

## CAREER ORIENTATION IN ITALY

In Italy we can identify Career Orientation in different moments of the student educational career.

The first moment in which students have to take a decision about their future is at the age of 13/14. Quite early they must decide in which type of high school carry on their formative path. Students may choose from a range of 'High Schools' known as licei with either classical, linguistic, artistic or scientific specialisation's or move to study at vocational secondary education (istituto professionale) which prepares students for elementary school teaching as well as technical, commercial and industrial careers. In this choice students are, above all, helped by their families. The role of the school in this moment is unfortunately not so fundamental as it should be. The educational system plans a cycle of visits among the different high schools to give students and parents the possibility to visit the school in which they probably will go and above all to give them the chance to speak both with students attending the school and teachers who work there. In this way students have concrete instrument of evaluation.

In vocational high school there is a second step in which career orientation is important. After the first two years, in fact, students have to decide which kind of specialization follow for their future professional career. In this moment a fundamental role is played by teachers who know their students's attitudes and can give them assistance, information and above all suggestion based on their direct experience.

At the end of high education, at the age of 18, students in Italy are called to take a big decision which will influence their lives. They have to decide if enter the University, and above all in which faculty of the 89 universities available all over Italy or enter the labor market and start the research of a job.

Career Orientation, in this phase ,start between the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth (and last) year of high education. Inside the school there is a person in charge for connecting students both with the labor market and the academic world.

The first contact with the labor market is represented by a short internship (about 2 weeks) in a company which students make during the last 2 years of the educational course. In this kind of situation It is really important to have a solid career orientation, for

that reason the role of the tutor is fundamental. In this delicate phase it is important for the student to have a clear and good relationship with the person in charge for the research of his internship to give the tutor the opportunity to find an internship the most possible closer to student's attitudes and interests so to make the student be able to exploit the work experience in the best possible way.

The introduction at the university higher education is quite easier. During the last year, schools organize a sort of conference inside their institution, inviting headmasters or academic teachers of different kind of Universities. Here the academic world has the opportunity to promote itself, its courses and teachers, its highly professional structures and above all give a report about numbers of students who will get a job within a year after the degree.

Career Orientation is also offered directly by the university. During the academic year, above all during the early summer, Universities organize the so called "Open Day". In these days the University is open: everyone can enter, follow some lessons, ask information to a committee of student and speak with teachers. Some conferences are planned to give general information about faculties, subjects to study, future job opportunities etc... and a lot of promotional material is given to the participants which are future possible students.

The academic World focuses on career orientation at the end of the first cycle. After the first 3 years students have some interview with an academic tutor in charge for the research of an Internship who will introduce the student with the work area in which he studied. Thanks to this interview students can focus on their strengths and evaluate which is the fields in which they want to work in future. Once identified with the tutor the work reference area and identified the company in which start the work experience the internship will be fruitful and the student will have the possibility to turn his studies in practice. It is also not unusual that from that moment onward the internship become a cooperation and sometimes, a real job offer.

What described in the first part of this relation is an overview on career orientation in educational system, that is in which phases of the Italian educational system, career orientation is important to help students to choose with confidence and awareness their professional career.

As far as job orientation in Italy there are some instruments which can be used to improve their chance to find a satisfying job. In this field, a distinction between public and private must be made.

As far as public institutions, each Italian city has its own Job Center. This office aims to put in connection offers and request of work. The first thing that people who wants to

approach the labor market, have to do is to fix an interview with the person in charge of the office who will put all the information and professional characteristics in a database accessible to companies. The role of job center is also important to have an overview on the possible public contests to join an employment in public institutions or have a work experience as trainee also abroad; last but not least a Job center in Italy provides an overview of vocational courses aimed at obtaining a job .

In the last 10 years we have seen the birth of many employment agency, they work especially for temporary jobs. They can be considered a sort of trade union between companies in search of employees and people in search of job. The way they act is quite similar to the one of the job center. One of the most useful thing that this private agencies do, is to organize special events called Job Meetings, a kind of workshops in which find information about labor market, the most required jobs, how to be competitive and up to date in our extremely changing society.

Choosing a career can be a very difficult decision. With young people, career choices must be considered as early as high school and before entering universities or colleges for many. At such an early age this is a stressful decision for young adults and one in which parents are often intricately involved, but without the competences to give a real help or address in the best way.

What lack in Italy is a more human component, the possibility to have a personal tutor from the beginning of the educational course who will follow the student pointing on his strength and working on his weaknesses. In this way training becomes effective, efficient and oriented to the world of work.