Skill surveys for current and future challenges: the impact for adult learning policies

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ISFOL: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

- ISFOL is a public research institute; it reports to the Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies.
- ISFOL works with all stakeholders: other Ministries, Regions, Social partners, research Institute at national and international level, European Commission, OECD.
- Since 1973, ISFOL has been playing an institutional role in the field of vocational training, adult learning, skill assessment, Labour Market, skills anticipation, forecasting.
- ISFOL also acts as in-house agency for the Ministry with respect to relevant National Operational Programmes co-funded by the European Social Funds.
## ISFOL: Areas of interventions

### 1. Anticipation of skill needs

- ISFOL supports the labour market reform introduced by the so-called Fornero Law 92/2012
- ISFOL has developed an information system on "Occupations, employment and skills":
  - The national system for permanent vocational needs analysis
  - The classification of occupational units (NUP/ISCO) with ISTAT
- The short term forecast in cooperation with other survey (Excelsior) lead by Unioncamere (skills gap)
- [http://professionioccupazione.it](http://professionioccupazione.it)

### 2. Labour market information and adult skill surveys

- PIAAC
  - (International Assessment of Adult Competences)
- OLC Project
  - (Organisations, learning and Competences)
- [www.isfol.it/piaac](http://www.isfol.it/piaac)

### 3. Qualification systems

- ISFOL supports National Ministries in implementing educational and labour market reforms
- ISFOL is the National point to implement the European strategy for transparency and mobility of qualifications and competences.
  - (EQF, ECVET; Europass; Validation of Non formal;)
- ISFOL is contributing to the building of a National Certification system for LLL within the new labour market reform (Law 92/2012)
Within ISFOL several research activities have been developed in the last few years concerning adult skills studies:

- Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)
- Organization, Learning, Competencies (OLC) Project
  - INDACO-Enterprises, complementary to Eurostat’s CVTS (Continuing Vocational Training Survey) and INDACO-Workers, complementary to Eurostat’s Adult Education Survey (AES)
  - Monitoring and Technical Assistance to active ageing policies and CVT

- We will focus our attention on the “OLC” project and the “PIAAC” (Italian pilot).
OLC Project:
a Model to analyse the relation between the Organization, Learning and Competences

• OLC is a multi-disciplinary project established in March 2003.

• Two surveys: the “Employees Perspective Survey” (3605 interviews) and the “Employers Perspective Survey” (1820 interviews) (within manufacturing and service sectors)

Main questions:
- Which new policies are really needed in support of SMEs employees in tech sectors?
  (Italian Enterprises System is composed of 90% SMEs 1-10 workers)
- How relevant are the acquired qualifications for the workplace?
- Which relation between the development of competences and work organization?
## HPWO and medium key competences index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practices adopted</th>
<th>Overall skill index (%)</th>
<th>Manufacturing sector</th>
<th>Service sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only one 1 practice</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No more than 3 practices</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All 5 practices</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## HPWO and percentages of employees involved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practices adopted</th>
<th>Percentage of employees involved in Italy (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 practice</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 practices</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All 5 practices</td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The levels of key competences seem to increase proportionally with:

- the increasing of work seniority (from 18.3% to 23.4%);
- the length of the training time (from 16.7% to 28.1%);
- informal learning processes play a key role in all kind of firms (73%).

The Organizations that adopt a range of practices – e.g. job rotation, quality circles, reengineering, self managed teams, peer performance review, employee involvement, pay for skill, profit sharing, total quality management, ……

……seem to hold higher levels of skills than the other organizations, showing a strong relationship between their characteristics and the skills development (“High Performance Work Organisations – HPWOs”).

But a very few number of Italian firms can be defined as HPWOs: only 1.9%.

In 2012 an extended OLC survey with the Italian Department of Public Services is ongoing. 2000 interviews will be realized in 200 public services sector at national level aimed at implementing adult learning paths and supporting new forms of organisations in the public services.
PIAAC – Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (a new strategy)

In 2008 Italy joined the OECD international Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), along with 24 other countries.

- Internationally comparable information across 25 countries
- Computer-based assessment
- A direct assessment of foundation skills of the adult population (16-65 years old) and an indirect assessment of skills used at work (JRA)
PIAAC –
Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (a new strategy)

- (Foundation) skills have become the global currency of 21st-century economies
- Impact competencies on social and economic outcomes at individual and aggregate levels
- It is increasing the policy attention to supply of and demand for skills within the adult learning
Competencies and school-work transitions: a delicate shift (1)

Source: Italian PIAAC Field Test data, 2010.
Students and workers obtained the best performances in the cognitive tests.
Fewer than one fifth of the respondents are over-educated.
Low skills and education outcomes

Source: Italian PIAAC Field Test data, 2010.
Low skills and social disadvantages

Source: Italian PIAAC Field Test data, 2010.
Skills affect people’s lives and the well being of nations ,.....

......for these reason we need to better understand how skills are linked to age, work, practices, training activities and learning opportunities.
Lessons learned from our studies towards a new skills strategy for adult learning (1)

- The need of new approaches of studies

  - Shifts the focus from traditional proxies of skills, such as years of formal education and training or qualifications attained, to a much broader perspective that includes the skills people acquire, use and maintain—and also lose—over a whole lifetime.

  - Workplaces provide a strong learning environment for both transversal and specific skills (OLC Project)

  - Unused skills tend to atrophy, while new skills are, to a large extent, developed informally, often through work experience.

  - People need both hard and soft skills and a range of skills that help them to contribute to better social outcomes and build more cohesive and tolerant societies (foundations skills).

  - The importance of international comparability of the distribution of competencies between countries and the need of a direct measure of skills as basis of effective skills policy making (PIAAC)
In Italy a new Labour Market reform (2012) based on lifelong learning perspective has being implementing moving towards an integrated skills strategy……………….

4 Ministries involved:
(Ministry of Labour and Social policies, Ministry of Education, Economy, and Development)

The main stones of the reform for lifelong learning

✓ **Foster a whole institutional approach** (national, regional, local) and different forms of workplace learning (Apprenticeships, internship)

✓ **Remove barriers to investing in further learning** (transparency, certification system, validation of non formal learning)

✓ **Recognising learning outcomes**: Transparent standards, embedded in a framework of national qualifications, should be developed alongside reliable assessment procedures

✓ **Provide new curricula base on transversal and foundations skills** (from initial to continuous and adult learning)

✓ **Flexible delivery of relevant programmes**: It is essential to ensure that programmes are relevant to users and are flexible enough, both in content and in how they are delivered (part-time, flexible hours) to adapt to adults’ needs and learning for their lives.
THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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