

Fondimpresa

Italy

General Policy



Good Practice Executive Summary

This file is about annual policies to support training plans promoted on the basis of agreements among the stakeholders, which involve networks and enterprise systems, districts, and local productive systems linked together by provision networks, logistics systems and so on.

We observed a national call for proposals (01/2006), having resources spread on a regional level. As a consequence, we observed the project which carries out the policy for the Basilicata region. All the following information refer to the organizations implementing the project, subdivided into temporary partnership.

The observed project is “CREA - Growing in company (2006)”, which was characterized by an overall amount of 1,764 training hours split into 32 training actions, involving 200 workers of companies from all over the regional territory of Basilicata.

Fondimpresa is a joint inter-professional fund for continuous vocational training (CVT) constituted by Confindustria (the main organisation representing Italian manufacturing and services companies) and GCIL, CISL and UIL (the Italian trade unions) for workers’ training. Fondimpresa is the most important fund for CVT, available for all kinds of companies, whose system is characterized by efficiency, quality and promptness.

In the Basilicata region, there are about 680 companies adhering to Fondimpresa for about 20,000 workers. During the last years, the training actions have had the following topics as subjects: health and safety, languages, personal skills, production techniques, ICTs.

As regards the training actions dedicated to language learning, it is possible to outline the following synthetic framework:

Year	Ref. Call for Proposal	N. Training Actions	N. Trainees	Training Hours
2006	1/2006	6	44	240*
2007	1/2007	5	28	200
	1/2007	2	16	80
	1/2007	7	67	510
Totals	5	21	163	1070

Source: **Fondimpresa Basilicata**
Processing: **Roberto Venezia**

* *CREA project*

The above table points out how language learning has become an always more meaningful issue of the annual programme.

1. Reflects current EU and regional policy on multilingualism

The observed project is “CREA - *Growing in company (2006)*”, being part of Fondimpresa, joint inter-professional fund for continuous vocational training, managed by an association whose members are Confindustria (the main organisation representing Italian manufacturing and services companies) and GCIL, CISL and UIL (the Italian trade unions).

The policy is part of a wider strategy, whose aim is to make the access to training and its use simple for companies (even the smaller ones) and their workers. This is seen how a needful boost to favour innovation and development.

In this general context of transition towards a new model of “knowledge economy”, based on the centrality of know-how in the development of the companies’ competitive capacities, Fondimpresa is engaged in supporting skill maintenance and development.

In the European reference framework whose learning dynamics is based on the concept of *lifelong learning*, the activity carried out in Italy by Fondimpresa concurs to spread the idea of the importance of training.

Continuous vocational training is addressed to the workers of the companies joining the inter-professional fund.

The economic priority is supporting companies’ competitiveness through continuous vocational training and the requalification of human resources. Individual assets are: safety, requalification and organizational development. Requalification is characterized by business English and ICT skill enhancement.

The key organizations are: the social parties which monitor the training plan (oversight phases) and the accredited training bodies over the regional territory which deliver the programme. Therefore, the drivers are the social and economic partnership (SEP) and the accreditation system (buy-in strategy).

This programme is coherent with the Lisbon strategy relating to the adaptability of companies (Operational Programme Basilicata European Social Fund 2007-2013). This means improving workers and companies’ adaptability and increasing the investments on human capital in order to foresee and manage changes and promote competitiveness and entrepreneurship.

Priority axes I) Adaptability and IV) Human Capital have the major connections with the Community guideline 1.2 “improving knowledge and

innovation for growth”, in particular with the guideline 1.2.2 “facilitate innovation and promote entrepreneurship”.

Companies co-finance the implementation of the annual training plan depending on their size (small, medium-sized and large enterprises) and the applied aid schemes (ref.: Reg. EC n. 68/2001 and Reg. EC n. 69/2001).

The policy:

ensures the provision of the necessary skills and qualifications for the world of work.

Links to Key Strategy Documents

- Communication from the Commission “Education & Training 2010” - *The success of the Lisbon Strategy hinges on urgent reforms*, COM(2003) 685.
- Communication to the Spring European Council “Working together for growth and jobs. A new start for the Lisbon Strategy”, COM (2005) 24.
- Council Decision of 6 October 2006 on Community strategic guidelines on cohesion (2006/702/EC).
- National Strategic Framework for Cohesion Policies 2007-13 (December 2006).
- Operational Programme Basilicata ESF 2007-2013 (December 2007).

2. Includes incentives to enhance and sustain language learner motivation and employment benefits

The programme is based on the relationship between training needs and contents: this is the main way to ensure the success of the initiative.

The whole programme is based on the quality of the involvement of the stakeholders and the programme targets (employers and enterprises).

The evaluation system of the annual programme gives back a series of useful information for rescheduling. For instance, we noticed that the request for information as regards cross-curricular competences (such as ICT, English language and so on) increased within the years, if compared to other skills (e.g. those referring to the production). For the action in foreign language (English), the participants were 44 in 2006; while the number increased to an overall amount of 111 in the following year (2007).

The call for proposal we observed is the 01/2006 for the Basilicata region. The call financed training plans lasting one year. The project we observed is “CREA - *Growing in company (2006)*”, carried out by a temporary partnership of training bodies and addressed to the workers of companies adhering to Fondimpresa. The programme for the Basilicata region amounted to 300.000 Euros.

The essential element in order to access to the funds is the preventive agreement among the social parties (the stakeholders). The agreement is achieved when goals, results, contents and the characteristics of the staff involved are shared.

The social parties are involved in the monitoring activities and in the programme evaluation with six-monthly meetings, through a programme committee which checks the values of the project quality parameters (the items are: competences, liking, efficiency).

The companies from the Basilicata region involved were 43, 12 for the province of Matera and 31 for the province of Potenza, for 238 overall workers enrolled (200 were the certifications delivered). Among the areas of activity of the companies involved there are: metallurgy, building trade, social services, road transports, typolithography, local food production, and so on. As regards the English courses, they were 6 (44 workers enrolled and 38 certifications delivered) being arranged over 80 hours.

3. Reflects regional strategy for employability and intercultural benefits

The Basilicata Region (Project Partner 06) adopted the methodology proposed by the LILAMA project. We therefore tried to identify programmes and policies matching the survey object (language best practices for the labour market). We searched into the regional database (SIRFO) for those financed projects whose goals included the support to workers' language skills. The range was from 2000 to 2006. The financial resources identified, which were considered meaningful for the Basilicata region, were:

- A) Regional Operative Programme Basilicata 2000-2006, Axis D (Continuous Vocational Training).
- B) Inter-professional funds.
- C) National law 236/1993.

We evaluated the quality of the policies which guide the three financial resources and we selected the Inter-professional funds on the basis of the following criteria:

1. the stakeholders' buy-in;
2. the regularity of the specific policy along the years 2000-2006;
3. the necessity of a quality system assurance e the traceability of qualitative and quantitative data;
4. the use of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEF) levels and descriptors in the training / assessment design.

As a consequence, we chose the financial resource B (*Inter-professional Funds*) and among these we identified *Fondimpresa* which is the most meaningful in terms of resources, companies and workers involved. We focused on the last year (2006), because we considered the policy ripe in the plan life-cycle.

The programme is characterized by an initial analysis of both individual (workers) and organizational (involved companies) training needs. It is therefore a powerful instrument to modify the employability inside the companies.

The programme fully responds to the regional policy for adaptability and employability. The policy reflects an up-to-date intelligence and can be readily implemented. This is due to the quality and method of partner involvement (economic and social partnership).

The policy encourages but does not fully controls the levels of management resource & QA, due to the fact that the programme is recent and has substantial room for improvement on the quality systems.

4. Addresses local language minority and migrant community language resources

The programme has no priorities regarding language minorities or migrant communities. For this reason, no information have been collected.

5. Provides for international networking and/or mobility

The programme is arranged over a regional network, composed by social and economic parties, without any kind of mobility or international exchange.

6. Incorporates the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) with transparent validation/ credits

The structure of the language courses was arranged after a survey about the language needs both on a communicative and on a professional point of view. Then the training proposal was provided to the companies. As a result, it was therefore decided to: build up homogeneous groups; favour the company management in terms of timetable sharing; favour the learning process (strong interaction between learners and teacher, small number of participants for each group). In order to form the groups, learners underwent a written (60 items of growing difficulty) and oral (direct assessment by the teacher) entry test. Learners were then arranged according to their own initial skills, using the levels and descriptors of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEF), published by the Council of Europe.

The main training goal was essentially to let the learners achieve micro-competences aiming at the strengthening and improvement of the four language skills: writing, reading, listening, speaking. The specific goals of the training actions were arranged in order to achieve:

- 1) grammatical, syntactic, general and specific lexical competences and issues of an interpersonal linguistic communication, in order to manage difficulties and define expectations in a real-life context;
- 2) appropriate strategies and communicative competences to face the management, planning, and independent participation to meetings, exhibitions and International conventions, International negotiations (both written and oral, telephone, face-to-face) and for an effective management of routine activities (administration, information services and so on);
- 3) communicative techniques and operational instruments for an independent and flexible use of the language in order to interact in professional contexts;
- 4) appropriate knowledge of the problems regarding specific job contexts.

The training action was split into four modules:

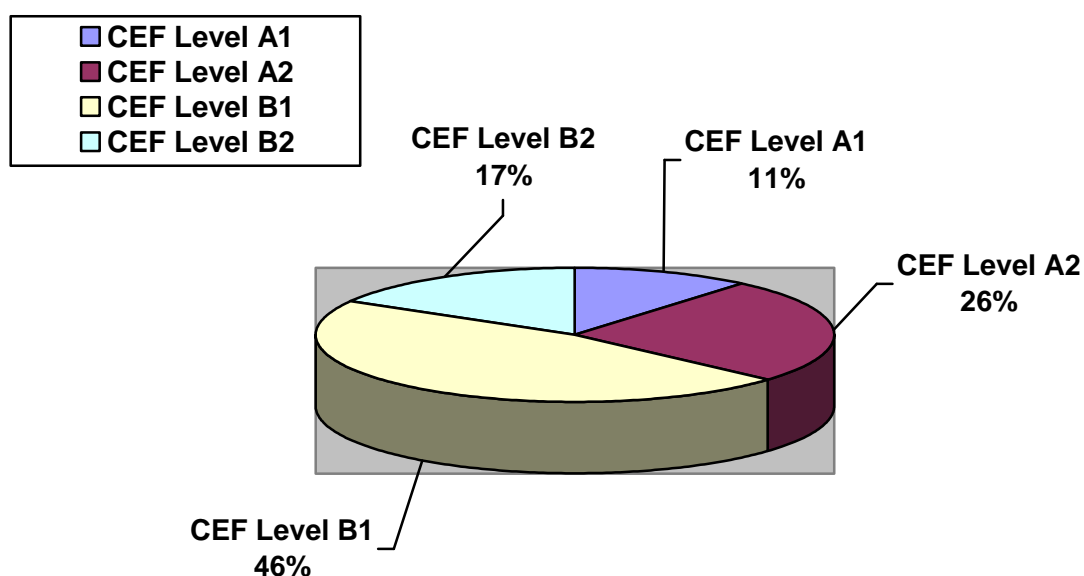
- module 1 “*Nice to meet you*”, grammatical, morphological and lexical items of the English language for pronunciation, written and oral comprehension and production;
- module 2 “*Day to day*”, items of verbal and non-verbal communication in real-life contexts;

- module 3 “*Working in English*”, listening, marketing and communication strategies through the language capacity to investigate, manage difficult situations and set expectations;
- module 4 “*My job*”, social interaction in formal and informal contexts, lexical items, listening and oral production techniques and strategies, in order to interact in a professional context.

During the modules, learners underwent some progress tests and an oral test at the end of each module, in order to identify the acquisition of: technical contents; individual communicative skills; interaction and group work skills. The final assessment was done through a both written (60 items of growing difficulty) and oral (direct assessment by the teacher with a reference grid) test, which allowed to verify the achievement of the training goals and the final competences.

Innovative techniques were used during the lessons such as: simulations in real-life contexts; interaction activities between learners and teacher and among learners; role plays and workshops for the production of written texts; use of multimedia materials as support. Thus learning process became more motivating and stimulating. The teacher, together with the didactic coordinator and the course director, had a crucial role in managing the training process and in planning the alternation of classroom activities, simulations and training on the job.

After the final test, the following situation, as regards the exit levels, was detected:



The programme CREA has a certified training quality system according to the International standards; the implementation partnership leader is accredited by the Basilicata Region and Fondimpresa and is UNI EN ISO 9001:2000 certified. Furthermore the system implies a quality manager to be identified inside the structure staff. The programme also implies the supervision by the social parties (Confindustria and the trade unions) which have to verify the programme quality among the various regions (benchmarking). At the end of each training module, the participants are supposed to fill in an evaluation questionnaire about the training activity, the learning process, the quality. Training materials are arranged according to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEF) levels and descriptors.

7. Can be readily & usefully implemented

The programme is part of the continuous training strategies and is coherent with the Lisbon Strategy. Sustainability is already pointed out if considering the continuity of calls for proposals and the companies' interests towards language training.

Companies already co-finance the annual programme at the moment of their adhesion to the training plan, respecting the aid schemes adopted by the European Community

The planning modality adopted by the Fondimpresa Programme is replied also at a regional level, in the activation of other resources with the same goals (OP Basilicata ESF, national resources for continuous training).

The programme is certainly successful since it was delivered respecting the four main principles which characterize the Basilicata Region accreditation system.

The programme is guided by the *lifelong learning* idea (ref.: accreditation system principle n. 1, which aims to guarantee the individual right to permanently access to the competences in terms of integrated training services, characterized by a continuity of their quality of performance and a quality assurance system); in respect of the principle n. 2 ("Keep the requisites and effectiveness of controls" – continuous assessment, practiced during the life-cycle of the vocational training services realized by the accredited body).

The programme, as regards the accreditation criteria of the implementation partners, followed some quality standards, such as:

- global implementation of all steps of the training life-cycle (need analysis, planning, service delivering) in respect of Criterion C, i.e. management capacity and quality of the involved human resources;
- cooperation with the various stakeholders of the regional economic and social system, in coherence with the Criterion E - "Connection with the territory".

The workers enrolled for the language activities were 44 and the certificates delivered were 38. The 85% of the target group stated that the service delivered was fully satisfying.

8. Transferability assessment

8.1. Evidence of transfer

The policy or programme has been transferred with partial success. This is due to the industrial relationships (Confindustria / trade unions) in Italy. The characteristics are: strong rootedness of the organizations on the territory, meaningful representativeness of the trade unions, habit to harmonize the training policies. The model can be transferable if these elements are present.

8.2. Innovation

The policy or programme is innovative with no barriers to a potential transfer.

8.3. Dependence on political context

In principle, the policy or programme can be transferred within the EU, because the planning modalities well adapt to the European social model, in terms of welfare and labour market.

8.4. Flexibility

The policy or programme allows for some flexibility. The risk of this kind of programme is a trade off between competence development policies and company productive policies. Sometimes, it may happen that the training actions crash against the production planning.

8.5. Multi-region transfer

The policy can be transferred to an unrestricted EU partnership.