Overview: adult education in Italy

The 2019 Anti-Poverty Strategy is currently the most relevant adult education policy in Italy, providing training schemes for the unemployed and fostering social inclusion. The participation in adult education has improved over last decade and in 2018, 8,1% of the adults (25-64) participated in learning (11,1% EU average) (LFS). Italy lacks a coherent regulatory framework for adult education, especially regarding training professionals.

In response, the Anti-Poverty Strategy introduced the qualification of socio-pedagogical professional educator and promoted non-formal education with a focus on counselling jobs. So far, many citizens have applied for the new scheme, which is supported by universities in terms of management and planning. Generally, there is no state funding for non-formal education in Italy. Hence, many of the programs rely on EU funding and independent training funds.

Some of the challenges in Italy are that low qualified adults as well as migrants, older generations and vulnerable groups are underrepresented in adult learning activities. In 2018 only 2% of the participants in continuing adult education were low qualified adults. This is concerning because low qualified adults are overrepresented in the population (12 million), while only 2,5 million jobs requiring low qualified people are available. Making adult learning accessible to all and especially to disadvantaged groups would not only enhance the development of Italy, but also promote the low literacy rates and support the social and personal development of wider Italian society .