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## **The policy framework in Bologna**

**FLOWS: Impact of local welfare systems on female labour force participation and social cohesion**

FLOWS Working Paper

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Aalborg 2014

ISSN 2246-4840

## **About the FLOWS project:**

The FLOWS project has been funded under the EU FP7 program, grant Agreement no: 266806. The project started January 1 2011 and ended April 30 2014.

The FLOWS project analyses the causes and effects of women's labour market integration, which is an issue that represents a major challenge for the European Union and its member states, and is supposedly also a precondition for the sustainability of the European social model. The overall aim is to analyse (1) how local welfare systems support women's labour market participation, as well as (2) the extent to which (and under which conditions) female labour market integration has contributed to the strengthening social cohesion. The project focuses on how public and private welfare services such as care and lifelong learning intended to support women's labour market integration have been designed; on how women of different classes, qualifications, ethnicities, and geographical locations have grasped and made use of such policies, and on how the increase in women's labour market integration has affected structures of inequality and social cohesion.

The study is based on in-depth analysis of eleven cities, i.e. one city in eleven different countries. The cities/countries are: Brno/Czech Republic, Aalborg/Denmark, Tartu/Estonia, Jyväskylä/Finland, Nantes/France, Hamburg/Germany, Székesfehérvár/Hungary, Dublin/Ireland, Bologna/Italy, Terrassa/Spain, and Leeds/UK.

The FLOWS project is composed by 6 academic work packages:

WP 1: Degree and structures of women's labour market integration

WP 2: Local production systems

WP 3: The local welfare system

WP 4: Local policy formation/local political actors

WP 5: Survey questionnaire

WP 6: Women's decision making

WP 7: Social structures: cohesion or cleavages and segregation

This working paper series reports work conducted in the seven work packages.



## 1. Mapping exercise

### A.1 Legal framework supporting or restraining women's labor participation

#### A.1.1. Gender equality laws

There is a little doubt that in the Italian context the intervention of the EU has been an important platform for the dissemination of a new way of thinking and acting in the field of gender policy, although already in the Italian Constitution (1948) two main equality and anti-discrimination provisions were included: the principles of equal pay and equal treatment of women and men in employment (Article 37) and in public office (Article 51), which provide a constitutional basis for the adoption and implementation of gender equality measures.

However, sex equality legislation acquired renewed importance with the adoption of sex equality Directives at European level. The most important was the Act 903/1977 on equal treatment between women and men as regards access to employment, adopted pursuant to the Equal Treatment Directive that is considered to be the first anti-discrimination law in Italy (Velluti 2008).

Consequently, in 1991, the Act 125/91 created *Equality Advisers*, that is new independent public bodies which were given significant judicial action powers such as filing collective actions. In particular, this law provides financial incentives for the adoption of positive action measures in firms, the priorities of which are defined by the *National Equality and Equal Opportunities Committee*. Such actions aim at promoting female representation to positions of responsibility within organisations, fostering the creation of firms run by women and creating network projects across different levels of policy-making. The Act provides that positive action schemes promoted jointly by the social partners have priority for funding. However, this Act has not produced significant results in quantitative terms (Velluti 2008) and only a few projects have been financed .

#### A.1.2. Family/marital law

The most important recent law in the field of family and marital status has been the enactment of Acts 53/2000 and 61/2000, implementing EC Directives on parental leave and part-time work. Five months of compulsory maternity leave are foreseen; mothers can choose to use either 2 months before the birth and 3 after, or 1 month before and 4 after; they are paid at 80% of mother's salary, but collective agreements in public administration, some industrial sectors or single companies extend replacement rate up to 100%<sup>1</sup>.

Afterwards, 10 months of parental leaves are available to each couple for each child until he/she reaches 8 years of age. Each parent is entitled to up to six months; if the father uses at least three consecutive months, one bonus month is recognized to the couple. Use is very flexible, as these months can be taken even on a day by day basis. However, the replacement rate is really low: parents are entitled to 30% of their salary, only until the child is three years old; leaves can also be used between the 3rd and the 8th year of age parental, but without any monetary compensation. As a result, it is parents with the lowest income in the household (e.g. predominantly mothers) that are more likely to suspend their employment. In fact, fathers' take up rates are very low, even though available data are still scant (Gavio, Lelleri 2005). Moreover, compulsory paternity leave is not present in the Italian regulation.

Mothers who go back to work after maternity leave are entitled to a reduction of working time of two hours a day until the child is 1 year old, in order to allow breastfeeding; if the mother cannot use this reduction, because she is unemployed, an autonomous or atypical worker, the father is entitled to it.

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<sup>1</sup> Fathers can use the "maternity" leave instead of mothers on special circumstances (mother's death, abandonment, exclusive custody to the father, ...).

### *A.1.3. Welfare law*

A large body of comparative studies of social policies identify Italy as a sort “symbol” of the Mediterranean welfare regime (Ferrera, 1996), mixing different approach towards the social protection:

- 1) a process of policy making in which the Unions play a central role, especially promoting a welfare system more oriented to the protection of the of the workers employed in the most important economic sectors. Consequently, the welfare system is mainly characterized by a dualism between “strong” and “weak” beneficiaries, in particular concerning social security and a traditional predominance of cash subsidies (money transfers over direct social services), especially expressed by the role of the pensions in the total welfare expenditures;
- 2) a strong orientation towards the family as principal actor devoted to the care and the social protection. In particular, the family in the Mediterranean model has a very heavy burden in supporting financially and providing care for the fragile members, compensating for deficiencies of the welfare state. In this pattern, the role of women into the elderly and childcare is crucial. In fact, the low level of female participation, as well as a higher level of instability into the labor market among women, has been largely interpreted also as a result of the general conception of the care as a family responsibility rather than a collective responsibility (Naldini, 2006; Ranci, 2004; Saraceno 2003).
- 3) a system based on a complex mix of private and public actors, through mechanisms of regulation showing a high level of territorial differences (Kazepov, 2009), especially at regional level, due to a general process of decentralization into the social policies and the growing role of the regional authorities in the field of labour policies, in particular in the implementation phase of the European Employment Strategy (EES).

However, during the last decade, not only the field of the labor policies but the entire Italian model of welfare state has been influenced by a process of “hybridization” of the different European patterns, promoting a stronger orientation towards less generous provisions, selectivity, activation and, at least into the rhetoric, toward the conciliation of work and care, especially for women. However this focus on women employability is not homogeneous and it’s dependant by the field of policy. As far as childcare, elderly care and Lifelong learning (LLL) are concerned, it’s interesting to mention that while in the childcare and in LLL this represents an important aim, there is a lack of attention in the elderly care, although the very difficult demographic framework and the impacts of this phenomenon especially on the women day life.

### *Childcare*

In Italy the responsibility for childcare has historically been widely delegated to the family, nuclear and extended. Both public and private facilities have been really marginal until the Seventies, when two national laws were passed about national kindergartens (1968), for children between three and six years of age (6 is the age at which compulsory school begins), and municipal day-care centres (1971), for children up to three years of age. Since then, a gap between the coverage rates of the two cycles increased.

For the 3 to 6 age range, historical roots are to be found in the Montessori and other readiness-for-school approaches, aiming at reducing the inequalities among children with different family background in compulsory school. This explains a wide social consensus, but also the typically short hours of provision, as the primary objective was not allowing reconciliation of (female) work and care. Substantially full coverage

was gradually reached, particularly during the Eighties, thanks to the role of the State that got to own and manage an increasing number of facilities, both building new ones and taking over some of the formerly Municipal or charitable ones. Take-up rate was estimated at 98,5% in 2008<sup>2</sup> (own calculations on Ministero dell'Istruzione).

For the under 3 age range, a slight increase in public provision was observed after the 1971 law was introduced, but at the beginning of the Nineties public provision still covered only 5,8% of children under 3 as a national average (Istituto degli Innocenti 2001). In response to a delayed increase in the female participation to labour market, this provision has slowly grown during the Nineties and the years 2000s. In 2008, only 40,9% of Italian Municipalities had at least one public crèche (the percentage was 33,7 in 2004), and only 23,7% had a municipal integrative service (Istat 2010).

Despite the sharp demographic decline and the persistency of comparatively low female employment rates (especially in the South) put hard pressure over the long-term sustainability of Italian welfare state, these themes are hardly present in the public debate in terms of necessary policy reforms.

### *Elderly care*

Elderly policies have been quite inertial in the last two decades in spite of huge demographic and socio-economic transformations. The only specific measure designed to cope with elderly care needs was the creation of a very modest "National Fund for Dependency" in 2007 (within the National Budget Law) that has been financed only till 2011 and will be soon dismissed. Elderly care remain in Italy a family issue even if a huge private care market is already consolidated in the country. Italian families are helped mainly by migrant women to care for dependent elderly family members. The Italian "model of care" experienced a transition from being "family based" to be a mixed one, with migrants working within families (Bettio and colleagues 2006).

Elderly policies are not defined as a specific arena in the Italian Welfare System and in any case they are not linked to the issue of women employability, nor at the national level, nor at the local one (Regional and Municipal). As a matter of fact, like in many other Western countries they are little institutionalized and are quite fragmented among different and non-coordinated policy fields (Costa 2011, OECD 2011). Elderly care needs and instruments to cope with them are not defined by any National law with a common criteria. Only "severe handicap" and "being in need of the support allowance" are conditions defined by national laws (104/1992 and 18/1980). These conditions are certified by medical commissions of local health agencies. The certification of these two conditions gives access to different kinds of benefits. The first one consists in a paid three days per month parental leave recognized to family members till the third degree of kindred who care for someone who has been defined as severely disabled according to the criteria defined in law 104/1992. The second one gives access to a flat cash transfer called "indennità di accompagnamento" devoted to support care needs of very dependent people, implemented in the 80s (law 18/1980) to compensate the loss of economic income of those who were unable to work and after eight years it was extended to those aged 65+. Since then an exponential growth in its coverage rate and a progressive ageing

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<sup>2</sup> Since 2003, kindergartens are accessible since 2,5 years, and primary school since 5,5 years, even though rates of early access remain low. Special intermediate classes were also introduced for the 2 to 3 year olds, mainly located in kindergartens, that cost less both for families and Municipalities than day care centres. All this has loosened a bit the boundaries between cycles, and made estimations about take-up rates more complex.

of its beneficiaries has been experienced. None of these two laws have been designed only for elderly people.

Dependence as a condition of individuals needing long term care support is faced by the public system mainly by social assistance policies (Ministry of Labor and Social Policies) and partly by health policies (Ministry of Health), two arenas that are not integrated in the Italian welfare system. Elderly policies are mainly debated in the Parliament at the “Commissione Affari sociali” (Commission of Social Affairs).

### *Life long learning*

In Italy the concept of lifelong learning policy is quite recent, because it has been introduced in the general policy framework by the Law 236/93 for “Urgent strategies to promote employment”. This law still today represents an important tool, especially concerning the possibility for companies, local productive systems and single person to apply for public funds oriented to training; in addition, it’s important to mention that, being these funds especially oriented to the most fragile actors on the labour market, especially women have been enabled to access to training, due to their extreme job vulnerability (Lodigiani, 2008). However, the application of the EU principle of lifelong learning as tool to promote employment and activation has been introduced by the “Treu agreement” in 1997, and more recently by some special public funds ( “Fondi paritetici interprofessionali” 388/2000 and 2002/ 289), available for lifelong learning through the agreement between different social actors (unions, firms representatives, public institutions, etc) at local level. This characteristic, as far women opportunities are concerned, has fostered a high level of territorial differentiation.

Anyway, there is a little doubt that the European Union has particularly affected the field of the lifelong learning in Italy through the ESF, promoting a higher level of attention towards the specific training needs of women in order to promote higher level of labor market participation (see 1.3). However, also this area of policy in Italy is particularly dependant by the regional level of government, due to the opportunity to link, in a more productive manner, the very different territorial level of competitiveness of local systems to social justice. Basically, although the existence of a National strategic plan, each region can decide which policies are the more urgent, the actors to be involved, and the use of resources from the European Social Fund (ESF). This has lead to a very fragmented framework, because the EU rhetoric has not created a common meaning for the gender policies, not so much by the need to make the EU guidelines consistent with the particular regional context, rather by different interpretations on the meaning and on the role of the gender policies in local programming (Devita, 2010)

### **A.2. Main government document**

The Green Book on the Future of Social Model “The good life in the active society” was the document presenting the programme of the Berlusconi’s Government about welfare policies. The Government (that has just collapsed – 12 nov 2011) was the expression of a centre-right coalition, including the regionalist party Lega Nord. The document was launched in July 2008, and open to feedbacks of social parts for three months. In May 2009 a White Book with the same title re-proposed the Government proposal after the feedbacks had been analysed. The overall approach is based on the idea of subsidiarity towards the centrality of the person and the crucial role of the family as producer of welfare.



As far as EU guidelines are concerned, The European Lisbon strategy is repeatedly quoted in the White Book, and particularly the employment rate objectives (including those on female employment).

About women's labour force participation, the comparatively low female employment rates are explained by the very low rates in the Southern Regions, due to low labour demand. The document calls for an "integrated gender approach, transversal to all public policies". In particular, the possibility to adjust working hours to women's caring responsibilities is wished. A more balanced share of caring responsibilities between men and women is not mentioned.

Rather surprisingly the document defines as "new" the question of women's freedom to have children without being "heavily damaged". Surprisingly as well, the document understates the positive relation of the diffusion of childcare services and of women's employment with the birth rate, stating that in the Italian Regions with highest coverage of services and highest employment rates one cannot observe a different birth rate. This has been clearly disconfirmed by data, showing that Centre-Northern Regions, such as Emilia Romagna, show better scores in all three indicators than Southern ones, such as Campania (Del Boca and Rosina 2010).

As far as caring load is concerned, the document wishes that the insufficient and territorially unequal distribution of early childcare services is overcome, also through diversification of services, an increase of micro day-care centres, company services and small family-based services. The Barcelona target about childcare (33% coverage for the <3) was quoted in the Green Book but disappeared in the White Book.

There is no mention about how LLL and training is related to women's entrance / return to the labour market in this policy document.

### **A.3. European program**

The Italian National Action Plan of social inclusion has been released on December 1st 2009, with the title "ITALIA 2020. Programma di azioni per l'inclusione delle donne nel mercato del lavoro" (Italy 2020. Programme of actions for the inclusion of women in the labour market).

The purpose of this initiative is to launch a strategic action plan for the work-life balance and the equal opportunities in accessing labour market. The priority of the plan is to innovate Italian social system by supporting economic growth, sustaining persons' employability, adaptation of workers and employers and self-employment in order to have more open and inclusive labour markets, and more equal opportunities between men and women. Support to family, to women in the family, and to maternity is central in the document, in order to achieve more development and, consequently, more inclusion and social justice.

The plan was promoted by the joint initiative of the then Italian Ministry of Welfare (Maurizio Sacconi) and by the then Italian Ministry of Equal Opportunities (Mara Carfagna), through a horizontal inter-ministerial coordination.

On the vertical level, each Region develops its own regional law on equal opportunities (see below). A network of Equal Opportunity Counsellors (Consigliere di Parità) exists at all institutional levels, from the national to the Municipal one.

As far as EU guidelines are concerned, in the National Action Plan Lisbon benchmarks about women's employment are briefly quoted, mentioning that Italy's distance from them is due to the low employment rates in the Southern Regions, whereas Northern ones are above the average.

The Italian Plan criticizes the fact that the new European regulation about Employment Support has excluded incentives to territorial areas, allowing only support to sectors in which gender gaps are over 25% (art. 2, point 18, lett. E, of the (EC) Regulation n. 800/2008). The Italian Government aims at re-discussing this in Brussels, because female employment in Italian Southern Regions needs exceptional support actions.

The plan also reminds a few Italian laws based on the North American affirmative action approach (laws 125/1991 about gender equal opportunity in the employment and 215/1992 on support of female entrepreneurship), juxtaposing them to the European approach to equal opportunities defined as only oriented towards granting correct competition among employers of the different member States.

About women's labour force participation, the document repeats paragraphs of the aforementioned "White Book on Future Social Model". Comparatively low female employment and activity rates are analysed in the report. Wide attention is given to the wide territorial differences, and the concentration of low female employment and activity in the Southern Regions, whereas in the Northern ones rates are at European level. Particularly, low participation rates of women under 25 and over 55 are reported, calling for better policies of school-work coordination and for active ageing. The persistence of a gender pay gap is also analysed. The plan aims at developing policies for the support of female employment aim at investing in the presence of women in green jobs.

About women's caring load, the plan strongly supports the promotion of an intergenerational solidarity pact, with grandparents ensuring both monetary support and informal childcare to young parents, and grown-up children ensuring organization of elderly care later on.

The plan identifies as a strategic action the increase of childcare services provision, that are nevertheless defined as early child "assistance" services. The prevalence of public provision is defined as "monopolistic" and responsible of "unbearable inefficiency". The fiscal lever is considered as the best one to support demand and free choice of citizens and firms, instead of investing only on the supply side. For the same reasons the use of "care vouchers", that in other countries (e.g. in France) are used for punctual childcare needs (e.g. babysitting) is indicated as a solution to be adopted also for continuous childcare needs.

The Government also aims at reviewing criteria for distribution of resources for work-life balance projects, in order to enhance their impact (law 53/2000 foresees resources for firms adopting schemes of flexible work in favour of employees). New industrial relations are also wished in order to improve the use of various forms of part-time, reduced, flexible work contracts.

About LLL and training. The national Plan aims at improving the impact of Law 53/2000 (art. 9) foresees resources for firms adopting training programmes for employees coming back after a leave period.

The Plan also aims at increasing female presence in the green economy sector, improving their access to training and higher education.

## **B. OVERVIEW OF ADOCUMENT AT LOCAL LEVEL**

At municipal level, in Bologna the most important document related to gender policy is the "Gender balance", a tool of policy assessment introduced during the 80ies in Canada, that today is widespread in many countries all around the globe. In Italy, thanks to some funds provided by the European Union, the

Gender balance has started to be experimented in many Regional contexts, among them Emilia Romagna Region.

In Bologna, it has been introduced by the “Assessorship for the policies towards differences” in 2004, as main document for the evaluation and planning of the gender policies in the Municipality of Bologna.

The document is a sort of evaluation of all the welfare provisions and other actions that the different areas of the municipal administration have promoted and may have an impact on different aspects of the women life.

The project has been promoted as a tool to answer to the different EU directives on the need to avoid discrimination into the administrative action, promoting policies respondent to women needs and problems. A direct reference is the 2006 EU documents on the equality of women and men into the local life.

The description of the childcare services are strongly connected to the reflection on the employment condition of women. At the same time, a large part of the document is also focused on the elderly care as important phenomenon to understand the condition of women in different field: work, social and political life. The document explains the strong intervention of the Municipality in these areas of policy. Conversely, as far as LLL is concerned, there is a weaker attention to the necessity of a better system of training for women, although some references especially connected to services for immigrant or unemployed women.

### **C. OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNANCE SYSTEM**

#### *Childcare governance system*

Except for State kindergartens, for which there is a direct involvement of the State, responsibilities for childcare provision is traditionally delegated to Municipalities. According to the 2000 Framework Law on Social Policies, the State is asked to fix minima standards for service provision (what has not been done yet) and transfers money under the Social Fund to Regions, that decide how to further distribute it to Municipalities. This fund is also destined to manage childcare facilities and measures for family support. The size of financing that Regions devolve to Municipalities in order to cover expenditure for building and managing childcare facilities varies among Regions; this partly explains the differences in take-up rate and level of fees among Municipalities. At present, it can be said that 21 regional and provincial systems exist in Italy as to family and childcare policies.

Moreover, Regions and Provinces can finance specific programmes, e.g. in order to increase the number of facilities or of places, in general or in specific sectors (e.g. company childcare facilities), or projects, e.g. to enhance parenthood support initiatives or multicultural initiatives, etc. The State used to do so too, but since the 2001 Constitutional Reform, earmarked funds by the State are contested: an agreement between the State and the Regions is necessary in order to define the broad objectives, that each Region can then further specify. This procedure was followed for the 2007-9 Extraordinary National Plan about Day-care Centres.

#### *Elderly care governance system*

In Italy health services are organized and delivered by Local Health Agencies; conversely, social services are delivered and organized by Municipalities, which means a great dispersion of locally designed programs,

being they organizationally integrated or not. Moreover, economic transfers for long term care are designed and financed by the Central Government.

*Health services for dependant elderly.* Home and residential services started to be developed by some municipalities in the 70s' outside of any National law or regulation. In the following decade, after the foundation of the National Health Service (law 833/1978), these services have been strengthened in some areas of the country with different levels of integration between medical and social provision. The first (and unique) National Plan for the Elderly was delivered in 1992 but it was never fully financed. Dependence in old age has never been a specific objective of planning actions that could finance and implement services on a National basis.

In 2000 a national law (328/2000) reframed the whole assistance system in Italy. It destined financial resources to "investment and integrated projects" to "support and favor elderly people autonomy and their permanence at home". National aims towards social policies have been reduced in 2001 when Constitutional reform gave larger legislative powers to the Italian Regions which now hold exclusive jurisdiction over social assistance policies, leaving to the central State only responsibility to fix the "basic levels of provisions concerning the civil and social rights that must be ensured all over the national territory" (art. 117, comma m, Title V of Italian Constitution). Previously Regions had already large capacities to program in several matters but were strongly checked by (and dependent on) the central government through a system of fund transfers linked to specific aims. Each Region develops its own elderly policy and defines care needs sometimes within regional laws, sometimes by administrative norms. Differentiation in what is considered "dependency" in old age also exists at the very local level. One of the consequences of the devolution enforced by the constitutional amendment is that each Region uses the assigned resources in accordance with its own standards and programs, adding different amounts of own resources and assigning them to the municipalities or Social Districts (associations of Municipalities, a secondary level of government of social policies, established by law 328/2000).

Coverage rates of elderly services are quite low in Italy compared to other countries. In general terms elderly services with a high health component are tax funded (under the National Health Service); only residential ones are partly co-paid by users. They are organized and/or delivered by the ASL ("Aziende Sanitarie Locali", local health regional agencies) and managed by Regions. They consist in home care services (called ADI, "assistenza domiciliare integrata"), residential facilities with different levels of medical services, day care centers and the assistance provided by general medical practitioners. Residential services are more and more devoted to very frail and very old dependent people. Home health services are organized to provide help over a short time period with medical, nursing and physiotherapy interventions and in any case for just few hours per week. The ASL are responsible for assessing the degree of care needs of those who live in their catchment area. There are no common criteria to assess care needs, either at the Regional level, or at the very local one. Normally the evaluation processes are built on validated international multidimensional schemes.

*Social services for elderly care* is managed directly by Municipalities and are tax funded. Social services in kind for LTC can assure a very modest level of coverage, they are locally fragmented and consist in home care services, in residential services and day care centers. The former two are normally means tested because users contribute, the second are mostly accessed on a free basis. They can assure very different care models in terms of numbers of home visits, qualification of the involved staff, number and kinds of services provided and integration with other services. Eligibility criteria (including economic ones) are not

homogeneous and are defined at the Municipality level, in some cases following Regional regulations. Many Italian Municipalities developed cash allowances (within a Regional framework) to maintain elderly dependents at home and are normally alternative to services in kind. They are devoted to compensate family members for their caring activities or to pay for private assistants. They are issued on a mean tested basis. Third sector organizations are involved in providing most part of social services for elderly along Italy, financed by users and by Municipalities.

However, the main and most widespread support for elderly care is the already mentioned “indennità di accompagnamento”, a disability benefit regulated by the central State, managed and paid directly to the recipients from the National Institute for Social Security (INPS). It is an allowance devoted to those who are unable to perform the basic activities of daily living according to the age on a long term basis. It is a universal measure that consists in a flat rate allowance of 480 euros per 12 months (2010) and it is not graduated in relation to different care needs. It can be used freely with no form of public control. Empirical research shows that it is frequently used to pay for some form of care, in most cases to integrate the cost of private assistants.

In the Italian policy making for elderly people Trade Unions have an important role, as the three main Unions (CGIL, CISL and UIL) have special sessions devoted to pensioners.

### *Lifelong learning*

As already explained, in Italy the competences in the areas of training policies and lifelong learning are on two main levels.

As far as lifelong learning is concerned, the National State is responsible for the main legislation (i.e. the Law 236/93; “Treu’s agreement” 1997). However, some important tools decided at the national level may require the direct involvement of other territorial level, especially in the planning and provision (i.e. “Fondi paritetici interprofessionali” 388/2000 and 2002/ 289).

Instead, the level of government responsible for vocational training and training towards adults (also financed through ESF), after the reform of the Titolo V of the Constitution in 2001 is the Regional. Consequently, regions may decide for planning activities and duties among Provinces and Municipalities with respect to this field, and the differences among Regions in the system of governance are huge (Lodigiani, 2008).

However, as far as the involvement of social parts is concerned, there is a high level of rhetoric related to the participation of Unions, representatives of entrepreneurs and the NGO’s sector in the planning and provision of the services, both at the National and the Local level. The result is a high level not only of territorial fragmentation but also sectorial differentiation: in fact, in some economic sectors Unions and entrepreneurs have been more able to gain funds than others, promoting huge disparities among workers (Lodigiani, 2008).

## **D. Overview of local policies**

In order to understand the local provision of the welfare in Italy, as already explained, is strategic to consider the Regional level of government, both about child and elderly care, and about lifelong learning.

The general document containing the guidelines for these provisions in Emilia Romagna Region is the “Document of economic and financial policies 2007-2010” that explains both the general objectives and structure of the policies and the services. What is interesting to mention about this program is that the promotion of a better work-life balanced among the population (but especially among women) is one of its central point. This general aim is supposed to be pursued through policies oriented to the child care and, especially, the elderly care.

### *Childcare*

Within the framework of the aforementioned law 1044/1971 about Day-care centres, Regions define their own regulations. Emilia Romagna has fixed regional regulation about childcare through the regional laws 1/2000 and 8/2004. Through these laws, the Region identifies general criteria for the realization, management, qualification and control of public and private early education services, recognizing the plurality of educational supply and of parents’ freedom of choice, and of national minima level of provision. The Region identifies structural and organizational requirements for early educational services.

Day-care centre is defined as having the following objectives: education and socialization of children, childcare, support to families in their educational choices.

Early educational services can be managed by Municipalities, also in associated form; other public actors; private accredited actors, in agreement with Municipalities; private actors through outsourcing of the Municipality; private actors with an authorization to function.

The Regional Government proposes, and the Regional Council approves every three years a regional programme for early educational services, defining: a) guidelines for planning and distributing the resources among Provinces.

Recently (October 2011) the Region Emilia Romagna has introduced vouchers to reduce the impact of fees of day-care centres on the income level for families.

Provinces approve, based on the proposals of Municipalities, the provincial three-year programme for the development and qualification of early educational services, as well as yearly plans, including training interventions. A Provincial technical commission supports Municipalities in their functions.

Municipalities grant authorization to services’ functioning, control their activities, grant accreditation, manage municipal services, present proposals for the development and qualification of services, as well as for the training of staff, and for the inclusion of third sector actors.

Local Health Bodies guarantee control over hygienic conditions of services.

Parents and families are to some extent involved in the service management through representation in parents’ committees.

At municipal level, the policy is managed by the “Assessorship to education”. This is the general overview of the provision.

- Public and private crèches for children <3 years (for private services some vouchers are available for low-income families)
- Other flexible services for the childcare of children <3 years, as “home-creches”, crèches on the parent’s workplaces, “babysitter on demand” (see qualitative study),

- Cash for care (Zerododici) for families with low income in which one family member decides to keep a not-mandatory parental leave (children <3 years);
- Baby-parkings and Educational services for parents and children <3 years
- Public and private Kindergarten for children >3 years<6 (for private services some vouchers are available for low-income families)
- Summer centres for children >3 years<18

### *Elderly care*

The governance of elderly policies in Region Emilia-Romagna is quite complex and it is considered as one of the most advanced in Italy. Although Elderly policies are held in Emilia-Romagna by two different Directorates (reflecting the separation of this policy field described for the National level), respecting a long tradition of achieving more integration between these two policy areas in comparison with national policies, it has been created a single technical structure called “Direzione generale Sanità e Politiche sociali” within which a special service “Governo dell’Integrazione socio-sanitaria e delle politiche per la non-autosufficienza” is devoted to elderly policies. This service is responsible for elaborating the triennial “Social and Health Plan”. The activity of the service is supported by a kind of “steering committee” for social and health policies composed by the leaders of the Regional Directorates in charge of social and health policies, by the majors of the Municipalities that are Provinces capitals and by the presidents of the so called “Conferenze territoriali sociali e sanitarie”, territorial conferences for social and health issues. These conferences have been introduced by the regional law 2/2003 that re-designed social policies governance in Emilia-Romagna. They coincide from the territorial point of view with the areas of the USL (Unità Sanitarie Locali that is the name given to ASL in Emilia- Romagna). They promote integrated plans for health and social policies at district level called “Piano di zona distrettuale per la salute e per il benessere” which defines policies and their implementation at the local level in agreement with the single Municipalities of the area, the Health Agency USL, the Province and with the collaboration of the Third Sector.

In 2004 the Region launched (with decree 2299/2004) a specific intersectorial plan for elderly services and issues called “Plan of Action for the Regional Community. A Society for all Ages: The Ageing Population and Prospects for Development”<sup>3</sup>. This plan is the result of a long confrontation with Municipalities, civil society and third sector organizations. It is still a reference for the policies towards elderly people, not only social ones.

It is also important to mention that Emilia-Romagna is one of the Regions that have incremented the resources allocated through the National Fund for Dependency created in 2007 with its own budget. The use of the Regional Fund for Dependency is based on priorities established in the Social and Health Plan 2008-2010 and gives priority to promote and finance homecare activities and services, including allowances devoted to pay for personal assistants in the private market or qualify their work, and to strength informal care networks.

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<sup>3</sup> Available in English at <http://sociale.regione.emilia-romagna.it/documentazione/pubblicazioni/guide/piano-delle-azioni-popolazione-anziana/il-piano-di-azione-per-la-comunita-regionale.-una-societa-per-tutte-le-eta-invecchiamento-della-popolazione-e-prospettive-di-sviluppo/piano-delle-azioni-english-version>

As final result of this very complex system of governance, the municipality of Bologna has many typologies of services, which are mostly oriented to support the elderly when they're already dependant. This is due especially to the fact that in Bologna there is an high percentage of population above 65 and plus (about 28% of total population), which makes the dependence a real emergency, even compared to province and region.

This fact has as a consequence that most of the resources are oriented to health services and to sustain elderly already in a condition of need. The main care policies for dependant elderly people are:

- Institutionalized care (in agreement with private institutions): approx. 1500 beds
- Domiciliary social and health care: approx. 3000 users (average 230 hours yearly for user)
- Grandparents day-care: local administration offers to keep during weekdays and Saturday the elderly in centers where they can be monitored and cared by professional care giver and nurses. approx. 450 day-beds.
- Cash-for-care: a fragile elderly in economic deprivation has the right to have a grant from the local administration to avoid his/her hospitalization and to help families in supporting the domiciliary care costs to be given to care giver (usually migrant care givers). approx. 3000 grants.
- Recovery care: there is the possibility to hospitalize the elderly for a short period (max 1 month) to give recovery to familiar care giver during holidays or emergency periods. approx. 50-100 beds.

All this measures are financed by Bologna's municipality and Region, which gives financing to AUSL trough the Fondo Regionale per la Non-Autosufficienza (FRNA)<sup>4</sup>, set up in 2007. This is managed by AUSL in collaboration with the system of social and health services of every municipalities in the province (they're 50, one for each municipality of the area). In 2010, the total amount of the costs of these policies were about 30mls euro: elderly care represents the 40% of the total costs for social policies (65mls).

### *Lifelong learning*

In Emilia Romagna the central actor in the field of the LLL policies is the Region, that basically plans all the service provision with the aid of the Provinces, especially in terms of training needs assessment, as well as public information and part of the service provision. Conversely, Municipalities have weak competences on this area of policy (Riva, 2008).

At Regional level it is important to mention that an important aim of the "Document of economic and financial policies 2007-2010" concerns the fight against the social exclusion, also through labour and lifelong learning policies, especially towards the most fragile part of the population, in particular women.

This principle has been introduced also in the Regional planning of ESF for 2007-2013. In accordance with the Regional law 17/2005, the main aim is not so much oriented to develop the employability of women (maybe because in Emilia Romagna the Lisboa target on women employment has been already achieved) but much more focused on fight against the horizontal and vertical segregation characterizing the female work condition in Emilia Romagna. Another important target is to avoid the risk among women of an exit from the labor market after the first child, although the good network of child-care services available in Emilia Romagna. The actions against this risk are especially focused on the promotion of more effective skills among women, especially in the field of ICT (Riva, 2008).

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<sup>4</sup> Delibera 1206/2007, FRNA.



In order to achieve these aims, the Emilia Romagna Region has developed many tools, that obviously are suitable also for women living in Bologna. In particular, the most important tools are the individual vouchers to attend training courses, that have been previously certified and approved by the Regional Authority. There are different typologies of vouchers, oriented to promote: lifelong learning for unemployed people; specialization for high-skilled workers (both employed and unemployed); vouchers to attend masters at university level.

In this process the Provincial level of government plays a role especially in the process of information about the different courses available, through a network of "Centers for employment", that are also involved in the provision of some courses, together with universities, institutions for vocational trainings, information desks, etc. In the city of Bologna there is one Provincial Center for employment.

In addition, the Municipality of Bologna has promoted 3 "Desks for employment" directly managed by the municipal level. These desks are especially devoted to the vocational guidance.

## **2. Qualitative study : policy formation and policy action**

### **A. General part**

#### *A.1 - A.2 Construction of the situation at the city level and assessment of the policy measures*

In the general overview of our key informants, since the end of WWII Bologna has represented for the Italian context, the symbol of the good governance, as well as a pattern of development promoting equal opportunity for both women and men, thanks to a climate of collaboration and trust between the private sector, the institution and the cooperative movements. However, during the last decade, the city has suffered for a difficult situation, affecting the climate of collaboration between social actors and limiting its traditional capacity of innovation, as well as in the economy and in the welfare system. Also due to the strong cuts to national funds oriented to social policies at the national level (Kazepov, 2009), the city has not been able to promote a good quality of the job positions for women, especially affected by underemployment and instability. The high level of female occupational segregation is the result of an economic and social pattern of development that has not been able to develop its social potentiality. Nowadays Bologna is dealing with the severe consequences of the financial crisis, that in particular seems to be worsening the same weak point: women are maybe losing less job positions in comparison with men, but are on the pathway toward a decreasing quality of their employment.

However until the '90s, Bologna has represented a particularly positive framework for female labour participation, thanks to the mix of two particularly features: a welfare and cultural system oriented to support women employment and a lively economic environment. In particular, as explained in part A, the Emilia Romagna Region and the Municipality of Bologna have been able to provide a very effective network of services (especially if compared with Italy as a whole) in the field of childcare and elderly care, that in the view of the key informants has been the most important tool in promoting a high level of women participation into the labor market. Nevertheless, starting from the late '90s, the ability of the Municipality

in promoting a collaborative climate of trust with the civil society has reduced. In the opinions of the key informants interviewed for the city has been especially difficult to find a new political guide after the crisis of the Communist Party, that has basically governed the town since the end of WWII. This transition has been particularly critical during the last decade, starting from the election in 2001 of Guazzaloca, the first right-wing mayor. After him, in 2004, there has been the election of Sergio Cofferati, a left-wing candidate who “was not born” in the city and has been considered not able to promote the particular social capital of a city characterised by strong relations between different political and social actors. In addition, in January 2010, the last mayor Enzo Del Bono (left wing) resigned after only eight months of mayoralty; since then the city has been ruled by a commissioner nominated by the central government. Today citizens are just welcoming the new left wing major Virginio Merola, who has been elected on may 16<sup>th</sup> 2011, and is expected to start a new period of renovation, economically and socially.

However the situation of economic crisis is very deep and it also deals with a severe financial crisis at national level, that is leading to a dramatic decrease of the funds oriented to local administrations as a whole (that have huge responsibilities in the field of elderly and childcare), as well of the funds oriented to social policies. It’s hardly to imagine what is going to happen in the next future, especially as far elderly services are concerned, due to the decrease of the “Regional Fund for dependant elderly people”. This is a tough task for a city where the percentage of elderly people is higher than in the rest of the country.

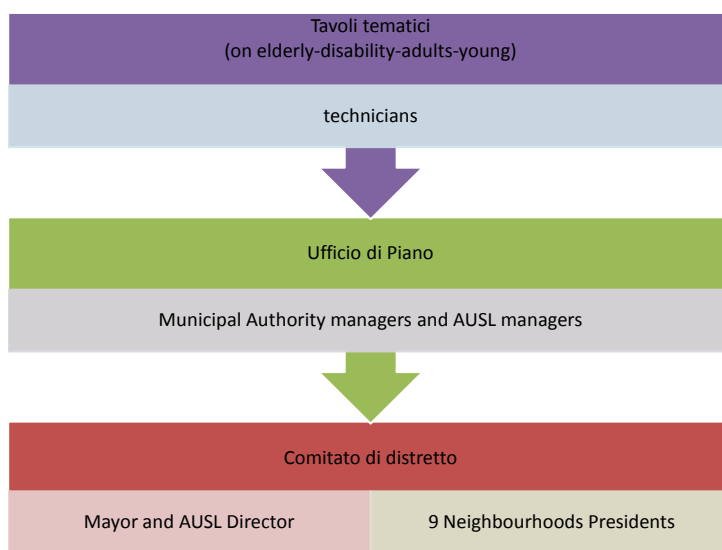
### A.3. Policy formation at municipal level

As far as the policy making process in the field of social policy is concerned, the national law 328/2000 have stated the necessity for local authorities to promote participatory process, involving representatives and technicians from different territorial levels of government, as well as Trade Unions and NGOs representatives.

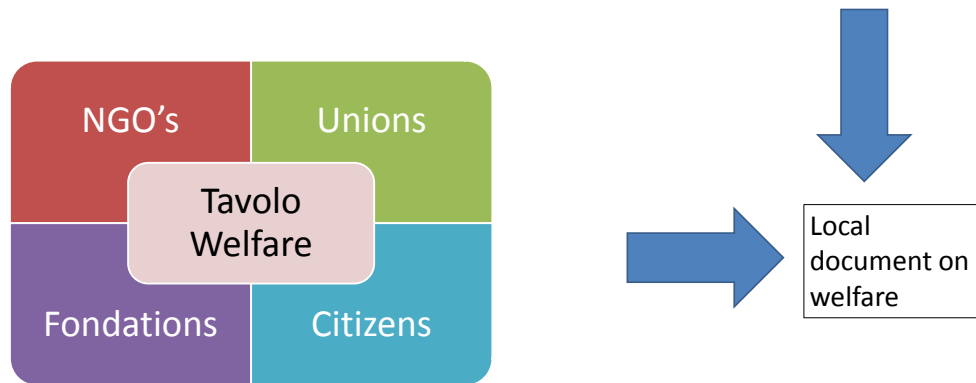
In the case of Bologna, the process of policy making is organized in different steps and arenas (Fig. 1)

Fig. 1 Process of policy making in social policy in Bologna

Firstly, there is an assessment of the main needs in the field of elderly care, disability, adults and young by professionals working in different agencies; based on this assessment, the Municipal and AUSL managers define the priorities; consequently, the Political representatives at Municipal and Neighbourhoods level sign the document, that became effective only after the evaluation of the “Tavolo per il welfare” (formed by Unions, NGO’s, Fondations and citizens). Although it may sounds as a very open process, it’s important to mention that the Public



Authorities are the only responsible for the final decision, and they have only to justify why they didn't take into consideration the evaluations of the Tavolo per il welfare.



## B. CASE STUDIES

### 1. Elderly care: *E-care network*

E-care network is a project promoted in 2005 as an experiment by the province of Bologna and it has now become the established structure to provide a personalized care at home of the fragile elderly in the Bologna area (but still not dependant). This project answers a need which is more and more urgent because of the demographical trend in Italy and especially in this area: 28% of the population have more than 65 years old in Bologna and about 33.000 have more than 80 years old (Cipolla, Guarino, 2009). It was firstly introduced as an experiment in 2005 as an autonomous initiative of the province financed thanks to a private foundation; the first 2 years have proved its validity, so in 2007 the service was extended thanks to a regional financing based on Fondo Regionale per la Non-Autosufficienza of region Emilia-Romagna given to Ausl of Bologna and CUP20005, a public in-house company owned by Region Emilia Romagna.

The first motivation to the implantation of E-care network was derived from the hot summer emergency in 2003, which caused in Italy an increase in elderlies mortality rate because of the exceptional hot temperature and their duration, but progressively it has widened in the service offered. The E-care network project was started in the perspective of preventing the risks of old age dependency and to avoid the premature hospitalization of elderly, in a double perspective of reducing the costs of health services in the province and protecting the quality of life of elderly. The main target for its services are families in which there is an elderly at risk; this might put those subjects in a condition of vulnerability when they will need

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<sup>5</sup> It is participated by Region Emilia Romagna (33%), Province of Bologna and township of Bologna, but also its ownership is shared with the 17 local health districts of the region.

to access and communicate with the local welfare systems and the health services. E-care intervenes in this problematic situations helping for a better communication with all these actors and sustaining the elderly before they fall in a condition of declared dependency (Moruzzi, 2005).

The main goals of E-care project are:

- To maintain elderly in their social environment and at their home as long as possible, guaranteeing their quality of life and health.
- To obtaining a better self-awareness of own health condition by the elderly involved;
- To reach an improvement in the quality of life of elderly living in a condition of vulnerability, fragility and solitude;
- To reduce emergency services and hospitalizations, thanks to a proper use of diagnostic and prevention services and a regular monitoring from the call center (Moruzzi, 2008; Cipolla, Guarino, 2009).

This project aims to take care of the elderly's fragile situation directly at home and it is focused on the centrality of home-care and volunteering associations, thanks to the help of ICT. It works on the basis of a local personalized and modular care, in which communication technologies have been used to create a call center, which is constantly in contact with every elderly integrated in a network of actors (public, private and voluntary associations). Every actor is in charge for providing different services in relation to their competencies, as it is coordinated by the operators of the contact center. The services offered by the network to the single elderly is related to on his/her needs and it's a decision taken on the basis of a personal dossier, which tracks social, health and familiar indicators (i.e. presence of children, participation to social life, solitude). The E-care is organized as a network and it puts in connection a lot of subjects that intervene when an elderly is in condition of fragility and vulnerability activated on the basis of their own competencies.

There are two main level of active services out-bound promoted by the contact center:

**Fig. 2 Stakeholders of the E-care network.**

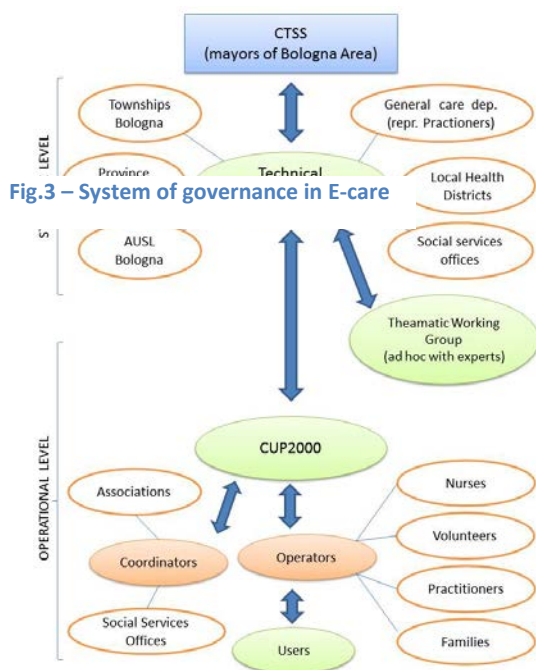
- Basic E-care: it is based on a weekly monitoring of psycho-physic condition of elderly and a support of tele-company. He/she might use the service for help in booking health services, to ask information and consultancies on health, pensions and taxes.
- Intensive E-care: it is addressed to the most fragile subjects. It foresees a wider set of services (accompany both for social and for necessity aims, domestic company, home-delivery services of medicines and food, help with domestic work and personal care).

This project was planned inside CUP2000, which is not only an operational structure of the local welfare system but also an organization devoted to promote innovative systems in technology for health care (thanks to its strict relationship with university, i.e. Achille Ardigò and Mauro Moruzzi). It was highly supported by the municipality of Bologna and province, which were the prime movers; it started with 50 users in 2005 just during the summer thanks to a funding received from a bank foundation. With 2007 and the new FRNA it was possible to develop the project; with that funding, the main stakeholder became the AUSL of Bologna, which is in charge of managing the funding for dependency of the Region. Now they're able to take care actively of 3.200 elderly; more than 8.000 are the people who have the right to access to service, even if they are not actively monitored by E-care out of a total of 28.000 who might benefit in accessing the service (as said by Carla Fiori during her interview). In the system, there are about 20

voluntary associations active on all the areas which were involved in company, tele-company and accompany services<sup>6</sup>; more than 600 are active at local basis.

The governance of the network is embodied by a technical committee, in which there are representatives for each of the six local health district and social policies offices of the province of Bologna, nominated by CTSS. CTSS is a governance body of the province of Bologna, composed by the 50 mayors of the municipalities of the area<sup>7</sup>. The CTSS body is in charge of the planning, coordination, orientation and control of all the health, social and territorial policies of the area. For what it concerns E-care in particularly, the technical committee is responsible for the strategic planning of the network and for the annual planning of the operations; together with the representatives of local district units (6) and social workers offices that operates in that area (6), there are also the mayor of Bologna and head of Province (as prime movers),

head of AUSL Bologna as funding manager but also the general care department's head of Bologna, as representative of general practitioners. Inside this committee, there is a coordinator which is chosen by AUSL, as manager body of E-care. In fact, the financing of the project is entirely in charge of local health district of Bologna (AUSL), which receives the funding from the Region through the FRNA.



In order to answer specific needs, the committee might choose to activate a temporary thematic working group (with representative of planning office of Bologna and other municipality involved, general practitioners, social workers) which is responsible for the implementation's choices on specific matters. Every document produced by those working groups is submitted to the technical committee.

If AUSL is responsible for the implementation of the project, the current management is assigned to CUP2000. This is done

basically with the collaboration of two coordinators, which are in charge of coordinate the activities of E-care in the area working together with the social workers offices and volunteers associations. To complete, there are about 14 operators which are in charge of contacting the users, coordinate the volunteers regarding their needs and to contact the nurses' group in case of any suspect of health problems. The most important element to underline in this project is the fact it's a network and it was projected like this to help coordinating different actors to avoid overlapping in the service provided to elderly people.

One problematic issue derives from the fact that there isn't an established system of quality control for this project, that puts in question if it's really effective in preventing the fall into non self-sufficiency. Two studies have been conducted in 2008 and 2009, one sociological on the perception of life's quality of elderly inside the project and an epidemiologic study with a group of control. Both of them have stated that

<sup>6</sup> AUSER Bologna, RIVIVERE, UISP Provinciale, Università Primo Levi, INPDAPOLTRE, C.S.I., CNA Bologna, Sindacati Pensionati SPI-CGIL, FNP-CISL, UILP-UIL della Provincia di Bologna, Croce Rossa Italiana, ACLI, AVAD, ANAP Confartigianato Bologna, ARCI Bologna, CNGEI Bologna, AVIUSS, Edelweiss Bologna, Banca del tempo quartiere Reno, Istituto Carlo Tincani.

<sup>7</sup> For info on CTSS: [www.ctss.bo.it](http://www.ctss.bo.it).

E-care has had positive effect, but since the cuts in the local welfare system has deepened it was impossible to keep this controls for the following years.

Last but not least, the question of positive impact of E-care on female propensity to participate to labour market is still unanswered, but at current state of affairs is probably irrelevant. In fact, there are two issues on the field here: first of all, this project is directly especially to elderly which are in condition of solitude and abandon, so reducing its effect on care givers. Secondly, in Italy the demographic change has postponed the timing of the dependency and now it usually regards elderly of above 80 years old. This implies that women in charge of care are usually the children of those elderly and they are quite likely to be already pensioner. However, in other situations, the elderly care giving has instead a negative effect on child-care more than reducing the propensity on being active on the labour market, because the children of those women cannot be fully supported by their mothers involved in their grandparent's care.

### ***Childcare: Tata Bologna***

The project Tata Bologna has been implemented in 2002 by the Municipality of Bologna, Assessorship to Education. The general framework was the necessity to plan childcare services more respondent to new needs of the families, mainly low-medium income, in which both the parents (or the single parent) are employed and asking to access babysitter services in a flexible way: in case of child's illness and impossibility of the parents to take care about him/her during the working hours; between the closure of the childcare service and the end of the working hours; other kind of flexible necessities.

The decision of promoting this kind of service has been taken in a period of good provision of municipal funds to childcare, just before the economic crisis and in a period where the main emergency was to answer to the higher flexibility/instability of the job market and the parents working time.

Another important aim was to provide legal condition of employment for babysitters, or making possible for them to exit from a condition of undeclared work.

The service has been introduced thanks to the Regional Law 1/2000; 8/2004 and the Directive 646/2005, in the framework of a legislation more sensitive to higher level of flexibility for the childcare, and the diversification of the services. It has been introduced in accordance to a wider strategy of diversification, through the promotion of other services:

- "home-creches". In this service, up to 3 families together may apply to organize a private crèche in a family home, employing a certified teacher; however only 3 services have been implemented due to the high cost of the service.
- "small educational groups". In this service up to 5 families may have access to a private and flexible service of babysitting.
- "0-12" it's a system of "cash for care", for parents with a low income <24000 Euro, who decide to take a long parental leave and take care personally of the child. This system has been used by 236 families in 2010, but, in the view of some key informants, it may rise some problems related to women employability. In fact, usually are the mothers applying for this kind of grant in order to extend the parental leave, and it is not clear if it makes more difficult the reinsertion into the labor market for women.

Finally, "Tata Bologna". The project provides for the qualifications of baby-sitting as support for families with children from 3 months to 3 years, through the implementation of training (with certification) directly organized by the City and accredited associations. The baby-sitter can only have one contract with one

family. The families that benefit of the baby-sitter for a few hours a week (less than 24) may use two methods of regularization of employment:

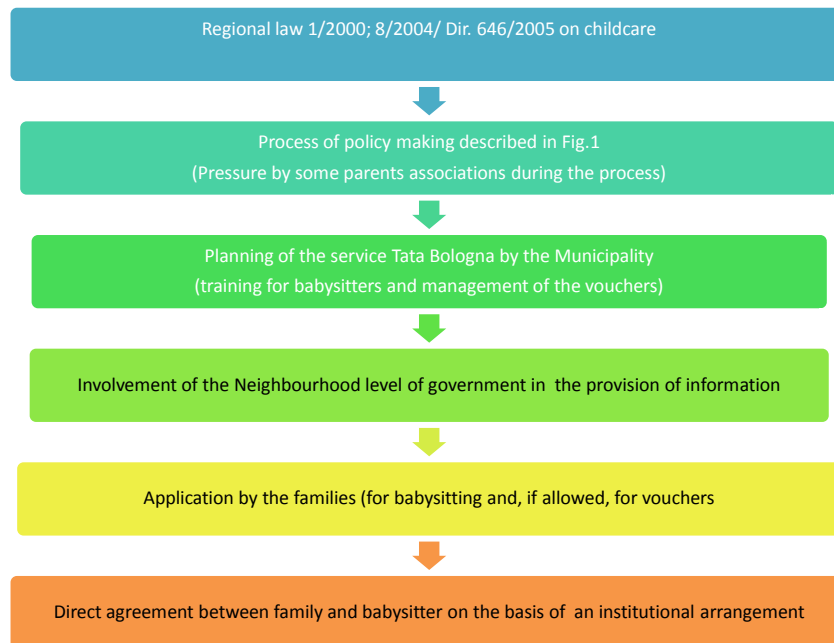
- The occasional contract work;
- INPS vouchers for occasional job.

Families who wish to hire the baby-sitter for at least 24 hours per week and for at least 3 months, are supposed to apply the national collective agreement for domestic work and may require a contribution to the Bologna City Council, if interested.

This contribution requires families to take the baby-sitter for a minimum of 24 hours up to 40 hours per week and for at least 3 months, using the national collective agreement for domestic work. The cost depends on the baby-sitter category (A, B or C super). Families can then apply for a contribution (voucher) to the City of Bologna if they have an income not higher than 35.000 euro.

What is interesting to mention in a framework of policy making analysis, is that all these services have been especially supported by some associations of parents in Bologna, who firstly expressed this need. An important role is also played by the Neighbourhood level of government in the City, that are supposed to provide information to families.

Fig. 4 – Process of policy making of TataBologna



However, also Tata Bologna has been used by few families until now (approx 15 families by year). The main reason is that both the families and the babysitters may prefer informal arrangements for this kind of service, because they can avoid to pay taxes. Instead, the most interested actors have been until now families with a high income, attracted by the quality of the training provided by the Municipal authority. However, it has been considered by some stakeholders a kind of niche-services, and because a strong restriction of the funds available for childcare due to the financial crisis, the Municipality is planning to re-organize these services focusing more on the standardize agencies (private and public creches) and the cash for care “0-12”, which has been requested by a higher number of families.

***Lifelong learning: “Center for gender resources” (CRG)***

As reported in the first part of the report, in the field of lifelong learning, the governance of the system is mainly focused on the Regional and Provincial level, while the Municipality plays a more marginal role. In order to focus on a case study interesting in a gender prospective, this report analyze the process that has lead to the implementation of the “Center for gender resources” (CRG) in 2001, an institution based especially on the activism of the association “Orlando”. Orlando is an historical NGO working on gender equality and active involvement of women in society since the ‘80s, which is partially granted by the Municipality of Bologna. The first agreement between the City of Bologna and this association in order to promote what is now called the “Documentation Center, Research Initiative for Women”, was signed in 1982. The activities of the CRG have been particularly focused on the promotion of the Italian Women's Library (the main Italian library specialized on gender), and consequently on the “Internet room”, designed



as a part of a larger project devoted to new technologies of communication and literacy Information for women (ServerDonne).

Especially starting from the beginning of 2001, thanks to a new attitude of some young women working into the association, the activities of this Centre have started to be even more oriented to help women in improving their work condition, through services of vocational guidance and training. Main aim of the Center has been supporting women affected by work instability, undeclared condition (especially immigrant women), but also helping women in having access to social services for the child and elderly care, as well as providing information about services useful for a better work-life balance.

The governance of this project is quite complex and has been based on agreements and financial supports of many institution at local and EU level.

At local level, the Convention between the Municipality and the CRG is based on a partnership principle, and not as just a financial support, based on an annual provision from the Municipality and the concession of a space, in collaboration with the Orlando Association. The relevance CRG for the Municipal administration is quite huge in the field of gender policy, as the CRG is one of the few association included in the "Gender balance" of the Municipality. It's also important to mention that the Center is in large part financed by a local Foundation (Fondazione Del Monte di Bologna e Ravenna).

Recently, the CRG has been able to gain funds promoting the project "Gift. Actions for gender equality and differences" (2006-2008); this project has been promoted thanks to funds provided by Emilia Romagna Region by ESF on the program "Azioni territoriali per il consolidamento della rete regionale a sostegno dei bisogni di conciliazione" (local actions to improve the regional network for work-life balance), with the collaboration of the Municipal Assessorship on Training and promotion of Differences.

The general aims of this project has been

- To promote access and retention of women in the workplace through the development of basic skills needed
- To improve the quality of life and profession through actions, initiatives and methods of gender.
- To support the dissemination of effective skills, through information services / training / orientation.
- To facilitate the planning of appropriate gender policies by local authorities.

The CRG is based on three general services: an information desk on guidance and training; orientation workshops; the website Ginger.

*The Desk.* The service is a point of reference for the collection and dissemination of information and guidance for women in the Bologna area and beyond. The Desk provides services face to face and online, also through the website ([www.women.it](http://www.women.it) / ginger). It collects and makes available information tools, research and study materials and links on topics work, guidance, research from a gender perspective and intercultural etc..The main innovative feature is the particular method of working: the methodology of "outreach", adapted to available resources. To the possible extent, the desk is moving toward people, while, traditionally, are the people who move towards the information services. The users who have turned to the service are for 94% women, compared with 6% of men. In general, the woman who access the service is between the ages of 20 and 39 years, has a high level of education but has a temporary job; although mainly are Italians, the percentage of foreign women is high (approx. 20%). The requests collected

by the desk are several. In any case training is the first entry (54% required), also because it's often related to the application at the laboratories of the Centre. Another key request is more generally oriented to a variety of services: training, education, but also of social service (childcare and elderly care). This has highlighted the need for greater coordination of all initiatives that are promoted in Bologna for women.

*The laboratories.* These workshops are designed to acquire tools and skills needed to foster the employability of participants and, simultaneously, develop a process of reflection, growth and awareness of their social identity and work. To ensure maximum participation in the activities, and in a view of reconciliation of life, work and training, the workshops have been divided into short modules and organized according to the needs and individual needs. The topics have been: Excel, "Women and Equality Rights, "Individual Right Guidance", "Active search of work", "Taking stock of experiences," "individual orientation".

*The website Ginger* [www.women.it / ginger], is a source of information, consultation and collection of material available, both for users and operators of public and private services. It provides information on topics such as work, guidance, training, etc. conciliation. It is designed to promote gender and intercultural experiences and to make accessible research and collect / file / abstract by Community institutions and bodies. It also promotes the activities of the Centre and provides a map of services in a gender perspective into the Bologna area (Ginger Data Bank). This fundamental instrument, also for the operators of the social services, requires constant and continuous updating to ensure the quality and reliability. This service has been updated through the help of various services, facilities and projects, both public and private, oriented to the needs of women in the city of Bologna.

In terms of governance the CRG may be considered as the result of a complex network of actors involved in the project with different functions:

**Tab. 1 – Actors involved in CRG**

<i>Funds and resources</i>	<i>Planning and provider</i>	<i>Actors involved in the network</i>	<i>Beneficiaries</i>
EU by ESF (Gift Project)	CRG	Municipality	Women
Region (Gift Project)		Province (by Center for employment)	Public/private operators
Municipality (location)		Private / public services for training	
Foundation			
Orlando Association (partially granted by Municipality)			

As already pointed out, the CRG has a strategic role in the LLL policies of the Municipality especially as it provides a wide range of information (LLL, labor market, LLL services and social services..) in a coordinated way, dealing with the high level of fragmentation of the services both at different territorial and sectorial level. This is the most important lesson we can learn from this project in a view of cross-border transfer.

However, due to progressive shortage of funds available, this strategic service is at risk of closure, and this is particularly dramatic in a moment of economic and financial crisis that is hardly affecting many women.

### Interviews

Carla Fiori, Head Director of CUP2000

Cristina Malvi, Head Director of AUSL Bologna

Maurizio Menarini, Bologna Area Commissioner, CRI (Italian Red Cross)

Mirna Cocchi, Municipality of Bologna, Sector Education

Maria Grazia Bertagni, Municipality of Bologna, Sector Elderly care

Patrizia Paganini, Bologna Province, Sector Labour Policies

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