

**Counseling and validation process to support skills-assessment and self-evaluation of competences of target of refugees and adults at risk of exclusion from the world of work
- applicability of national studies approach -**

Social SELF-I. Self-empowerment of guidance advisors and VET trainers for the promotion of social inclusion of refugees, asylum seekers and adults in career transition

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**First Short Training Event
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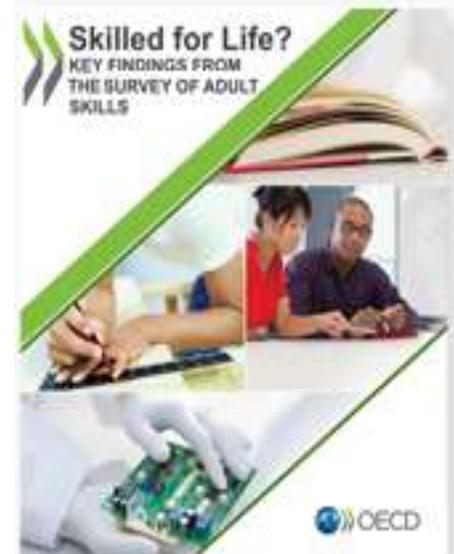
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Applicability of national studies approach on counseling and validation process to support skills-assessment and self-evaluation of competences of target such as refugees and adults at risk of exclusion from the world of work

- ❖ The study/research we present is connected to some recent studies carried out to support policy based on the results of the OECD survey on adult skills (PIAAC) and European Commission strategy on skills
- ❖ My experience in this area is due to the fact that I have been NPM of the OECD PIAAC program (since 2008-2016) and national expert for the European Commission precisely in the implementation of some recommendations and skills strategies



Presentation of the study and questions emerging from the research

The CONTEXT

- ❑ The PIAAC Programme (framework-approach to the *assessment of skills*)
- ❑ The New skills agenda
- ❑ The Upskilling pathway

The KEY QUESTIONS

Approaches and tools addressed to refugees and low skilled adults

- ❖ How to approach the need of making visible and Identify the skills of low skilled and vulnerable adults and refugees
- ❖ Which methodologies (approaches, devices, practices) can we define to support their empowerment and self identity
- ❖ How can we support the need of integration of different tools such as *skills assessment* and *self evaluation* (self empowerment)?
- ❖ Which skills and competences do we consider fundamental for them to live and work in the current society?

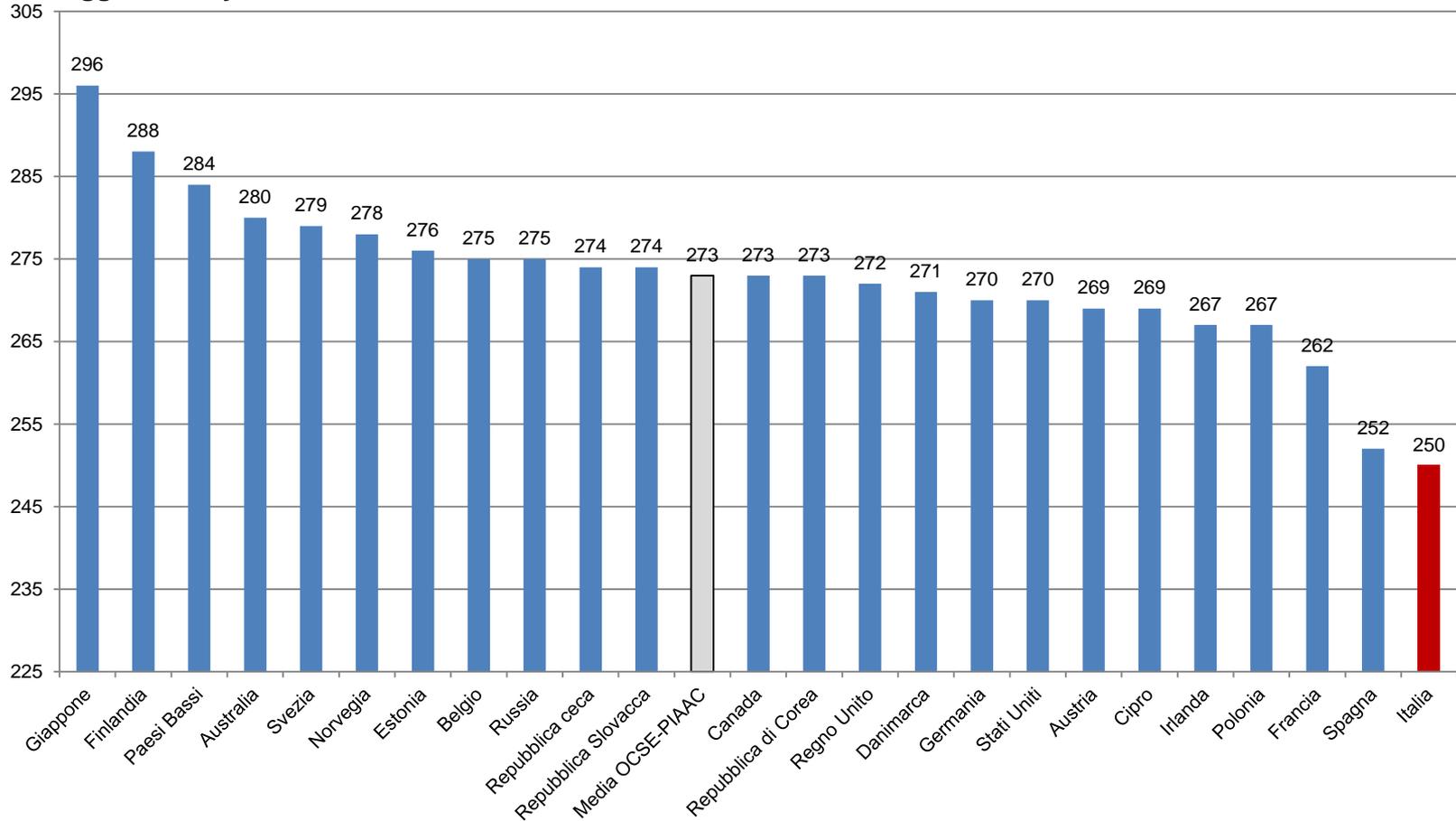
The data from OECD PIAAC survey and skills strategy

- 70 millions (20%) of the EU working age population has low literacy and low numeracy skills and digital skills
- Education and skills increase employability; this represent a challenge for the one in four unemployed who has low literacy and numeracy
- People with low proficiency are easily caught in a “*low skills trap*” as they are less likely to participate in learning activities
- 25% of adults lack the skills to effectively make use ICT
- A possible field of intervention is *guidance and counselling* to better reach the low-skilled population and promote dedicated education and training programmes – including through the use of ICT



Performance of the 24 countries (Piaac 2012)

Punteggio literacy



Livello 3

Livello 2

Percentage of population in literacy in Italy and some countries

Country	% levels below 1 a 2	% level 3 and superior
Italy	70	30
Germany	51	47
France	57	42
Spain	67	32
USA	50	46

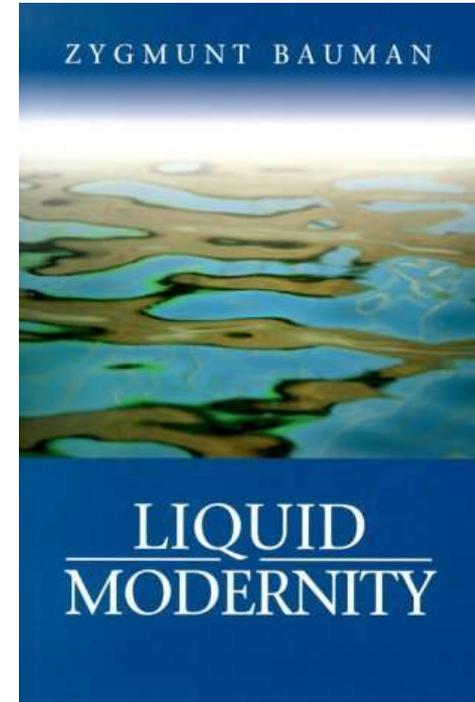
The data from OECD PIAAC survey and skills strategy

- People with poor skills face a much greater risk of experiencing economic disadvantage, and a higher likelihood of unemployment and dependency on social benefits
- Refugees, migrants and adults with low levels of foundation skills have a higher likelihood of reporting poor health and participate much less in community groups or training paths
- Skills are also key to tackling inequality and promoting social inclusion
- But like all assets, skills can depreciate as the requirements of labour markets evolve and individuals lose the skills they do not use. For skills to retain their value, they must be continuously developed throughout life and recognized by people and society

This is why OECD Skills Strategy (2012) shifts the focus from traditional proxies of skills, such as years of formal education and training or qualifications attained, to a much broader perspective that includes the skills people acquire, use and maintain—and also lose—over a whole lifetime

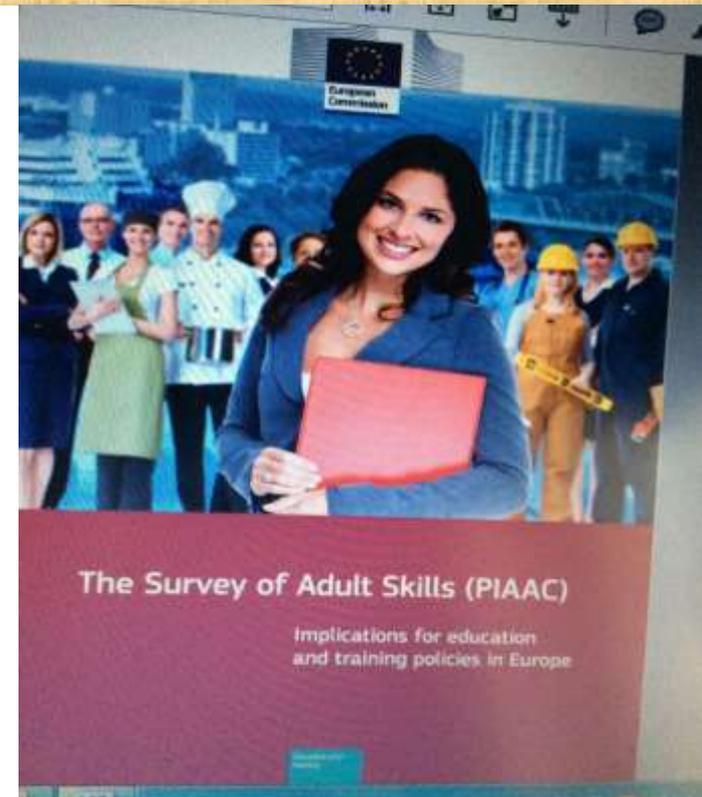
Some assumptions to share from OECD framework

- In PAST, learning meant learning something and teaching meant teaching something, while today it is necessary for people to have a personal compass  to orientate, the navigations skills necessary to face the complexity and volatility of the present
- Usually when we ask what a person can do and how well he can do it we tend to look at the education paths and the formal qualifications. Often this approach turns out to be not true, that is, it does not actually correspond to what and how well an individual really is able to do in the present
- It is important to see what skills an individual has acquired or lost over time, where he have learned them (non-formal and informal) and how an individual is active to use and improve them.



The New Skills Agenda (2016) and Upskilling Pathways (2016)

The European Commission strategies underline the same priority, just resulting from PIAAC survey (first wave 2011/13 and second one 2015)



One of the main aspects, referred to the "New skills agenda" and the Upskilling pathways, concerns the difficulty of those who have low skills in participating in training (lifelong learning), due to limited guidance and support services to people and also due to limited adoption of validation of skills systems that could help people to enter into personal and professional empowerment paths and tailored programs

Upskilling Pathways recommendation (June 2016)

- People need a broad set of skills to fulfil their potential both at work and in society
- **The aim of Upskilling pathways is to enable adults to acquire awareness and evidence of their learning needs to improve their skills;** the proposed measures and tools refer to skills assessment, bilan des compétences, use of online tests (now available in the various countries) usable at the various vocational training facilities or at public or private employment centers or in guidance services

Step 1 – Skills assessment

Step 2 – Learning offer

Step 3 – Validation and recognition

10 concrete actions to be implemented **over the next two years**, to counter critical issues related to skills that strongly expose citizens to the risk of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion

Which tools meet these needs?

- ❖ On the one hand **the studies show how it is increasingly important to collect valid and reliable evidence on skills for inclusion and integration** (looking for a job); this is an important information stage to activate development strategies towards disadvantaged social target (Europe/countries)
- ❖ On the other hand **the tools for the identification of skills (Validation)** for the recognition of experience, the acquisition of formal qualifications, validation and certification / **are not calibrated for these target** (Cedefop)
- **HOW TO GIVE CONSISTENCY TO THIS POLICIY IS A CHALLENGE FOR COUNTRIES**

CEDEFOP studies (2016)

To make visible and value skills and competences of refugees and low skilled adults, **this needs to be done within a wider context of guidance, counselling as well as education and training**

Three strong challenges

1. Existing national recognition, validation and/or guidance/counselling systems have not been designed to deal with the current situation (refugees/asylum seeker)

neither in terms of number of individuals to be 'processed' nor in term of the particular problems caused by language, cultural background and (in some cases) lack of written and formal documentation

2. While some stakeholders at local, national and European level have recognised the need for initiatives to be taken in this area, **developments seems generally to be slow and unevenly distributed between target groups and within countries**

3. So far there has been no systematic sharing of experiences and solutions in this area

This means that developments take place in isolation from each other, potentially causing loss of time and money and preventing synergies to develop

Questions arising from Cedefop studies (2016)

1. **Existing national recognition, validation and/or guidance/counselling systems have not been designed to deal with the current situation**
2. **While some stakeholders at local, national and European level have recognised the need for initiatives to be taken in this area**
3. **Developments seems generally to be slow and unevenly distributed between target groups and within countries**

Political issue

- **How to improve actions on this issue and facilitate the applicability of a counseling and guidance device to support specific target group**
 - **- disadvantaged**
 - **-asylum seekers/ refugees**
 - **- low skilled population**
 - **- adults in transition paths**
 - **-**
-
- ☐ **A first step of national study put in evidence the features of the «skills assessment» of the PIAAC Online tool (OECD 2014-15) (English, France, Italian, Spanish, Japanese Languages)**

PIAAC study (OECD)

The tool «Skills assessment» Education&Skills Online

Education & Skills Online is an assessment tool designed to provide individual-level results that are linked to the [OECD Survey of Adult Skills \(PIAAC\)](#) measures of cognitive and non cognitive skills

Cognitive: **Literacy, Numeracy and Problem Solving in technology-rich environments**

Non Cognitive: **Skills use, Career Interest and Intentionality , Well-Being and Health, Behavioral Competencies**

All results are comparable to the measures used in **PIAAC** and can be benchmarked against the national and international results available for the participating countries. In addition, the assessment contains non-cognitive measures of skill use, career interest, health and well-being, and soon also behavioral competencies.

Education & Skills Online has been developed as an assessment relevant to all people (low skilled/adults/migrants) of all ages. Institutions, organisations or local governments can use the online tool to assess the skills of a particular population with the goal of providing training or for policy interventios purposes

The tool «Skills assessment» Education&Skills Online (Cognitive Skills Assessed)

The components of test are based on the [frameworks](#) used for the [OECD Survey of Adult Skills \(PIAAC\)](#). They are as follows:

Literacy - Literacy is defined as understanding, evaluating, using and engaging with written texts to participate in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential

Numeracy - the ability to access, use, interpret and communicate mathematical information and ideas, in order to engage in and manage the mathematical demands of a range of situations in adult life

Reading Components - To provide more detailed information about adults with poor literacy and refugees/migrants

Problem Solving in Technology-Rich Environments - refers to the ability to use technology to solve problems and accomplish complex tasks. It is not a measure of "computer literacy", but rather of the capacity to operate within a digital environment to solve the types of problem that adults face in their everyday life as users of digital technologies

The tool «Skills assessment» Education&Skills Online (Non Cognitive Assessment)

Skill Use – assessment to gain information on the specific skills that respondents use in both their work and daily lives as important drivers of skill acquisition as well as critical outcomes affecting their lives

Career Interest and Intentionality – based on individual's preferences for different types of work activities and environments and the level of an individual's intention to seek out new job opportunities and career- and job-related training

Subjective Well-Being and Health - assessment of subjective well-being and health as an important information source to policymakers who examine the well-being of population

Behavioral Competencies - research shows that certain personality characteristics predict educational success to a degree comparable to cognitive ability measures as well as being predictive of workforce success.

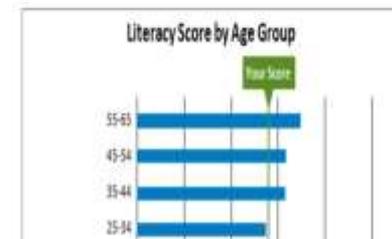
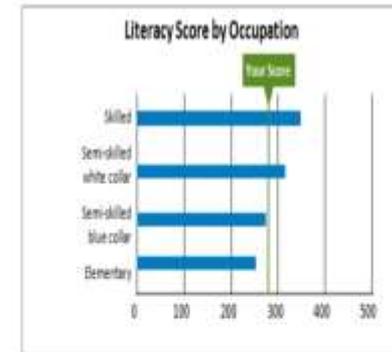
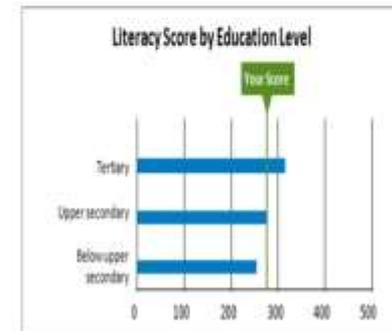
The tool «Skills assessment» Education&Skills Online

(The Results for people)

□ The tests dedicated to «cognitive skills» (*Literacy, Numeracy and Problem solving*) have as a result final individual documents in the domains considered, reporting a quantitative point (0-500) and 5 levels of proficiency

□ Those dedicated to «non-cognitive skills» lead to the drafting of final individual documents on the basis of qualitative approaches represented graphically in explanatory tables

How does my Literacy score compare?



Questions from «PIAAC online tool» (2016)

Our National Study keeps in mind the possibility of using tools such as PIAAC Online (*skills assessment*)

but.....we consider essential to integrate it (and the specific comparative results fo an individual) in a more wide and personalized *self evaluation process* -

«skills assessment» and «self evaluation»
(towards a self empowerment device)

Some Key Questions arise:

- How tailorize them?
- How integrate «skills assessment and self evaluation (empowering)» ?
- Which competence framework do we adopt?
- Which support to specific target?
- Which competences and skills of the professionals/practicioners
-

Our aims with the Project SELF-I - how to improve and facilitate the applicability of such device

We started from the hypothesis of national studies that points some objectives

- A) Highlight the potential of “a *skills assessment tool*” , based on the PIAAC framework and oriented to the online assessment of adult proficiency levels, comparable with national and international (OECD) results and based on the «foundations skills» to live and work in the current society**
- B) Promote the use of this *skills assessment tool*, integrating it within a *self-evaluation (self empowerment)* device centered on personal and social dimensions, able to combine the needs of the job and the needs of development and empowerment of the person (especially the target group), in a moment of great institutional commitment towards the construction of a system of lifelong learning.**
- C) Develop and implement a guidance, counseling and validation process to support the motivation and inclusion of this target**

«Skills assessment» and «Self evaluation»

ASSUMPTION

- 1. The *self-evaluation* process and, inside this, a path of *skill-assessment*, represent a meaningful strategy for the person, especially if the person recognizes this as not imposed, as a formal obligation for professional growth**
- 2. The issue of assessment, validation and certification of skills is a strategic reflection area for the person (not merely “accounting tools of skills”)**
- 3. Monitoring the evolution of the skills possessed by different target, gathering valid and reliable evidence on them, compared (national and International) is not only an individual objective, but is becoming of great social interest**
- 3. Equally crucial is the question of the competence frameworks (WHAT WE EVALUATE-VALIDATE-ASSES) that these devices assume**
- 4. Despite epistemological differences, most of the studies converge, more than in the past, on the importance of motivational dimensions, transversal skills rather than technical, relevant skills for understanding the complexity of current society and face transitions with awareness of their potential and resources**

Skills assessment: a functional device as part of *Self-evaluation process*

Definition

- ❑ **Skills assessment** is a specific moment within the ***Self assessment process***.

In general terms, *skills-assessment* is a systematic way, supported by operational tools (eg standardized tests, inventories, exercises and solution of typical problems) for:

- **gather information on the adequacy of the performance in various areas where resources and skills** (knowledge, skills, attitudes, etc.) **are played** and acquire this information directly beyond (or in addition) the use of other indirect information methods such as the opinion of supervisors, teachers, colleagues
- **compare individual performance and skills against to comparison criteria** (for example, peer results on the same tasks, the results of a specific target taken as a comparative reference, the standards established at national or local level)

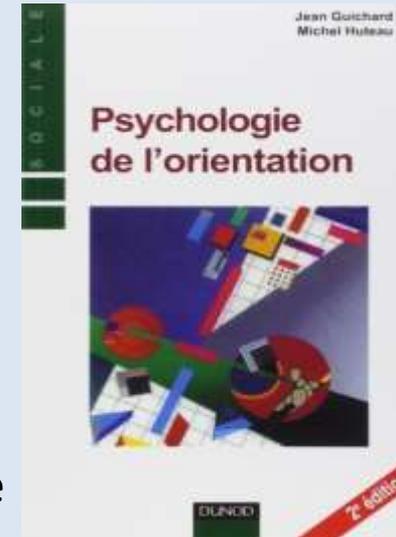
Self evaluation is a «broader process towards Self empowerment»

Definition

□ ***Self evaluation*** is a more complex process - it involves a very wide and varied sets of knowledge, attitudes and skills not linked to formal standards

-- It can be defined «a process by which a person» is able to:

- a) **monitor their patrimony of resources and abilities** (cognitive, affective and behavioral) acquired during the experience carried out in formal, informal and non-formal contexts (**WHAT**)
- b) **identify any reasons and strategies for enhancing this patrimony of resources** for everyday life, including working life (**WHY**)



The self-evaluation is a process:

- continuous (not related to the results of a single phase of life)
- authentic (linked to events of people's real life, perceived as significant)
- directed to the other development of skills learning (not one definitive)

« *Skills assessment and Self evaluation* »
« **A device towards empowerment** »

The main function of this device is to stimulate, make operational and support, starting from the results of *skills assessment*, a more complex *self-evaluation process*, that is based on individual reflection, on the *implications 'for self'* (in a perspective of self-analysis and self-planning and development: training, professional, occupational, if it **makes sense for personal life)**

These practices and devices, which are based on a new relationship between self and hetero-evaluation (bilan des compétence, biographical-narrative approaches, portfolios, dossiers), **emerge as crucial in the most recent methodological innovations**, present both in experimental actions in guidance systems (personal and professional) and in the various training sectors, and specifically, in "**specialized**" services aimed at supporting people in transition and / or professional development, particularly in the context of new employment services / guidance centres / training systems



A device towards self empowerment the contribution of a 'third party' is necessary

- ❑ In order for the *self-evaluation device* to be the effective input of a genuine *self-empowerment process*, the **contribution of a 'third party' is necessary**, and in particular the support of a competent professional, able to carry out an adequate **guidance and counseling**) function «distinct from information, training and personal support»
- ❑ One of the function of this “ third party”, within the self evaluation process is the **facilitation of awareness and reflective strategies that contribute to the construction of self identity**. It is indeed a concrete opportunity to focus the attention of the individual, on how he works, on how he thinks about what he is doing, how he values his personal and professionals results
- **This concrete opportunity for meta-cognitive reflection has a strong significance in mastering one's own strategies of action**, in monitoring and controlling attitudes, beliefs about oneself (eg self-efficacy), the value of tenacity in seeking expected results and the assumption of personal responsibility for personal, social and work growth

A device towards self empowerment the contribution of a 'third party' is necessary

□ This means to make available, for each individual, with the support of a competent counselor/professional /practitioner.....

- a *self evaluation path*
- including a *skills assessment* (es PIAAC Online or other tools)
- *voluntarily undertaken*
- being able to have appropriate incoming information
- to obtain personal results also compared with target (different for age, experience, country)
- provided as part of “an *individual relationship*” with a *competent practitioner/professional/expert*
- providing a *personal reflection* on strengths and weaknesses, individual resources
- and in this way *promotes activation* and individual planning
- in relation to the needs, intentions and opportunities with a view for improvement
- attainable through a plurality of resources and tools
- in a *lifelong self-monitoring and self direction perspective*



A device towards self empowerment

Focus on «Transversal competences»

- ❑ This aspect of self-direction is the crucial element of every modern definition of competence
- ❑ A conceptually and operationally concept of Transversal competences would have the advantage of being able to better consider the role of personal proactivity in taking charge of one's psychosocial and practical abilities
- ❑ How a person is able to "combine and orchestrate" the various elements of knowledge, skills and personal resources, in a "self-directed way"
- ❑ This is very relevant for our target of population
- ❑ A common conceptualization of transversal competence appears as a shared objective on the theoretical level, and in most of the National and European studies, but still to be achieved on the practical one
- ❑ In fact, often in different contexts we work by juxtaposing skills of a very different nature into long lists created for pragmatic evaluation or training purposes

The contribution of a 'third party' and the focus on Transversal competences

- A differentiation of the various frame work, which should be better considered, concerns the relationship between the contents of knowledge and skills and the “mental processes and psychosocial resources” of the person
- On the one hand, it seems quite common that, when we talk about competence, we should not only refer to knowledge (what and how) but also to the ability to control and master tasks and roles (not only working), self-regulating the emotional implications of experience, motivational drives and independent personal involvement and social interactions. (very relevant for our target of population)

Some conclusions on WHY this device.....

- ❑ There are many different reasons that make it opportune and useful, in the current scenario, both from the point of view of this target (refugees, low skilled) and from the point of view of the socio-institutional stakeholders, the provision of a service of *self-evaluation*, which can benefit of a *skills-assessment phase* and the use of which can be made available in different contexts and systems (school, vocational training and universities, orientation and employment services for work, companies and organizations in general)

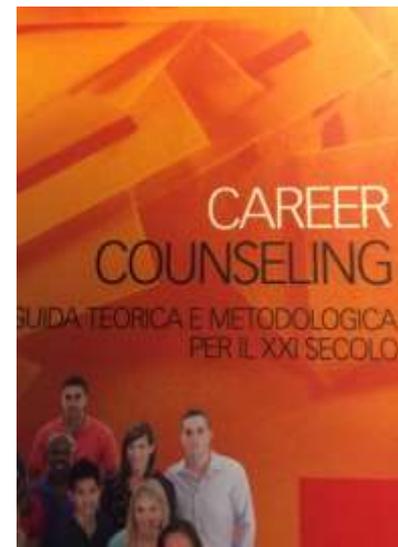
- ❑ For the target of asylum seeker and adults low skilled/in transition, it can work as an effective device to contrast:
 - frequent apathy and low personal investment that occurs in transition periods
 - reduced responsibility in activities and building sustainable choice for life and working paths
 - lack of motivation to act independently
 - low awareness of the gaps in term of competences to live and work today
 - difficult to recognize their potentiality, competences and self identity

Some conclusions on WHY this device.....

For some years the function of guidance (function of accompanying) is consensually recognized as crucial in the «society of transitions»

Its concrete application can represent an important component of the proactive ways in which a person takes charge of his educational and professional career, taking early a '*style of care*' of his knowledge, attitude and professional resources that constitute the substance of one's employability

- ❑ In this sense, the *self-evaluation and skills-assessment* should be carefully considered and progressively incorporated into the devices for personal and professional development (orientation initiatives, career development and socialization pathways at work, guidance and counseling to transitions)
- ❑ Currently these devices must deal also with the question of skills and training of the professionals/operators/counselors to face with the request, increasingly expressed by public and private actors, to offer more qualified services (eg. exception centres) responding to the real psycho-social and professional qualification needs of this population target



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Thanks for the attention

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