Regional Comparative Analysis of Regional Policies for Adult Learning

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The OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies: empirical evidences for future policy-challenges

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PIAAC (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies)

- PIAAC is the most comprehensive international household-based survey ever implemented. The Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) assesses the proficiency of adults in literacy, numeracy and problem solving in technology-rich environments. These are considered to be “key information-processing skills” in that they are:
  - necessary for fully integrating and participating in the labour market, education and training, and social and civic life;
  - highly transferable, in that they are relevant to many social contexts and work situations;
  - “learnable” and, therefore, subject to the influence of policy.
- The target population for the survey was the non-institutionalised population, aged 16-65 years, residing in the country at the time of data collection, irrespective of nationality, citizenship or language status.
Round 1: Australia, Austria, Belgium (Flanders), Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea (Republic of), Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom (England and Northern Ireland), and United States; and two partner countries – Cyprus and Russian Federation.

Round 2: Chile, Greece, Indonesia, Israel, Lithuania, New Zealand, Singapore, Slovenia, Turkey
Agenda

1. The Main Elements of the Survey
2. Computer delivery platform
3. Summary of results
4. The policy challenges
The Main Elements of the Survey

**BQ**
- Demographic characteristics and background
- Educational attainment and participation in learning activities
- Labour-force status and employment
- Social outcomes
- Literacy and numeracy practices and the use of skills

**Module on skills use**
- Cognitive skills – reading, writing, numeracy and problem solving
- Technology skills – ICT
- Interaction skills – co-operation, influencing
- Learning skills – learning
- Organisation skills – organisation and planning
- Physical skills – physical requirements: use of gross and fine motor skills

**DA**
- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Reading Components (optional)
- Problem-solving in technology rich Environments (optional)
2. Computer Delivery Platform

Computer delivery platform

- CMS piaac
- PIAAC VM
- Background Questionnaire
- Assessment
PIAAC was the first large-scale assessment delivered on a laptop computer to respondents in their homes.

The integration of the 3 components (Case Management System, Virtual Machine e TAO platform) address the following issues:
- all countries fully met the required quality standards;
- test and evaluate the functioning of the cognitive portion of the delivery platform, particularly response capturing and automatic scoring;
- test and evaluate the functioning of the CAPI system, particularly the flow of questions and efficiency of the system in capturing information.
The level and distribution of skills across country

3. Summary of results
The level and distribution of skills across country

3. Summary of results
The adult proficiency across survey

3. Summary of results

The bar chart shows the PIAAC mean score compared to the IALS mean score for various countries. Positive values indicate a significantly higher PIAAC mean score, while negative values indicate a significantly lower PIAAC mean score compared to IALS. The countries included are Poland, Australia, Italy, Ireland, Finland, Belgium, Netherlands, OECD Average, Czech Republic, United States, Canada, Germany, Norway, Denmark, and Sweden. Poland has the highest positive score, indicating a significantly higher proficiency, while Sweden has the lowest negative score, indicating a significantly lower proficiency compared to IALS.
The adult proficiency across survey

3. Summary of results
Italy

- Italy badly performed in adult skills proficiency:
  - A significant number of adults have low levels of proficiency in the information-processing skills increasingly needed in the information societies of today (28% at or below level 1).
  - Young adults perform better than older ones.
Italy

- Italy badly performed in adult skills proficiency:
  - A significant number of adults have low levels of proficiency in the information-processing skills increasingly needed in the information societies of today (28% at or below level 1).
  - Young adults perform better than older ones.
  - Women perform as men.
  - Performance gap is wide between regions: North Eastern and Central Italy with scores around OECD average and Southern Italy much below the average.
NEET

• NEETs are the worst performers
• NEETs are the worst performers

**Summary of results**

Adjusted odds ratios of 16-24 year-olds scoring at or below proficiency Level 2 on the literacy scale, by education and work status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Italy</th>
<th>Average OECD</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In education only</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither in education nor work but has been in education or training during previous 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In education and work</td>
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<td>In work only</td>
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<td>NEET</td>
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Formal education and its relationship to proficiency

- Formal education plays a key role in developing foundation skills:
  - Students are the best performer in Italy (273 score)
  - 16-24 aged students show an evident advantage than workers
Level of education and skills proficiency

- The relationship between **formal education** (educational attainment) and proficiency in the skills assessed by the survey is strong and complex.
- More education does not automatically translate into better skills.

[Diagram showing mean literacy proficiency scores across different countries and education levels.]

Japanese high school graduates have literacy skills comparable to those of Italian tertiary graduates.
Adult education and training and proficiency

- PIAAC results show a strong positive relationship between participation in adult education and literacy skills.

In Italy there is the lowest participation rates in adult education and training activities: 24.3% vs. 51.9% OCSE average.
The policy challenges

- PIAAC evidences allow for systemic analyses, as a prerequisite for setting up consistent strategies and skills policies.

- In Italy many factors have an impact on foundation skills performance:
  - Early School Leaving
  - Low Levels of Participation in Tertiary Education
  - Low Levels of Participation in Adult Education and Training
  - High Level of Neets
  - Women Low Activity Rates
  - Aged Population (Older Cohorts with Very Low Levels of Edu)
  - Spells of Long-term Unemployment
  - Social Background
  - Mismatch and Low Skills Use

- Improve virtuous cycle for adults with high proficiency as adult learning can play an important role in helping adults to develop and maintaining key information-processing skills and acquire other knowledge and skills.

- The key policy challenge is to help low-skilled adults breaking the vicious cycle for those with low proficiency.
Key points for policy

- Make lifelong learning opportunities accessible to all
- Provide high-quality initial education and lifelong learning opportunities
- Make sure all children have a strong start in education
- Develop links between the world of learning and the world of work
- Provide training for workers
- Identify those most at risk of poor skills proficiency
- Show how adults can benefit from better skills
- Recognise and certify skills proficiency
Thank you for your attention

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