for the implementation of the required actions to be carried out in the region;
- Local level assigned to provinces and municipalities.

As indicated, the system concerning the education of adults in Italy is being reformed. The ministerial Decree of 25 October 2007 envisages the constitution of CPIAs. As evidenced by the ministerial note of 22 April 2009, the management and organisation-didactic structure of the CPIA will form an integral part of the second grade secondary education set-up.

3 STRUCTURAL AND FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Structural framework

Once again, the structure currently being envisaged for adult education in Italy is one in which the efforts of agencies at the provincial level are coordinated by the CPIA through a system of governance characterised by a network. The province, responsible for programme planning and coordination, constitutes the pivot in this regard. All the actors, including schools, vocational education centres, NGOs, and the *comuni* are meant to cooperate within the context of such a network. The province has the task of ensuring the flow of relevant information to the region via the provincial educational observers' network, with the purpose of monitoring the

system's process of governance. With regard to NGOs participating in adult education, these are now organised in the form of a national union called UNIEDA (Unione Italiana di Educazione degli Adulti - Italian Adult Education Union), which promotes adult education carried out by cultural associations, out-of-school associations, the popular universities, Third Age universities, Libera Eta` universities and initiatives that publicise the right to learning through contractual and legal rights and through demands forthcoming from workers, youths, women, older adults and pensioners.

3.2 Financial framework

Adult education (CTP and evening courses) obtains its funding from the resources made available by the State, the Regions, local entities and public and private agencies, which are then integrated with the resources provided by the EU. Generally speaking, no fees are charged for enrolment in the CTPs. In order to ensure a more effective use of financial resources allocated for the implementation of actions, a Fund for Higher Technical Education and Training has been established. The Fund consists of resources coming from: the Ministerial budget connected to paragraph 634, the fund established as a result of law no. 440 of 18 December 1997, and the resources allocated by CIPE (Comitato Interministeriale per la Programmazione Economica) for under-utilised areas as well as higher technical education and training projects. The ultimate aim is to improve the level of employability of young people who successfully complete the second cycle of education and training (MIUR, 2008-2009).

When it comes to continuing professional development, the principal means of funding are 1) the ESF, 2) national law 236 of 1993, which established a fund for vocational education, 3) other laws, namely n.144/1999 (started operating in 2000) and n.53/2000 (started operating in 2001) and, 4) funds similar to the Sectoral Training Funds established in 2001 and which became operative in 2004 (Eurydice-Italia, 2009/2010).

4. PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION IN ADULT LEARNING

The main target groups, judging from the literature, are the unemployed, people who have not completed their formal education at the primary, secondary and higher diploma levels, employees regarded as 'at risk', and immigrants. The obstacles, as intimated above, are many, not least the existence of a strong 'underground economy' that absorbs people either being classified as 'inactive' and those registering for employment who therefore find no incentive to follow courses in order to improve their situation. Other obstacles that stand in the way of participation include the existence of people who have given up on registering and who have little faith in the welfare system and its provisions (*amortizzatori sociali*), including its sporadic retraining programmes. One other obstacle is the lack of decent employment opportunities especially in the industrially underdeveloped South. The situation varies from region to region.

Another obstacle for further participation is literacy retention (*alfabetizzazione di ritorno*) regarded, in policy reports and other documents, as constituting one of the greatest challenges for adult education. Poor retention rates are often the result of a lack of a stimulating post-literacy environment for those who are judged to have attained functional literacy. The newly literate can suffer because of a lack of opportunities for continuing education or employment, both of which can create a literacy-rich environment.

5. CLUSTERS OF MEASURES

5.1 Guidance and counselling

Directive no. 455 of 1997 states that educators, in collaboration with other personnel at the Centre (CTP and, in the future, CPIA), are to include in their list of competencies the ability to welcome and listen to as well as analyse the needs of the various participants. They should also provide individual evaluation and tutoring. At the moment, there is no envisaged provision of a structured programme of guidance and counselling for employees except for those currently provided by employment centres, the network of private consultancy agencies, associations, and structures available in industrial zones and, in certain cases, by the firms themselves. ISFOL (the Central Institute for Research on Instruction, Formation, Guidance and Work) carried out a survey of current provision and of the demand for guidance services throughout the country.

5.2. Flexibility

Priority is being given to a modular approach to adult learning so that the learners can build their education profile gradually. The Second Chance programmes on offer are held in settings tailored to the participants' learning needs and are carried out in a manner that accommodates the adult learners' life and family commitments. These settings also occur either within or outside the formal education system and are meant to be conducive to the obtaining of secondary level qualifications.

The CPIAs are being granted a certain degree of autonomy in terms of didactical choices and set-up. This autonomy is also meant to allow for greater flexibility in terms of accommodating the needs of different participants within the territory.

At higher levels of learning, a number of online Master's programmes are being offered by universities and institutes, which serve as a means of professional re-orientation. Fees are charged for these programmes.

5.3. Mobilisation and publicity

The main strategy for mobilisation, as indicated above, is that of devolving the organisation of adult education to the various regions, localities and municipalities. This devolution is intended to render adult education planning and provision closer to the users of the services. In order not to suffocate initiatives taken by the various agencies involved, a network form of organisation or governance is being developed. This network requires a great degree of coordination by the administrative bodies concerned, especially the CPIAs. Importance is attached in policy documents (EC, 2008-2009) to the issue of guidance and counselling within the context of lifelong learning. Every year, the CPIAs offer courses/modules and the adult learners choose the ones in which they enrol. The main emphasis is placed on Second Chance education. Efforts are being made to provide learning opportunities for adults, who did not avail themselves of their 'first chance' education to obtain a qualification (*titolo*). In order to improve further the participation of adults in educational programmes, the National Assembly of UNIEDA (Unione Italiana di educazione degli adulti – the Italian Union of Adult Education), held in Rome, on the 22 January 2010, proposed, among other things, the establishment of regional registers of the agencies involved in adult education.

5.4 Outreach

The centres are pivotal to the network of adult education providers throughout the *territorio*. This fact implies that outreach is part and parcel of adult education

provision. The notion of an administrative network at the regional, provincial and local levels is geared towards a more decentralised type of provision.

5.5 Financial incentives

The major financial incentive is that of rendering participation free of charge in many of the courses offered by the centres, especially those leading to a *titolo*. In order to further improve the participation of adults in educational programmes, the National Assembly of UNIEID, held in Rome, on the 22 January 2010, proposed, among other things:

- The extension of tax deduction for instruction and education carried out in the context of permanent education. This fiscal measure would apply to all citizens pursuing educational courses offered by accredited adult education agencies and associations;
- Providing, through the ESF, financial assistance of at least 300 Euros a year for members of the socio-economically weak strata who intend to follow learning courses.

6. THE FIVE PRIORITIES OF THE ACTION PLAN ON ADULT LEARNING

6.1 Analyse effects of reforms in other educational sectors on adult learning

The major feature of the reforms is to connect many of the courses provided at the centres, therefore leading to a *titolo* provided at the mainstream secondary level. The idea is of a difference in approach at the centre leading to a similar end: a *titolo* equivalent to that obtained at the end of secondary schooling. It remains to be seen whether the difference in approach to teaching developed at the centres, would have an effect on the mode of teaching inside mainstream secondary schools. One of the goals of the 150 hours experiment in the past was precisely to change the way of teaching in schools as a result of the new approaches meant to have been developed in the 150 hours project. Whether this or the opposite occurred remains a bone of contention. A certain degree of articulation between the state system of adult education and the formal schooling system is being proposed.

6.2 Improve the quality of provision and staffing

The basic complement of CTPs consists of five educators (*docenti*) working in four areas: literary material, mathematics, foreign languages, and technology. In the evening schools, the complement depends to a large extent on the needs of the type of courses provided. It seems that the preparation of the *docenti* as adult educators remains a challenge, especially if it is intended that they engage in their task in a manner that is different from that of teaching mainstream students. If this reform is to be put into practice, there must be more information about the qualification and training levels of the adult education personnel involved, and plans for adequate provision in this regard will be required. The difference in approach to the teaching of adults from conventional methods used in the schooling system requires training programmes for adult educators. Occasional courses are provided by NGOs and universities to prepare persons to teach specific areas of adult education. One example is provided by the Università per Stranieri di Siena which has just announced a call for people to enrol in the course leading to a first-level Master's degree in 'Contents, Methods and Approaches to teach the Italian Language to Foreign Adults.' The University of Padova has advertised a post-*laurea* course (*corso di alta formazione* or advanced preparation course) targeted at adult educators. There

seem to be no specific prerequisites, in terms of qualifications, for adult educators in Italy.

There is no system of effective quality control for continuing education. Standards and quality levels are safeguarded through the institute accrediting the adult education agencies, as a result of decree no. 166 of 2001. Accreditation of vocational education is carried out in relation to the following:

- Basic compulsory vocational education: the pathways pursued within the system of vocational education and apprenticeship;
- Higher learning: comprising post-compulsory vocational education, higher technical education; and higher education within and beyond university;
- Continuing education for employees, in relation to CIG (Cassa Integrazione Guadagni or Wages Guarantee Fund) as well as education for the unemployed.

In order to be accredited, the private and public agencies are judged according to these criteria: logistic and administrative capacities, economic situation, professional competencies, track record of efficacy and efficiency, and the quality of articulation with the social and productive system in the territory.

6.3 Increase the possibilities to achieve a qualification at least one level higher

Emphasis is placed on Second Chance education. Efforts are being made to provide learning opportunities for adults, who did not avail themselves of their 'first chance' education to obtain a qualification (*titolo*). They can now obtain this qualification via this Second Chance opportunity. As stated earlier, the Second Chance programmes on offer are held in settings tailored to the participants' learning needs and are carried out in a manner that accommodates the adult learners' life and family commitments. These settings also occur either within or outside the formal education system and are meant to be conducive to the obtaining of secondary level qualifications. Qualified commentators analysing the results of the monitoring exercise state that the data indicates that despite the large amount of courses being offered with regard to information technology and foreign languages, and courses leading to diplomas and certificate, the number of *titoli* and certificates awarded is still low by comparison. The CTPs are considered a vehicle to address this issue as well as that of sustaining the most 'resistant' sector of the adult population.

6.4 Speed up the process of assessing and recognising non-formal and informal learning for disadvantaged groups

There have been debates in Italy regarding the recognition of competencies acquired at the workplace, but these seem to have had little effect on firms. The introduction of the Citizen's Formative Booklet (*libretto*), as a result of the legislative decree no. 276 of 2003, also had little effect. This booklet was meant to register the competencies acquired during the apprenticeship, during work periods, as a result of continuing professional development, etc. Research carried out by Isfol-INDACO, indicates that two out of every three firms that offer training to their employees do not use an evaluation scheme and it is only in certain cases that there is certification of the acquired skills. As will be indicated in the next section, the results of monitoring exercises in Italy have pointed to the fact that CTPs are, in the main, being frequented by people who do not belong to the most disadvantaged social groups and often possess a *titolo superior* (a high level qualification). The socio-economic status of CTP attendants has been interpreted in certain quarters as indicative of a need to develop a sound system for the validation and certification of competencies and recognition of credits.

6.5 Improve the monitoring of the adult learning sector

ISFOL generally does comprehensive monitoring, mainly on the basis of statistics gathered through questionnaires rather than through 'on the spot' visits. In the adult education section of the Eurydice-Italia report (page 56), there are statistics concerning the number of courses on offer at the centres and number of participants per course. These statistics were forwarded by the centres (CTPs and the second-grade Evening Course Administrators) and gathered by the National Agency for Scholastic Autonomy, under the aegis of the General Direction for Instruction and Higher Technical Formation.

The first national monitoring of adult education in Italy was carried out by the Ministry of Public Instruction with regard to the academic year 1998/99 following the establishment of the CTPs. Other monitoring exercises were also carried out. The data and other information provided are said to indicate an increase in the provision of courses targeted at the acquisition of a diploma or vocational qualification in line with European Union guidelines and the Lisbon objectives regarding the development of basic skills and raising the educational attainment levels of the adult population. This monitoring has served to indicate the presence of EDA throughout the entire Italian territory. It also indicates the presence of many types of agencies and service providers with main and satellite centres – around 2,400 types of services – to which one must add centres in prisons. The monitoring service also sheds light on provision for the integration of immigrants; 120,000 immigrants are making use of this service. This integration is the most positive aspect emerging from the result of the monitoring exercise. The CTPs' difficulty in attracting those with few or no qualifications is a negative aspect raised by the report. Generally, the CTPs are frequented by people who already have achieved a qualification (including the *titolo superiore*). Qualified commentators who analysed the findings from this exercise pointed to the need for greater and more effective guidance and to improve the system of certifying competencies and recognition of credits.