# Italian Education, Culture, Youth and Civil Society policies

**Education policy**

The Italian scholastic system is organized in two cycles of study. The first cycle consists in two different scholastic degrees:

* **Primary school**, that lasts 5 years, from 6 to 11 years old;
* **Secondary school** of I degree, that last 3 years, from 11 to 14 years old.

The attendance of both is compulsory for Italian and foreign children. The first cycle ends with the final national exam, that allows the access to the second one. It consists in the **secondary school of II degree**, or High school, and lasts five years, from 14 to 19 years old. The last reform of school, effective from the scholastic year 2010-2011, reduced the fragmentation of curricula and organized it in the following way:

* Licei (humanistic, scientific, artistic and linguistic curricula);
* Istituti tecnici (technical institutes);
* Istituti professionali (vocational training).

At the end of the second cycle there is another final national exam. Education is *compulsory* for at least 10 years, from 6 to 16 years old. The fulfilment of compulsory education is finalized to the achievement of Diploma of the secondary school of II degree or a professional qualification, within the age of 18. Different is the *formative education*, the right-duty of young people who have completed the compulsory education path to attend training activities until the age of 18 years.

Every young person can choose, according to their interests and capabilities, one of the following possibilities:

* continuing the study in the school education system;
* attending the system of vocational training, whose jurisdiction is regions’ prerogative;
* following the apprenticeship route. It is a contract of educational content aimed to promote the integration of young people into the labour market through the acquisition of a trade and / or specific experience for a vocational qualification;
* attending an education course for adults at a Provincial Centre for Adult Education.

**Interculture in school**

The recent migratory phenomena modified the role of school and demand it to redefine its educative mission. The presence of foreign students is a structural phenomenon of the Italian scholastic system. The foreign students enrolled in Italian schools in the years 2015-2016 are about 800 thousand (9.2 % on the total scholastic population). The 58% of them was born in Italy. Italy has chosen the full and complete integration of everybody in school, in which interculturality is the traversal dimension and the response to deal with the differences and to increase the quality of scholastic inclusion. Since 1989 the Ministry of Education established some guidelines to emphasise the needs of young immigrants. The first Ministerial Circular (C.M.) was based on two core ideas: focusing on immigrant students’ basic right of education and on the respect of their cultural and ethnic roots; implementing formative courses for teachers on multiculturality.

In the 1990 a new Circular of the Ministry of Education defined for the first time the notion of Intercultural Education as *the* *capability to mediate between culture, to promote the dialogue, the democracy and the pacific coexistence*. A step forward was set by the C.M. in 1994, that reaffirmed the importance of valuing the differences through the intercultural approach. According to it, the integration of foreign students starts from the possibility, for the students, to be heard and for the teachers to understand them. In the school the students with migratory background can learn the meaning of *citizenship* in the Italian national context. The school also acts like a gym for all the students who train themselves how to live together. Moreover the C.M. established the need of reorganizing the educational tools like textbooks and libraries. Therefore the stress was on the renovation of the didactic methods. Supporting the efforts of the Ministry of Education, Law 40/1998 on immigration affirmed that *every young migrant, both regular or irregular, must attend the compulsory school*. Many other laws and C.M. followed this first normative pattern on intercultural education. The positive aspect is that Ministries and governments, thanks to the experience acquired during the years, are considering some critical points i.e. the massive dropout rate of migrant students and the slowness in learning Italian language. In fact, the scholastic path of foreign students and their outcomes usually present many problems. The disparity between the Italians and the foreigners is still a disadvantage that need to be tackled.

**Cultural Policy**

On 1 August 2014, Italy submitted to the European Commission the **National Operational Program (PON) for Culture** with the objective of fostering the "investments for growth and employment" in less developed Italian regions (Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Puglia and Sicilia). The PON, in which are defined the themes related to the contribution of the culture for the construction of an "intelligent, sustainable and inclusive society", aims to overcome the under-utilization of cultural resources in less developed regions for increasing their appeal, generating more flows of touristic demand and promoting the strengthening of (business and third sector) cultural enterprises. The action addresses micro, small and medium-sized enterprises of culture, tourism, entertainment and traditional production in order to create activities and services aimed to enrich and diversify the touristic-cultural offer.

**G7 of Culture**

In Florence, on March 30 and 31, 2017, the Ministers of Culture and the culture authorities participated to the first **G7 of** **Culture** in the history, promoted under the impulse of Italian Minister of Cultural Heritage and Tourism and ended with the signing of the **Florence Declaration** by the Ministers and other culture representatives of the Seven Countries. In this first meeting, it was recognized the distinctive role of culture as a tool for dialogue among peoples, because contributes to preserve the identity and the memory, fosters the intercultural dialogue and the exchange among all nations, fuels the tolerance, the mutual understanding, the recognition and the respect for diversity. Moreover it was underlined the importance of a joint and coordinated action to strengthen the protection of cultural heritage from the ever-increasing risks arising from terroristic attacks, armed conflicts and natural disasters, but also from raids and other crimes perpetrated on a global scale - for the cultural heritage and the institutions such as museums, monuments, archaeological sites, archives and libraries. The destruction of cultural sites and the actions of eradicating an irreplaceable heritage suppress the identity of communities and remove any trace of diversity of the past and religious pluralism.

**New law for Cinema and Audiovisual aids**

**Cinema** is finally recognized as a fundamental asset or a real industry, with less bureaucratizing practices and great attention for the new talents. The benefits will not only emerge in economic terms, but also in the promotion of the beauty and intellectual quality of the Country. The measure increases the resources of 60%. A "Fund for the Development of Investments in Cinema and audiovisual aids" set up in 2017: through it will be collected incentives and contributions for "young, influential authors" and for all the works dedicated to the promotion of the Country.

**Annual “Capital” of the Italian Culture**

The initiative to select each year the "**Italian Capital of Culture**" aims to support and encourage the autonomous planning and the effective capacity of Italian cities in the field of arts and, at the same time, to recognize the high value of culture in increasing the social cohesion, the integration, the preservation of identity, the creativity, the innovation, the growth, the economic development and the individual and collective wellness.

**Youth policy**

In line with the conclusion highlighted by Professor Rita Bertozzi in her paper "*Youth policies and youth participation: from beneficiaries to actors"*, in Italy young people tend to be scarcely involved in political matters and to remain “invisible”. There are indeed forms of youth activism, but it involves different ways of participation. Youth participation has gradually become a more central issue at the political level and several Italian laws acknowledged this situation, confirming the role of associations, non-formal education and responsible citizenship.

There is a key programme which aims to promote the involvement of youth in voluntary activities: National Civic Service – known as **Servizio Civile Nazionale** - is an opportunity available for youngsters between 18 and 28 years old. It allows accredited organisations to employ young and motivated volunteers who, stimulated by the possibility of doing a qualifying experience in the field of social assistance, ensure a continuous and efficient service

Volunteers in the program are subsidized by the government to work for both public agencies and Civil Societies Organizations. The service intends to enhance solidarity and cooperation at a national and international level, with special regard to the promotion of social rights and personal services, the education to the peace among young people and the preservation of national cultural heritage and the environment. The service experience is also supposed to develop youth’s civic, social, cultural and professional conscience.

**Civil society policy**

It is possible to record a widespread presence of civil society organizations throughout the peninsula, predominantly in the centre and in the north. Public involvement of all citizens is a key element for raising the awareness on current issues and its consequences on our daily lives. For this purpose, the network of civil society in Italy organize meetings, reflections, debates on current social relevant problems and campaigns promoting the right information, the participation, the solidarity and the pursuit of goals for the collective good. In addition to the traditional media, the ways for spreading initiatives, proposals, opinions and adhering to national campaigns are the web and social networks. Apart from some positive associative realities, the nature of Italian civil society is still fragmentary, bound to the territory and less accustomed, until few years ago, to the private fund-raising systems. Moreover its weakness lies in its limited ability to influence the attitudes and values of Italian society. Among the deficits we can include: low political impact, which research confirms to be far behind social impact; limitations in the international links to face the effects of globalisation; insufficient commitment to emerging problems in Italy such as social mobility and the rules of law; the lack of inclusion and management of diversity, which includes insufficient attention to the situation of immigrants and the potential for development of their citizenship through the participation in CSOs.

**Resources:**

* [http://www.beniculturali.it/mibac/export/mibac/index.html#&panel1-1](http://www.beniculturali.it/mibac/export/MiBAC/index.html#&panel1-1)
* <http://www.integrazionemigranti.gov.it/Documenti-e-ricerche/FROM_BENEFICIARIES_TO_ACTORS.pdf>
* <http://www.mondinsieme.org>
* <http://www.istruzione.it/>
* [http://dati.istruzione.it/espscu/index.html?Area=anagstu](http://dati.istruzione.it/espscu/index.html?area=anagStu)
* <http://www.archivio.formazione.unimib.it/Default.asp?Idpagine=724&funzione=scheda_materiale&ins=2507&doc=mate>
* <http://www.serviziocivile.gov.it/>