

For further information refer to:

Fondazione G. Brodolini

Via Goito, 39 - 00185 Rome

Tel. +39 06/44249625 Fax: +39 06/44249565

economialavoro@fondazionebrodolini.it

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### INTRODUCTION

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Roberto Angotti

Continuing vocational training has played an increasingly central and crucial role in the development processes of knowledge and skills systems, and, nowadays, represents one of the main growth drivers for the adult population and companies.

In line with EU policies, greater institutional attention, including at national level, is being paid to continuing vocational training issues, with the adoption of important measures as part of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP).

This special issue of “Economia&Lavoro” includes a series of research papers developed as part of the activities of INAPP’s Research Group on Continuing Vocational Training and Adult Learning, in the framework of the new policy scenario in the field of vocational education and training at national and EU level.

*Keywords:* continuing vocational training, adult learning, training policies, NRRP, INDACO surveys, public funding.

### KEY ISSUES FOR CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING POLICIES IN ITALY, BASED ON THE INDACO-COMPANIES SURVEY PROMOTED BY INAPP

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Roberto Angotti, Luca Dordit

Although the Italian continuing vocational training system has become more and more crucial in the socioeconomic development of Italy, it features a number of limitations and criticalities that still hamper its massive and widespread use. The paper intends to provide a transversal analysis of the CVET system with a view to identifying a core of key issues that currently significantly limit access to training by a large share of potential users. For each topic dealt with, alongside an examination of the essential scenario data, a number of in-depth observations are proposed, some of which intersect with the international debate on the various topics addressed.

*Keywords:* continuing vocational training, INDACO-Companies survey, geographical divides, socioeconomic divides, public funding.

## THE STRATEGIC FUNCTION OF CONTINUING TRAINING FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN THE LIGHT OF THE MAIN POLICY INSTRUMENTS

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Giuditta Occhiocupo

The contribution provides elements for reflection aimed at identifying continuing training, understood as a species of vocational training, as a strategic factor for skills development. Among general considerations, it is of utmost relevance to focus on the difficulty experienced in identifying a training system and, more specifically, a vocational training system and a related continuing training system. Such difficulty is ascribed to some interrelated factors, such as: multilevel governance; the coexistence of a number of both public and private actors providing resources, which entails close interweaving of training-related funding sources; and the need for recognition, in the Italian legal system, of a subjective right to continuing training.

The essay then analyses some of the most recent regulatory and policy acts likely to favour the development of a continuous training system that, through the participation of all the actors involved, is able to adequately address the elements of innovation emerged in recent years in the labour market, also following the Covid-19 emergency.

The contribution ends by highlighting the role of continuing training from a prospective point of view, also in the light of the European Year of Skills.

*Keywords:* continuing vocational training, multilevel governance, mix of funding sources, subjective right to continuing vocational training, skills development.

## TRAINING-RELATED INVESTMENTS OF SELF-EMPLOYED WORKERS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PANDEMIC CRISIS AND THE FIRST CHANGES BROUGHT ABOUT BY DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

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Domenico Barricelli, Simona Carolla

The article presents the main features of self-employed workers' training behaviour, as evidenced by the second edition of the INDACO-Adults 2020 INAPP survey, also in the light of the pandemic crisis and the first changes induced by digital transformation. The analysis is complemented with a forecast of self-employment in Italy (starting from a forecast survey conducted by INAPP in 2021) by analysing the evolution of the adequacy of the legal and regulatory framework, the system of skills and knowledge in the face of the challenges posed by change, as well as the role of training and its support tools.

The article highlights the reasons behind the gaps that some categories of self-employed workers still experience in training investments, also in comparison with employees, and discriminatory elements in terms of access to continuing training. The contribution underlines that the devaluation phenomena present in various forms of self-employment can be addressed by incentivising significant reskilling and upskilling actions; this is necessary with a view to increasing bargaining power in the search for more sustainable and inclusive self-employment.

*Keywords:* self-employment, digital transformation, continuous training, training investments, reskilling, upskilling.

## PROFILE OF LOW-SKILLED ADULTS: FEATURES, PARTICIPATION IN TRAINING, AND SKILLS

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Roberto Angotti, Giovanna Di Castro

This paper analyses the socio-demographic characteristics and educational behaviours of low-skilled adults, i.e. individuals with low levels of education and digital skills. Our empirical analysis is based on data from INAPP's INDACO-Adults 2020 dataset. The analysis highlights that the inequalities affecting this subpopulation are expected to increase due to the pervasive digitalisation occurring across diverse sectors of the economy and society, which requires higher proficiency in digital skills. Further, through binary logistic regression models, an estimate of the probability for low-skilled individuals to participate in training activities or to experience unemployment or inactivity is provided. Moreover, the analysis provides valuable evidence to understand the importance of implementing policies aimed at bridging the skills gap, particularly in disadvantaged segments of the population, with a particular focus on digital skills, also considering the significant amount of funding allocated to these aims in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP).

*Keywords:* low-skilled workers, training, digital skills, adult learning, digitalisation.

## THE IMPACT OF SMART WORKING ON RESKILLING AND UPSKILLING PROCESSES IN THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS: A FIRST ANALYSIS

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Giuditta Occhiocupo, Alessandra Pedone

This contribution presents an analysis of the effects that remote working has had on the provision of continuing training to private and public employees, on the planning and/or rescheduling of training programmes, on the acquisition of specialised skills, and, in general, on the processes of reskilling and upskilling in the private and public sectors. Such analysis was developed in the framework of a quantitative research project promoted and conducted by INAPP within some companies and central and local public-sector organisations. Building on a literature review, the contribution also offers a dual in-depth analysis, one concerning the relationship between the need for technology and digital skills and training processes in the context of the new remote work organisation, and the other on the analysis, also from a prospective point of view, of the regulatory evolution of remote working and of its impact on training. The main findings from the survey conducted by INAPP on the relationship between continuing training and remote working in the private and public sectors are then summarised, highlighting strengths and criticalities, as well as presenting future scenarios.

*Keywords:* smart working, remote working, continuing training, digital transition, work organisation, digital skills, digital skills, soft skills, digital learning.

## CORPORATE ACADEMIES SUPPORTING HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT IN SME TERRITORIAL SYSTEMS

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Domenico Barricelli, Giuseppe Cappiello

Corporate academies represent an important new element of the Italian continuing education scenario, and can constitute a significant feature of the network of actors contributing to the development of human capital of an area. Corporate academies are often top-ranking structures set up by companies, which invest, innovate, and support the development of knowledge and skills, and therefore aim to be included among the actors of the training offer system.

This article presents the findings of an exploratory research on the phenomenon of corporate academies, with the aim of identifying the different features and experiences.

The analysis was aimed, in particular, at framing the development of corporate academies within the context of the ongoing transformations occurring in the continuing education system. The findings point out that the number of Italian academies is growing and that they are gaining more and more experience, as well as opening up to cooperation patterns with other territorial actors, making the boundaries of the company more porous.

*Keywords:* corporate academy, knowledge management, digital transition, continuous training.

## IMMIGRATION IN ITALY: HOW DO CHANGES IN THE IMMIGRANTS' SHARE AFFECT THE WAGES OF NATIVES

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Giacomo Panzeri

How does immigration have an effect on the wages of native workers? Does it actually have one?

This article develops an econometric analysis based on the presence of immigrant workers and on their skill composition in order to evaluate how differences in immigrants' share affect the mean wage and wage distribution of native-born Italian workers, adopting an approach similar to the work of Dustmann, Frattini and Preston (2013).

Based on the theoretical assumption that immigration would lower wages for those points in the distribution of wages in which immigrants would be more abundant, the empirical results display the overall impact for mean and median wage to be positive, while it shows to be negative for the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile of the natives' wage distribution. To handle the endogeneity coming from the geographical collocation of immigrants, the first difference of immigrants' share variable has been instrumented with different lags of the variable itself, though this does not prove to be a good instrument after the 6<sup>th</sup> lag onwards.

*Keywords:* immigration, impact, wage distribution, labour market.

## INTENSIVE EXPLOITATION AND INCLUSIVE BARGAINING. NOTES FOR AN ANALYSIS PERSPECTIVE

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Igor Piotto

The paper examines the phenomenon of labour exploitation in the context of a general worsening of social inequalities, as demonstrated by the increasing exposure to the risk of poverty and social exclusion. The study adopts a specific concept of exploitation (drawn from Marxian theories), and describes the features of intensive exploitation, characterised by the interdependence of some factors that outline its specificity. The distinctive factors of intensive exploitation affect the mechanisms that contribute to reducing wages (work relationships and the application of collective labour agreements), but are related to a business model that is widely applied in the production chains, and represents a link in value chains. Finally, an analysis scheme was developed that summarises the strategies undertaken by unions to counter this phenomenon by leveraging inclusive bargaining at company and supply chain level. The intensive exploitation issue highlights the need to rethink the contractual model and distribution policies, starting from the centrality of the material condition of work.

*Keywords:* working poverty (working poor), intensive exploitation, regulation of work relationships, labour productivity, inclusive bargaining.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EU COHESION POLICY AND NEXTGENERATIONEU. WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE LITERATURE?

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Giulia Nunziante

The size of EU budget devolved to the health emergency and the recession caused by the pandemic, and the new policy governance in the scope of the massive Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) have sparked once again debate on the effectiveness of cohesion policies in the economy. In this paper, we illustrate the evolution of the EU cohesion policy in the last 60 years, EU regional disparities, and the emergent risk for regional development traps. Then, we discuss the empirical literature on the effectiveness of the EU cohesion policy, measuring the outcome on growth, employment, and productivity. Many authors find a positive impact, revealing that the effectiveness of the cohesion policy depends on conditioning factors such as the quality of regional institutions and human capital endowment. Considering the multilevel governance in the current architecture of the cohesion policy, the role of national and subnational Governments emerges as a key factor for the effective deployment of EU programmes, as well as the pivotal role played by the human capital of the public administration.

*Keywords:* regional disparities, cohesion policy, NextGenerationEU, NRRP.

## WHAT IS FEMINIST ECONOMICS TODAY. REFLECTIONS FROM *THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF FEMINIST ECONOMICS*, EDITED BY GÜNSELİ BERİK AND EBRU KONGAR

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Paola Villa

This paper discusses what feminist economics is today, starting from the recent publication of *The Routledge Handbook of Feminist Economics*, edited by Günseli Berik and Ebru Kongar, respectively co-editor and associate editor of the journal *Feminist Economics*. The editors offer a collection of review essays on contemporary feminist economics, starting with contributions published in the journal in the decade 2008-2017. The editors' choice is not to discuss what feminist economics is today, but to present the 50 chapters that make up the volume around the so-called "Social Provisioning Approach" (SPA). After a critical discussion of the SPA, the various contributions are presented highlighting the elements of continuity and/or innovation with respect to the pre-existing feminist economics literature, and/or discontinuity with respect to the orthodox literature (in particular, gender economics and macroeconomics). This is followed by a critical discussion of the ambitious goal of *Feminist Economics*, raised in 2010, to be an increasingly inclusive journal both in terms of its capacity for dialogue with other disciplinary fields, and in terms of welcoming contributions from all over the world. The last part of the article focuses on the controversial relationship between gender inequality and economic efficiency (i.e. growth), concluding that the ultimate goal of feminist economics is the elimination of gender inequality, not the pursuit of efficiency.

*Keywords:* feminist economics, inclusivity, gender inequalities, efficiency, equity.