

# New horizons in Italy’s “small schools”. Re-thinking didactics to enhance the territory

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper aims to explain the organizational and didactic innovations that have occurred in recent decades in Italy’s “small schools”, typical of the so-called *Aree Interne* (Inner Areas). These changes have led to a new knowledge organization and management, even according to the new recipients of the educational offer: school is changing, like its students and the world we live in; schools had to respond by changing and enhancing their offer, in order not to lose their students. They have cleverly chosen to use the precious link with the territory, often achieving excellent results, such as the development and the enhancement of schools, territories and students, both nationally and internationally, introducing new horizons in the landscape of both their students and the territory that hosts them, by re-thinking teaching for a continuous enhancement. Moreover, we have to build up a strong link among such a new way of education and the precious information methods we can use to update and integrate students and small schools.

**Keywords:** Didactics, Knowledge Organization and Management, School, Students, Territory.

## 1. Introduction

The school situation in Italy<sup>1</sup>, especially in recent decades, has often been characterized by various changes from an organizational and a didactic point of view. In fact, there has been a long cycle of reforms, which has affected all the orders of educational institutions, but which has been taken up by schools in different ways: often, some schools have had to adapt to the changes due to the ministerial reforms but, at the same time, they also have had to deal with various difficulties caused by natural events in their territories, such as disastrous earthquakes and heavy snowfalls.

In particular, the so-called “small schools”, that are schools with a low number of students and that are characteristic of specific inner territorial areas in Italy, have had greater difficulties in recent years.

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1. This research paper results from a re-elaborated version and a translation from Italian into English of a section of my degree thesis in Administration Sciences (a.y. 2018/2019), about organizational changes in educational institutions in Italy with particular attention to specific territorial areas.