

from mixed (national and regional) resources. Because it is so difficult to follow the money and identify how the money is spent, Law no. 23/1996 established the National Register of School Buildings. It contains data regarding each school building, to allow planning for their maintenance. The register is now online, which speeds procedures up. However, fund allocation is through agreements between the regions and the local authorities. The register has been integrated with UNI standards in the field of maintenance. This should produce positive results in terms of the quality and quantity of data available for the Information System. The Information System represents an essential tool for streamlining time and costs for inspections and interventions.

There is a risk of inequality between the regions in the provision of additional services. In the core educational service, equality is guaranteed through common principles and the essential levels of provision stated by the Ministry.

For example, although the responsibility for school buildings is at a local level, a general framework sets the minimum security and health characteristics required. Any buildings which do not fulfil the minimum requirements cannot be used for educational purposes.

The role of the MIUR in educational service is more important. This explains why the biggest part of general expenditure is current expenditure (teachers and non-teaching staff). The MIUR sets rules about the number of learners per class and the number of teaching and non-teaching staff based on the number of learners enrolled in schools. It allocates resources to each school accordingly.

Last school year there were 7,816,408 learners. Of these, 224,509 were disabled learners and 736,313 were foreign learners. There were 370,597 classes and 804,772 teachers, of which 124,572 were support teachers (who are equivalent to Resource teachers).

It is known that Italy has the lowest ratio of teachers to learners.² This is due to the geographical reality of the country. School is an essential service and the aim is to allow learners to attend a school close to their home.³

² See for example IES/NCES, [EDUCATION INDICATORS: An International Perspective](#), but also *Education at a Glance*.

³ See MIUR-MEF, 2007, [Quaderno bianco sulla scuola](#) (in Italian).

implementation of recommendations to be followed up after the school evaluation and will help schools to solve problems at a local level.

Simplification of inter-institutional dialogue: the shift from an administrative to a holistic point of view

As described in the Country Report, the Italian system has different levels. At regional level, co-operation in the school system is enabled by Region-USR conferences.

There are also Workgroups for Inclusion. These are composed of teachers, medical staff, parents and other professionals (social services, psychologists, physiotherapists, etc.) involved in the learners' education and life:

- at regional level (GLIR);
- at provincial level (GLIP);
- at school level (GLH/GLI).

The reform simplifies these groups, stating that there will be one territorial level in dialogue with the core school of the territorial school network.

However, there will still be different administrations. These must co-ordinate their actions properly and find a common understanding between different technical languages (education, social services, health services) and different interpretations of provisions and services. This will allow the shift from an administrative view of inclusive education to a more social view, focusing on the enabling effect of the support provided to schools.

As stated in the Country Report, Law no. 104/1992 foresees that all institutions that contribute to the inclusion of learners with SEN should sign a framework agreement. This aims to regulate, integrate and co-ordinate the function and funding allocation policies of the various entities planning educational, social and health intervention aimed at disabled learners enrolled in schools and in Education and Vocational Training.

Over 20 years of monitoring since Law no. 104 was brought into force has shown that it has only been successful in some areas of the country. This is due to the variety of organisations involved (health authorities, municipalities, schools, MIUR provincial office, training institution and stakeholders' associations) and the complexity of the procedures to reach the agreement.

The solution is service integration. It is known to produce positive outcomes for users, carers and the organisations involved. It can create the conditions for services to provide a comprehensive, person-centred approach and respond more quickly and effectively to users' needs. Service integration can avoid the duplication of tasks and share back-office tasks, such as human resources and technology solutions.

One of the pilot experiences presented during the CSV has proved successful. It was a model for functioning of local agreements at socio-sanitary district level between all authorities involved (local health service for mental health and rehabilitation in developmental age and socio-sanitary district, social services for municipalities, schools and school networks) and the third sector.

As stated, the added value is not only the real commitment of the various organisations involved, but also the definition of a 'common pedagogical language'. This goes beyond the specific 'technical language' of the individual organisations (for example, medical language). Changing the language, through profound, shared reflection, changes the attitude towards the meaning of inclusive education and avoids labelling and stigma.

This kind of agreement envisages a progressive, three-step (culture, policy, action) development in service integration, focused on the school environment. The agreement procedures identify priorities and shared goals to achieve through intervention, by:

- sharing common 'guidelines' for procedures aimed at integrating services;
- harmonising the three plans drafted by each authority (the schools' Annual Plan for Inclusion, the socio-sanitary districts' Local Implementation Plan and the municipalities' Social Plan).

These priorities and goals should combine into an 'Action Plan for Inclusion in Schools'. This would form the basis on which each authority would allocate resources, thereby carrying out co-designed actions. A monitoring process would allow the redefinition of guidelines, in a virtuous cycle made of building a new, shared culture of social inclusion in schools.