

Employment Services in Italy

The matrix of services

The administrative certification of recruiting (imposed by the law and addressed to firms), the listing of job offerings and of job seekers are the traditional core business of the employment offices, but other services can be offered. For instance:

1. **first selection or selection of CV on behalf of firms**
2. **careers guidance** (divided in Italy between first level –information- and second or specialistic level –guidance-)
3. information about job regulations addressed to job seekers
4. information about job regulations and law procedures related to recruiting people (addressed to firms)
5. **promotion of stages**
6. promotion of unemployed people between firms
7. granting of unemployment benefits

The services can also be differentiated according with different group of clients. For instance:

1. **young people 15-18**
2. **women**
3. young holders of diplomas or degrees
4. long term unemployed
5. immigrants
6. **disabled**
7. employed
8. **firms**
9. outplacement
10. adult people as soon they are dismissed

The bold character shows the most common services and served groups in Tuscany.

Every employment office (not only in Italy) can so be defined according to this two kinds of variables:

| Services/clients group | first selection or selection of CV on behalf of firms | careers guidance information | careers guidance 2' level | Etcetera |
|---|---|------------------------------|---------------------------|----------|
| young people 15-18 | | | | |
| women | | | | |
| young holders of diplomas or degrees | | | | |
| long term unemployed | | | | |
| immigrants | | | | |
| disabled | | | | |
| employed | | | | |
| firms | | | | |
| outplacement | | | | |
| adult people as soon they are dismissed | | | | |
| Etcetera | | | | |

A short recent history

After 1945 the matching between offer and demand of jobs has been a monopoly of public services. Private companies could work only in selection of personnel, and they did mostly for high profile roles. Private companies could work also in careers guidance, but until recently there was not a market because the existence of this service was not considered. In 1999 private staffing services¹ (as Manpower, Adecco) have been allowed.

Until 1999 the employment offices have been managed by the central government, caring almost exclusively for the administrative certification of recruiting and the listing of job offerings and of job seekers. The efficacy of this services was very low. A research made in 1995 showed that of 100 people recruited by private companies, only 5 were found through the employment offices. The remaining 95% through word of mouth, job offerings on newspapers, direct request to the firms by jobseekers, etc. In few regions local governments had in the meantime set up their own careers guidance services (in Tuscany for instance have existed careers guidance services since 1989, addressed mainly to young holders of diplomas or degrees and women).

In 1999 the employment services were given to the Regions, with the hope to make them more effective. The Regions kept for themselves the strategic planning of services and gave the day to day management of services to the Provinces.

The Provinces decided to enlarge the services offered and the groups of clients served. One of the main new service offered has been careers guidance.

The Provinces got not only the physical structures of the employment services, but also most of the personnel. The personnel had been previously mainly concerned with administrative tasks, so Provinces had to find ways to start new services. Two main models are possible:

A. to continue to supply in the employment offices the traditional administrative and job matching services, and to develop the new services at the offices of specialised private organisations. This can be described as **The referral model**, because the function of the public employment offices is to refer clients to other organisations that supply the specialised services. This has been for instance the strategy of Regione Lombardia.

B. to supply the new services inside the employment offices using free lances or specialised organisations. This can be described as **The supermarket model**, as the client can find in the employment office almost all the services he needs. This has been the strategy of **Regione Toscana**

Also the administrative and job matching services can be supplied by different means. For instance in all Regione Toscana the job matching services will be shortly cared for also by trade unions, employees organisations and professional accountants, knitted together by a common internet database. This can be described as **The decentralised model** of job matching. This model is already in use in Prato Province where there has been also another innovation: the employment and vocational training services are managed by a company (called FIL) set up by the Province, some town councils and other organisations like trade unions and employers organisations.

¹ Private firms that hire people and send them to work in a different firm.

After four years from the reform most of the Italian Provinces have already started to supply the new services, even if the situation remain differentiated. Some Provinces have not yet activate the guidance services, in some others old employment offices have not yet integrated with other existing public guidance centres.

The framework of the employment services has been further modified recently. The Italian Government has recently enacted a law (Law n.30/2003) that allows many different organisations (schools, universities, local town councils, trade unions, employers organisations, private companies) to act as employment offices. This will create a competitive market for the employment services and urge the public employment services to increase further their efficacy and to create networks with private organisations.

The weight of private organisations: until recently the weight of private organisations has been high in careers guidance (often supplied on behalf of public organisation), selection and staffing services. Now onward it will probably became high also in jobmatching. A point worth considering is that, according to the Italian Law, the jobmatching cannot be paid by unemployed people, so the public services can offer their services for free at unemployed and firms, while private organisations have to ask a fee to the firms. But very easily a system based on voucher² can be established, so making private and public organisations compete on the same base. This is actually the trend that can be foreseen in several Regions.

The guidance services

In Italy the guidance services are differentiated between *first level* or *information services* where rough information about educational and vocational paths, professions and job search are given. Information services are given by *operatori di primo livello* (*first level advisers*, or *information officers*) (usually people holders of a diploma and specific training about how to find and spread information and how to understand the needs of the clients) usually located at the entrance of the employment office, in a wide room containing computers, books, newspapers and other materials that can be used also directly by clients).

The *second level* –or *guidance-* services are supplied by people holding a degree (*counsellors*) (usually psychologists) and are on appointment. The appointments are given by the *first level advisers*. The main second level services are:

Colloquio di orientamento specialistico: a one hour personal consultation. Is addressed to people that want to discuss their professional and/or educational choices or situation, or to be advised about their jobsearch.

Counselling: up to 10 one hour personal consultations. Is addressed to people that need an help for clarifying their preferences or a continued support for overcoming their difficulties during their jobsearch, professional choice process or educational or vocational training.

Individual bilancio orientativo (or *bilancio di competenze*): about 10 one hour personal consultations addressed to people that don't have a clear professional target and want to find one, and want to define the steps for reaching it. It's based on a reconstruction of the professional

² A voucher is a sum of (public) money that the client (the unemployed or the firm) can equally spend in public or private employment services. In this way the public money finance most the employment services that the clients prefer. A similar system has been set up also for vocational training.

history, and a deep reflexion on professional aspirations and strong and weak points. It ends with a written report where all the findings are resumed.

Short courses about job search or bilancio orientativo. Both last 12 hours and are addressed to 10-15 participants. The course on bilancio orientativo gives the same results of the *Individual bilancio orientativo*. The *course about jobsearch* teaches how to write a CV and a cover letter, to plan a job search, to pass an interview, etc.

Some datas about second level services in employment offices of Florence Province (11 centres)

| Years | 2002-2003 | 2001-2002 |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Hours of activity | 3500 | 3500 |
| Number of clients | 2500 | 1900 |
| Services (%) | | |
| • Colloqui specialistici | 46 | 65 |
| • Short courses | 22 | 2 |
| • Counselling | 15 | 16 |
| • Other | 12 | 11 |
| • Individual bilanci orientativi | 5 | 6 |

Some more things to know

Preselezione (preselection). Most of employment services don't give to firms looking for employees the rough list of all the unemployed, but make a first screening, called *preselezione*. *Preselezione* is usually made through a research in the database of the Centre of the most interesting profiles and the sending to the firm of the 5-10 most interesting CVs. *Preselezione* can be organised in many different ways, so is worth asking.

The hiring of people by public organisations. In Italian public organisations (local councils, public hospitals, Provinces, Regions) enrol people holding a diploma or a degree through a open competition (*concorso pubblico*). The job positions for which no diploma or degree is requested are filled according a procedure provided for the Law 56/1987, art. 16. According with this Law, when a public organisation need a employee of this kind, has to ask to the employment office, and the employment office sends the first in a list. The position on the list depends by the unemployment period length, by the income, etc. Most of unemployed people registered in Italy with public services are looking for this kind of jobs.

This draft has been written by Leonardo Evangelista (webmaster@aiuto.net) of Associazione Orientamento in rete (see, in English, <http://www.orientamento.it/oir-uk.doc>). © 2003 Leonardo Evangelista. It can be reproduced quoting author's name and email address).