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Yuri Kazepov

Thematic Expert

with the assistance of

Eduardo Barberis

Preventing the Risks of Exclusion of Families with Difficulties



on behalf of



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Introduction

This document represents the discussion paper prepared within the framework of the peer review in the field of social inclusion policies in Italy. It aims at providing the peer review process with some basic information on the policy and the case studies under review and their respective regulatory contexts.

The paper is divided into three main parts:

- 1) The first part provides a very short overview on the institutional context of Italian Social Policy within which the law under review has been implemented. It places also the Italian welfare system in the EU15 context.
- 2) The second part provides an overview of law 285/97, its innovative methodologies and instruments, and some data on available evaluations.
- 3) The third part provides a synthetic description of the case studies under review, attempting to highlight the way in which they take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the 285/97 law.

An appendix includes some relevant data available to frame the policy.

These parts will be further developed after the peer review meeting on the 23-24 February 2005 in Rome and according to the debates and feedback received by the country representatives.

I.1. The institutional Context of Italian social policy in the European scenario

In order to understand the innovativeness of the law 285/97 under review it is important to highlight the main characteristics of the Italian welfare system within which it has to be placed. These have been studied for nearly thirty years and have become relatively well known in the international debate since the end of the 70s (Flora, 1986; Ferrera, 1996; 2000; Saraceno, 2002). We can summarize the main characteristics of the Italian welfare system and of how it developed after World War II, as follows:

- a) *strong relationship between labour market participation and social protection*: provisions – except health – depend on the claimants' labour market



position or on the categories they belong to (e.g. lone mothers, blue collar workers in big or medium-sized firms, elderly,...);

- b) *strong subsidiarity*: the family plays a major role in cultural (e.g. Church), economic (e.g. family businesses) and participatory terms (e.g. non-profit associations); women have comparatively low activity rates and heavy care responsibilities in a still strong gender division of labour.

This well known and highly synthetic picture is incomplete. In fact, if we want to understand *the Italian welfare system* as the sum of all agencies producing welfare and interacting within this process, one another, we have to add a few crucial specifications which distinguishes Italy from continental European countries:

- c) *Strong north-south divide*: the territorial imbalances characterise not only the socio-economic structure, but also the institutional design of policies (often regionally and locally fragmented). The two taken together bring about high industrialisation in the centre-northern regions, where a diffused SME-based industrial sector strengthens the occupational basis, in contrast with high unemployment in the southern regions, where wide informal work goes hand in hand with a subsistence economy. High income inequality is a clear consequence (see Gini coeff. in table 1).
- d) *Underdeveloped last safety net*: fragmented social policies, in particular social assistance schemes, and strong emphasis on pensions serve to consolidate inequalities in the redistributive system. The same condition of need is addressed differently in the different regions.
- e) *High categorisation*. Policies are often conceived within rigid classifications of social problems in categories and office-duty schedules. This implies that the different policy areas and the respective institutional arrangements are highly self-referential and their action is rooted in bureaucratic ritualism and *in-house* logics disregarding mostly effectiveness, actual outcomes and grassroots' claims.
- f) *Weak and passive form of subsidiarity*: the state does not support directly families to maintain standards of living and overcome conditions of need, but only people in the labour market. The strong gender division of labour implicit in this form of subsidiarity brings about a very unbalanced distribution of power within households.



- g) *Women and young people as particularly vulnerable groups*: this is even more true in the south, where unemployment hits them specifically and their labour market participation is very low. The result is overall difficult conditions, in which female emancipation is unlikely to occur (see women activity and unemployment rates in tab.1).
- h) *The LiFo approach (Last-in First-out)*. The political agenda follows emergency priorities, so that policies are episodic, crisis-based (*ad-hocracy*) and lacking coherence, wide scope and foresight. The consequence is a random evolution of the policy system, with a weak coordination and programming of single measures and policies and a preference of monetary transfers, which require an easier organization. No long-lasting planning is possible.
- i) *The supply planning approach*. When planning activities are carried out, they are in general top-down and limited by budgetary constraints, with no certainty about reproducibility over time. The weak bottom-up interaction lays the foundations of a system in which rights are seldom claimable.

These characteristics brought several authors to classify Italy within a south European model of welfare (Leibfried, 1992; Mingione, 1996) and not within the conservative model as Esping-Andersen did (1990, 1999). Their main argument is that, despite evident communalities with countries where welfare provisions are attached to contributory records (Germany, France, ...), the characteristics just mentioned above refer to a different regulatory principle: the *family and reciprocity networks* as a crucial and strategic actor.

The family is important also in the countries of the conservative/corporatist model. Germany, for instance, is based on a highly structured subsidiarity model. However, most countries of this model provide the family – through generous monetary and in-kind provisions - with the adequate means to address their social responsibility. In Italy and most south European countries these resources are not given, while the family is invested by the same social responsibility. The importance of the family implied, among other things, a strong gender division of labour. Women concentrated in caring activities towards children and elderly on the one hand, and men were the main breadwinner on the other (for some comparative data on this issue, see table 1).



Tab. 1 Socio-economic and social expenditure indicators for selected EU countries (1990-2000)

Welfare Regime	Liberal		Social democratic		Conservative		Familistic		EU-15	
	UK		Denmark		Germany		Italy			
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Population										
Old age index ¹	24,0	23,9	23,2	22,2	21,6	23,9	21,5	26,6	21,6	24,3
Child in single parent family ²	11,9	19,8	n.a.	n.a.	6,7	10,3	3,3	4,1	6,0	9,7
Fertility rate ³	1,83	1,64	1,67	1,34	1,45	1,34	1,33	1,25	1,57	1,53
Births out of wedlock ⁴	27,9	39,5	46,4	44,9	15,3	23,1	6,4	9,2	19,5	27,2
Divorce ⁵	3,0	2,6	2,5	2,7	1,7	2,4	0,5	0,7	n.a.	1,9
Non-EU immigrants ⁶	0,6	2,7	2,8	3,9	6,3	6,7	0,9	1,9		
Employment rates⁷										
Male (15-64)	80,5	77,9	80,1	80,7	78,7	72,7	72,0	67,6	n.a.	72,4
Female (15-64)	61,7	65,1	70,7	72,1	54,0	57,9	36,4	41,1	n.a.	53,8
Youth (15-24)	64,3	55,9	65,0	67,1	57,9	46,1	33,3	26,1	n.a.	39,9
% of fixed term contracts	n.a.	6,7	n.a.	10,2	n.a.	12,7	n.a.	10,1	n.a.	n.a.
Unemployment rates										
Male (55-64) ⁸	8,4	5,5	5,1	3,9	7,0	12,6	1,6	4,4	6,1	8,0
Female ⁹	6,6	4,9	8,4	5,3	9,6	8,3	13,7	14,4	n.a.	9,7
Youth (15-24) ¹⁰	10,8	12,7	11,4	7,35	8,0	9,1	27,2	30,7	n.a.	16,2
Long-term (15-64) ¹¹	33,5	28,0	28,8	20,0	45,9	51,5	69,0	61,3	n.a.	45,2
Expenditure on social protection										
Per capita in PPS ¹²	3410,1	6180,7	4543,5	7671,5	4316,5	7267,9	3749,5	5891,4	3823,9	6404,9
As % of GDP ¹³	25,7	26,8	29,7	28,8	26,1	29,5	25,2	25,2	26,4	27,3
On Family/children¹²	9,0	6,9	11,9	13,1	7,6	10,5	4,4	3,8	7,9	8,1
On old age and survivors ¹²	46,2	48,7	36,8	38,0	45,8	42,5	54,7	58,5	45,4	46,6
On labour policies ¹³	n.a.	0,5	n.a.	3,9	n.a.	2,9	n.a.	1,2	n.a.	2,0
On active labour policies ¹³	n.a.	0,07	n.a.	1,6	n.a.	0,9	n.a.	0,5	n.a.	0,7
Unemployed covered ¹⁴	24,1	26,2	79,4	63,8	62,4	72,3	4,4	4,4	n.a.	n.a.
GMI for one parent+1 child ppp ¹⁵	n.a.	575,79	n.a.	800,11	n.a.	534,62	n.a.	219,57	n.a.	n.a.
Poverty										
60% median pre-transfers ¹⁶	32	29	29	23	22	20	23	21	26	23
60% median post-transfers ¹⁶	20	19	10	11	15	10	20	18	17	15
Gini index ¹⁷	n.a.	33	n.a.	23	n.a.	28	n.a.	33	n.a.	31
Competitiveness¹⁸										
Growth 2003-ranking	n.a.	15	n.a.	4	n.a.	13	n.a.	41	n.a.	n.a.
Business 2003-ranking	n.a.	6	n.a.	4	n.a.	5	n.a.	24	n.a.	n.a.

¹ Old age Index: people over 65 as a percentage of the working age population (15-64) (source: Eurostat 2003a).

² Children (0-14) living in families with only one adult as a percentage of all children living in families with two adults (source: Eurostat 2003b).

³ Source: Eurostat (2003b). Data for non EU-immigrants first year 1994.

⁴ As a percentage of all live births. For Italy, Denmark and EU-15, last year 1999 (source: Eurostat 2003a).

⁵ Per 1000 persons (source Eurostat 2003b).

⁶ Source: Eurostat (2003b). Employed persons as a share of the total population aged 15-64. Last year 2001.

⁷ Source: OECD (2002).

⁸ For Germany, first year 1993 (source: Eurostat(2003b).

⁹ Long term unemployed (12 months or more) as percentage of all unemployed (source: Eurostat 2003b).

¹⁰ In PPS (purchasing power standards) (source: Eurostat 2003b).

¹¹ First year 1991, last year 1999 (source: Eurostat 2003a).

¹² As a percentage of social benefits (source: Eurostat 2003b).

¹³ As a percentage of GDP, last year 2001 (source Eurostat 2003b).

¹⁴ Unemployed covered by unemployment benefits. Source: ECHP version 2001, first year 1994 (wave 1), last year 1998 (wave 5). Calculations by Carbone (2003).

¹⁵ Guaranteed Minimum Income (social assistance and existing relevant benefits/allowances) for one parent plus one child aged 2 years 11 months. PPP= purchasing power parities (Euro=1). Situation 31st July 2001 (source: Bradshaw and Finch 2002).

¹⁶ Eurostat (2003a). First year 1995, last year 2000.

¹⁷ EU-13 (source: Marlier and Cohen-Solal 2000).

¹⁸ Source: World Economic Forum (2004). The CGI (Competitiveness Growth Index) and the BCI (Business Competitiveness Index) aim at ranking countries according to the factors that favour the growth and business of an economy. It considers at its very basis a mix of qualitative and quantitative set of indicators and a survey conducted on 7,707 senior business leaders in 101 countries. The report and full methodological details are available online at: www.weforum.org. Retrieved: 15 September 2003.



These features have been reproduced within the institutional settings of labour and social policies after world war II up to the end of the 1970's. Starting from the end of the '80s — and most significantly in the last decade — a deep process of reform took place involving the rescaling of competences and responsibilities and the definition of new rights and provisions.

Reforms, inspired by the subsidiarity principle, have assigned an increasing regulatory power to local authorities not just in delivering social services, but also in defining eligibility criteria and in designing the overall policy scheme and multiplying the actors in the process, from single families to voluntary associations, public bodies.

This important shift had the potential of setting a process of deep change in motion. Our hypothesis is that the innovativeness of the new policies provides only a partial perspective of the ongoing processes, because it clashes against the path dependent tendency of the existing institutional milieu, which is crucial to consider in order to understand the outcome of the reform processes. From this point of view, path dependency should not be considered here as a mere rhetorical device.

Our hypothesis is that institutions which get structured over longer periods of time are deeply rooted and constrain choice to a limited range of possible alternatives, reducing the probability of path changes and presenting an evolutionary tendency. Routines, taken-for-granted, and practices tend to consolidate the existing institutional settings which establish “a system of nested rules, which are increasingly costly to change” (Goodin 1996: 23) produces a self-reinforcing effect over time.

This view should not bring us to conceive institutions as only conservative, on the contrary, they are also enabling contexts. As Jessop and Nielsen put it: “institutions always need to be re-interpreted and re-negotiated, they can never fully determine action; but nor do they permit any action whatsoever so that life is no more than the product of purely wilful contingency” (2003: 4). This implies that the path-dependent character of institutions has to do with the interplay of actors opportunities and structural constraints. Paths might be changed, but this possibility has to be framed by the given contextual opportunities (Kazepov, 2004).



II.1. Towards the 285/97 law

Since the 1970s, the policy environment described above became more and more inadequate in alleviating need in a society that was undergoing deep transformations: family- and breadwinner-delegation of social adjustment began to fail because of the fast changes in labour-markets (demise of the traditional Fordist industrial texture; globalization processes) and households (decreasing number of marriages, children and extended families; increase of women's workforce; cultural changes due to economic improvement, higher schooling level and rural family background) (for data see table 1 in the appendix).

The first reform season started in the Seventies when many reforms challenged the institutional scenario: Regions as independent administrative bodies were defined (1970); the National Health Services based on a regional footing (1978); a new Family Law according equality between husband and wife (1975) (and, at the beginning of the decade, the first referendum ever held in Italy on people initiative instituted the divorce).

In the Nineties a new reform stage began, in connection with the serious crisis of the leading national political parties: a rescaling process, inspired by the subsidiarity principle, assigned an increasing regulatory power to local authorities not just in delivering social services, but also in defining eligibility criteria and in designing the overall policy scheme and multiplying the actors in the process.

Within this new reform trend, Law 285/97 has to be considered a path-breaking policy which synthesized a reform process that started already in the early 90s and defined new policy instruments, new methodologies and new territorial arrangements.

The first step towards this direction was Law 142/90, perfecting the Constitutional scheme of territorial power balance through the increased autonomy of Local institutions. From then onwards, Municipalities represent the general interests of a local community and perform all the administrative duties related to that community. Poorly enforced, Law 142/90 has been modified with Law 265/1999, that defines the frame for an horizontal integration between local authorities – the basis for the present-day local social planning (*Piani di Zona*).



Still in 1990, another important law (241/90) stated the right to an effective and transparent public administration, while later the so-called Bassanini laws (59/97, 127/97, 191/98) changed the balance of powers between national and local administration and gave new rights to the citizens foreseeing, for instance, the possibility to inquiry about the status of one owns administrative files, etc.

Further steps were other national laws that included new non-state actors in the redefined public space: e.g. voluntary associations (266/91)¹ were acknowledged and had a clear institutional frame in which they can operate.

II.1.1. The 285/97 law and its underlying vision

The law no. 285/97 enacted on August 28th 1997 and titled “Provisions for the promotion of rights and opportunities for childhood and adolescence” was intended to set a wide-ranging policy environment to put into practice the principles included in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989, enacted in Italy through the Law 176/91).

The legislator paid attention not only to protection and provision issues, but also to participation. As a consequence, the policy wasn’t solely aimed at evident problems (juvenile deviance, abuses or effects of family breakdowns on children...), but mainly at more borderline problems (the so-called “*disagio*”, something in-between maladjustment and uneasiness) and at everyday life of children and adolescents, bearing a strong prevention character.

Law 285/97 put forward a policy style quite ground-breaking in the Italian institutional *milieu*: the beneficiaries weren’t seen only as passive recipients of social policy measures and bearers of problems. Rather, in a distinctive combination of both social and citizenship policies, local communities, children and adolescents were intended as skilled actors able to cope with their own problems and needs if only the possibility to interact, participate and enhance their ability was given in the daily life. The empowering of recipients is seen by the legislator as a way of granting full citizenship and as a way of preventing the raise of social problems, including children as a resource for local and national community.

Hence, high relevance has been given to a community approach, that implied the implementation of an holistic, multilevel and network methodology aimed

1 The same occurred for social promotion organizations some years later with law 383/00.



at involve the largest number of actors vertically and horizontally integrated: the real question is not the solution of a single situation, but the inclusion of children and adolescents and their active participation to the society.

As a consequence policy actions cannot be sectorial: an organic approach is necessary for social problems are seen as faceted and multiform, made up by different interrelated elements. From this point of view, the childhood policy is part of a wider and general policy approach directed to the development of a community as a whole.

II.1.2. The areas of intervention and funding: some data²

The 285/97 law instituted the *National Fund for Childhood and Adolescence* and has foreseen funding for projects developed within four major areas of intervention, addressing:

1. the relationship between parents and children for counteracting poverty, violence and institutionalization (Art. 4);
2. innovative social and educational services for children (Art. 5);
3. recreational and educational services for the spare time (Art. 6);
4. promotion of children' and adolescents' rights and well-being (especially in the urban environment and with attention to cultural, gender and ethnic diversity) (Art. 7).

The law, encouraged also projects foreseeing monetary transfers and in-kind provisions for families with disabled children.

Funding for this Law represent one of the biggest financial efforts for child policies ever enacted in Italy³. Actually, it allocated a total of more than 686 million Euro in 5 years (1997-2001), distributed to all the Regions and to 15 large cities⁴: indeed, a share (30%) of the fund has been dedicated to large cities, according to criteria relying on quantitative indicators and aimed at targeting investments where children are most numerous, where conditions of hardship

2 Data refer to the period 1999-2002 and come from some publications edited by the *National Centre of Documentation and analysis for childhood and adolescence*: Ciampa *et al.* 2004, 2003; Barachini *et al.* 2001; Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri (2000).

3 Italy is still one of the smallest spenders on family and childhood in the EU. Even though Law 285/97 opened a privileged channel for some sectors of child policy, the goal of tuning with other European Countries is still distant.

4 The cities are: Bari, Bologna, Brindisi, Cagliari, Catania, Florence, Genoa, Milan, Naples, Palermo, Reggio Calabria, Rome, Taranto, Turin, Venice. All the endowments were distributed according to the following criteria: resident population 0-17; lack of services for children; number of institutionalized minors; compulsory-school drop-out rates; rate of poor families with children; juvenile deviance. See appendix for data.



are most evident, and where the services for children are most backward. The Regions which received the largest share of funding are Campania, Sicily and Lombardy: their share is more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of the total (40% if we include also funds targeted to the large cities in these regions).

The four areas of intervention received in the first three years' period a differentiated share of resources: 41% for projects aimed at Art.4; 30% at Art. 6; 17% at Art. 7 and 12% at Art. 5. Nearly 70-80% of the funded projects were addressing *normality*, everyday life of children and families more than to deviance, situations at risk and overt social problems. Childhood attracted more resources than adolescence, while parents were the main target for one project out of four (see appendix section B).

The extensiveness of the project is reflected also by the high number of estimated people directly involved in the first three years: 1.350.000 people were involved as recipients and users of services and in-kind provisions implemented according to Law 285/97. The people employed in the implementation were about 50.000, distributed in 257 local areas and 2.819 executive projects.

In the local planning process, many actors were involved, mainly public: Local Health Units (96% of the cases), juvenile courts (54%), local administrative officers (78%), associations and voluntary organizations (both 75%), schools... It has been remarked, however, that a real participation process involving also children was quite occasional in the planning process (see appendix section B).

In the implementation process, the contribution given by networked actors was substantial: 47% of projects were managed by the third sector, whilst only 34.5% were managed directly by the local authorities; even if the latter planned the projects (for some 50% the sole Municipality, 19% associated municipalities, 16% the Province). In 80% of the cases a wide-range coordination board was established (see appendix section C).

1.1.3. The Multi-Level Organizational Structure

Law 285/97 foresees that various levels of government and various actors are involved in the definition of the policies to be implemented. State, Regions, Local authorities and other stakeholders are involved in a complex interaction process institutionalising governance practices, in line and even anticipating many reforms in Europe.



The State

The Department of Social Affairs – an agency of the Prime Minister’s Office – manages:

- the allocation of funding to regions and cities;
- the monitoring and mid-term control of the expenditures;
- training, support and counselling through the *National Centre of Documentation of Childhood and Adolescence*.

The Regions

Regions are the key regulating and steering actor in the process. In order to access the *National Fund for Childhood and Adolescence*, they must:

- 1) identify a competent body (e.g. a department, etc.), which is responsible for the whole proceedings at the regional level;
- 2) establish the local areas (“Ambiti”) of intervention, providing guidelines for their social planning activity;
- 3) examine and approve the local plans of intervention;
- 4) prepare the regional social plan harmonizing the allocation of funds. The latter must include:
 - the analysis of the local living conditions and needs of children and adolescents;
 - the targeting of resources according to the analysis carried out;
 - the definition of eventual additional regional funding;
 - the allocation of funding to local plans, fostering integration and networking strategies.

When the regional plan is approved and enacted, the Regions must monitor and control the implementation of the projects and their expenditures, in order to provide information to the National Department of Social Affairs and to the National Centre of Documentation for Childhood and adolescents.

The Local Authorities and other stakeholders

Local Authorities must draft the local plans of intervention (executive projects and their funding) and approve them through so called “programme agreements”, which foresee the involvement of stakeholders in the process through a negotiated participation. The latter *must* involve the wider number of public and non-profit actors possible. The main role of local authorities is considered to be the networking of activities and the provision of resources. The “third sector”



can co-operate with public institutions both in the planning and in the carrying out of the projects, either agreeing to the proposals of Local Authorities or making proposals on their own.

Local Authorities – in many Regions co-ordinated at a Provincial level – must draft and implement the local plans grounding them on local guidelines and priorities and defining the most appropriate allocation criteria for local budgets, develop evaluation schemes criteria for addressing expenditure. In fact, Local Authorities must have selection rules, for the proposals are usually more than the available funds: Law 285 has also goaded public institutions to think about rational schemes of *ex ante* and *in itinere* evaluation.

Then, the local plans must be sent to the Regions for a control on congruity and on the observation of the regional and local targets and programmes:⁵ after accomplishing this step, the Regional junta gives its approbation to the endowment.

1.1.4. New Methods in Policy Design and Management

Such an innovative vision requires new methodologies in policy design and management. The new forms of social action foreseen by the law are redefining the concept of public space and public interest: *public* is less and less a term used for government authority and its exclusive administration tasks. Rather, it is more and more used for the mobilization of actors in the local community, in the civil society and in the associational fabric, having the administrations a role of steering, guarantee and coordination – a role of *governance*.

In particular, the three main areas of methodological innovation are related to the:

- 1) networking activity;
- 2) adoption of mid-term strategies;
- 3) periodic and integrated evaluation.

These three areas of innovation are to be found in most social policy reforms which took place in Europe in the last five years. These foresee the involvement of an increasing number of actors in designing, managing and implementing policies, in attempting to overcome short-term perspectives and in monitoring the outcomes.

5 On the contrary, the 15 large cities having a special share of the National Fund respond directly to the Department of Social Affairs of the Welfare Ministry – even if they must observe the Regional targets.



Networking

With law 285/97, for the first time, non-state actors are considered to be fully involved not only in the implementation, but also in the planning of the action plans, with a recognised subsidiary role. Hence, the networking becomes one of the most important concerns: vertically, the wider territorial institutions interact in a two-way direction with the narrower one (State > Regions > Provinces > single and associated municipalities), horizontally local institutions cooperate one another and with the other local actors (associations, non-profit organizations...), through a process of “participated negotiation” and a range of institutional tools aimed at supporting networking practices, such as the *accordi di programma* (programme agreements). This allows the pooling of more resources and knowledge different in kind, and a rationalization, systematization and improvement of measures in an integrated system of programs otherwise implemented on a sporadic and localized footing. Furthermore, this pattern has the important aim of unburden national state authorities, more and more unable to meet the expenditure generated by a manifold demand for care.

Summing up, the pursuit of a linking action between various public and private actors connects a motley number of local administrations, schools, associations and organizations in order to create an integrated local network of programs for childhood and adolescence, so that educational, environmental, housing and health policies are steered in a consistent direction.

State and Regions provide a frame for local action and a technical support for their implementation, while interventions are advanced from the bottom and through a grass-roots mobilization: the general purposes are agreed at a national level, while the specific solutions are tuned according to local needs, so that a common end – a national, common, social citizenship – can be achieved through different means.

Mid-term planning strategy

In general terms, *planning* cannot be taken for granted in the Italian policy process, dominated by emergencies, government frailty and a strongly rooted charity tradition. From this point of view, Law 285/97 introduces the concept of project-work, leaded by time, mean and cost stakes.

The planning has a three-year span and is based on a National Plan, which provides a general frame of reference. The real planning heart are, in fact, the Regions for they have – in line with the general purposes of Law 285/97 – a



wide autonomy in defining the fields of intervention, by allocating their share of national funds according to criteria they consider the most adequate. Every third year the Region and the Local Administrations must define the regional fields of intervention (targets) and, on a yearly basis, the procedures for the distribution of funds.

As a matter of fact, it is a Regional Law the source of the local organizational layout, defining the role of local institutions, the modes of coordination and the most adequate territorial level for programs and interventions. Moreover it is the Regions that have to approve the three-year Local Plans for Children. Besides that, the law requires local authorities themselves to plan and manage the local participation patterns, through the above-mentioned *Local Plans for Children*. This means that regional plans are made up by regional guidelines (according to national principles) and local level action plans coordinated at different inter-municipal level (province, district, zone...) and involving a wide range of public and private actors.

The Local Plans include a survey over the local context; the living conditions of children and adolescents in the area; needs, standards and projects with their financial budgets; the programmed agreements that from a legal point of view binds the institutions included in the community planning (municipalities, health units, youth law courts, education offices, Mountain Communities...) to the completion and attainment of the obligations undertaken in the Plans.

This structure is aimed on the one side at providing responsiveness to grass-roots needs and on the other at guaranteeing the duration/continuity of projects through targeted endowments and resources.

Periodic and integrated evaluation

As far as evaluation is concerned, art. 9 states that every year the regions must address the National Government a report about aims and measures funded by the Law 285/97 and their implementation, effectiveness and consequences: it is probably the first Italian Law foreseeing the institutionalisation of evaluation activities and, up to that period, surely the only one implementing it.

Although the text of the Law is not very clear on the way to carry out the evaluation (no procedures or implementation guidelines were given at the beginning). The basic idea seems to be some form of monitoring aimed at sup-



porting future planning. After the first three years only 40% of the local actors carried out the foreseen evaluation. Considering, however, the novelty of the approach (Battistella & De Ambrogio 2003) and the existing territorial disparities, the result is more than satisfactory, also because the Regional and Provincial evaluation procedures helped to reach higher levels. As shown in table B.2. (see appendix) 3 Regions out of 4 carried out a wide monitoring activity (though more focussed on zone level than on executive projects).

After the first phase of implementation, evaluation activities have been better specified through the *National Centre of Documentation and Analysis for Childhood and Adolescence*. An information campaign was carried out; an advice and technical assistance service for local bodies was activated and two handbooks of guidelines on planning and management under the law were disseminated. These guides provided also suggestions and examples of *ex-ante* and *ex-post* evaluation.

Furthermore, a data base with the classification of all the projects financed was set up and every year a number of publications analysed outcomes and results reached (see references). In co-operation with the Regions, a system for collecting information on the state of implementation of the Law was constituted and yearly reports for the Parliament were prepared.

At an organizational level, once again Regions become the strategic steering actor as they must set up and define the instruments for monitoring and verifying if and how the local plans (*piani di zona*) are carried out. The evaluation is usually undertaken at a Provincial or zonal level.

II.2. Critical issues

The implementation of an innovative law like the 285/97, within the social policy context we sketched above, is not easy and bears some risks. The path-dependent nature of the institutional context influences the implementation process and the outcome of the single projects as well as the emerging forms and patterns of governance and co-ordination arrangements.

In general terms the following critical issues can be raised:

- 1) the unsynchronised character of the ongoing transitions and reforms;
- 2) the territorial articulation of reforms and the north-south divide.



As to the first point, labour market policies and social policies, in particular in relation to active and empowering schemes (e.g. the RMI for four testing years,...) followed independent paths, without considering that reforming labour market policies would create new forms of vulnerabilities for which there was not yet a protection scheme. The most evident example is the still lacking last safety net. Labour market policies widened their access, but restricted the duration the benefits could be claimed. This increased the risks of becoming poor in a context without targeted policies to face the new situation. Law 285/97 provided some important policy answers (in some regions), but highly fragmented both in provisions and design.

As to the second point, most reforms reflect the territorial divide characterising Italy. Regional efforts weren't harmonized, so that there were different access criteria to benefits and services in the different regions. Within this frame, municipalities bring often a further level of complexity, by designing either specific rules for specific categories, often interpreting the framework law loosely and maintaining high discretion in the distribution of benefits. One main consequence of this complex morphology has been the consolidation of a differentiated system of social citizenship, framed by very different legal contexts within which *citizens* are entitled to different sets of rights, related not so much to their condition of need, but to the specific eligibility rules and to the specific way in which social services are organised in the place where they live, not even excluding patronage arrangements.

Within this more general frame, law 285 gave a unique opportunity to experiment new organizational models for social services, paying attention to their substantive matters rather than to their formal dimensions. It was the beginning of a cultural change both in the way childhood and adolescence were conceived and in the management of social policies: community work was no more a concept for a few innovative social workers.

Despite these important aspects, the path-dependent character of Italian social policies we addressed before still pervades practices: the tendency of splitting endowments and powers into in-communicant areas of intervention still lasts and in some contexts the self-referential logics still re-emerges.

The main problems have been observed in relation to the following issues:

- a. the *planning* activity in the initial phase;
- b. the *evaluation* activity in the final phase;
- c. the *territorial fragmentation* of the overall impact of the law.



a) As far as *planning* is concerned, the greatest obstacle is the lack of expertise among the different actors: how to network with other bodies, professionals and competences? In particular the networking with the private sector was quite difficult to develop *ex-novo* in contexts where it was not already established. A wide range of training activities was addressed precisely to this issue⁶ targeted to the (mainly public) actors involved.

The planning activity has been made more difficult by the fact that law 285/97 required a complex set of procedures and documents to be produced within a rather short period time. All that took place in a context which was still characterized by organizational inflexibility and the existence of different priorities/ aims for different services not used to co-operate.

These problems were potentially present in the text of the law and emerged – more specifically – during the first implementation period (1997-1999) when there was still no balance between top-down guidelines and bottom-up experimentation.

One explanation of the above mentioned difficulties is given by the fact that 93% out of the nearly 8,100 Italian municipalities has less than 25,000 inhabitants. Coordination problems and a weak networking tradition provide a very fragmented policy process.

This occurred not only at the institutional level among administrative bodies, but also in relation to the involvement of the non-profit organizations, which were hardly involved in planning activities⁷. Conflict relations, self-referential planning and externalisation are some resulting strategies not consistent with the vision of law 285/97.

Many problems in planning were also caused by an underestimation of the contextual analyses which had to be carried out in order to recognize social needs and local resources.

b) As far as *evaluation* is concerned, the problems are related to the fact that it is carried out with inconsequential instruments and practices. Professional cultures and methodological approaches were often inadequate: actually, the prevailing idea is that evaluation is a kind of control and de-valuation, i.e. a vertical power relationship. Thus, cultural limits intertwine with unclear law formulation, that gives no methodological guidance.

6 Training was carried out at a national, regional and local level, also because law 285/97 allowed 5% of the National Fund to be used for this goal. Some 30 seminars were organized by the national Centre of Documentation in 4 year, involving 1,500 delegates and 80% of the Regions every year.

Furthermore 40% of the Regions have carried out training activities on their own, involving ca. 2,500 persons every year. As a consequence, two third of the local areas – a number increasing every year – joined some forms of national or regional training.

7 The few cases where this happened were mainly due to local traditions of co-operation and networking preceding law 285/97.



c) As far as the territorial fragmentation is concerned, the scenario is highly diversified, both in terms of north/south divide and local policy cultures. The starting gap was very relevant bringing about a situation in which many southern areas were engaged in filling that gap, while many northern areas were experimenting innovative services.

Nevertheless, good practices are given also in southern regions showing an important process of expertise and know-production also in underprivileged areas. The considerable autonomy of the Regions, however make it more difficult to create a nation-wide social citizenship, which is one of the aims of law 285 bringing about a high differentiation in local welfare settings. National assessments have pointed out that it was hard to have comparable accounting and reporting from all the territorial level, because regional policy cultures are becoming more and more differentiated.

II.3. Policy prospects

The institutional frame adopted by Law 285/97 provided the basis for further policy developments. At least three other recent Laws have been approved by the parliament further developing the main principles and methodologies of the 285/97. In particular:

- 1) Law 40/98 for immigration policies;
- 2) Executive Order 237/98 for RMI (a means-tested minimum-income provision);
- 3) Framework Law 328/00 for a comprehensive system of integrated social policies.

These laws introduced *governance* as a new way of regulating public interest, to be achieved mainly through the networking of multiple actors at the local level, with a subsidiary and/or concurring role. The still ongoing reforms underline explicitly these two aspects and the fact that the local level (municipality or consortia of municipalities) is the place where problems should find a solution in terms of coordinated action among stakeholders. The massive legislative changes of the 1990s make extensive use of concepts like *collaboration*, *coordination* and *networking*, even foreseeing *ad hoc* funding for that.

II.3.1. The New Framework Law for Integrated Social Services

Out of the three laws the new framework law (328/2000) on social assistance and integrated social services took advantage of the legacy of law 285/97 and tried to address the increased vulnerability and social policy fragmentation by



defining some general criteria. One of the aims was to overcome the existing policy differences among local contexts and foreseeing non discretionary rights. According to this law the State has the responsibility for defining the 'essential levels for social interventions' (Liveas) and to structure social policies by providing guidelines to regions and municipalities. Local social policies are defined in *Piani di Zona*, (*zone/local plans*), i.e. in concerted planning documents settled by the actors of the *ambito* (the territorial area of reference), which includes one larger municipality or a group of small associated municipalities and the relevant stakeholders. This represents now the territorial unit for social policies, as defined by the new law and ties in with the most advanced reforms taking place in Europe in relation to the rescaling process of social policies occurring in most countries.

The relation between Law 285/97 and Law 328/00 is very strong, up to the point that the text of Law 328/00 openly subsumes the aims of Law 285/97. The principles which are addressed by these two laws are rooted in the same social policy vision, sharing also the methodologies and prospects. In particular:

- the networking activity foreseen or the implementation of an integrated system of services, involving the highest number of public and private actors (*horizontal subsidiarity*), and the interplay between national, regional and local levels (*vertical subsidiarity*);
- the focus on local communities, community work and activation, substantiated in the making of "Local Plans" (*Piani di Zona*). These are organized according to previous experimentations and practices adopted for projects and provisions (in-kind and monetary) addressed in the 285/97 to children and adolescents.
- the role of the evaluation as part of planning and implementation processes within a mid-term time schedule.

Despite these similarities, the amount of funding, the actors involved and organizational complexity, Law 285/97 is definitely simpler than Law 328/00. Law 328/00 is designed to encompass *all* the social policies in Italy, whatever field, territorial dimension and institution in charge is considered. It is the far-reaching result of thirty-years-long⁸ debates inside and outside the Parliament and it is the first organic and coherent law on social policies enacted in Italy after the "Crispi Law", named after the Prime Minister in office at that time: it was the very end of the XIX century (1890!).

8 The first draft bill intended to amend the existing social assistance rulings dates back to 1969.



As a results, even if there are still some contradictory elements⁹, many factors of integration are now visible in the enforcement of Law 328/00. In particular:

- at the horizontal level of subsidiarity, policy design, management and implementation is becoming more and more homogeneous, involving more actors both public and private;
- at the vertical level of subsidiarity the Province and the Municipalities leading a programming *locality* (una Zona) are undertaking a co-ordination role firstly due to Law 285/97; the vertical linkages are further promoted thanks to the adoption of technical boards between Region and Provinces previously tested in the childhood and adolescence policies.
- evaluation activities are becoming more and more institutionalised and a routine, methodically grounded and oriented at supporting the future planning, also thanks to the first input given by Law 285/97;

A further factor of integration is represented by the (still potential in many regional contexts) convergence of many special funds (included the Law 285/97 and the National Fund for Childhood and Adolescence) into the *National Social Fund*, in which all budgetary lines have merged. Regions are now freer in defining and harmonizing their social policy agenda through one unique funding tool. This new scenario may bear some risks. In particular the differentiation among Regions according to their expenditure capacity, organizational potential and political subculture is a substantial risk which is becoming an institutionalised reality.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM OF 2001

The institutional relation between State and Region has been steered again in a new direction after the reform of the fifth (V) chapter of the Italian Constitution at the beginning of 2001 (Constitutional Law 03/01) – that is only some months after the enactment of Law 328/00.

As a matter of fact, these two measures are partially conflicting, because in the Constitutional Law 03/01 the legislative power of Regions increased substantially and the vertical subsidiarity changed in favour of Local Authorities. Regions got the full liability in many matters, included social policy.¹⁰

9 For instance, in the last national assessment (published in 2004 and concerning plans carried out in 2002) 7 regions maintain a separate planning for the two laws which do not correspond one another and target different groups at risk (Ciampa et al. 2004, 84).

10 The turn has been quite substantial: before Constitutional Law 03/01, regional competences were accurately listed, while the emended version adopts a residual vision, giving the Regions power “in every matter which is not explicitly reserved to the State”.



As a consequence the organizational structure defined in Law 328/00 (and in Law 285/97 too) has been partly neglected/hollowed, so that the Regions can put into effect the integrated system of social actions and services at their discretion, according or not to the national framework law.

Thus, the Regions are reconsidering the whole social system they are enforcing – often keeping the framework given by Law 328, sometimes not.

The crucial point, is that at present the State is not anymore legitimised to provide guidelines, while Regions are fully autonomous on all welfare issues except the definition of the level of essential welfare provisions. Nonetheless, after 4 years, the State has still to define the Liveas and the system still leaves space for a high degree of discretion at the local level (Municipalities, Provinces, Regions).

III. The case studies

The selected case study, the *Mowgli Project*, aims at supporting families in a difficult situation both economically and socially. This case study has also been included in the NAPincl as an example of good practice in terms of social exclusion prevention.

Due to logistical problems the peer review process will not visit the premises of the Mowgli project in the Mountain Community Cigno-Valle Biferno, but the premises of the project Pollicino in Rome. A description of the Pollicino project is also provided below.

Both projects have been designed, implemented and monitored within the frame of the 285/97 law and can be considered as good examples of how the law mobilised different actors and resources addressing

III.1. Project nr. 1

“Mowgli” Project. Home care and social and economic support targeted to families at risk of social exclusion in the Mountain Community Cigno-Valle Biferno (“Mowgli” project)

The context and the areas of intervention

The Mowgli project was aimed mainly at building a solidarity network around households with children at risk of social exclusion. It focussed primarily on the family’s atmosphere and the children-parents relationship, in order to prevent



minors' institutionalization. This aim was included in a wider and multifaceted set of parallel actions integrated in the community work on everyday life of children and families in small-sized local societies.

As far as the general aims of the project are concerned, this project fits in the objective *(a)* (see II.1.2. herein) of Law 285/97, particularly in its third sub-goal, "support actions for minors and their households aimed at preventing effectively psycho-social risks and crises through services' networking for domiciliary, diurnal, educational, schooling and first-aid intervention" (Art. 4 letter *c*).

The project and its sub-actions defined their specific local goals as follows:

- to prevent children leaving their family and to restore a normal family functioning;
- to empower family educational skills;
- to increase parents' skills in household duties and childcare;
- to set up new linkages between families and the local environment;
- to reduce children's institutionalizations and adoptions;
- to promote an effective change in the problematical household;
- to promote children's integrated and serene growth.

This project was planned and carried out in a Mountain Community in Region Molise (South-Eastern Italy) by a consortium (Consorzio Molise Solidarietà) through a co-operative society.

The territorial background of Mowgli is a non-metropolitan area made up of little hilly (and quite secluded) towns and villages linked institutionally within the Mountain Community.¹¹

Local social planners recognized limits in cultural capital and environmental and social isolation as key factors in local maladjustment processes, layered together with particular events and situations (un- or under-employment; parents' deviance – prostitution, addiction or imprisonment; school failures; limited paternal authority; housing and relational problems).

The organizational structure

Such a wide set of problems required a multifaceted social plan involving several targeted actions, focusing both on prevention and protection and aimed at developing:

11 Mountain Communities (Law 1102/71) are local authorities grouping municipalities which fulfil some regionally defined criteria and which are aimed at fostering local social and economic development.



- institutional networking among the public actors;
- social networking and actions targeting children's and adolescents' everyday life;
- specific actions targeting more explicitly towards situations at risk.

The plan was implemented between March 2000 and October 2001 and usually, most programmes were split up in three major steps:

- 1) preliminary assessment, organization and advertising (lasting about 3 months);
- 2) the actual implementation (lasting 10-12 months);
- 3) Periodical evaluation of outcomes.

The project foresees a staff made up by 12 people – a psychologist, a chief social worker and ten social workers, employed in all actions (*Centro Infanzia*, home care support, ...).

1) PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT, ORGANISATION AND NETWORKING

The first major step has been usually a preliminary assessment of the existing local policies and resources available to the families in difficulties through a questionnaire addressed to the relevant stakeholders. This preliminary assessment brought about an extensive networking activity. The "Mowgli" project constituted itself as a focal tie connecting information flows among many local actors. Hence, the staff introduced itself to the local actors dealing with childhood and adolescence (schools, health service, minors' law court, municipalities...). Particular attention has been devoted to the networking process among the local authorities because one of the goals of Mowgli was to settle the services it developed on a stable footing, even after the end of the two-years project. This same preliminary assessment had a major role in identifying precisely potential targets of the services, even though they have been delivered only on demand¹² and according to clearly defined criteria in order to avoid discretionary behaviours..

2) THE ACTUAL IMPLEMENTATION

The actual implementation of the ambitious goals mentioned above brought about the establishment of a series of services like the *Centro Infanzia* (Childhood centre), various home caring activities, the *Spazi Famiglia* (Family spaces), etc. foreseeing:

- children's assistance to study;
- educational support for the household;
- emergency problem solving;

12 The choice of avoiding actions against the parents' will, is related to the fact that their high involvement is required in order to accomplish an effective change in the educational style within the family.



- local integration support for minors;
- networking with other educational agencies.

For instance the *Centro Infanzia* works according to the following steps: > potential claimants are sent by local authorities > interview with social workers of the centre > home visit > development of a personal plan > implementation of the personal plan > evaluation of the implementation on a three months basis involving all relevant actors > final report. At the different steps different actors are involved, according to the existing problems and actual risks.

Targeted households were 13 in the six municipalities of the Comunità Montana; 10 children had also home care support along the duration of the project, while 6 households received an integrative monetary support in the form of vouchers to buy food, medicines and other basic goods (for a total expenditure amounting to about € 9,000).

3) EVALUATION

Outcomes and impacts were evaluated every third month by the staff that carried out the action and every sixth month by the staff together with networked and promoting institutions. In this case, the whole planning activity has been considered and evaluated. Also the co-operative in charge of the actual management of the project carries out a further *in itinere* evaluation every fourth month.

Complementary actions

Besides the main activities (Centro Infanzia, home care,...) other actions have been planned and carried out by the Consorzio Solidarietà Molise following the principles listed in articles 6 ("recreational and educational services for the spare time") and 7 ("Positive actions aimed at promoting the rights of childhood and adolescence") of Law 285.

In particular, they carried out the following actions:

- A summer entertainment week for children between 6 and 10 and summer camps for adolescents (aged between 14 and 18). One of the most interesting activities carried out during the week was the process by which children become aware of the built and human surroundings. They were encouraged to take pictures, notes and to interview elderly people.
- A one-day traffic stop in the towns' main street in order to prepare shows, exhibitions and entertainment activities for and by children and adolescents. This programme was aimed at promoting the awareness of the significance



of minors in local communities and at making the children feeling at ease and responsible local actors.

- “Family rooms” in five municipalities of the Mountain Community. It was a service for families with children between 3 and 10 self-managed by families themselves (helped by some social workers). It put together children’s playing and parents’ meeting in order to promote gathering and educational chances in secluded areas. Actually this service was aimed at supporting parents/children relationship and at networking families to promote relational skills and self-help. The recipients were 168.
- Meeting centre for adolescents (aged between 14 and 19). In an area lacking in public and private services for this population, such an action was aimed at preventing borderline behaviours through the self-management of a room for the spare time. Actually, no detailed programme was planned, in order to promote participation in the management of the centre, while organizational troubles were faced together with two social workers helping in the running. At the end, the recipients were 42.

Every programme was evaluated thanks to a collection of quantitative and qualitative data analyzed in periodical assessments till the drafting of a final report for the networked and promoting institutions, while a “data return” to the recipients – useful to increase participation – wasn’t planned.

“Mowgli” project as a good practice

This project has been considered a *good practice* because it translates the vision of Law 285/97 into the peculiar spatial configuration of this area. The balance between service localization, networking and co-ordination shows the way in which also dispersed towns can become an innovative educational community.

The staff was organized in order to overcome the traditional bureaucratic problems typical of public institutions in Italy. The normative expectations have been extensively replaced by a cognitive approach: being an “educational community” implies that the community can both teach something and that it can learn something.

The concept of an integrated educational community is carried out also thanks to a whole set of activities targeting the local society at large: an horizontal networked solidarity that links children and households usually scattered on the territory. In this scenario, the project is not a self-referential, but the first



step of a path where every member of the community is responsible of the collective goods and achievements.

The extensive evaluation activity carried out along the project allowed a constant re-planning process. Evaluation became an important part of planning, not only the final step of a project. This implies a potentially higher receptivity towards the context of reference. In fact evaluation isn't solely an accountability and reporting process, but mainly a learning process; for example the *in itinere* evaluation wasn't just a mere monitoring, but also a strategic assessment of the planning activities.

Critical issues

The complexity of the project implies a high number of potential critical issues. Most of them were identified in the relationship with public institutions including the Mountain Community and the Municipalities involved in the project.

In particular, difficulties related to the weaknesses in the networking process, which had – as a consequence – delays in payments and in the obtainment of permits for opening *family spaces* and *children rooms*. Further delays were due to an incorrect estimation of workloads in relationship with the large number of actions carried out.

Networking difficulties highlighted the fact that priorities and goals might be different for the actors involved in the process. The contrasting semantics can generate communication problems and misunderstandings.

III.2. PROJECT NR. 2

“Pollicino” – City Centre for foster children, adoption and child sponsorship

The context and the areas of intervention

“Pollicino”¹³ is a service started up by the City of Rome in January 2002, following the new Italian adoption Law (149/01), which states children's right to grow up in their kin family or – if this is not possible – in another family. As a consequence, Law 149/01 sets out a de-institutionalization process aiming at replacing juvenile institutions by family-like settings like foster care, adoption, family-like houses and family communities¹⁴.

13 Literally translated the name means “Tom Thumb” – the name of a popular fairy-tale character.

14 I.e. families with an adult single or couple and more than three-four non-kin children.



Foster care is also one of the main aims pointed out in the Italian updates to the NAP/Incl 2003-2005, where an extraordinary plan for the de-institutionalization of minors and activities for the promotion of family foster-care are reported.

“Pollicino” is a division of the local Social Policy Department and a co-ordination office set up for the local devolution process. Actually, in Rome the implementation of social policies has been delegated to the so-called ‘municipi’ (some sort of districts with an elected council, a budget and the authorization to manage some local services). Thus, at a city level foster care has been detected as a priority in order to provide help and solidarity to households and children in temporary problematic conditions.

The goals of “Pollicino” city centre are:

- to provide basic information to people interested in adoption, foster caring and child sponsorship;
- to help singles and couples adopting or taking foster care children with bureaucratic obstacles;
- to monitor adoptions and foster care in the City of Rome;
- to train social workers employed in this field;
- to foster actions for the sponsorship in favour of minors and families from developing countries.

The organizational structure

The above mentioned goals are put into practice by means of a broad set of actions. The Centre operates a telephone information service for a first contact and it is open every day to support families before, throughout and after the foster care. This action is aimed at avoiding the so-called “adoption failures”, that is relational problems dangerous for adopted children’s and adopting adults’ balance. In fact, the basic opinion is that adoption and foster care cannot be tackled without a training and a support, because they generate unexpected and unique problems able to burn out the adoptive and foster family and their educational role.

The “Pollicino” centre runs also some databases: families interested in adopting children or in taking foster care; list of potential foster children; ongoing foster care; a register of non-profit organizations working in this field and entitled to co-operate with the local authorities. Such an information set allows the centre to match needs and available resources in an easier way, cutting



bureaucratic troubles: thus, when a family or a single is needed for foster care, social services address to “Pollicino” Centre.

Furthermore, the Centre manages training activities for social workers and has a specialized library. Training, however, is not only for social workers, but for families, too.

Foster caring classes for families are usually articulated in four meetings (lasting some 2 hours each). The first focuses on legal facts; the second on family changes and pressures, on child’s insertion, on the relationship with kin households and the provisional nature of foster care (that implies a hard emotional conduct); the third deals with roles and tasks of social services, while the fourth is dedicated to a talk with people already experienced and involved in cases of foster care.

Methodology

Classes foresee the participation of small groups (some 15 people), because the methodology is very participatory and the staff (usually a psychologist and a social worker) uses a non-directive style of leadership (tutorship). Actually, the knowledge outcome of the class is not considered that important, because the main landmark is the process of sharing emotions and experiences.

Participants are asked to talk a lot about their opinions, through the use of video-stimuli, brainstorming and focus-group methodology. The staff surveys spoken and unspoken communication on the class ‘stage’ and evaluates roles and interactions. While doing this, the tutors evaluate themselves, too: they learn from every relation how to manage and improve next classes.

At the end, a feedback session is organized, in order to talk with the staff and to discuss about communication and interaction problems. It is a useful practice in order to realize and evaluate one’s own relational skills.

The aim of these classes is to network families interested to provide foster care one with the other and with social workers in an horizontal solidarity – a kind of self-help – and to empower people which supposedly will meet significant problems in the relationships with problematic children and adolescents. Actually, voluntarism is an imperfect resource and first enthusiasm can hide problems difficult to overcome in a next stage.



Within this frame, classes are only part of a longer and personalized path, because problems are very different depending on insertion programmes balanced on specific needs.

“Pollicino” Centre as a good practice

“Pollicino” Centre is a service consistent with Law 285/97 principles, specially with art. 4 letter *d* (support services for parents/children relationship counter-acting poverty and violence as well as measures alternative to taking minors in institutions – in particular foster care).

Networking processes are one of the main features. Different law provisions are networked together (285/97; 328/00; 149/01) in order to create a sound system of actions. Their aim is to develop relationships between districts, juvenile law courts, non-profit organizations and social workers through an information system and a co-ordination centre (exactly “Pollicino”) as well as a set of local rules.

Furthermore, also horizontal and informal solidarity is promoted: foster care itself is considered as a form of solidarity among families, and it is encouraged through self-help groups and a reference centre, overcoming some biases in the help of foster families. For instance often families do not ask social services and law courts for help, because these institutions are obliged to control and assess the foster caring activity of the families themselves with the possibility of interrupting the foster care. On the other hand, “Pollicino” centre provides support without automatically activating procedures that may interrupt the foster care because of the difficulties foster parents experience.



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Law 285/97 ("Provisions for the promotion of rights and opportunities for childhood and adolescence")

- Official Italian version: www.parlamento.it/parlam/leggi/97285l.htm
- Unofficial English version: http://www.minori.it/cd/cd_lucca_2003/3/3.3.4_en.pdf
- Unofficial French version: http://www.minori.it/cd/cd_lucca_2003/3/3.3.4_fr.pdf

Law 328/00 ("Framework Law for the accomplishment of the integrated system of social actions and services") – Italian version: www.parlamento.it/parlam/leggi/00328l.htm

Law 451/97 ("Appointment of the Parliamentary Committee for childhood and of the National Observatory on childhood") – Italian version: <http://www.parlamento.it/parlam/leggi/97451l.htm>

Ministry of Labour and Social Policies
www.welfare.gov.it

National Action Plan against poverty and social exclusion

Official Italian version

[http://www.welfare.gov.it/NR/rdonlyres/eqv7skjnk35p7fp3kt42zt3pyfudgzmgtejsv2yknmi4uapdr7mhvnsznqvbfqhtgckg2oi57v4gaa/11\\$0803.pdf](http://www.welfare.gov.it/NR/rdonlyres/eqv7skjnk35p7fp3kt42zt3pyfudgzmgtejsv2yknmi4uapdr7mhvnsznqvbfqhtgckg2oi57v4gaa/11$0803.pdf)

Updates – official English version

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2001/jun/napsincl2001_en.html

Piano Nazionale per l'Infanzia

<http://www.welfare.gov.it/NR/rdonlyres/ezpdpvsk5jnn5qgrz3ov6vjmvgqwmjrcs3d3vzf7cdgpgwboq3n3fjrp5guzdp7bj7jdb3z4kac/10%24pianoinfanziaCdM.pdf>

"Pollicino" – City Centre for foster care, adoption and distance support
http://www.comune.roma.it/dipsociale/Pollicino/pagina_pollicino.htm

Project of actions for domiciliary social and economic support addressed to problematical households in the Mountain Community Cigno-Valle Biferno ("Mowgli" project): www.molisesolidarieta.it/mowgli.htm



Important Link

National Centre of documentation and analysis for childhood and adolescence (www.minori.it)

The National Centre is an agency depending on the Prime Minister's Office. It is regulated by Law 451/97 ("Appointment of the Parliamentary Committee for childhood and of the National Observatory on childhood") and by Law 285/97 ("Provisions for the promotion of rights and opportunities for childhood and adolescence"). The main activities of the Centre are:

- Management and development of databases on childhood conditions, including reviews, books, administrations' documents; Laws, Bills, judgments at a local, national and European level; figures and comparative indicators;
- Users' support through a website, a public library and an information counter;
- Studies and analyses about minors' problems: mapping services and endowments; drafting the National Report on minors' conditions in Italy; carrying out researches on special topics;
- Circulation of documents through surfable databases and the publication of three reviews;
- Making proposals and considerations about projects and implementation and outcomes of new laws.

As far as Law 285/97 is concerned, the National Centre:

- manages and develops a database of local programmes financed by Law 285/97;
- carries out researches on foster care and services for children and adolescents;
- informing about Law 285/97 with reviews, leaflets, handbooks and CD-Rom.



Appendix

A. DEMOGRAPHY

Tab. A.1 – Population 0-17 per age group and country. Year 2002

Countries	Age groups				
	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-17	Total
Austria	4,9	5,7	5,8	4,1	20,5
Belgium	5,6	5,8	6,1	3,5	21,0
Denmark	6,2	6,5	5,9	3,2	21,9
Finland	5,5	6,2	6,2	3,7	21,7
France	6,3	6,0	6,4	3,8	22,5
Germany	4,7	4,9	5,7	3,4	18,7
Greece (2000)	4,8	4,9	5,5	3,8	19,0
Ireland	7,1	6,7	7,3	4,8	26,0
Italy (2001)	4,6	4,8	4,9	3,1	17,4
Luxemburg	6,2	6,5	6,1	3,4	22,1
Netherlands	6,3	6,1	6,2	3,5	22,2
Portugal	5,5	5,1	5,4	3,6	19,6
Spain	4,8	4,7	5,1	3,4	18,0
Sweden	5,1	6,3	6,8	3,6	21,8
UK (2001)	6,0	6,5	6,5	3,7	22,6
EU	5,3	5,5	5,8	3,5	20,2

Figures for France, Ireland and Luxemburg are estimates
Source: Ciccotti et al. 2004, 86.

Tab. A.2.x – Old age Index per sex and country. Year 2002

Countries	Old age index		
	Males	Females	Total
Austria	71,3	119,7	94,9
Belgium	77,6	116,7	96,7
Denmark	64,8	94,1	79,1
Finland	64,2	105,6	84,5
France	68,9	105,3	86,7
Germany	85,1	139,3	111,5
Greece (2000)	98,8	130,4	114,1
Ireland	44,7	61,2	52,7
Italy (2001)	100,9	154,8	127,1
Luxemburg	59,3	91,4	75,0
Netherlands	59,2	88,1	73,3
Portugal	84,9	123,3	103,6
Spain	95,2	140,4	117,1
Sweden	78,5	111,5	94,8
UK (2001)	66,8	98,6	82,3
EU	79,2	121,0	99,6

Figures for France, Ireland and Luxemburg are estimates
Source: Ciccotti et al. 2004, 86.



B. POLICY PROCESS: PLANNING, NETWORKING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Tab. B.1. – Approved projects in the local plans per region. April 2001 – April 2002

	Projects		
	Second period (2001-2003)	First period (1999-2001)	Average number of projects per area
Piemonte	278	-	34,8
Valle d'Aosta	20	-	20,0
Lombardia	215	-	19,5
Autonomous province of Bozen	29	-	3,6
Autonomous province of Trento	17	-	17,0
Veneto	243	-	11,6
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	207	-	Nd
Liguria	82	-	4,8
Emilia-Romagna	46	-	5,1
Toscana	314	-	9,2
Umbria	47	-	3,9
Marche	151	-	5,2
Lazio	90	-	18,0
Abruzzo	138	-	34,5
Molise	-	15	Nd
Campania	302	-	7,4
Puglia	Nd	Nd	Nd
Basilicata	-	70	3,2
Calabria	-	169	12,1
Sicilia	475	-	7,1
Sardegna	-	35	1,5
Total	2654	289	8,2

Source: Clampa et al. 2004, 72.

Tab. B.2. – Regions carrying out evaluation of local plans and executive projects per evaluation type. April 2001 – April 2002

Evaluation type	Local plans	Executive projects
Ex ante evaluation	9	4
In itinere evaluation	6	7
Ex post evaluation	3	1
No evaluation	0	0
Do not answer	7	12

Source: Clampa et al. 2004, 76.

Tab. B.3. – Regions per relationship between local plans regulated by law 285/97 and local plans regulated by law 328/00. April 2002.

Relationship	N.
Joint planning	4
Planning for 328/00 includes parts of planning for 285/97	1
Two different planning actions	7
Other	6
Do not answer	3

Source: Clampa et al. 2004, 77.



Tab. B.4. – Local areas doing networking meetings for the carrying out of executive projects per actors involved. Years 2000 and 2001

Meeting	2000		2001	
	N.	%	N.	%
Yes	197	87,2	176	84,7
No	27	11,9	27	13,0
Missing	2	0,9	4	2,4
If yes, actors involved				
Municipalities	175	77,4	154	74,4
Provinces	83	36,7	70	33,8
Mountain Communities	35	15,5	33	15,9
National government local agencies	20	8,8	21	10,1
Schools and other public schooling agencies	156	69,0	147	71,0
Local health services	162	71,7	150	72,6
Juvenile justice agencies	90	39,8	75	36,2
Juvenile law courts	26	11,5	28	13,5
Associations, Co-operatives, non-profit organizations	150	66,4	139	67,1
Other	56	24,8	40	19,3

Source: Barachini et al. 2001, 56; Ciampa et al. 2003, 81.

Tab. B.5 – Local areas monitoring activities per method of monitoring. Years 2000 and 2001.

Meeting	2000		2001	
	N.	%	N.	%
Yes	169	74,8	166	79,4
No	55	24,3	32	15,7
Missing	2	0,9	9	4,9
If yes, which method?				
Questionnaires	78	34,5	82	39,6
Reports	86	38,1	98	47,3
Periodic meetings among public administrators	64	28,3	81	39,1
Periodic meetings among persons in charge of the projects	124	54,9	137	66,1
Other	52	23,0	64	30,9

Source: Barachini et al. 2001, 57; Ciampa et al. 2003, 82.



C. MAIN FEATURES OF EXECUTIVE PROJECTS

Tab. C.1. – Executive projects and local areas per target age class. Years 2000 and 2001

	2000			2001		
	Projects	Areas	%	Projects	Areas	%
0-6	244	107	47,3	271	106	51,2
7-11	480	132	58,4	495	131	63,3
12-14	407	136	60,2	322	111	53,6
15-17	203	91	40,3	183	81	39,1
Minors (0-17)	-	-	-	261	79	38,2
18-30	38	19	8,4	35	24	11,6
> 30	221	71	31,4	138	67	32,4
No prevalent age class	632	120	53,1	299	78	37,7
Missing	48	7	3,1	204	32	15,5

Source: Barachini et al. 2001, 60; Ciampa et al. 2003, 85.

Tab. C.2. – Executive projects and local areas per target group. Years 2000 and 2001

	2000			2001		
	Projects	Areas	%	Projects	Areas	%
Minors in general	1266	185	81,9	1249	174	84,1
Minors (special categories: poverty, disability, deviance...)	310	91	40,3	268	91	44,0
Adults in general	56	33	14,6	41	28	13,5
Adults – parents	239	101	44,7	206	91	44,0
Adults – social workers	133	67	29,6	92	60	29,0
Institutions and organizations	27	18	8,0	20	16	7,7
No prevalent category	191	56	24,8	73	32	15,5
Missing	54	8	3,5	256	33	15,9

Source: Barachini et al. 2001, 60; Ciampa et al. 2003, 85.

Tab. C.3. – Executive projects and local areas per categories of social workers. Years 2000 and 2001

	2000			2001		
	Projects	Areas	%	Projects	Areas	%
Civil servants	525	128	56,6	483	136	65,7
Professionals	292	95	42,0	341	98	47,3
Workers from covenanted organizations	974	163	72,1	1139	167	80,7
Volunteers	150	56	24,8	178	51	24,6
Missing	332	20	8,8	211	31	15,0

Source: Barachini et al. 2001, 61; Ciampa et al. 2003, 86.

Tab C.4. – Executive projects per areas of intervention. Year 2001

Area	Projects	%
relationship between parents and children for counteracting poverty, violence and Institutionalization (Art. 4)	1192	43,8
Innovative social and educational services for children (Art. 5)	190	7,0
recreational and educational services for the spare time (Art. 6)	719	26,4
promotion of children' and adolescents' rights and well-being (especially in the urban environment and with attention to cultural, gender and ethnic diversity) (Art. 7)	271	10,0
Articles 4 and 6	146	5,4
Articles 6 and 7	73	2,7
All the 4 articles (4, 5, 6, 7)	39	1,4
Other combinations	233	3,3
Total	2863	100,0

Source: Ciampa, A. et al. 2003, 90.