

**CEI Human Resources Development Forum:
*Identifying Barriers of Lifelong Learning and Their
Removal***

**The development of lifelong
learning in Italy**

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In Italy the situation is still characterized by low levels of education and professional qualifications of population (especially for 25 to 64 years old), and by widespread shortages of cultural, scientific, and cross-functional layers in large parts of adult and young population.

Italy is suffering from backwardness attributable mainly to the low qualification of older generations. In fact, over the past two decades, there has been a “surge” in the achievement of different educational qualifications by the entire Italian population.

These are significant progresses, but we need to remember that even today...

The context 3

- in the average of European countries, about one fifteen student out of five has poor reading skills, while in Italy more than one out of four,
- a young European (18-24-year old) out of seven, gives up the education and training system precociously, in Italy about one out of five,
- the rate of attainment of an upper secondary education in Europe stood at 78.6%, in Italy at 76.3%,
- in Europe one student out of three graduate in the age range 30-34 years, in Italy one out of five.

The participation in education and training (people aged from 25 to 64 years old), is moving from the current rate of 6.3% (minus 3% points above the European average) to 15% by 2020 which means, for Italy, involving in training nearly six million adults.

Problems

- a reduced participation in training activities, related to the adult population with low educational level;
- a widespread willingness to participate, not helped by lack of information support and counseling;
- presence of a large and varied range of public and private providers with a variety of courses and activities (relating primarily to foreign languages and computer skills), mostly oriented to the substantial demand;
- a lack of coordination among providers that put back the creation of local networks and facilitates the overlap of courses.

Strengths

Positive are the figures for the plurality of providers (both public and private) and the stability of the sites surveyed, as well as the one which points to a tradition of institutions in the provision of continuing education activities.

The experiences of individual demand for continuing vocational training have been consolidated

Weaknesses 1

It is worrying to note that the whole different educational segments are focused on the more educated demand and, above all in the delivery of courses in computer literacy and foreign language, there is an overlap between formal and non formal providers.

Weaknesses 2

Overall all educational segments face with a strong and structured training demand, given that the user type of training - apart from the case of the primary activities for literacy – is Italian, he is employed, he has a high education degree (average he/she has, in fact, a secondary school degree), and he is aged between 26 and 40 years old.

Continuing vocational training

In 2004-08, the resources put out to tender by Law 236/93 have been a total of around 464 million €, of which 79% used to fund plans agreed by social partners involving 726 000 beneficiaries. The remaining 21% contributed to fund training plans to individual applications through vouchers, which involved nearly 92,000 beneficiaries, especially in the north-east of Italy

Looking to the future 1

First, Italy should be working to raise the level of learning and it is important to continue to combat early school and training leaving, encouraging even more personalized learning formulas. In particular, in Italy must be remedied with the well-known disparities between regions by means of policies and programs targeted with appropriate investment.

Looking to the future 2

- to implement actions in order to involve the most disadvantaged groups, starting from the territories
- to guarantee continuity between young and adult education
- to support the use of practical knowledge and skills through recognition of certification
- to support the building of networks between different providers
- to facilitate access to educational opportunities for all, including through a strong appeal to the use of new ICT
- to increase training investment, also based on individual choices, the use of the imposed regulatory mechanisms