

# National Consultations Report

## 1 – TES NATIONAL CONSULTATION PROCESS

In Italy, TES national consultation process has been directed by officials of the Italian Ministry of Education, under the guidance and advice of the Minister of Education Patrizio Bianchi, who also participated in many meetings.

The person responsible for the process is the Deputy Chief of Staff, Sabrina Capasso.

**Number of consultations:** 7 Meetings

**Basic information on all the consultations convened**

**Dates**

The Meetings took place on May 12<sup>th</sup>, June 1<sup>st</sup>, June 14<sup>th</sup>, June 15<sup>th</sup>, June 16<sup>th</sup>, June 20<sup>th</sup>, June 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Types**

National consultations

**Geographical Focus**

National

**Number of participants for each consultation**

May 12<sup>th</sup> 214 (young people of Students' Advisory Councils)

June 1<sup>st</sup> 352 (Plenary meeting with all Education Advisory Bodies)

June 14<sup>th</sup> 234 (Meeting between the National Forum of Parents' Associations and Students' Advisory Councils)

June 15<sup>th</sup> 260 (Meeting between the National observatory on school inclusion and Students' Advisory Councils)

June 16<sup>th</sup> 250 (Meeting between the National observatory on interculture and Students' Advisory Councils)

June 20<sup>th</sup> 250 (Meeting between the Higher Council for Education and Students' Advisory Councils)

June 23<sup>rd</sup> 352 (Plenary meeting with all Education Advisory Bodies)

Language used

Italian

Total number of participants: 352

Age range: insert number

Adequate age range participation was ensured

0 – 17

18 – 29

30 – 59

60+

Gender participants: insert number

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

Adequate gender balanced participation was ensured

Number of participants from each Sector: insert number 352 - Education Stakeholders

Number of participants from each Stakeholder Group: insert number

- Teachers, educators, facilitators, and professors 36 members of the Higher Council for Education – CSPI, representing national schools staff that is to say 856.400 teachers and 204.500 other school staff working in more than 40.500 state schools and 12.200 accredited private schools, which are part of the national education system.

- Youth and students (including children and adolescents) 214 young people of Students' Advisory Councils, representing 2.661.856 students of upper secondary education pathways (age 15-19)

- School leaders (e.g., from UNESCO ASPnet school network)

- City and local government representatives

- Parents and caregivers 20 members of the National Forum of Parents' Associations – Fonags, representing more than 50.000 stakeholders
- Small/medium enterprises/unions
- Large national businesses
- Members of Parliament
- Multi-national corporations
- Local authorities
- Government and national institutions
- Public Servants
- Regional economic community
- Local Non-Governmental Organizations
- International and/or Regional financial institutions
- International Non-Governmental Organizations
- Indigenous people and community leaders
- Scientific community, academic, universities and research institutes
- Media
- Other (Please explain): 46 members of the National Observatory on School Inclusion, representing more than 1.000.000 stakeholders of which over 277,800 enrolled in schools.

36 members of the National Observatory on International Students' Integration and Interculture, representing more than 5.700.000 stakeholders, of which more than 798.000 foreign students.

## 2 – PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

Italy has joined the Summit preparatory activities on May 6th, 2022. Given the tight deadlines and on the basis of the indications provided by the UN<sup>1</sup>, the Minister of Education has decided to organize the consultations taking young people as main interlocutors (protagonists), allowing them to make their voices heard and finally encouraging their agency.

Moreover, fully recognising that such endeavour should be based on a whole-community approach to fully develop and engage the entire societal capacity, it has been decided to involve in the process

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<sup>1</sup> “The voices of youth and children heard by policy-makers and other actors and stakeholders through the results of the pilot phase of the World's Largest Lesson Survey on Education, as well as through national consultations and Thematic Action Tracks”.

the representatives of the Ministry Advisory Bodies, starting from Students' Advisory Councils to the Higher Council for Education – CSPI, the National Forum of Parents' Associations – Fonags, the National Observatory on School Inclusion, and the National Observatory on International Students' Integration and Interculture. All that in order to scale up the multiplicity of perspectives, knowledge and experiences from diverse background and sectors, acquired before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, the Italian Education Advisory Bodies system represents both students' and school staff territorial organisations and also parents' associations and cultural, economic and social stakeholders and it is organised to allow an effective national dialogue, starting from local communities to the central authorities, thus promoting collective learning. This consolidated approach of the Italian Ministry of Education allows a shared analysis of communities needs and capabilities, greater empowerment and more effective preparedness to educational needs and emergencies, both at community and national level.

On the basis of the main aim of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) of *“ensur[ing] inclusive and equitable quality education and promot[ing] lifelong learning opportunities for all”*, a shared consensus has been built among all parties involved in the National Consultation to focus on a common reflection starting from the principles of equality of opportunity in the access quality education and inclusion, with particular attention to vulnerable groups. Therefore, we have centred our consultations on the need of transforming education, in order to meet learners needs in a way that is appropriate to their life contexts. This also implies a broader social and economic vision of education, which can give a critical contribution in creating a more sustainable and peaceful world.

More in detail, the national consultation has started on the basis of a "discussion paper" aimed at stimulating a reflection on the SGD4 of 2030 Agenda which has been submitted to the Students' Advisory Councils (Consulte studentesche) on May 12<sup>th</sup>. In the following weeks, the Advisory Councils have then carried out specific consultations at territorial level. The collection of local councils' proposals has been summed up in a paper approved on June 1<sup>st</sup> by the National Coordination Office of the Councils' National Forum. On the same day, the document has been presented, during a plenary meeting in the presence of the Minister, to the representatives of the other Education Advisory Bodies (the above-mentioned Higher Council for Education – CSPI, the National Forum of Parents' Associations – Fonags, the National Observatory on School Inclusion, and the National Observatory on International Students' Integration and Interculture). Then, in the subsequent weeks, the Minister's advisory bodies provided written remarks on the students' paper and discussed them with the representatives of the Students' Advisory Councils during specific "bilateral meetings":

- June 14th: Meeting between Fonags and Students' Advisory Councils;
- June 15th: Meeting between the National observatory on school inclusion and Students' Advisory Councils;
- June 16th: Meeting between the National observatory on interculture and Students' Advisory Councils;
- June 20th: Meeting between the Higher Council for Education CSPI and Students' Advisory Councils.

The consultations took place online and ended on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, with a plenary meeting in the presence of the Minister of Education Patrizio Bianchi.

### 3 – CONSULTATION FOCUS AND OUTCOMES

The **main areas of focus** during national consultations originated from the Italian legislative framework which has as a main mission the removal of all barriers to personal development and participation in social activities (Italian Constitution art. 3) and education is taken as a universal human right and for this reason made-free and accessible to everyone (Italian Constitution art. 34).

In this respect, we underline that the Italian education system has developed a long tradition in equal opportunity and inclusive education, starting from the 70s of the last century when the government adopted an equal and inclusive education model, grounded on the principle of the full participation of each girl and boy to the learning activities at school, in order to attain educational achievement regardless of their personal characteristics and fragilities and relying on their abilities. Italy is also one of the few countries in the world where the responsibility of the personalised educational project is shared by the school, the family and all educators and professionals involved, and by the students themselves, when of legal age, in a systemic perspective. However, the implementation process and continuous improvement of this inclusive model is still underway and during national consultations the advisory bodies have reaffirmed its validity, particularly in line with SDG 4, also highlighting the weaknesses and obstacles to its full achievement.

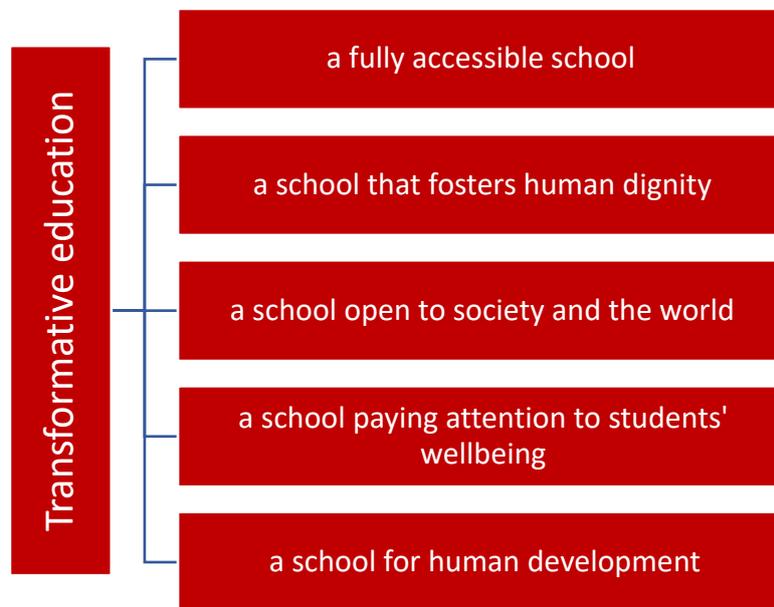
The shared analysis of statistical data and local bottlenecks, held during national consultations, has made evident their impact on the population, urgent issues and local best practices. All that allowed the **definition of the main areas of focus and the key actions** to be implemented in order to achieve the Italian vision of the “School of tomorrow”. TES five Action Tracks discussion papers and the Futures of Education Briefing Notes guided and supported the national dialogue on *why, what and how rethinking education policies* in order to fully achieve the Italian vision of equitable, inclusive and quality education.

Taking into account current multiple crisis, as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, millions of refugees fleeing emergencies and ongoing crisis in Europe and elsewhere, the consultations between the Italian Ministry of Education and education advisory bodies have highlighted the global dimension and the role of education not only for equality and inclusion, but also for recovery, economic and social growth and peace. Education has been defined as the solution to current crisis but, at the same time, evidence has been acknowledged that the new challenges and the obstacles that have prevented progress towards the achievement of SDG 4 call for a transformation of education in order to support people, societies and economies.

The national dialogue has stressed that a more inclusive, fair and safe school is a student-friendly school, open and forward-looking, paying attention to the person in his totality, as a human being and as a citizen. It is a school model that leaves no one behind and that allows the achievement of good and widespread levels of learning, making it an added value for society, ensuring at the same

time the physical and psychological well-being of students. In a sentence, a school for human development.

To sum it up, the Italian vision of transformative education is that of a system with the following characteristics:



Together with the **main objective of focussing education on students' personal needs, ensuring every learner to fully develop one's potential and thrive**, with a sharp focus on those who are excluded, the national dialogue also allowed the definition of the **other main areas of focus fostering recovery, economic and social growth and peace**. These aspects relate to: the content of education, which should include not only the promotion of competences for a changing society and economy, such as education for sustainable development, but also competences for life in a lifelong learning perspective; the strategic role of teachers; innovative and digital approaches; pedagogical approaches, organisation of activities and educational environments to narrow educational and territorial gaps.

The national consultation highlighted that, in order to achieve a transformative education, there is a need to implement a set of **key actions of intervention** and **mobilise key stakeholders**. First of all, young and adult people have stressed the need to implement policies that make substantial the universal right to a quality education for all, at every educational level, from the first years of life to the most advanced stage of it. That means implementing policies reducing territorial and social inequalities, starting from measures to overcome learning losses during the pandemic to medium-longer term interventions, in order to offer the same high-quality education throughout the national territory and supporting disadvantaged groups.

Each student must be seen as a resource to be valued through a personalisation of learning pathways and guidance activities. That action is an antidote to the phenomenon of early school leaving and educational poverty and should regard not only the promotion of competences for a changing society and economy - such as STEM education (especially for young girls and women) and

education for sustainable development - but also soft and transversal competences in a lifelong learning perspective to be successful in life.

National stakeholders have also underlined the need of ensuring that schools are not only healthy and hospitable but also places where students can feel safe from violence, bullying and cyberbullying. Places where they can fully develop all their potential and nourish their spirit.

There is a need to foster competent educational action by a robust initial and in-service training of teachers, consolidating the link with pedagogical research. Students and teachers are the real agents of change and to transform education we also need a transformation of the teaching profession making teachers facilitators of quality lifelong learning.

Finally, stakeholders highlighted the fact that it is possible to rethink educational action also on the basis of technological innovation and its strong inclusive potential. This regards, on one hand, the need of investing in infrastructure and connectivity and, on the other hand, on supporting competences in order to decrease the digital divide. More in general, in order to fully overcome the educational losses due to the pandemic and territorial inequalities and addressing current and future challenges, stakeholders have stressed the need of innovating not only pedagogical approaches and learning environments but also the organisation of school activities.

A transformation of the education system towards a more inclusive, fair and quality school could be achieved with the mobilisation of main stakeholders, through a programming process involving not only local authorities but also students, parents, teachers and the whole local community, adopting a whole-school and whole-of-society approach, connecting the local to the national level. This way, the different perspectives could become a common heritage and the identification of the economic, social and organisational roadblocks and the measures to overcome them would be easier. In fact, the youth and other main stakeholders called for their real integration in national discussions and programming to transform education and for the collection of transparent data to inform action and establish quality educational standards.

The intensive consultation activity has made it possible, on the one hand, to identify the main areas of key action which constitute the policy objectives of a transformative action and, on the other hand, to identify all the complementary interventions to these key action areas, which best contribute to the achievement of the objectives.

## Transformative Education

Key action areas	Complementary interventions
<p><i>Policies addressing territorial and social inequalities, starting from measures to overcome learning losses during the pandemic to medium-longer term interventions, in order to offering the same high-quality education throughout the national territory and supporting disadvantaged groups</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Providing students throughout the school year with remedial and empowering learning activities, to prevent academic difficulties: nobody shall be left behind.</li> <li>- Making educational pathways more flexible, fostering the acquisition of life and work competences tailored to the society we live in, and fostering educational methodologies based on dialogue and critical thinking.</li> <li>- Tailoring of learning pathways</li> <li>- Improving guidance activities</li> <li>- Enhancing innovative teaching methodologies, in order to promote the development of pupils'/students' critical thinking and learning</li> <li>- Rethinking assessment forms and means, along the learning continuum, enabling full and conscious academic and career choices</li> <li>- Improving school transport, guaranteeing full territorial coverage and socio-economic, individual and geographical accessibility</li> </ul>
<p><i>Policies fostering the acquisition of competences for sustainable and digital society and economy and competences for life</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fostering the acquisition of life skills and soft skills for educational success, also through initiatives and projects aimed at developing leadership skills, team-building abilities, resilience, reasoning skills, critical thinking and planning skills</li> <li>- Delivering digital and STEM education measures, especially for young girls and women</li> <li>- Giving greater impulse on language teaching, as a tool for communication and inclusion, thus enabling students to acquire multilingual competences</li> <li>- Making educational pathways more flexible, fostering the acquisition of life and work competences tailored to the society we live in, and fostering educational methodologies based on dialogue and critical thinking.</li> <li>- Facilitating transitions from school to post-secondary education and to the labour market, with the aim of supporting self-development and professional careers</li> <li>- Tailoring of learning pathways</li> <li>- Improving guidance activities</li> <li>- Enhancing innovative teaching methodologies, in order to promote the development of pupils'/students' critical thinking and learning</li> </ul> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">Making assessment an integral part of the teaching/learning process, based on a reprocessing of the studied notions and on discussion.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rethinking assessment forms and tools, along lifelong learning process, enabling full and conscious academic and career choices</li> </ul>
<p><i>Policies concerning technological innovation:</i></p> <p><i>a) Investing in infrastructure and connectivity</i></p> <p><i>b) Supporting competences in order to decrease the digital divide</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increasing investments in building and upgrading educational facilities, guaranteeing adequate sanitary and safety conditions, and according to sustainability and innovation</li> <li>- Delivering digital and STEM education measures, especially for young girls and women</li> </ul>
<p><i>Policies ensuring the individual well-being of students, both physical and psychological well-being</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increasing investments in building and upgrading educational facilities, guaranteeing adequate sanitary and safety conditions, according to sustainability and innovation principles</li> <li>- Improving school transport, guaranteeing full territorial coverage and socio-economic, individual and geographical accessibility</li> </ul>
<p><i>Policies fostering competent educational action, by a robust initial and in-service training of teachers and a strong link with pedagogical research</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Providing teachers with a broader initial and continuous in-service training that enhances, besides disciplinary knowledge, psycho-pedagogical and relational expertise and encourages the application of inclusive and innovative teaching methodologies</li> <li>- Enhancing innovative teaching methodologies, in order to promote the development of pupils'/students' critical thinking and learning</li> <li>- Making assessment an integral part of the teaching/learning process, based on a reprocessing of the studied notions and on discussion</li> <li>- Rethinking assessment forms and means, along the lifelong learning process, enabling full and conscious academic and career choices</li> </ul>
<p><i>Policies promoting the innovation of learning environments and the organisation of activities</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increasing investments in building and upgrading educational facilities, guaranteeing adequate sanitary and safety conditions, according to sustainability and innovation principles</li> </ul>
<p><i>Policies promoting stakeholders' active involvement</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promoting pupils'/students' representation, aimed at developing civic and institutional awareness. Enhancing its value among the entire educational community (school managers, teachers and non-teaching staff), up to the central and local administration of the Ministry</li> <li>- Adopting whole-school, whole of community approaches</li> </ul>
<p><i>Accountability processes</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensuring transparent data collection, to inform action and, internationally, establishing quality educational standards, for performance monitoring</li> </ul>

The national dialogue has also allowed a **reflection on the existing processes and activities implemented that can be leveraged and strengthened in order to achieve a full recovery from Covid-19 disruption** but also, at a medium and longer term, **a real transformation on education**.

In fact, since March 2022 the Italian Ministry of Education has not only been launching interventions to overcome the learning losses and educational poverty caused by the pandemic, but it has also been trying to address other current crisis, which are having a strong impact on education, such as the climate crisis and the need to integrate in our education system refugees fleeing from war, as Ukrainian refugees. Moreover, the Ministry is trying to give an answer to the challenges arisen by scientific and technological innovations, in order to anticipate change and define its direction.

The lockdown measures adopted to fight the pandemic have strongly increased the risks of poverty and social exclusion. The overall policy response to these inequalities and to the major regional gaps has recognised the critical importance of education, in particular on fighting educational inequalities and achieving universal access of children and young people to educational opportunities, as the best strategy to promote an economic and social development which is also inclusive and sustainable, while ensuring the wellbeing and a good quality of life of the population.

To overcome the health, climate and social crisis, the political action has been directed towards the renovation of the country, starting from the most vulnerable and marginal areas, taking care of the fragility of people and territories, including through the support to the acquisition of key and transversal competences and the fight to early school leaving. At the same time, education policies have tried to meet the challenges posed by a changing society, anticipating change and defining its direction.

This vision, built and shared through a whole-of government approach and dialogue with national stakeholders, has led to a significant investment in education in the National Recovery Plan, which is in fact one of the six missions in which the whole plan has been structured. During national consultations, advising bodies have recognised the importance of strengthening investments towards the achievement of high levels of education for all and a decisive action against educational failures, within an overall rethinking of the education system. Particularly, stakeholders have stressed the importance of paying special attention to learners who are facing additional challenges, such as students with special educational needs or with disabilities, those with low skills or who come from disadvantaged socio-economic or migration contexts, including those fleeing wars. Moreover, they have suggested methodological diversification and organisational change, as the reduction of the number of pupils per class, be taken as guiding principles so that all learners can effectively acquire key and social competences, to succeed in personal and professional life and become active citizens.

Taking into account the lessons learnt during the pandemic, national stakeholders have also recognised the importance of investing in the digital competences of the population and highlighted the importance of going on with the actions of the National Digital School Plan, both with those concerning the implementation of digital infrastructures and innovative learning environments and those promoting the acquisition of new competences by students and teachers.

At the same time, national stakeholders, particularly the youth, have stressed the importance of leveraging the teaching and learning of digital technologies and sustainable development and climate change as part of the discipline of civic education.

Regarding national education targets and benchmarks, during the national dialogue it has been agreed that the choices already defined at EU level with other Member States should be confirmed.

Particularly, the benchmarks through which it is intended to continue to measure the qualitative growth capacity of the national education system and convergence with other Member States' systems include:

- Reduction of early leavers from education and training  
2030 target: < 9 %
- Reduction of low achieving 15-years-olds in Reading, Maths and Science  
2030 target: < 15 %
- Percentage of children enrolled in ECEC pathways the year before primary school  
2030 target: 96%

In order to achieve these targets, national stakeholders highlighted the need to integrate different financial resources (national budget, European Union funds 2021-2027 and Next GenerationEU funds) in relation to the different objectives identified and the expected results in the short, medium and long term. A detailed work programme will ensure the effectiveness of interventions and their impact on the education system.

As a final outcome of the national dialogue, Education Advisory Bodies and the Ministry of Education have shared a consensus on the validity of the equitable and inclusive character of the Italian education system and recognised the global dimension and the role of education in the solution to current crisis and rising inequalities. At the same time, they have acknowledged the new challenges and the obstacles that have prevented progress towards the achievement of SDG 4 call for a transformation of education, in order to support people, societies and economies.

In order to recover from the impact of Covid-19 on education but also to get ready for the future, there has been an agreement on the need of giving an answer to the call of the Italian educational community and national stakeholders to help every learner to take advantage of educational opportunities and fully develop one's own potential, in line with the Agenda 2030 Education targets. That means implementing policies reducing territorial and social inequalities in order to offering the same high-quality education throughout the national territory and supporting disadvantaged groups. It also means having a learner-centred focus, giving value to each students' characteristics through a personalisation of learning pathways and guidance activities, fostering the acquisition not only of competences for a changing society and economy, but also competences for life in a lifelong perspective.

Convergence has also been reached on the need of ensuring that schools are not only healthy and hospitable but also places where students can feel safe from violence, bullying and cyberbullying. Places where they can feel free to develop all their potential and health and wellbeing, even during emergencies.

Taking into account the assumption that a transformation of the education system towards a more inclusive, fair and quality school could be achieved only through a whole-of-government approach but also through the mobilisation of main stakeholders, the central authority and the stakeholders have agreed on the need of going on implementing participated programming processes, involving not only central and local authorities but also students, parents, teachers and the whole local communities, adopting a whole-school and whole-of-society approach, connecting the local to the national level and vice versa.