

The challenge of building human capital accounts starting from education satellite account. An exercise for Italy

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All European countries are nowadays knowledge-based economies and information societies. Therefore, human capital is becoming a more and more important asset for the present and future success and prosperity of countries. This has caused knowledge to be inserted as a strategic goal for Europe, as stated by the Lisbon European Council in March 2000, according to which Europe is to become by 2010 "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world".

The growing demand of qualified information regarding statistics on educational expenditure can be satisfied in the national accounts framework compiling the education satellite account: this will guarantee the international comparability and the coherence with all macroeconomics aggregates and indicators. Satellite accounts are frameworks designed to expand the analytical capacity of the national accounts without overburdening them or interfering with their general-purpose orientation. They add details or additional information about a particular aspect of the economy, integrating monetary and physical data, providing room for analytical purposes such as productivity analysis and macroeconomic modelling.

This study tries to compile an Italian education satellite account integrated with the national account framework. It is based on the international standard classifications for: Government (COFOG), households (COICOP), Non Profit Institutions (COPNI) and enterprises (NACE). The preliminary analysis of the existing data sources represents the first crucial step in order to enrich the national accounts core system. The following stage consists in identifying a complete and systematic set, of economic flows regarding education: that is, public and private expenditure by level of education and by type of input (labour, capital and use of goods and services). The analysis should be widened by considering also the physical data consistent with economic aggregates: students by educational level and gender, teachers and other supporting employees, goods and services used as intermediate consumptions. The construction of such a framework will allow a better comprehension of the educational system, increase the analytical strength of national accounts and provide an information system that can be used for economic analysis.