

Media and Information Literacy Policies in Italy (2013)

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OssCom

Centro di ricerca
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Experts:

Piermarco Aroldi, OssCom, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan

Maria Francesca Murru, OssCom, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan

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Since the 1980s, some processes that have influenced the birth of the Media Education (ME), deeply affecting the policies aimed to its development, characterized Italy.

By the economic point of view, a period of accelerated growth in consumer spending has accompanied the progressive expansion of tertiary sector during the 1980s; it was followed by a period of slower growth during the 1990s; with the transition to the new millennium, Italy has entered a period of stagnation that, from 2008 onwards, became a strong recession. From the political point of view, the season of governments lead by Democrazia Cristiana and Partito Socialista (1980s) ended the First Republic, and was followed by the so-called “Mani Pulite” (“Clean Hands”) break-down (1992-94), with the crisis of the traditional parties come out of the Second World War and the emergence of new political subjects: Forza Italia, Lega Nord, Alleanza Nazionale. For the next twenty years Italian politics is strongly influenced by the figure of Silvio Berlusconi.

These dynamics have resulted in a strong growth and a radical restructuring in the media system: from a television system centered on the monopoly of PSB (1954-1975) to a mixed public-private oligopoly with a strong commercial vocation, through a period of wild deregulation (1976-1990); the following conformation to the rules of European standards which accompanied the advent of digital TV (1990-2012) has been, however, negatively affected by conflicts of interest related to the person of Silvio Berlusconi and the interference of political parties in the media system. Since the 1990s started also the penetration of the Internet, but it only recently has exceeded the threshold of 50% of the population connected.

The entire period (1980-present) was also characterized by a progressive marginalization of the school, both in terms of reduction of public spending, and in terms of detraction of the teaching profession; this crisis has been met with some reforms aimed to the modernization of the school, but often not very effective.

In this context of hypertrophy of the television system, accompanied by a slow diffusion of the Internet and a structural condition of crisis of the school's system, can be easily explained the traits that characterize the development of Media Education in Italy: the lack of national and institutional policies for supporting the ME, its difficult entry into the school, its roots in civil society and academia, the critical paradigm (e.g. inoculation theory), aimed primarily at the television (1980s and 1990s), then to the Internet (2000s - nowadays).

Nevertheless, the Media Education movement has in Italy a long tradition: since the 1946 was founded in Rome the “Movimento dei Cineforum”, aimed to the education of the moviegoers and the development of cinematographic culture; in the Sixties disciplines such as performing arts, cinema and television enter some Italian Universities (namely Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore and Università di Padova); in the early Seventies, the Jesuit Nazareno Taddei founded the “International center for performing arts and social communication”, that since 1972 publishes the magazine EDAV (“Educazione Audiovisiva”, Audiovisual Education) addressing to teachers and educators and proposing a structural-semiotic approach to the image (photography, film, television) (Giannatelli, 2002), on the stump of other experiences carried out in Italy during the 1960s and 1970s in the so-called popular arts paradigm, initially mainly devoted to the movies and comics. In the same years the CSC (“Centro Studi Cinematografici”¹) begins to promote the educational use of cinema and audiovisual technology in the school through the journal “Ragazzo selvaggio”.

The clear and explicit affirmation of Media Education in Italy hails from the Eighties, when some university centers, earlier focused on Media Studies and Communication Studies have inserted the ME tradition from abroad, especially from Great Britain, USA, Canada and France. Namely, main references have been to the works of Len Masterman, David Buckingham, Cary Bazalgette, John Pungente, Ismar de Oliveira Soares, Henry Giroux, Robyn Quin, Barrie McMahon, Evelyne Bévort, Jacques Gonnet, Gneviève Jacquinet.

Theoretical reflection and first initiatives of teachers’ training and post doctoral courses (early 1990s) have been accompanied by the emergence of some associations (e.g. MED, 1996; Zaffiria, 1998); around the initiatives of teachers’ and operators’ training (e.g. the Summer School of Corvara since 1992) has grown up a network of academics, practitioners and teachers who defined, in dialogue with the international experience and scientific literature, the principles of Media Education (see below, the Carta di Bellaria, 2002).

The movement for Media Education found members and partners in local schools and teachers, church communities, parents associations, industry professionals - namely in the Public Service broadcaster (RAI Radiotelevisione Italiana); relatively less attentive have been the Institutions, the Ministry of Education and the AGCOM (Authority for the Guarantees in Communication); nevertheless, it is noteworthy that AGCOM have committed to its regional Offices (Corecom) some mandates in the protection of minors that often are at the basis of ME projects carried out in the schools, in partnership with the Regional School Offices, ME agencies and Universities. Notwithstanding, the major school reforms, as will be seen, while actually opening some space to ME, never entered systematically ME among their guidelines or priorities, even if the plan of the

¹ <http://www.cscinema.org/index.php>

Ministry of Education 1997-2000 for the introduction of new technologies (computers and Internet) provides a strong impetus for the modernization of the Italian school and offers new opportunities for basic education, and the law n . 30/2000 on the reorganization of the cycles opens up new spaces for ME and provides the first indications for the future development of a cross-curriculum for Media Education (Giannatelli, 2002).

2. Dimension	Legal policy framework
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There are no legal documents framing Media Education policies and there isn't a clear authority that oversees Media Education initiatives in Italy. Thus, it is not possible to find an official designation of media education. However, in the last "Indications for the curriculum" issued by the Ministry of Education in 2012 to guide and orient the educational plans of primary and secondary, we can find a specific reference to the media-related skills and to the aims of the related training process. Drawing upon the notion of digital competence included in the Recommendation of European Parliament and Council of 18 December 2006 (2006/962/CE), the national indications suggest that students should acquire the ability of critically using new technologies of information and communication for searching and analysing information, for distinguishing reliable and not reliable information, and for interacting with different people. Moreover, formal education at schools should orient children's media consumption in order to foster their esthetical sensitivity. The words that are more frequently associated to media are knowledge, information, critical attitude, expressive skills, and creativity.

While the greatest part of Media Education public policies in Italy are focused on the promotion of digital literacy, several grassroots initiatives coming from civil society, charities and academic association address the more specific area of media literacy.

Public policies in the area of digital literacy are promoted by the Ministry of Education through the Office "Digital Innovation at school: the Digital School" at the "General Directorate for Research, Statistics and Informatic Systems". All the initiatives are developed and monitored through INDIRE (Istituto Nazionale di Documentazione, Innovazione e Ricerca Educativa), the National Institute for Research and Innovation on Education which coordinates teachers training programs, research on innovation in digital technologies' usage for educational aims, connection with European policies in education and digital agenda.

In 2007, the Ministry of Education launched a National Plan for Digital Schools (Piano Nazionale Scuola Digitale) to spread ICT in Italian classrooms and to enhance technology's adoption as a catalyser of new teaching practices and advanced quality teaching. The National Plan for Digital

Schools has two main strategic aims: to increase the Italian population's ICT skills and digital skills and to introduce teaching innovation, encouraging more personalised educational paths and promoting active learning (Schietroma, 2011). We cannot find a detailed definition of digital literacy; they are generally referred as "skills for the information and knowledge society". In the "digital agenda", a cross-governmental initiative to encourage digital solutions for the development of the economy and society and for more efficient government action, the Ministry of Education led the digital skills task force which identifies the first priority in the scaling up of "the digital school model: school access to broadband; cloud resources for teaching and learning; transforming learning environments; digital contents and ebooks; teacher training through blended e-learning; interactive whiteboards; e-participation" (Avvisati et al. 2013).

The National Plan for Digital Schools springs from the convergence of two main logics. First of all, the belief that schools can act as fundamental vehicles for spreading the use of ICT throughout society; consequently, investments in "digital schools" are considered as one pillar of a coordinated effort to build up Italy's capacity in the digital economy. A complementary view stresses the need to align schools with changes in society, particularly with the working environment of the knowledge society, closing the gap between formal education and the emerging modes of socialisation and informal learning among peer cultures. The resulting policy marks a clear discontinuity with previous national efforts to introduce ICT in schools: the aim is to fully incorporate communication technologies in all the school activities, overcoming disciplinary boundaries and promoting the adoption of ICT in all subject fields and at all levels of education. ICT equipment should be introduced directly in standard classroom, rather than in separated computer lab as it happened with previous digital plans.

The national plan includes four initiatives: a fund to equip classrooms with interactive whiteboards (Piano LIM), and three test bed projects in which pilot schools, selected through open competitions, experiment ICT solutions:

- *cl@sse 2.0*. This project is similar to the Spanish project Escuela 2.0 and to the British project Capital. It aims at transforming the traditional class into a training laboratory where digital tools introduce new contents and new ways of learning and teaching.
- *scuol@ 2.0*. This project is targeted at the entire school and the introduction of new technologies is linked to a wider transformation that affects both organizational systems of human resources and curricular paths.
- *Editoria digitale scolastica*

Besides that, three projects are targeted at children with specific needs: *@urora* and *Oltre l'@urora* for children/teenagers followed by juvenile court and *HSH@Network* for hospitalized children.

For the four school years 2007-2011, the budget law set apart EUR 120 million in total, or about EUR 30 million per year (5 euro per student). This represents less than 0.1% of the yearly budget of the Ministry of Education for pre-primary, primary, lower- and upper-secondary education (EUR 42 billion for 2011: Ragioneria Generale dello Stato, www.rgs.mef.gov.it) (Avvisati et al. 2013).

According to most recent data (Eurispes, 2014, pp. 114-115), 70.000 interactive whiteboards have been distributed in Italian schools. The classes that have taken part to the "cl@sse 2.0" initiative are in total 416 (124 of the primary school and 136 of the secondary school) while the schools involved in scuol@ 2.0 are only 15. In the face of a substantial investment into technical equipment, the projects of educational innovation still affect only a minor part of the entire population of Italian students.

The plan works on voluntary basis; only schools that express their interest through the submission of a project to a call for tender are considered for involvement. Recently, a report commissioned by the Ministry of Education and realized by OECD (Avvisati et al. 2013) has assessed weakest and strongest points of the Plan. The voluntary mechanism on which the founding system is based is considered as one the strongest points because it is expected to encourage the "bottom-up" system and the capitalization of previous experience of teachers. Among the weakest points, the review underlines the extremely low budget and the lack of a unitary system for the management of curricula and the sharing of teaching resources. Moreover, it criticizes the focus on single classes acting as "advanced technological islands" which go ahead without a coordinated involvement of the entire school system. Finally, another huge limit is represented by the lack of monitoring and assessment system.

Thus, national policies are uniquely focused on the promotion of digital literacy which is not considered as a set of skills per se, rather as a new teaching culture which incorporates technologies in innovative learning environment which are expected to be interactive and student-centered. Initiatives in the domain of media literacy- aimed at enhance the ability "to access, analyze, evaluate and communicate messages in a variety of forms" (Aufderheide, 1993) - are not framed by specific and focused policies. Thus, we cannot find any official definition of media literacy, neither stated goals related to resources allocation or performance assessment. The great part of the Media Literacy projects in Italy comes out from the free initiatives of academic research units, charities, non-governmental organizations which, in trying to fulfill their goals, actively involve national institutions like Ministries and local institutions like CORECOM (regional bodies of AGCom, the independent regulator and competition authority for the Italian communications system). Depending on the case, they can obtain from these institutions a political patronage or a substantial sponsorship including the delivery of funding. This bottom-up processes haven't yet received an official

recognition that could overcome the fragmentation in principles and practices of all existing projects. The lack of institutional coordination is thus balanced by a very lively community of academics and civil society organizations that support both an advanced theoretical debate and a constant experimentation of new practices.

Among the most active institutions in Media Education, there are CORECOMs (Regional committees for communications) which are the regional bodies of AGCOM - Autorità per le Garanzie nelle Comunicazioni, the independent regulator and competition authority for the Italian communications system . CORECOMs have a mandate of warranty, regulation and supervision on the regional system of communication and they also act as advice centre for the Regional Council and the Regional Assembly. However, during recent years the institutional activities of some CORECOMs - especially in some regions as Emilia Romagna, Lombardia, Puglia, Piemonte - have evolved beyond the mere regulatory function and have started to give a proactive contribution to information and education of citizens.

This new proactive role is developed through the creation of large networks that include other institutions, like the Ministry of Education, University and Research, and stakeholders like universities and non-governmental organizations. Within these networks, institutions adopt, give value and legitimacy to definitions and best practices of Media Education that have emerged from grassroots organizations.

In one of this initiative, namely the "Media Education" project addressing teachers and promoted by CORECOM Puglia, Postal and Communications Police, and the regional body of Ministry of Education, we can find a well-articulated notion of media education conceived as both education with media - which are considered as tools to be used in training processes - and education to media - related to the critical comprehension of media texts and systems, considered not only as tools but also as languages and cultures. Within this project media education is intended as a way for empowering citizens rather than protecting them from potential harms coming from media.

Notwithstanding the absence of institutional coordination, a great effort in overcoming fragmentation of subjects and practices of Media Education has arisen from below, from the free enterprise of civil society. One of the most successful effort of coordination from below is represented by the Carta di Bellaria , an agreement made in April 2002 by a large group of political representatives, educators and broadcasters with the aim of regulating criteria, practices, qualitative parameters, ethical principles and legal frameworks of Media Education projects and products.

Carta di Bellaria is not a binding agreement and has not a legal foundation; however, it can be considered as the first official act that has given recognition to all the institutional and non-

institutional subjects actively involved in Media Education projects and provided them with a coordinated framework of organisational standards and general aims of their work.

In this agreement, Media Education is defined as the specific area of theoretical reflections and practical interventions where media are conceived and used as a strategic resource for processes of learning and training: "quel particolare ambito delle scienze dell'educazione e del lavoro educativo che consiste nel produrre riflessione e strategie operative in ordine ai media intesi come risorsa integrale per l'intervento formativo" (art. 2). This definition emphasizes the double dimension of Media Education intended both as a research strand and a set of intervention practices. Moreover, it doesn't contain any reference to age and puts into play the totality of the education process in order that the agreement could be extended to all the subjects that are directly involved in education, like families, NGO and companies.

The Carta di Bellaria is inspired by articles 3 and 34 of the "Constitution of the Italian Republic" according to which the State has the duty of assuring to all the citizens the right of education and equal opportunities for actively participating to the political, economic and social organization of the country. A second source of inspiration is represented by the UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child together with the UNESCO Declaration on Media Education (1982). At the same time, the Carta di Bellaria constitutes a bridge to the most advanced international contribution on media literacy explicitly declaring the willingness of being aligned with those international conventions that has taken Media Education as a civic responsibility and a moral necessity. Most specifically, it refers to the Meeting of Research and Media Education in Losanna (1988), the Conference of Toulouse (1990) New Directions in Media Education, UNESCO Forum "Les jeunes les médias demain" (Paris, 1997), the 2000 Summit on Media Education in Toronto. Starting from this background, Media Education is indicated as an essential path towards the development of an active citizenship and the promotion of human values.

The Carta di Bellaria has thus represented a turning point in the public discourse on Media Education insofar as it has allowed both to legitimize it through a connection with the overarching discourse on rights of children qua citizens and to enrich it with the most advanced reflections on praxis and scope of Media Education. It includes a definition of media literacy as critical analysis of contents and their underlining communication strategies, as the creative and aware usage of expressive potentialities of different media and of their specific codes and as the ability of critically interpreting advertising and commercial communication.

Moreover, it encourages the recognition of the social and cultural identity of "media educators" whose professional role consists of using media for educational purposes or considering them as the main object of reflection and intervention.

The Carta di Bellaria formalizes a double path of action. On the one side, it officially addresses institutions, policymakers and other stakeholders with a set of precise and detailed requests aimed at giving value and effectiveness to Media Education's projects. It asks for the public recognition of the professional identity of the "media educator" both in formal and informal contexts of education; it asks for a specific teacher training through focused undergraduate and postgraduate courses; it addresses the Ministry of University and Research claiming for the inclusion of Media Education in the curricular training offered to students and asks to the Ministries of Social Policy/Health/Equal Opportunities to value projects of Media Education as resources for the support and rehabilitation of sick or disadvantaged people. Moreover, it proposes an active role to media producers inviting them to include media educators in their staff as an essential part of the fulfillment of their deontological mission. Charities and non-governmental associations are invited to create tools and contexts for the development of media skills of educators. On the other side, the Carta di Bellaria officially declares the commitment of all the subscribers in undertaking practical initiatives in their specific areas of expertise, as the coordination of all the subjects working in the area of Media Education through the Italian Association of Media Education (MED) , the creation of an academic observatory aimed at promoting and coordinating the research on Media Education, the establishment of a national archive of all the experiences and resources developed by Media Education projects.

3.1 Dimension	Capacity-building: teacher training
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A coherent framework of education policies in the area of media literacy is not available; however media and technological skills are part of the general teacher training at higher educational level. Initial teacher training reformed through Regulation of 10 September 2010 has been introduced starting from school year 2011/12. It is not exclusively focused on subjects skills but also on cross-curricular competencies like better mastery of English, ICT for teaching and a better qualification for integration of disabled students (European Schoolnet, 2011).

A regulation issued by the Ministry of Education, University and Research on March, 25th 2013² has provided that the compulsory traineeship for teachers must include digital skills as required by the Recommendations of European Parliament and Council (2006/962/CE). These skills are specified as following: ability of using multimedia languages for the representation and communication of knowledge, usage of digital contents and, more in general, of virtual reality and computer simulation paying special attention to accessibility for students with special needs.

² *DECRETO 25 marzo 2013, n. 81. Available at: <http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2013/07/04/13G00120/sg>*

First of all, it should be underlined that, notwithstanding the lack of a common institutional background, a very rich reflection on the training path and professional skills of media educators has been developed in Italy since the end of 90s. These debates have received a decisive push in the years 1999/2000 after the Bologna Accords. Besides the reorganization of the educational framework in 42 Classes of First Degree and 104 Classes of Master, the reform subsequent to the Bologna Accords has recognized to each university a greater degree of flexibility than in the past in the management of their educational offer. More specifically, two elements in the institutional reorganization of universities have opened new spaces for the development of curricula for media educators. The first one consists of a greater flexibility in the integration of different disciplines in the same "laurea degree courses"; this has been a great advantage in the planning of Media Education training which is placed at the intersection between the three disciplinary areas of education science, communication sciences and social science. The second one is the greater recognition of workshop, laboratories, professional and practical training which concur, together with the most theoretical lessons, to the entire educational offer. This greater openness towards the most pragmatic and experiential side of education is again advantageous for Media Education which again deploys itself along the two sides of theoretical research and practical enterprise.

The new opportunities opened by the reform of the university system have been grasped and further developed by those academic contexts that could rely on a pre-existent competence on Media Education. In those same years, a rich academic debate has gradually defined the main features of the media educator (Rivoltella, 2001; Giannatelli, Rivoltella, 2003; Ottaviano, 2001) around three main points: 1) the media educator is the "next generation educator"; in the information society, each educator in whatever disciplines she teaches, should have media competences and should be able to put them into practice; 2) the media educator should work not only with children at school or in other informal learning contexts, but should work also in the no-profit area with disadvantaged people, in the public administration and private companies. Each of this professional contexts will require a different emphasis on the various disciplines that constitute the background of media educators; 3) Media Education should be thought at the same time as a set of distributed competencies and as a strong professional role, with a strong expertise in the educational and communicational area.

The prevailing orientation has been that the achievement of distributed competences could be implemented through Media Education courses included in the "laurea degree courses" of Communication Sciences and Education Sciences. The training of a focused professional role of media educator has been assumed by dedicated post-graduate courses (Laurea specialistica) or masters. The full list of degree programs officially recognized by the Ministry of Education

includes a degree course in "Theory and Methodology of e-learning and media education" (LM93) that has been introduced through the Ministerial Decree DM n. 509/99 and DM 270/04.

Since 2000/2001, Masters in Media Education were activated by Università Cattolica, Università Sapienza di Roma, Università degli Studi Suor Orsola Benincasa Napoli, Università di Padova, Università di Bari, Università Pontificia Salesiana. A dedicated "Laurea Magistrale" in Media Education was activated by Università della Calabria and Università di Padova but at the moment (March 2014) they are no longer available. From the academic year 2013/14, Università della Calabria has introduced a post graduate course (Laurea Magistrale) in Education Sciences for Interculturality and Media Education (LM85).

Media education policies don't propose a specific curricular development of Media Education. There isn't a coordinating framework specifying a set of competences, indicators or standard instruments. Lacking a national curriculum, the development of specific programmes of Media Education is left to the single teacher initiative. This produces a fragmentation of Media Literacy programs at school: strong where the teachers are sensible, almost absent where they are not involved and concerned with the matter.

In 2009, Ai@rt, a no-profit association of spectators, has proposed a law of popular initiative which introduces Media Education as a compulsory programme. However, the proposal has not been successful. The absence of a specific reference to Media Education in official documents and in public policies appears to be even more striking if we consider that the Ministry of Education officially encourages other specific forms of extra-curricular education, such as financial education, road safety education, education to legality, environment education and nutrition education.

The legal framework of Italian school system has gradually introduced a set of recommendations where the area of Media Education is implicitly acknowledged as a necessary element for the training of students. Most specifically, these traces can be found in "Indications for the curriculum" that are regularly issued by the Ministry of Education (the last indications for the primary and low secondary school has been issued in September 2012). They are structured in the form of an open text that professional community have to implement and translate into concrete plans of educational offer; they identify the main skills and competences that should be achieved by students at different stages of their scholastic carrier and guarantee a vertical integration between primary and low/high secondary school.

Although we cannot find in these indications an official designation of Media Education, we can find a specific sensitivity towards mass media and communication technologies since the end of 70s, with the didactical programs for secondary school issued in 1979, the didactical programs for the primary school in 1985 and orientations for educational offer at the infant school (1991). In

1995, ICT skills were stated by Ministry of Education as a primary goal since the National Plan about New Technologies in the School but only from an instrumental, non critical, perspective, with a scarce connection with mass media.

Taking into account only the last decade, the educational, professional and cultural profile of students outlined by the reform of Italian school system of 2003 include some elements of Media Education. It is stated that skilled learner should be able to communicate ideas through expressive codes different than verbal which include photography, cinema, Internet and theatre. He should understand the value, the meaning and the producing techniques. He should be able to read newspapers and confront himself with the array of opinions that are represented. Moreover, he should be able to connect technologies to the socio-cultural contexts where they have been created, to use computers for solving problems, to reproduce images, to organize and archive data, to select websites and to strategically use search engines.

However, an official recognition of the global area of Media Education is still lacking, media are interpreted in relation to their instrumental dimension and there is an evident fragmentation of the training program in multiple disciplines (Falcinelli, 2007).

In 2007 the Ministry of Public Education has issued the official document called "Indications for the curriculum"³ which contains some general guidelines for the development of didactical programs in the primary school and low secondary school. These indications deals with transversal competencies but leave to teachers and school the right and the duty of translating them in concrete practices of training.

Media Education is not indicated as a specific area of the curriculum, however it is possible to find traces of it both in the linguistic-artistic-expressive area and in the technological section. In the first area, the document underlines that a relevant role in the development of communicative skills is played by new technologies that are typical features of the information society. Students have to develop specific competences in the mastering of multimedia languages for the expression and representation of knowledge.

The section dedicated to Technology belongs to the disciplinary area of mathematics-science-technology. There is here a double reference to Media Education, although implicit: the first one deals with computer science which includes both the learning of technical skills and the analytical reflection on consequences of these technologies on the life of people and organizations; the second one deals with the knowledge of all artifacts and could represent a useful resource for introducing the technical features of media, both in the production stage and in broadcasting.

³The document can be accessed at the following address:
http://www.indire.it/indicazioni/templates/monitoraggio/dir_310707.pdf

These orientations have been confirmed by the "Indications" issued in September 2012⁴. In this last document, the attention towards inequalities in access and use of new media is indicated as extremely relevant. A specific emphasis is placed on the necessity of creating a virtuous connection between the pedagogical interventions at school and the experience and knowledge that children acquire through processes of informal learning, often thanks to media practices. The document states that children constantly confront themselves with new media and new languages of communication, both in the role of spectator and actor. The school should give value to the experience of multimediality (photography, cinema, television, digital communication) with which children confront themselves in their daily life; the educational programs should promote an active attitude and the discovering of expressive and creative potentialities. This document marks a turning point in relation to the pedagogical paradigm of the previous indication because media are not still framed in their instrumental dimension but as part of the cultural environment surrounding children. The lack of an area specifically dedicated to Media Education requires that teachers and schools develop educational projects that are transversal to the disciplines included in the two areas of technology and linguistic-expressive-artistic competences (Felini, 2012), like music, technology, Italian, art. In the Primary School (6-11 years) there is a teaching area, named "Media and Languages", that traditionally involves all the activities with non verbal languages: draw, photos, movie, computer and Internet. In the Low Secondary (12-14), the main tradition is to charge the teacher of Italian Literature (and those who of Techniques and Art) with the Media Education teaching.

Since the scholastic year 2000/2001, the article 21 of the law "15 March 1997, n. 59" has introduced the principle of autonomy for educational institutes in the managing of their educational mission. According to this new regulatory framework, national curricula can be enriched with supplementary disciplines and activities up to the 15% of the total amount of working hours per year. Each educational institute has to elaborate its own P. O. F (Plan of the educational offer) which is the result of the group work of the Teacher' Assembly according to the suggestions given by the School Council with the supervision of the School Head. This document must be approved each year by the institute and has to be presented to students and families at the moment of registration.

⁴ The document is accessible at the following address:
http://hubmiur.pubblica.istruzione.it/alfresco/d/d/workspace/SpacesStore/8afacbd3-04e7-4a65-9d75-cec3a38ec1aa/prot7734_12_all2.pdf

This system of autonomy leaves ample space for the development of Media Education programs which could be developed by single institutes coherently with the general guidelines expressed in the "Indications".

A similar framework is found in the secondary schools of second level ("liceo" and technical college). In the «Profile» of licei signed by the Council of Ministers in February 2010, the use of multimedia tools for study and research is introduced as one of the essential feature of the training path. Students from both "liceo" and technical college must be able to read and critically interpret contents of different communication forms and, in the linguistic and communicative area, must be able to use technologies of information and communication for studying, researching and communicating.

The fulfillment of these educational aims can be realized within the space of autonomy that each educational institutes can manage in order to answer to the needs and requests coming from families, local administrations and their economic, social and cultural contexts. The part of curricula that can be autonomously managed by institutes cannot overcome the 20% of the total amount of hours in the first two years, the 30% in the second two years and the 20% in the last years. The difference is that in "licei" these supplementary educational offer should be organized without any increasing of the staff; on the contrary, in technical colleges, there is the possibility of hiring new teachers.

Between 2008 and 2009, an empirical research (Ancona, 2010), has been conducted by OssCom – Research Centr on Media and Communication at Università Cattolica together with the Department of Education of Univeristy of Bologna in three Italian regions - Emilia Romagna, Lombardia, Puglia - aimed at knowing teachers attitudes towards the introduction and the practices of Media Education in compulsory school. The topic of the research was to collect some indicators concerning the presence of the ME in schools, to know some opinions and attitudes of the teachers on media culture and the role of the school to define some proposals for teacher training on ME. The research has been financed by CORECOMs of the three involved regions and carried out by academics in the area of communication and education science.

The findings of the research are encouraging. In first place, infrastructures seems to be adequate for Media Education; the great part of schools involved in the research have at their disposal a satisfactory set of media technologies. These resources are used for Media Education training especially in the primary school, probably facilitated by a pedagogical setting that is already interdisciplinary and interactive.

Computer is the most used media technology, together with the videorecorder. On the contrary, more creative technologies like camera or cultural products like comics are used only by a minority.

The majority of school head consider positively the introduction of Media Education as a specific discipline, not compulsory and outside the standard curriculum.

If we look at the teacher training in the area of Media Education, we see that institutionalization of Media Education has been lead more by local initiative or by the good will of some teachers rather than by a coherent strategy of implementation. The great majority of teachers has acquired skills in the area of Media Education through self-managed path of training and they consider their competences satisfactory and adequate.

A wider collection of data on national basis, published by European Schoolnet in Novembre 2012, concluded that “in Italy the infrastructure to some extent, infrastructure conditions needed to underpin teaching and learning with ICT are not in place in all schools, with relatively high ratios of students to computers and over three times the EU percentage of students in schools without broadband. Nevertheless almost all students are in schools with a website and teacher use of ICT at grades 4 and 8 is close to the EU average, although student use is consistently lower than the EU mean. Both teachers and students rate their confidence in using ICT close to the EU mean, and most students are taught by teachers who have undertaken both formal and informal ICT training” (European Schoolnet, 2012).

3.2 Dimension	Capacity-building: <i>Teaching/training Materials and other relevant content</i>
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Teaching resources referring to all disciplines are made available by INDIRE (Istituto Nazionale di Documentazione, Innovazione e Ricerca Educativa), the National Institute for Research and Innovation on Education through PuntoEdu, a web portal where multimedia educational content has been developed for training activities as well as for pedagogical training to teachers. Moreover, the Ansa (Agenzia Nazionale per lo Sviluppo dell'Autonomia Scolastica), the National Agency for the development of School Autonomy has developed four databases that collect resources to be used by teachers for their training (European Schoolnet, 2011):

- Dia (<http://www.indire.it/archivi/dia/>) is the digital database of 25,000 images dealing with all the subject of the curricula. Every image has its file card which provides historical information and background together with suggestions for in-depth developments and study.
- Pon (<http://risorsedocentipon.indire.it>) is a digital database of learning resources from the National Projects developed by teachers.
- Gold (<http://gold.indire.it/gold2/>) is the database of best practices, including the learning online resources produced by teachers.

- Musiknet (<http://www.indire.it/musiknet/>) is a virtual museum of music, offering images, sounds and descriptions of the instruments.

Several teaching resources and materials in the area of media education result from specific project activities carried out from research institutions, NGO or other civil society associations. There aren't mechanisms of validation or selection but they are generally created by teachers and researchers specialized in the area of Media Education.

We can distinguish two main typologies of this kind of resource. The first one offers a kind of support that is mainly theoretical in helping teachers or school heads to plan and design project of Media Education within the existent regulatory framework. Examples of this typology are produced in academic contexts and circulated by publishers specialized in education science (e.g. the book series on Media Education by Erikson: <http://www.erickson.it/Pagine/Risultati-Collana.aspx?col=17555>). The second typology includes resources that are organized as a toolkit for teachers, containing a set of conceptual guidelines and practical instruments that can be used in Media Education courses. A positive example of this typology can be found in the handbook "Education and New Media. Duties and Responsibility towards digital citizenship" realized by Save The Children and Mondadori Education, co-funded by European Commission, which has been freely distributed to 15.000 teachers and is still downloadable by the Italian website of European Commission and Italian website of Save The Children⁵. A second example is "Digital & Media Literacy Education", a toolkit for educators and teachers within the European Project "Virtual Stages Against Violence" (VSAV)⁶ funded by the program Daphne III of the European Commission. It's a guide for Media Education courses focused on five main topics (privacy, participation, credibility, identity, creativity); for each of them conceptual explanations and practical guidelines for teaching are provided.

Even if the latter resource is in English, they are generally in Italian and are referenced and circulated mainly through specialized magazines that address teachers and educators, such as *Media Education. Studi, ricerche, buone pratiche* which is promoted and coordinated by MED, the Italian association for Media Education (see below, Dimension 4).

The role of libraries at school is very weak in Italy; they don't receive any specific funding and the practical management is not run by dedicated human resources.

⁵ Attached in Appendix and accessible at: http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&ved=0CCoQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fec.europa.eu%2Fitalia%2Fdocuments%2Fattualita%2Finformazione%2Feducazione_nuovi_media.pdf&ei=oyf5UaLiOMzV4QSCqoGADQ&usq=AFQjCNHkr4TcVCgNm15Nb2I28vPcuqgANQ&sig2=2T_IWt4U-78EiKUIosOuAA&bvm=bv.49967636,d.bGE

⁶ <http://virtualstages.eu/it/download/> and attached in Appendix

In tune with the general orientation of politically promote "education through media" rather than "media education", the National Plan for Digital Schools (Piano Nazionale Scuola Digitale) includes an initiative, called "Editoria Digitale Scolastica" (Digital school publishing), specifically devoted to the development of digital training resources in all the disciplinary areas included in the official curriculum (History-Geography-Civic Education, Math, Geography, Literature-Art-Music, English-Technology, Latin-Greek). Buying 20 prototypes of digital schoolbook, the Ministry of Education, University and Research, in close cooperation with interested schools, has contributed to establish a kind of benchmark of digital training resources which stresses dimensions of interactivity and participatory production.

3.3 Dimension	Capacity-building: funding
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Since there aren't Media Education policies, in Italy there aren't financial report accounting for a centralized and coordinated delivery of funding.

Funding for Media Education projects come mainly from local institutions, like provinces, municipalities and regions. Regions usually intervene in this area through CORECOMs (Regional committees for communications) which are the regional bodies of AGCOM - Autorità per le Garanzie nelle Comunicazioni, the independent regulator and competition authority for the Italian communications system. Considering the richness of grassroots initiatives funded by local institutions, it is not possible to estimate the value of total investment in the area of Media Education.

We have more detailed data in relation to investments for digital infrastructure of schools. According to the report "Review of the Italian Strategy for Digital Schools" by OECD (Avvisati et al., 2013), Italy has invested 30 million per year since 2000/2008 for the technological equipment of school within the "National Plan for the Digital School". According to OECD, this investment is not enough and is far away from the standards of most advanced European countries.

4 Dimension	Role of actors (outside school system)
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As told before, amongst the most active institutions, there are CORECOMs that have evolved beyond the mere regulatory function and has started to give a proactive contribution to information and education of citizens. This new proactive role is developed through the creation of large networks that include other institutions, like the Ministry of Education, University and Research,

and stakeholders like universities and non-governmental organizations. Within these networks, institutions adopt, give value and legitimacy to definitions and best practices of Media Education that have emerged from grassroots organizations.

Civil society associations together with research institutions are at the moment the most active subjects in the national initiatives for Media Education. They are actively involved in awareness raising, teacher training, resource production. They keep the national debate at pace with the most advanced international contribution. Notwithstanding the lack of institutional coordination and of a common legal framework, they capitalize on all the available opportunities in order to include Media Education at school or create networks with local institutions able to give legitimacy and deliver funding.

Amongst the many civil society associations, a relevant role is played by MED⁷, the Italian Association of Media Education, a non-profit organization established in 1996 in Rome, which involves academics, media professionals and a number of teachers with the aim of promoting research, study, and experimentation in the field of Media Education, media studies, and pedagogy. The work carried out by MED in these past fifteen years has provided the basis for the very conception of the project, whose aims can be summarized theoretically, developmentally, and in terms of the educational program itself. *On a theoretical level*, researchers consider Media Educational practices as research objects, reflecting on pedagogical models and teaching instruments used in the field of ME, and defining tools for the documentation and evaluation of practices. *On a developmental level*, MED aims to improve teachers and schools' attitudes towards research and experimentation through the promotion of already existing ME practices and involving teachers in the design and development of new ME materials. Finally, *on a training level*, the aim is to foster teachers' capacities of "exploiting" the potential of digital media, mainly for the appeal they have on new generations: with and through new media, teachers should be able to motivate younger generations in rediscovering and in appreciating the importance of writing abilities and of the ability needed to become aware users of media. Amongst the main contributions from MED must be remembered the journal *Media Education. Studi, ricerche, buone pratiche*⁸, that acts as a reference for the Media Education movement in Italy, as well as the Summer School of Media Education, yearly held in Corvara since the beginning of the 1990s with the participations of academic scholars, teachers, media educators and professionals.

CREMIT - Centro di Ricerca sull'educazione ai media, all'informazione e alla tecnologia (academic research centre on Media, Information and Technology Education) based at Università Cattolica in

⁷ <http://www.mediaeducationmed.it/>

⁸ <http://riviste.erickson.it/med/>

Milan is another relevant subject in the area of Media Education⁹. Cremit carries out research in the area of media and children in school and extra-school contexts; it provides tools for designing and monitoring both Media Education projects and training courses for teachers using ICT or aimed to Media Literacy. Its activities are related to two main research areas: Media Education (education, with and for the media, in schools and in the reality of extra-school contexts by non-formal education, the family, education informal education) and Education Technology (with particular attention to issues of technology integration in teaching, planning and evaluation of learning processes in e-learning, the moderation of online communication and e-tutoring).

Another very active association is Zaffiria¹⁰, a not for profit resource center which offers various kind of Media Education courses for teachers, parents and children. It works very often in collaboration with MED and has agreements with the Universities of Bologna and Urbino.

Since 2002 Zaffiria has been organizing MEDIT@NDO, which is a biennial convention on Media Education. It manages a national archive of over 130 Media Education projects realized all over Italy, organized by medium and/or topic (e.g. media and museum, media and children at hospital, media and emotion, media and food, and so on).

Also Ai@rt¹¹, the association of spectators is very active in promoting projects of training for teachers, families and cultural associations. The general aim of Ai@rt is to contribute to the development of critical sense and individual skills, giving people the awareness that is needed for the rational and responsible use of audiovisual media. It has promoted a law of popular initiative for the inclusion of Media Education as a discipline in compulsory curriculum.

There are also some interesting cases of private sector, especially publishers and broadcasters, actively involved in projects of Media Education. Rai, which is the Italian public service broadcasting company, has carried out a lot of Media Education projects aimed at promoting media literacy among the general public, including basic literacy in audiovisual language and ICT. Some of these projects have introduced media into the classroom, like for instance *GT Ragazzi - TG at school*, which has involved 50 schools, each of which has produced its own television news (with students taking on the roles of producers, directors and journalists and using their own stories), or *Screensaver*, a program that invites and helps young people and schools to produce videos and short films, with the objective of allowing young people to express themselves via the media, understand the media and make their own productions.

Another project that is worth to be mentioned is "Quotidiano in classe" ("Newspaper at school") that has been created in 2000 and at the moment involves more than 2 million of high secondary

⁹ www.cremit.it

¹⁰ www.zaffiria.it

¹¹ <http://www.aiart.org/>

school students per year. The project addresses secondary school classes which receive everyday a free copy of three newspapers (two national newspapers and one local) and can participate to an online forum - www.quotidianoinclasse.it - where to discuss the news of the day with all the other students that are involved in the project and three bloggers or journalists working for the three newspapers.

Teachers who are responsible for this project should dedicate at least one hour each week to the discussion of the news and can attend a dedicated training course where to apprehend didactical strategies for Media Education. This project is promoted by a not-for-profit association called "Osservatorio-Permanente Giovani Editori" with the collaboration of three big media and publishing companies (RCS Media Group, Poligrafici Editori, Il Sole 24 Ore) with the aim of developing a quality news culture and of closing the gap between news media and the youngest segment of Italian population.

5 Dimension	Evaluation mechanisms (inside and outside school)
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There aren't legal mechanisms to ensure and measure the efficiency of Media Education policies and the performance of Media Education resources and programs is not evaluated by any agency or authority. This is not unexpected as far as Media Education programs in Italy are promoted mainly by civil society without any centralized coordination from public institutions. As previously affirmed, Media Education programs are mainly included in the extra-curriculum activities and they strongly depend on the enthusiastic good will of teachers rather than on a systematic institutional planning; this explain the lack of an satisfactory supervision of both processes and behaviors put in place by involved people.

A ministerial decree of 22 August 2007¹² requires that national education systems produce a document which certifies that students arrived at the end of compulsory education have acquired a set of knowledge, skills and abilities classified in three standard levels: basic, good, excellent. Such skills include 1) the ability of producing multimedia texts, of understanding audiovisual messages, of producing multimedia contents (texts, images, sounds) also with digital technologies, 2) the knowledge of main structural and expressive features of an audiovisual product, of basic application for audio-video production, of essential usage of telecommunication.

¹² http://archivio.pubblica.istruzione.it/normativa/2007/dm139_07.shtml

More specifically, the Guidelines for the Curriculum issued in 2007 describe the competences that have to be reached by pupils at the end of primary school and of lower secondary school as following (European Schoolnet, 2011):

- Goals for primary school: pupils can use ICT and multimedia to develop their work in various subject areas, they can produce presentations of their work and communicate it; pupils can use ICT in educational games and in communication with others.
- Goals for lower secondary school: pupils can use ICT and multimedia to support their work, make and validate hypotheses, make self-evaluations and produce presentations of their work; pupils can search for information, select it and make syntheses; pupils can work up their ideas and share them with others.

Both media and digital literacy are thus entailed by the curriculum of compulsory education; nevertheless, a detailed system of classification and assessment of skills is still missing.

The lack of institutional coordination is balanced by an advanced academic debate on which criteria could be used for an overall assessment of Media Education intervention. Drawing upon the widely shared differentiation between assessment (the judgment of skilled acquired by students) and evaluation (the judgment of quality didactical path as it has been conceived and actualized by the professional teams), the richest contribution we can register is related to the second area, that of evaluation of processes.

Damiano Felini (2010b) starts from the comparative review of three main international sources of evaluation criteria - UNESCO *Paris Agenda or Twelve Recommendations for Media Education* (2007); *Study on the current trends and approaches on media literacy in Europe* (EAVI, 2008); *Guidelines for Media Education at school* by European Centre for Media Literacy, 2005 - together with official documents produced by MED, the Italian association of Media Education. Drawing upon the analysis of both weak and strong points of these four sources, he proposes a system of five quality's criteria for Media Education in Italian primary school:

1. the awareness and appropriateness of the background pedagogical approach
2. the originality of didactical path
3. the efficacy, the coherence and the kind of structure supporting the organization of project and related activities
4. the efficacy and appropriateness of didactical methodologies
5. the training of educators that carry out Media Education activities

For each criteria, the related areas of inquiry and indicators are identified.

For the point 1, the conception of Media Education and the awareness of the final aims of the project are identified as the two main areas of inquiry; indicators include the presence of a specific conception of media and their role in society, the explicit reference to a model of media competence among those debated by current literature and the sharing of aims and purposes of Media Education projects with schools and teachers directly involved.

The point 2 takes into account the thematic focus of the project and the media product produced during activities. Indicators deal with the degree in which the project is in tune with the most updated trends of media environment and the aesthetic value of the media product.

The point 3 analyses the structure of the project, the degree of institutionalization, the usage of instrumental resources and dissemination of results. In this case, indicators are very well articulated and include the presence of evaluation and assessment systems, the interdisciplinary approach connecting Media Education to other teaching subjects, the degree in which Media Education is organically included in the schools' plan of educational offer, the availability of technological tools and finally the creation of occasion for sharing activities and results of the project.

The point 4 is focused on the kind of didactical approach put into place by teachers, with a special attention to the ways in which critical reflection and interactive participation by students are invited and stimulated. Finally, the point 5 takes into account training of teachers, relationship between school and family, the involvement of media professionals in the development of projects. Indicators include an examination of teachers' competence and their involvement in peer to peer networks aimed at promoting exchange and evaluation of experiences, the active involvement of parents in order that achievements of Media Education activities at school could be reinforced in the domestic environment and the participation of media professionals both in the stage of planning and in meetings with students.

6 Dimension	Main concepts and legitimizing values
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The prevailing educational paradigm applied in media education domain is now inspired by the values of creativity and participation. While in the early days of media education initiatives media literacy was conceived as a defensive strategy aimed at defending children from negative effects of mass media, nowadays media literacy is intended as an essential aspect of citizenship. Acknowledging the impossibility of separating media from the whole cultural environment of children, media literacy has been recognised as conducive to empowerment and doubly articulated into education to media and education with media. The emphasis on creativity and production is translated into participatory educational strategies where the mere transmission of notions and

practices is replaced by the active appropriation by children of what is taught. The media education initiatives created and developed by Cremit (see p. 19) offer a clear example of participatory educational logic. They are always articulated in two steps so that education by experts and teachers can be complemented and enhanced by peer education.

Referring to the "Indications for the curriculum" issued by the Ministry of Education in 2012 - where a strong attention is paid to contemporary media even if without an explicit delimitation of media education as autonomous disciplinary area - the educational goals of compulsory school entail a set of skills directly related to media. Digital competences are defined as the ability of consciously using technologies of communication to look for and analyze data and information, to distinguish between reliable information and information that need be verified, to interact with different people. The emphasis is on critical usage of the technologies of information society for professional aims, hobbies and communication needs. Besides skills linked to informational literacy and relational competences, the national indications state that the knowledge of mass-media should be aimed at developing children's esthetic sensitivity and the comprehension of themselves and their surrounding world. Even if a notion of media literacy is completely absent from the document, the implicit notion of media education emerging from the text entails the development of an attitude of active reception to media together with the proactive exploration of their expressive and creative potentialities. Media are considered as essential part of the cultural environment where children live; consequently, the capacity of using them creatively and knowingly is considered as part of the basic literacy that should be acquired through compulsory education.

If we look at the "National Plan for Digital Schools", the public policy promoted by the Ministry of Education to enhance student's digital literacy and to improve schools' technical equipment, the introduction of technologies of information and communication at school is justified as a way to enhance the society of information and employment's opportunities for future citizens. At the same time, digital media are considered as an occasion for innovating educational strategies through the implementation of personalised educational paths and learning environment for active training.

In the "Indications for the curriculum" issued in 2012 by the Ministry of Education the overall rationale guiding education at primary and secondary school is inspired by two main values: civic virtue and humanism. As stated before, a clear definition of media education is lacking but the reference to the cultural relevance of media is affirmed throughout the text. The skills associated to media are thus reinterpreted in the light of civic virtue and humanism. The result is a strong emphasis both on relational potentialities of digital media and on the improved ability of manipulating, producing and selecting knowledge. The advocated critical attitude is intended as the capacity of understanding the consequences of technologies on human condition, of assessing limits

and potentialities of knowledge, of understanding that contemporary controversial issues as environmental risks or bioethical dilemmas can be tackled only through a deep cooperation between cultures and disciplines.

Finally, the richness of interventions of Media Education conducted by civil society is such as to bear a certain plurality of inspiring values. Referring to the two main actors in the field, Med and Zaffiria, we can indicate the following:

- Empowering children’s critical awareness, children’s rights and the social participation of children through the creative use of media and art education.
- Affirming the values of person, dialogue, solidarity.
- Exploiting the potential of media in order to create democratic participation in education, communication, information and culture.
- Fostering audience’s activity and responsibility in order to promote meeting between people .

7 Dimension	General appreciation (and recommendations)
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Media Education movement has in Italy a long tradition and is still characterized by a great amount of grassroots projects and initiatives. Nevertheless, there are neither legal or institutional frames for Media Education, nor well established policies to promote it. Main actors are from civil society (academics, associations, church communities, teachers, professionals, educators), with little support from Institutions. While Digital Literacy entered in a more systematic way the school system with funds, projects and teaching resources aimed to improve education technology, Media Literacy principles and values marginally contribute to shape the competences expected from school curricula in a transdisciplinary way. Furthermore, the great abundance of grassroots initiatives may entail dispersion of resources and a great fragmentation in training approaches and enhanced skills.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: to conduct evaluative research on media education impact

In order to promote the introduction of media education into official curricula, it is necessary to enhance research efforts into two main domains: on the one hand, the interdependence between media literacy and other forms of literacy, as social and civic literacies, should be brought into light and disentangled; on the other hand, the already rich theoretical research on systems of assessment of media education interventions should be complemented with empirically-grounded inquiry aimed at confronting the various levels of efficacy achieved by different media education methods.

Recommendation 2: to create a "clearing house" for media education

The Italian scenario of media education initiatives is characterized by a fragmented plurality of subjects. There is the need to create a junction interface where scholars, institutions, NGO and all the other stakeholders in the domain of media education can meet and exchange their experiences and plans of intervention. This sort of "clearing house" could manage the collection of best practices, enhance research efforts orienting them towards the already existing knowledge gaps, promote the cooperation between civil society and public institutions, build grounds for efficacious policymaking.

Recommendation 3: to increase investment in educational innovation

The widespread diffusion of technical equipment in Italian schools should be complemented with a stronger investment in innovative educational strategies. School libraries need to be enhanced in order that they can play an active role in the cultural appropriation of media technologies at schools.

Recommendation 4: to enhance teacher training

The empirical research that has been conducted between 2009 and 2012 in three Italian regions - Emilia Romagna, Lombardia, Puglia - with the aim of knowing teachers attitudes towards the Media Education (see p. 15 of the report) shows that the great part of teachers that are involved in media education initiatives draw upon an ensemble of skills and knowledge that have been acquired through auto-didactical training. At the same time, the national indications for the curriculum issued by the Ministry require that both pedagogical aims and methods of contemporary school should be in tune with the pervasive relevance of media in the cultural and social life of children. It is thus necessary to close the existing gap between hopeful indications and the more complex reality

through the enrichment of the training resources for teachers in order that they could take on all the challenges implied by contemporary media scenario.

8 Dimension	Good practices
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1. *Impara Digitale* <http://www.imparadigitale.it/> (Teacher training)

Impara digitale is an association founded in 2012 with the aim of promoting the development of new educational strategies that exploit all the potentialities of digital technologies. It creates a network allowing the circulation of information and the sharing of experience and experimentation among teachers and schools that are official members of the association. The method of working of *Impara Digitale* includes the creation of new educational models based on "cloud learning", that is the technology of cloud computing applied to teaching and learning. The idea is to launch partnership with private companies in order to develop and test devices enabling technologically mediated learning environment (Personal Mobile Learning and Knowledge Environments). The "cloud school" is presented as a new didactic environment that exploit ICTs' potentialities of flexibility, personalization, connection and thematic focalization in order to enhance the sharing of educational resources, of teaching programs, and the connectivity among teacher and students. The technologies are considered as a way to establish a student-centered context of relationship that increase creativity, inclination to collaboration and to social shaping of knowledge. One of the most relevant aspect of the project supported by *Impara Digitale* is the formalization of a monitoring protocol for the assessment of the adoption processes of cloud learning systems by the network of schools that are involved in the association.

2. *Motus - Monitoring Tablet Utilization in School*

http://www.cremit.it/portale/adDetail.asp?cat_id=71&cat_parent=&cat_group=2&ad_id=1167

(Digital technologies at school)

The National Plan for Digital Schools in Italy has reinvigorated great optimism towards the possibility of radically changing pre-existing teaching cultures thanks to technology adoption. A possible way for channeling the mounting rhetoric towards concrete benefits and for avoiding the typical disenchantment that follows every hyperbolic peak, consists in the development of monitoring tools aimed at enhancing self-reflexivity and defining quality parameters in mediated teaching practices. The *Motus* project has been developed within this frame by Cremit, the

academic research center on media education based at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore¹³. Nine secondary high school have been involved in the monitoring project. The incorporation of the tablets into teaching activities have been directly supported by researchers through training seminars and professional improvement. Besides that, a constant monitoring of class activities with tablets have allowed to ascertain different degrees of effectiveness and possible opportunities for improvement. The research project realized by Cremit has allowed a relevant degree of comparability among the nine schools involved and has been inspired by the logic of action-research: it has been based on the combination of traditional tools of assessment (interviews, focus groups, questionnaires) with coaching techniques aimed at overcoming shortcomings previously identified through analysis. Cremit has applied a specific mixed method of working called BLEC (blended learning + coaching) and consisting of

1) a training path including three meeting - at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the project - aimed at the sharing of those ideas and theories that have a direct impact on teaching culture (Laurillard, 2012);

2) a coaching path within which the coach offers to teachers a didactic and methodological support organizing single tasks and translating abstract prescriptions into practical suggestions. Interestingly, the monitoring path has included students and families, together with teachers. More specifically, the tools that have been used to gather representations of devices, analyses practices of usage and reflect on experience are the following:

- a starting questionnaire administered to families, students and teachers aimed at exploring expectations and usage
- a focus group with students aimed at focus in depth their point of view on tablets
- two sessions of observations in classes within a framework of video-research (Goldman, R., Pea, R., Barron, B., & Derry, S. 2007).
- a conclusive questionnaire on teachers aimed at exploring changes in teaching practices, critical and positive aspects in their experience with tablet.

3. *Ragazzi in zona* <http://www.ragazzinzonamilano.it/> (Youth's participation)

This project has been funded by the municipality of Milan, developed and managed by ARCI, an Italian ONG focused on social and cultural promotion. It is aimed at developing media and civic literacy among children and teenagers. The objective is to provide tools and context of communication where kids can put into practice and concretely translate their rights of civic participation that have been ratified by the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child.

¹³ <http://www.cremit.it/>

The project officially specifies that the main aim is not to offer training resources to future media workers. Instead it explicitly states that the acquisition of creative media skills is the best and the only way for fully taking part to the knowledge society: "the cultural challenge is to allow children to use technologies as actors and not as consumers". In the official document presented to institutions in order to ask for funding (within a call for tender), media education is proposed as a strategy for protecting children from media harms. This project has started in April 2013; however it is conceived as the enrichment of a previous project started in 2000 within which a news agency - "l'agenzia dei ragazzi" - based in Milan and entirely managed by students of local primary and secondary schools was established. First of all, this further development extends the accessibility of the news agency to extra-school agency (e.g. community centers, post-school, non-governative associations). The project is coordinated by a psychologist and the other human resources involved are mainly educators or media expert working for ARCI. Besides this extension, the project is oriented to the following aims:

- to enhance civic participation of kids giving them the expressive tools for communicating their needs and for sharing their point of view on surrounding social contest
- to promote the creation of community of practices among teachers working on media education. This objective will be supported by a website - www.ragazzinewmedia.com - where news on normative framework for media literacy, findings and suggestion from research on educational strategies and practices, definition of best practices will be circulated.
- to use media and ICT technologies for innovate teaching and learning contexts
- to offer to kids a communication tool for taking part to local politics and at the same time to create bridge with national and European levels.
- to actively promote a media production that allow to give value to ethnic differences and intercultural recognition and cooperation.
- to organize formal meeting between kids and local institutions using the format of "Question time"
- to report each steps of this experience not only to give visibility to civic participation by kids but also to create an observatory of the relationship between children and media.

4. *Smart Future Samsung* (Digital technologies at school)

This project is founded and promoted by Samsung. Launched at the end of October 2013, it aims at establish 300 Italian digital schools by 2015. Besides the training for teachers and students, Samsung provides classes with all the required equipment: digital blackboard, tabletwi-fi , broadband, software that mediate the diverse steps of learning processes, from interactive quiz to a

sharing platform where publishers can disseminate their products. The adoption of digital technologies at school will be monitored by Cremit. This project is worth to be mentioned among the list of best practices because it is a good examples of cooperative network between different subjects: a private company, public schools and academic research focused on Media Education. The scientific monitoring of technology adoption will allow the formalization of the experimentation and its dissemination among other schools not directly involved in the project.

9 Dimension	References and resources
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