The results of the project
"IT – Implementation of the European Agenda for Adult Learning"

SUMMARY

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The authors are:

Valentina Benni: Introduction

Luisa Daniele: Abstract; chaps. 1-2; Conclusions; Recommendations; Essential Bibliography

Giovanna Spagnuolo: chap. 3

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Abstract

National and international sources identify some permanent features associated with the quality of competencies in Italy: the low percentage of Italians with secondary or tertiary level qualifications (58.3% against a European average of 75.1%); the high early-school leaving rate in compulsory education and training (20% of 15-19-year-olds); the high percentage of NEETSs (23.2% of 15-29-year-olds, OECD average 15.8%); the low take-up of education and training initiatives (6.6% against a European average of 9.3%).

It is evident that, faced with these indicators, in the long-term, it is not possible to combine a high level of development with a low level of education and training. The intention is to meet these challenges by promoting adult learning, which, according to the definition given by the European Commission, includes any formal, non-formal and informal learning for people between 16 and 65 years of age.

Against this background, the "IT-Implementation of the European Agenda for Adult Learning" project pursued a two-fold objective: on one side, to raise awareness among national and local stakeholders of the priorities of the European Agenda for Adult Learning (AL); on the other, to share the experience of successful initiatives in adult learning, which can then be transferred to less developed contexts.

The contents of adult learning were addressed in the project following a thematic and territorial approach. In this connection, the work was developed around three thematic axes (new technologies; non-formal and formal learning; active citizenship and social cohesion), to work out the priorities of the European Agenda regarding the most important policies and strategies in Italy. Further, the methodology of the focus group was used in the different areas of the country to highlight the benefits of peripheral experimentations and contribute to their implementation. Indeed, at the three national conferences (Turin: ICT; Naples: active citizenship and social cohesion; Florence: formal and informal learning), the representatives of central and regional authorities were presented with the recommendations and open issues collected in the territories.

The discussion that took place in the two years of activity involved major participation. The most important and transversal consideration made is the need to go beyond the phase of experimentation, particularly in the field of new educational technologies and in the field of recognition and accreditation of prior learning. A multi-actor model of governance is invoked, which has, at the same time, a pivot in central public administration and also in local public administration, for the regions.
Beginning from such considerations, various Recommendations are presented that offer achievable and sustainable guidelines, as a contribution to innovating policies and practices regarding AL at local and national level, in terms of improved access to training and to educational opportunities for adults.

Introduction

The present work constitutes the Report to the European Commission on the results of the "IT - Implementation of the European Agenda for Adult Learning" project which was concluded in October 2014. The project was 75% financed by the EACEA - Executive Agency for Education, Audio-visuals and Culture, within the Lifelong Learning Programme, and 25% by national co-financing.
The objective of the project was twofold: on one side, to raise awareness among national and local stakeholders of the topic of Adult Learning (AL); on the other, to share the experience of successful initiatives in adult learning, which can then be transferred to less developed contexts.

For this reason, the report is addressed both to the actors involved in planning and monitoring processes, that is to say, the decision-makers at regional and central levels, particularly in the employment and education sector, and to operators of continuous training and education for adults, including experts and employers' associations.

In the report, the reader will find, on one side, results and evidence emerging from the project activities carried out in the period 2012-14 and, on the other, Recommendations aiming at providing sustainable proposals to increase the quality of the system of adult learning, also in relation to the new 2014-2020 Programming Period.

Specifically, the results of the following are presented:

- the activities for territorial animation, communication and promotion of networks carried out through focus groups (nine) and the national conferences (three);
- the online communication campaign on adult learning themes;
- the database (http://adultlearning.isfol.it) containing a directory of important initiatives on the subject of AL;
- the work of the Italian Steering Committee for the project.[1]

The Recommendations - based on reflections made during these activities, as well as on analyses deriving from interviews with key stakeholders, from Italian and European literature and from the interpretation of the data - intend to provide evidence-based indications according to the logic of "knowing for deciding", regularly adopted by the main programmes financed by the European Union. The objective of this was to contribute towards promoting more adequate political and organizational decisions on the subject of adult learning for the country.

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1. The Steering Committee for the project is formed of representatives of the following: Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Education, Office for Coordination of the Regions, Union of Italian Provinces, National Association of Italian Councils, Indire, Leonardo da Vinci National Ag

Enjoy your reading and let us keep on learning together!

1. The scenario of the adult learning policies in Italy

Below are presented the main issues relating to the quality of human capital in Italy, collected from national and international sources, and underlining some long-term features in the national scenario:

1. a low percentage, equal to 41%, in the 25-64-year-old population, has achieved at least an upper secondary school qualification (ISCED 3) against a European average of 48% (*Education at a glance*, OECD, 2013);
2. of these, only 15% of Italians in the 25-64 age group have achieved a university level of education (ISCED 4 and 5) in comparison to an OECD average of 32% (*Education at a glance*, OECD, 2013);
3. a fifth of the 15-19 year-old population has dropped out of school without completing their compulsory education or training (*Education at a glance*, OECD, 2013);
4. in Italy, more than one young person out of five between 15 and 29 years of age (23.2%) is unemployed, not in education or in professional training (known as NEETs). Italy ranks sixth in this age bracket compared to all the OECD countries (OECD average 15.8%) (*Education at a glance*, OECD, 2013);
5. the percentage of 25-64-year olds that had taken part in education or training initiatives in the four weeks prior to the survey rose to 6.6% in 2012 (against 5.7% in 2011), but remains below the European average (9.3% in 2012) (*Eurostat Data*, 2012).

It is evident that, faced with these indicators, it is not possible, in the long-term, to combine a high level of development with a low level of education and training, all the more so when dealing with a world of work and production that is expanding and becoming increasingly more global. The intention is to meet these challenges by promoting adult learning, which, according to the definition given by the European Commission, includes any formal, non-formal and informal learning, for people between 16 and 65 years of age.

Lifelong learning in the Italian and community political vision has the double function of contributing to employability and economic growth, on one side, and to responding to broader social challenges, particularly that of social cohesion, on the other. Public policies in this field have to respond essentially to two strategic challenges: stimulating private investment in adult training and education, and ensuring a broader access to training and educational opportunities.

In the period 2012-2014, big steps were taken towards building a regulatory framework of reference for adult learning and a system of identification, recognition and accreditation of prior learning. These range from providing a definition of permanent learning and setting out minimum service and process standards and the requirements for creating networks for adult learning, in Law No. 92 of 2012, to defining admission standards , the processes to be followed and certification, in Legislative Decree No. 13 of 2013. It ought to be remembered that, following the reform of constitutional law, in Title V,

"Regions, Provinces, Municipalities", of 2001, aspects concerning education, professional training and employment became the shared responsibility of State and Regions. This opened up a process of governance in some respects horizontal, complex and multifaceted, which however led to some important results, consisting in agreements between State, Regions and local bodies. These normative innovations were the result of a broader process of reform that started in 2009, and culminated in the period December 2012-January 2013 with the adoption of a substantial package of agreements ,among the central administration and the regions, that constitute the backbone of the Italian adult learning strategy. The primary objective is to increase access to education and training for 16-65 year-olds, but also to integrate services and government funding, for the purpose of improving its effectiveness. These agreements include:

a) the agreement on lifelong learning policies and the pathways to identify the general criteria and priorities to promote and support the creation of territorial networks;
b) the agreement concerning the referencing process of the Italian system of qualifications to the European framework of qualifications for lifelong learning (EQF - Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of 23 April 2008);
c) the agreement concerning the definition of the Italian system for lifelong guidance;
d) the agreement concerning the definition of specialization paths in higher education and technical training;
e) the agreement concerning the guidelines on the subject of traineeships.

The process of reform and implementation of the regulations on apprenticeship in the unified code approved with Legislative Decree No. 167/2011 deserves a special mention: apprenticeship is identified as a main gateway to enter the labour market for young adults. In implementing this decree, two agreements were approved: a) the agreement of 15 March 2012 regulating the contents of training in apprenticeship leading to a qualification and professional diploma and hence fulfilling compulsory education and training requirements; b) the agreement of 19 April 2012 regulating the Italian system of certification of the competencies acquired during an apprenticeship.

For the sake of brevity, this report does not include non-formal education offered at "popular universities", or continuous lifelong education courses held at universities and academies offering tertiary education. These sectors are, however, covered by the Recommendations.

2. Approach and results of the project

The following paragraph illustrates the general aims, the specific objectives, the target groups and the activities contained in the "IT - Implementation of the European Agenda for Adult Learning" project carried out in Italy in the period September 2012-October 2014.

The Italian EU AL Agenda project

General aims:

1. sensitizing and favouring debate among national and local stakeholders on the theme (also in relation to higher education and active aging)
2. spreading and "treasuring" important experiences in the country, in relation to adult learning;
3. promoting transferability of significant experiences to less developed contexts.

Specific objectives:

1. spreading greater knowledge of EU adult learning strategies
2. spreading knowledge of adult learning policies;
3. promoting the debate about better structuring of adult learning systems, and reinforcing the main components (planning, management, monitoring and evaluation);
4. stimulating discussion on modalities and tools for validating non-formal and informal learning in the sector of ICT and social inclusion for adult learning;
5. spreading knowledge of the state of the art of the national referencing process in relation to the European framework (EQF).

Activities carried out:

1. an online communication campaign on adult learning oriented in particular towards the targets considered;
2. a databank (http://adultlearning.isfol.it) containing a directory of experiences relating to AL (also in order to integrate the future EPALE - Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe - active starting from 2014 as a platform for information exchange between national coordinators);
3. activities of territorial animation, communication a promotion of networks through focus groups and three national conferences on the following themes: a) Promotion and diffusion of ICT in adult learning; b) adult learning and non-formal and informal learning; c) adult learning for active citizenship and social equity;
4. Report to the European Commission on the outcome of the activities, in relation to the new 2014-2020 planning.

The target groups

Target groups (stakeholders)

• *provincial and regional representatives in charge of planning adult learning policies*
• *operators in vocational training; operators in university training and education; CTPs (Permanent Territorial Centres)/CPIAs (Adult Learning Centres); the third sector; firms*
• *representatives of the Regional School Authorities*
• *representatives of social organizations representing trade unions and employers*

Target groups (final beneficiaries):
• *migrants;*
• *disadvantaged individuals;*
• *employed and unemployed adults over 55;*
• *employed and unemployed adults with low skills.*

2.1 Activities carried out and results achieved

Within the "IT-Implementation of the European Agenda for Adult Learning" project the following activities were carried out. A brief description is provided, followed, in the next chapters, by an analysis of the key conclusions and the proposals that derive from the work carried out.
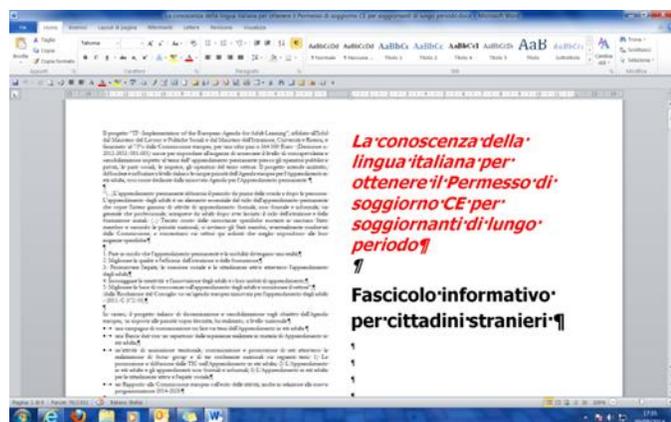
Box 1 *Online communication campaign on adult learning themes*

With regard to the information campaign, the Steering Committee decided to aim its campaign especially at long-term foreign residents waiting for residence permits. This gave this group a greater insight into the Italian Proficiency Test, which is necessary to obtain this permit, in terms of its content and what they must do to access it at CTP/CPIA centres (CTP - Permanent Territorial Centres, CPIA - Provincial Centres for Adult Learning).

A dossier entitled "Knowledge of the Italian language to obtain an EC residence permit for long-term residents. Information package for foreign nationals." was prepared to give information and be an initial guide for foreign long-term residents who wish to enter into an Integration Agreement in Italy. The information pack is available in six

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languages, English, Italian, Romanian, Albanian, Arabic and Chinese, and can be downloaded from the project website at http://adultlearning.isfol.it/.

A newsletter has been sent to the various CTPs/CPIAs of the Ministry of Education and to the job centres of the Provinces, containing the PDF file of the dossier in the different languages.

Box 2 *The database and the portal*

The website created for the project is: http://adultlearning.isfol.it/ hosted on the ISFOL site (www.isfol.it).
The Internet site is divided into different areas and sections:
- a summary "description" of the project objectives and activities;
- a second area of the section covering "local workshops": for each focus group, the list of participants, the key themes discussed, a photo gallery of the participants, studies or material produced by ISFOL or by the participants. All the material can be downloaded and printed;
- a third area covering "conferences", where the detail is equivalent to that in the territorial workshop section;

- an area covering "resources", with links to documents, research and regulation related to the theme of adult training;
- an "adult learning systems" area, with extracts from Eurypedia. Users can click on the "country profile" to access basic information on the educational system, and they can also surf the site to find other relevant information, such as vocational training policies and strategies in EU countries;
- the "links" area, divided into two sections, connections to institutional sites and other sites;
- the "media library", an area containing video interviews with experts, decision-makers and operators;
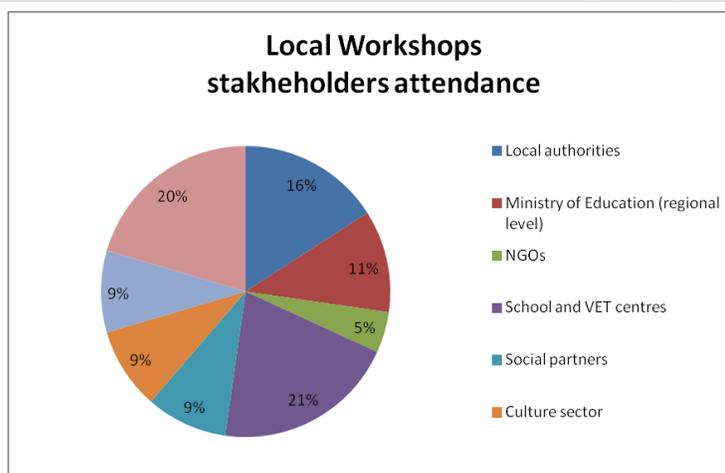- a "database with the main initiatives": featuring 65 initiatives on the basis of reports received from the territorial focus groups and of the networking activity carried out by project staff; a brief presentation of these is available and accessible. The database can be updated by any operator wishing to include their project, after approval by ISFOL. The initiatives included in this section are the basis for Chapter 3 of the present Report to the Committee. In addition, an added value of this database is the fact that the information regarding the initiatives it contains is not available in any other national or EU database (such as EST or ADAM). The data relate to initiatives known exclusively within the territorial or sectoral context in which they took place.

Box 3 **The focus groups**

An important component of the project concerns the territorial workshops, which relate to specific subjects and territorial areas. The workshops premises were selected according to the following criteria: a balanced representation of the major regional areas of Italy, North, Centre, South and the Islands; the different level of development of adult learning strategies and practices in the different territories; the presence of successful initiatives. Nine meetings were held in Rome, Padua, Benevento, Livorno, Bologna, Foligno, Ancona, Catanzaro and Catania, with the participation of about 100 stakeholders representing a selection of different institutions (the following table shows participation in the focus groups by percentage of representation).

In terms of animation, the workshops made use of focus groups, opting for Metaplan animation techniques only for the first meeting, held in Rome. The focus groups were organized around three core topics: New learning technologies; Active citizenship and social cohesion; Non-formal and informal learning. When choosing locations, institutional centres were given priority. For each workshop reports were prepared on the results of the discussion and the dialogue between animators and participants. These documents, along with the conclusions of the national conferences and the interviews with key stakeholders, informed the present report and the proposals contained within it. The reports can be downloaded or consulted online at http://adultlearning.isfol.it /.

Local Workshops stakeholders attendance

- Local authorities — 16%
- Ministry of Education (regional level) — 11%
- NGOs — 5%
- School and VET centres — 21%
- Social partners — 9%
- Culture sector — 9%
- 9%
- 20%

Box 4 *The national conferences*

As part of the project, three conferences were organized in three different parts of the country, each with specific focus on a relevant topic for the local context: ICT; active citizenship and social cohesion; non-formal and informal learning.

As for the national conferences, two threads were followed: one linked to theme, the other to territory.

The thematic conferences were held in the following territories:

- "Adult learning and ICT", Turin, 24 September 2013;
- "Strengthening equity, social cohesion and active citizenship through permanent learning", Naples, 11 April 2014;
- "The value of non-formal and informal learning", Florence, 23 October 2014.

In addition, the project results were summed up at the final conference in Florence .

The different topics covered attracted representatives of institutions at EU level and of other European countries, Italian and territorial institutions, employers and unions, CTP/CPIA permanent territorial centres, vocational training bodies, universities, businesses, third sector bodies, ISFOL and INDIRE, acting also as agencies for LLP, the network of the "National Teams of ECVET Experts 2012-2013", the National Europass Centre and the National Reference Point on Quality.

The national conferences helped transfer the experience of successfully tested initiatives and encouraged debate on Italian and European policies and strategies for AL. The reflections made are reported in the last chapter of this report, which covers the conclusions and set out the Recommendations.

Box 5 *The Report to the European Commission*

The report is organized in a way that is functional to the objective of supporting policy-makers and operators in the AL sector in the adoption of evidence-based decisional processes. For this reason, in the full version, a review was undertaken of the main issues in relation to the development of competencies in Italy and the primary problems linked to adult learning. This is followed by a review of the policies and strategies to meet such needs. Activities relating to the project are then presented, starting with an analysis of the context and the needs of the target groups. In conclusion, on the basis of evidence from the project and the observations and proposals of the focus groups, Recommendations are presented to develop concrete actions, in reference to the different topics, target groups and the systems involved in permanent learning and covered by the project. The report was supervised by the Steering Committee and, specifically, by the relevant ministries, namely the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour.

The report was drawn up in Italian and English and printed in 200 copies.

The distribution channels include:
- circulation during the final conference held in Florence in October 2014;
- publication on the project website; people on the mailing list will receive a notification;
- publication of an abstract in sector-specific journals for education and vocational training.

Box 6 *Governance of the project: the Steering Committee*

In order to ensure maximum attention to the topics covered in the project and full involvement of the institutional actors, a national Steering Committee was constituted, with the task of guiding and monitoring the activities. The Steering Committee included the following: the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies; the Ministry of Education, University and Research; the National Authority for Coordination of the Regions; the Union of Italian Provinces; the Italian National Association of Italian Municipalities; the Italian National Agencies involved in the LLP programme (INDIRE/ANSAS and ISFOL).

The Steering Committee was responsible for establishing the strategic guidelines of the project, defining the executive guidelines of the single activities, monitoring the progress of initiatives and proposing any necessary corrections to work in progress. By sharing detailed planning and

monitoring the activities, the different institutions involved were regularly updated on the project development, but also on the evolution of adult learning policies and on significant initiatives within the territories.

Every representative on the Steering Committee also handled the following: online dissemination, through their own stakeholders, of the information material, as part of the communication campaign; identification of successful initiatives to be shared through the database; making all information and qualitative-quantitative data on the themes available; identification of stakeholders for the focus groups, promoting participation thereof and, where possible, offering their premises for some of the focus group meetings; sharing their mailing lists to help organize the three national conferences; evaluation of the results reported on in the present final report, with the purpose of their assessment and dissemination.

The Steering Committee held four meetings in September 2014, and communication with the two relevant ministries was constant.

3. The Directory of successful adult learning initiatives in Italy: transversal analysis and key features

A transversal analysis of the 65 important initiatives included in the database (http://adultlearning.isfol.it /) underlined the following specific key elements.

Focus on the requirement of adult users, meaning that their training is part of an overall process of care, whereby the person is "looked after" in terms of welcome/guidance/follow-up/ and integration into the working world. This aspect is an important part of all the initiatives recorded in the systems of education and vocational/advanced training and those linked to associations. The following initiatives are particularly significant: "The Second Chance School of Rome" promoted by the "Di Liegro" CTP/CPIA; "Training in basic and intermediate technical skills" promoted by the "San Zeno" school in Verona; "Guidance, tutoring and job placement" promoted by the University of Turin; "The ideal re-integration pathway: prison-school-work" promoted by the Institute of Higher Education "Lussu" in Alghero.

Planning "organizational relais points" when dealing with users, which addresses the various demands of adults in an integrated way and includes initiatives such as "Adult learning offices in Rome, gateway for information and initial guidance" promoted by the municipality of "Roma Capitale"; "Foreign YALLA in Campania – a regional cultural counselling service" promoted by the regional administration of Campania; "Evaluating and certifying building skills" promoted by FORMEDIL (the body for professional training in the building sector). In these cases, it is clear that an organizational culture is being constructed for the long-term, based on teamwork and with the aim of providing quality, which includes experimentation methods and establishing Steering Committees and technical coordination groups.

Institutional and professional leadership in developing a strategy that is effective and functional in terms of planning and administration and in consolidating territorial partnerships. This is particularly evident in the case of the following initiatives: "TRIO: the web learning project for Tuscany" and "Identification of territorial spheres and building local committees for permanent adult learning" promoted by the municipality of "Roma Capitale"; "SPRINT – a provincial project in support of low-skilled workers, enabling them to re-enter education or training" promoted by the provincial administration of Bologna.

The financial resources: the initiatives highlight the importance of Structural Funds (ESF, EIF, ERDF); national financing (Italian national projects: MIUR, MLPS, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Justice); regional and municipal funding and other funds belonging to the organization carrying out the initiative (for instance, enrolment fees).
Being aware of the cost of training is a must. Proposals are rationalized, with the training provision being measured against the priorities for intervention (as in the case of training for migrants). In the case of education for the third sector and volunteer work, training is free, in particular for the less advantaged or socially marginalized target groups.

Education and training responding to social emergencies in relation to some socially vulnerable target groups, such as migrants, inmates and young adults who have dropped out of school.

In relation to immigrants (for whom specific norms have been passed: Ministerial Decree No. 4/6/2010 entitled *"Modalities for taking the Italian language knowledge test; where a pass is a pre-condition for a EC residence permit for long-term residents"*; Decree No. 1179/2011 of the President of the Republic *"Regulation concerning the Agreement of Integration between the State and non-nationals)"*, the initiatives recorded concern learning and improving language skills and social integration, including recognizing and certifying such competency. The following initiatives can be linked to these objectives: "Socio-linguistic integration of foreign nationals in Lazio" promoted by the Lazio Regional Education Authority; "I Learn Italian in Liguria" promoted by the regional administration of Liguria; "YALLA - Foreigners in Campania" for young second-generation immigrants living in Campania; "ICAM - Open workshop for Italian in Marche" promoted by the Marche Regional School Authority, *"ReteScuolemigranti,* a network for an integrated action plan for immigrants and refugees" in Rome; *"Baobab sotto la stessa ombra (under the shadow of the same baobab tree) Intercultural Centre:* to promote social integration" promoted by the *Baobab sotto la stessa ombra* association in Foggia; "Evaluating and certifying building skills" promoted by FORMEDIL; "PETRARCA 2/PETRARCA3 – Training trainers" promoted by the Piedmont Regional School Authority.

The most relevant initiatives underline the importance of strong coordination at local level, to fulfil a condition contemplated in the expected inter-institutional agreements, and also to: a) monitor the quality of education and training and, additionally, b) uphold the processes for accrediting and certifying acquired competencies and the sustainability of the initiatives. Language training is mainly carried out by various associations and through volunteer work. In many cases, to avoid fragmentation, territorial associations have formed networks, as in the case of the *"ReteScuolemigranti"* network, composed of 106 associations located in Lazio, the network of CTPs/CPIAs and the network of evening schools. The drive to provide training to migrants had led to new and updated models to address the users' demands more effectively.

In relation to adult prison inmates an agreement was signed between Ministry of Education, the University and Research and the Ministry of Justice on 23 October 2012 ("Special Programme for education and training in prisons" to "promote integration and equal opportunities through schooling within prisons"); the initiatives illustrate the role played by "schools in prison", i.e. the branch sections of CTPs/CPIAs and schools in partnership with prisons. In these initiatives, the objective of re-entering education to learn or consolidate basic knowledge and skills, and also citizenship skills, is achieved through innovative methods, using sport, music, culture, creative art, autobiographical writing and new technology.

Best examples of integrated planning in initiatives aimed at greater involvement, revival of motivation and the promotion of constructive participation on the part of young people and adult prison inmates, within the limits imposed by their detention, include the following: "Special twinning: adult students in training meet groups of students in prison" promoted by the "Rosmini" high school in Trento; "Armonichearmonie" (*Harmonics and Harmonies*) and "ContaGIOIAmoci" (a play on the words "contagious joy") promoted of the "Diano" CTP/CPIA in Pozzuoli; "Newspaper workshop in … the news"; "The art of reading and writing in prison"; "Inside … the emotions. A prison counselling

help desk" promoted by the "Caruso" school in Naples; "The *Naples Prize* Project. Inmates read, vote for and meet the authors shortlisted in a literary competition" promoted by the "Secondigliano" Penitentiary of Scampia near Naples.

For young people who have dropped out of school, the initiatives highlight the support on the part of educational and vocational training authorities in encouraging young people to re-enter education, with a focus on flexibility and shortened courses, guidance initiatives, recognition and certification of credits enabling the transfer between systems. The quality of teaching and forms of support offered by tutors and mentors are continuously monitored. In this respect, the following initiatives are worth mentioning: "POLIS" promoted by the CTP network of Piedmont; "PRISM" promoted by the CTP of Castiglione dei Pepoli; "The Second Chance School in Rome" promoted by the "Di Liegro" CTP; "Modular second-level secondary education course for admission to the third class in the Malignani senior secondary school of Udine" promoted by the 2nd comprehensive school of Udine; "Evening school to attain a five-year technical education diploma, in synergy with vocational training" promoted by the Salesian school "San Zeno" of Verona; "Evening courses for adults" promoted by the "Solari" school of higher education of Tolmezzo (in the province of Udine); "Evening course to attain a five-year diploma for community executives" promoted by the "Ruju" technical school of Sassari; "Integrated course for Italian and immigrant adults and young adults" promoted by the "Cattaneo" school of Rome.

The practice of a network culture: the initiatives would indicate that their success depends on the fact that they are included in a network built up over the years, and so can offer additional services, such as guidance in selecting targeted studies and qualification pathways. Among the initiatives are the following: "POLIS/Work guidance and higher education programme" of the CTP network of Piedmont; "PRISMA/Modular remedial courses in secondary education for adults" by the "Caduti della Direttissima" CTP/CPIA in Castiglione dei Pepoli (in the province of Bologna) (an initiative that addresses the demands of the inhabitants of rural and outlying areas of the territory), "CTP: networking in the territory, with the territory, for the territory" by the "Don Milani" school in Rovereto (in partnership with the Employment Agency of Trento for training courses such as "Italian Language" and "Society and Work" for unemployed/non-unemployed/persons involved in mobility projects); "Training in basic and intermediate technical skills" promoted by the Salesian school "San Zeno" in Verona; "Adults in technical education" promoted by the "Firpo Buonarroti" school in Genoa.

Organizational and teaching-training prototypes emerge in the fields of education, training and advanced training, as in the "POLIS" case of the Piedmont-based CTP network, which proposes a model for running the implementation and promotional phases of the education-training programmes. These include the analysis of the demand for training needs in the territory; modular teaching plans to assess results and certify competency; communication and dissemination. The same applies to the initiative "Identifying territorial spheres and forming local committees for permanent adult learning" promoted by "Roma Capitale", which illustrates the planned organizational and administrative architecture for implementing the adult learning system. In the initiative "CO.VAL.CRE - Commission to assess credits", promoted by the "Besta" CTP in Bologna, there is a clear description of the process of credit recognition, to encourage poorly qualified adults to re-enter education or training. The initiative "Atlas of professions", promoted by the University of Turin, maps out the design and implementation of an information tool for work integration, updatable in terms of

company relationships. The project "SO.NET.T.O - *Social NETWORK for Tourist Operators*" promotes an interactive system of tourism training designed by the University of Foggia. "EMYA *European practices of mentoring with young adults at risk of social disadvantage and school drop-out*", promoted by the AIM Association, has produced a guide and operational material on the activity and figures involved in mentoring within training processes.

The role of the universities and the system of Research and Innovation: the initiatives show that universities have a specific role in developing services such as guidance, job placement and certification of competencies and in the development of educational initiatives for the public; as in the following "Competency mapping programme" and "Women, politics and institutions: training courses in gender culture and good practices in equal opportunities" promoted by the University of Foggia, "How to find work by telling digital stories" "Flexi-Path/Flexible" and "FREE-*Fundamental Rights Education in Europe*" promoted by the University of Florence. Some initiatives illustrate the implementation of qualification courses for people in employment. The Research and Innovation system also supports and designs technology used in teaching, contributing in a concrete way to the transfer of knowledge and specialist competencies in innovation, aimed, in particular at small and medium companies. In this regard, the following initiatives should also be mentioned: "SINAPSI - Interactive simulation in learning individual skills" promoted by the National Research Council/CNR and "Gran Sasso project: a network for advanced training" promoted by the National Institute of Nuclear Physics/Gran Sasso National Laboratories.

Focus on quality and the use of ICT: high quality is apparent in the successful initiatives, in terms of the typical phases involved in building the training pathway (from the needs analysis to the design, implementation and final verification) and also in the choice of interactive teaching methods that aim at integrating traditional classroom teaching with methods that go "beyond the classroom" and the use of ICT in some sections of the course (for instance, using some online teaching modules), as part of a blended learning model. In all cases, there is a prevalent use of teaching methods that give priority to subjectivity and the adult learning environments.

The *de facto* presence in the territories of a community of practice built up over time and made up of operators, teachers and trainers belonging to the CTP/CPIA networks, schools, bodies/associations, companies, and the officials and persons in charge who are active and promote integrated and innovative actions.
The various actors have learned to create networks of relationships, promoting alliances with various local actors and bodies, also under the thrust coming from national and local bodies and from the European Union. In this connection, various formal devices are used: the agreement, the draft agreement and the framework agreement.

The survey of the successful initiatives of adult learning for the creation and implementation of the Adult Learning database has made it possible to stimulate this community of practices and activate the participation and sharing of guidelines, devices, instruments and tried and tested organizational and teaching-training prototypes.

Conclusions

Based on the evidence collected from the completed activities and the results achieved, it is possible to draw several conclusions, including strengths, areas for improvement and work prospects.

First of all, in terms of participation, both for the territorial focus groups and the three national conferences, the project achieved its objectives, with a high level of sharing of the contents, both at territorial roundtables and during the conferences. Over a hundred relevant actors took part in the nine territorial workshops; it is estimated that more than three hundred people attended the three conferences (with 100 estimated to attend the conference in Florence on 23 October 2014). There was clearly an active participation, as indicated not only in terms of the numbers present but also of the quality of the talks: the ongoing reforms - covering the adult learning system, certification and accreditation tools, the structure of the Italian qualification framework – have stimulated in operators and in the decentralized decision-makers, a need to access information, for discussion, debate.
As mentioned at various sections in this report, from 2012 to 2013 there was a whole series of legislative developments, in some cases anticipated for at least a decade.

This was, therefore, an opportunity for the project research team to observe the reactions of the various parties involved. In addition, the operators who took part in the sessions, had an opportunity to voice their demands, concerns and needs, and also to take in the need for visibility, particularly on the part of the basic operators engaged in the development of practices on the ground.
What emerged was a ranking and clustering exercise of all the doubts, priorities and proposals expressed by the territories and communicated by the various sectors consulted.

With respect to the strengths, the methodological choice of a organizing the project work not only by key themes, but also on a territorial basis, proved effective to reflect the different local systems in Italy: from North to South, from the provinces to the metropolitan areas, with the different stages of development of adult learning systems.
Further, in carrying out the activities of the focus groups, it proved advantageous on the part of regional administrations to adopt a strategy of "sponsorship". The representatives of the regions were asked to help identify participants in focus groups and regional administrations, in many cases, strengthening their invitation by sending a "save the date" message. This attracted the attention of operators and local representatives, highlighting the institutional mandate under which ISFOL operated. Moreover, the project-related activities have benefited by the involvement of members of the Steering Committee (which included representatives of the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education, the National Agencies for the LL-Leonardo da Vinci Programme and Indire, the Coordination Committee of the Regions, the Union of Italian Provinces and the National Association of Italian Municipalities). By involving the institutional and central levels of these bodies, conflicting points of view about the project were avoided. The Steering Committee members were included in the governance of the project, and also in designating the stakeholders to be invited at the local level, thereby overcoming any visibility or participation issue on the part of local representatives.

Another important result was succeeding in bringing together, both during the focus group meetings and at the national conferences, the representatives of the world of vocational training and those of the world of adult learning. This allowed to verify the different working hypotheses for the sector, and expand both the vocabulary used and the topics covered.

Among the areas for improvement, it should be noted that it was not always easy to convince businesses and employer representatives to take part. Despite covering topics of clear importance to this sector, at times it is difficult to create an effective network with the other actors within the territory and so share exchange of ideas, such as those proposed in the project.

Recommendations

Introduction

Below some reflections are reported in the form of Recommendations, organized by systems or themes and not by targets. To move on to innovative actions, in fact, it is necessary to introduce system measures, which go beyond sectorial policies that in the past have caused a "ghetto effect" on the target groups they intended to address. These Recommendations are the result of project activity work, but also derive from interviews with key stakeholders, from Italian and European literature and from national and comparative data.

1 **Creating a "statute" of the adult educator**
Law No. 4 of 2013 on "Provisions on the subject of professions not organized into orders or colleges" included among the professions not organized into orders or colleges that of the educator and the trainer. Although this is the starting point, it is necessary to establish some criteria and indicators of quality for the adult educator, both in presence in traditional environments, and at distance in digital environments. This includes adopting a UNI regulatory system that, in line with the most advanced European initiatives, recognizes the practices and forms of knowledge using the tool of third-party certification. It is also necessary to define the specific professional competencies of executives and teachers in adult learning, and deliver training actions for operators and executives who intend to work in this sector, thus raising the profile of professions which currently are not recognized.

2 **Diversifying the new technologies by target and aims.**
Media and methodology (and, accordingly, the related funds must be diversified on the basis of the group target and to the goal of adult learning. Successful experimentations on the ground (cf. *Focus group Padua*, 1 March 2013) have shown that the ease of access and use of Italian courses for foreigners at levels A1 or A2 (required to obtain a residence permit) improve exponentially if the teaching material is made available, not only in classroom environments but also through applications for mobile devices. For other target groups and contexts, like refresher courses for professionals, the objective of accessibility is achieved in an optimal way with modular and flexible distance training, together with a distance tutoring service. By contrast, young adults in vocational training have difficulty with courses held exclusively through distance learning. Therefore, the most successful experiments are those using a "blended" modality, in which students interact directly with a teacher or a tutor, but also use tools and resources available online and remotely. In general, the match between type of target, educational goals and the methods and technology used to teach the courses in a technological environment is, according to the focus group participants (cf. *Focus group Rome*, *21 December 2012; Padua, 1 March 2013; Benevento, 11 April 2013*), very critical and should be analysed starting from the results of the many experiments conducted in the territories.

3 **Strengthening the creation of permanent university learning centres.**
On the basis of Law No. 92/2012, universities become agents of permanent training, with a specific role in contributing to raising the share of 30-34-year-old Italians with a higher education qualification (ISCED 5 and 6 – Italian national benchmark: 27%, 2010 figure: 19.8%), and in contributing towards updating adult competency. A third mission is therefore added, that of permanent learning, to those of research and teaching. Furthermore, Law No. 92/2012 underlines the importance of building up and strengthening networks for permanent learning. The centres for permanent learning contemplated from 2007 onwards in the universities, with, however, poor implementation, would have the following tasks: a) setting up effective partnerships with the territory, with professional organizations and with businesses; b) organizing services for people and organizations related to training courses designed on an individual basis and/or on the basis of the demands of organizations; c) overseeing the training of the trainers needed in the new format of adult teaching and that of the people required for accrediting prior learning (cf. *Paper of Luigia Melillo, Naples Oriental University, Naples Conference, 11 April 2014*, http://adultlearning.isfol.it/adult-learning/le-conference-nazionali/conferenza-napoli).

4 **Revising Law No. 240 of 2010 in the provision of a maximum limit of 12 accredited credits.**
Under Law No. 240 of 2010, the provision in Art. 14 "Regulation of the recognition of credits" limits the number of accredited university training credits to a maximum of 12. The legislation also states that "Accreditation must be effected exclusively on the basis of the proven competency of each student. Forms of accreditation awarded collectively are excluded." Nevertheless, introducing such credit limit of 12 reduces the cultural and social value of the accreditation body, whereby the process is unlikely to be implemented. Since the number of credits that can be accredited in this process is very low, and in terms of cost-efficiency, few universities are willing to invest financial and human resources into building a rigorous and transparent accreditation tool, and in training the operators. In addition, the counterparts of the academic world who were consulted underline that Law No. 240/10 conflicts with the spirit and the letter of subsequent Law for the Labour Market No. 92/2012, which states that the universities having the responsibility of "*granting exemptions and/or credits for the results of pertinent learning acquired in non-formal and informal contexts*", and of adopting the Italian national guidelines and activating "*appropriate guidance and consultation services*" (paragraph 56a of Law No. 92/12) for the recognition and accreditation of prior learning, both for workers previously enrolled at the university, and for any member of the public who wishes to access such services defined according to the appropriate quality standards (cf. *Interview with Giancarlo Tanucci, University of Bari*, http://adultlearning.isfol.it/mediateca).

5 **Promoting concrete forms of incentive for universities involved in the recognition and accreditation of prior learning, including these initiatives among the parameters relating to quality.**
Teaching and research are added value, for sure, but this is true also for the "third mission" of universities, which refers to lifelong training of the wider public. This measure would have the double advantage of introducing some criteria of financial reward linked to the accreditation of prior learning and, therefore, strengthening a culture of recognition and accreditation within the academic world. This would make the objectives of raising the participation rate of adults in lifelong learning initiatives (2020 objective: 15%) and of increasing the percentage of 30-34-year-olds with higher education qualifications (2020 Italian national: 27%; European objective: 40%) easier to achieve in a rigorous and

transparent manner. Furthermore, this condition on university government funding can stimulate the creation of partnerships between universities and external organisations (professional associations, businesses, regional administration, trade unions, schools, etc.), with the aim both of implementing the process of certifying the competencies of people with high qualifications, for professional purposes, and of contributing to drafting a list of the competencies and professions shared by both the academic world and the world of work (*cf. Interview with Aureliana Alberici, University of Rome Three*, http://adultlearning.isfol.it/mediateca).

6 **Strengthening territorial networks of information and guidance centres for training and work opportunities, both public and private, for adults and disadvantaged categories.**
This is a case where the evidence from the territories echoes the Recommendations of the Council addressed to Italy at the time of the 2014 programme of reforms (2 June 2014), with a request to improve public employment services. The counterparts in the focus groups believe that private sector services also need strengthening, beginning from investment in a guidance and counselling system that can detect the most vulnerable users and centred on the unions, which, because of their representative nature, are best placed to recognize the need for skills on the part of workers and businesses (cf. *Focus Group Livorno, June 13 2013*).

7 **Promoting information and assistance services for small businesses.**
The objective here is to provide information on the existing opportunities offering training to small businesses and their employees (cf. *Focus Group Padua, 1 March 2013*). The territories complained that, unlike large companies, small businesses find it hard to access this information or to invest in training. It is, therefore, necessary for local employers' associations to promote the services that provide information and assistance. These include initiatives, which are of special benefit in some territories, to set up networks of small companies to access training, reducing, in this way, their cost per hour and their impact on the company's production process (Veneto, Lombardy, Emilia Romagna, Lazio, Campania – ISFOL, 14th Report on Lifelong Training, 2013).

8 **Permanent training as a factor in assessing pay levels and career paths.**
According to the focus group participants, this can create the workplace conditions for encouraging participation in training (cf. *Focus group Catania, 3 July 2014*).

9 **Providing "learning tutors" in production plants.**
This was tried out in France with the "tutor de l'apprentissage" at Danone-Evian, showing how important it is, in work teams, to prepare certain people for the role of learning companion, often identified in the group leader or the union representative. These tutors would have the function of detecting any lack of basic skills (reading, writing) and work alongside the people taking courses in key skills. The most vulnerable workers need encouragement, positive role models and examples of success to come into the open. In these cases, a mediator acting as a companion and facilitator can be decisive. (*Danone-Evian initiative, Lyon National Conference on the Fight against Illiteracy: Lyon, Illettrisme Grande Cause 2013*, 13-15 November 2013, ANLCI)

10 **Allowing training companies to award credits for skills gained on the job.**

These credits can be used in a vertical way when re-entering training or education, or in a horizontal way to recognize skills gained on the job, especially for retraining and mobility purposes (*Focus group Catania, 3 July 2014*). Also in this case, references can be made to European initiatives adopting a work-based learning approach of. Large and medium companies directly – or, in the case of small businesses, the industrial sector association or Chamber of Commerce - can certify specific professional skills under certain conditions. These are: the presence of a tutor involved exclusively in training; respect of health and safety regulations; continuous investment in lifelong training. The advantage for the company is to stimulate and motivate their workers into taking part in in-house training programmes and refreshing their skills, with proven advantages in terms of competitiveness and the ability to innovate - two factors that have helped many small and large companies in Italy cope during these difficult years (ISFOL, 14th Report on Lifelong Training, 2013).

11 **Promoting quality certification in "popular universities".**
This certification of quality, based on the learners' attendance rates, the quality of the teaching staff, the variety of the training provision and the transparency of administrative procedures, could lead to more positive certification of these adult education centres by the regional Authorities (responsible for training in the territory) (cf. *Focus group Rome, 21 December 2012*).

12 **Recognizing the right to tax breaks for expenses linked to membership of associations and attendance those taking courses promoted by "popular universities."**
Like in other sectors of education and lifelong and permanent training, tax breaks will increase the "attractiveness" of permanent training and avoid any negative discrimination against the non-formal courses offered by adult education centres or "popular universities" (cf. *Focus group Rome, 21 December 2012*).

13 **Use adult education centres or "popular universities" more extensively throughout the territory, to train teachers of Italian as a foreign language (L2) and to offer Italian courses for foreigners.**
In this connection, adult education centres or "popular universities" have an important place in certifying levels A1 and A2 (necessary to obtain a residence permit for long-term residents) and for training teachers of Italian for foreigners. For instance, the UNIEDA "popular university" in Rome has become a Ditals training and examination centre, teaching Italian to foreigners, awarding certification on the level of competence issued by the University for Foreigners in Siena following an examination taken at the "popular university" of Rome. This certificate can be used in Italy and abroad, in schools of all levels, universities, Italian Institutes of Culture and in all bodies where Italian L2 is taught. This good practice could be extended to other "popular universities" in the country (cf. *Focus group Rome, 21 December 2012*).

14 **Strengthening and increasing funding to museums for museum-based teaching in order to improve literacy and numeracy and digital skills among the adult population and as part of family learning.**
From several studies on the subject, it is now recognized that informal learning in museums for individuals and families can have a major impact, leading to increased basic skills. Nevertheless, practical initiatives are not widespread, although, there are several excellent examples that should be strengthened, referenced and extended to analogous contexts. These include the MIC International

Museum of Ceramics in Faenza (cf. *Focus Group, Bologna, 28 June 2013*) featuring workshops for families that start from operative/conceptual methods inspired by the work of the artist and inventor Bruno Munari, and develop numeracy, exploring concepts of space, form, surface, area and volume. Among the other practices in Europe, NAICE, in the United Kingdom, has reviewed and explored various cases of museum teaching to develop numerical and literary skills in an adult public with low basic skills (NIACE, *Adult Numeracy & Museums and Archives*, 2009).

15 **Designing a course for Italian as a second language for work beyond teaching only the basics.**
In a country where the immigration has become a relevant phenomenon (4.5 million immigrants according to the 2011 census, equivalent to 7.5% of the population) it is necessary to design advanced Italian courses for foreigners, particularly for work purposes but also for health and safety in the workplace (cf. *Focus Group Foligno 14 February 2014*). These courses for foreign workers in companies can be partly financed using inter-professional funds or funds for vocational training organized by the regional Authorities for job seekers. It has been demonstrated that a high level of proficiency in a second language when working in a foreign country leads to increased skills and a reduction in accidents (*Council of Europe, Linguistic integration of adult migrants. Guides to policy development and implementation*, 2014).

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