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Output 01_Italy

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Introduction

- The document is divided into two sections: a brief report on recognising non-formal and informal competences in Europe, Italy and Liguria, and a series of good practices.
- The report is based on our examination and analysis of documents, reports and recommendations from the European Union, scientific articles and books.
- The good practices stem from a series of interviews with experts from the sector.

Recognising non-formal and informal competences

- Summary of the process which has inspired and consolidated an issue with strong links to international and national policy, one which has been attracting more and more attention in recent years: recognising and validating the knowledge and competences acquired by adults in non-formal and informal contexts.
- Recognising prior competences has become a relevant issue at European level and beyond in the past few decades
- As yet there are no internationally tested and endorsed practices for recognising and validating competences, and nor are there at national level in Italy.
- While there are already formal and shared procedures for recognising learning in formal contexts, when it comes to non-formal and informal learning there have been few successful experiences and they are badly documented and rarely assessed or followed up.

Lifelong learning and lifewide learning

- The EU's most recent strategies (*Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training*) include ideas for integrating work and education in a lifelong learning process in which validation should play a central role. The new approach embraces the typically humanistic aspects of the 1970s as well as the more economic aspects of the 1980s.
- Today's approach is aimed at training citizens who want to learn and take responsibility for their learning pathway with a view to becoming employable (Fejes, 2010). The validation process for prior learning is seen as a means of creating a knowledge-based society. This has led the European Commission to instruct Member States to implement national lifelong learning strategies with particular emphasis on validating non-formal and informal learning. Validation has the potential to turn everyone's life into a life of learning. Furthermore, since validation considers all learning and knowledge worthy of value, citizens know that everything they do and learn can have a formal value.

The specific case of migrants

Reischmann (2014) identifies three contexts in which this type of learning can take place:

- parallel to other intentional, organised activities which nonetheless have no educational or training purpose.
 - during specific events, i.e. clearly identifiable situations which give us the opportunity to learn (an accident, the death of a loved one, beginning a new relationship). These events are unplanned or unexpected and they may render our prior knowledge obsolete or open up new perspectives. They may cause us shock or great pleasure; change may be minimal or enormous and it may occur in a matter of seconds or over months or years.
 - mosaic learning, interwoven into our daily routines, without an easily identifiable cause or pathway.
- The second situation mentioned above is obviously more relevant to our case. If one considers the experiences of migrants, it is evident that they are filled with events, episodes and situations which most people will not have to face during their lifetime. This makes it difficult for migrants to explain their experiences and difficult for those who interact with them or have to interpret their consequences.

Towards a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for Italy

- Italy adopted the Recommendation in the “Agreement on referencing the Italian qualifications system to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)” signed by the State-Regions Conference on 20/12/2012. This marked the start of a compliance process which considers two core themes of the Europe 2020 Strategy:
 - the centrality of learning and
 - the centrality of the individual.
- In this sense the EQF is a common frame of reference for European citizens’ concrete right to have their training pathways and life and employment experiences recognised across the whole of the EU.

Towards a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for Italy

- Today the “First Italian report referencing qualifications to the European Framework” is an initial step towards referencing the EQF in Italy, but further elements are required if an NQF is to be drawn up. The report identifies these as:
 - a table of functional levels representing the Italian qualifications system;
 - typologies and descriptors for every level in the table;
 - a common means of accessing qualifications within the Framework.
- Once it has been produced, the National Framework will need to reference the EQF by automatically comparing the descriptors for each level.

Reference legislation in Italy

- Law 92/2012
- Decree Law 13/2013
- Decree of 30/06/2015

Law 92/2012

In legislative terms, Law 92/2012 (known as the “Fornero Law”) describes the validation of non-formal and informal learning and the certification of competences as fundamental to ensuring and realising lifelong learning as a means of supporting the employment and employability of citizens.

It calls for the establishment of a national register for educational, training and professional qualifications prior to the introduction of a National Qualifications Framework.

The same Law describes the individuals involved in certification in order to guarantee the transparency and expendability of competences and access to certification and validation services.

Decree Law 13/2013

- Decree Law 13/2013 sets out basic performance levels (LEP) for identifying non-formal and informal learning as well as service standards for the national system of certifying competences (process, certification and system standards).
- It also implements a national technical committee with representatives from all certification bodies: MIUR (Ministry for Education, Universities and Research), autonomous Regions and Provinces, MLPS (Ministry for Employment and Social Policy) and MiSE (Ministry for Economic Development).
- The aim is to optimise prior competences and achieve the greatest possible social and employment inclusion.
- The Decree details the actions and monitoring activities required of the bodies involved.

Decree of 30/06/2015

- Decree 30/06/2015 sets out a national operational Framework of recognition for regional qualifications and associated competences with a view to implementing a national certification System.
- Within the national Register, the operational Framework pertains to regional qualifications and is the reference point for correlation and gradual standardisation.
- The Framework uses the classification of professional economic sectors (ATECO – ISTAT's business classification system for Italy – and CP – ISTAT's classification system for the professions); it is based on the levels used in the EQF and is designed as a means of comparing and correlating different qualifications by form and content.
- It is also the unique reference source for recognising regional qualifications and validating and certifying formal, non-formal and informal learning.

Conclusions

- The absence to date of a single national framework, along with individual regional registers of qualifications, training and professions (as is the case in Liguria) has slowed down the validation and certification process for non-formal and informal learning.
- However, cases of good regional practice have influenced national decision-making processes and governance models while playing a strategic, defining role in promoting the validation of learning particularly in professional and employment-based contexts.
- There are wide differences at regional level within validation and certification systems for competences. Regional practice is currently at one of three stages of progress: in development, under implementation and already in use.
- All the Italian Regions have embarked on the process in keeping with the European principle of optimising and certifying all types of learning.

Criteria for selecting good practices

- Since the choice was limited to a small number of cases, accessibility to the project pathways was our main criterion for selection.
- Two types of approach emerged from our research and were considered when selecting good practices:
 - Top-down. The experience/project begins with local needs, identifying the most in-demand employment competences in the area where the person with non-formal and informal competences and learning (or formal competences and learning which cannot be proved) is living. People are offered a formal pathway and information is collected on their prior competences and learning to see how spendable they are in a future training pathway towards formal qualifications. In the most advanced cases, the number of training hours can be reduced if certain competences are recognised following theoretical or practical tests. Two examples are the I CARE project and the Talenti di cura (Caring Talents) project.
 - Bottom-up. The second approach explores a person's competences and learning a priori, regardless of whether or not an objective has been selected (taking part in a specific training course to meet existing local or professional needs). This involves considerable skill on the part of the operator, since they must "read" and interpret the user's life stories and experiences in contexts which are difficult to imagine. This approach opens up many different possibilities and is less likely to involve stereotyping (women matched with the caring professions, men from certain ethnic backgrounds matched with jobs done by people of the same ethnicity). Two examples are the RIVALUTA project and the Citizen's Training Portfolio.

I CARE

Title

- I CARE. Improving Mobility and Career Paths for Personal Care and Social Workers”

Region

- Lombardy

Financed by

- Lifelong Learning Programme from the European Union

Years

- 2011-2013

Partners

- The consortium comprised organisations from four countries (Italy, Germany, Poland, and Romania) and it gathered institutions responsible for VET and qualifications at the regional level (Fondazione CEFASS, IT), for governing the qualification system at the national level (NQA, RO), VET and service providers (Fondazione IKAROS and Federsolidarietà, IT; VHS Charm, DE), organisations aiming at transferring expertise and know-how in the field of professional training (Amber Business Consulting, RO) representatives of workers, including migrant workers (ANOLF-CISL, IT).

Website

- <http://www.icareproject.eu/>

Talenti di cura

Title

- Talenti di Cura (Caring Talents)

Region

- Emilia Romagna, Sicily. Since the original project, Talenti di Cura has been used by more than 1,400 family assistants in eight more Italian regions (Veneto, Piedmont, Lazio, Umbria, Sardinia, Calabria, Campania, Lombardy).

Financed by

- Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP). Leonardo da Vinci programme. Innovation transfer

Years

- 2007-2009

Partners

- Società Cooperativa “Anziani e non solo”, Interfor SIA (France), Balkan Plan Ltd (Bulgaria). and Enfap Emilia Romagna.

Website

- <http://www.talentidicura.it>

Citizen's Training Portfolio

Title

- Libretto Formativo del Cittadino (Citizen's Training Portfolio)

Financed by

- By decree of the Italian Government, following the DECREE of 10th October 2005
Approval for the Citizen's Training Portfolio in accordance with Decree Law n. 276 of 10th September 2003, Article 2, Subparagraph 1, letter i).

Regions/Provinces

- Province of Trento, Province of Bolzano, Valle D'Aosta, Piedmont, Liguria, Tuscany, Sardinia, Veneto, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Emilia Romagna, Molise, Lazio, Sicily.

Website

- <http://librettocompetenze.isfol.it/libretto-formativo.html>

RIVALUTA (RE-EVALUATE: Restoring Value and Using Talents)

Title

- RIVALUTA: RIdare VALore e Usare i TALenti (RE-EVALUATE: Restoring Value and Using Talents)

Region

- Liguria (Provinces of Genoa and Savona)

Financed by

- Italian Interior Ministry through the European Fund for the Integration of non-EU citizens
2007-2013 PROG 103203

Years

- 2014

Partners

- Arci Liguria, La Comunità cooperative, the Municipality of Savona, with technical support from limited liability company Job Centre and input from other institutions, primarily the Province of Genoa, the Liguria Region, Universities and Schools, private social organisations, training agencies, social partners.

Participants

- Seven public sector operators; 20 migrants: 7 men and 13 women from 11 different countries: 6 from Morocco, 2 from Cuba, 2 from Peru, 2 from Tunisia, 2 from Ukraine, 1 from Argentina, 1 from the Bahamas, 1 from Benin, 1 from Chile, 1 from Congo and 1 from Iran. Over half the group was aged under 40.

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