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# Connecting Career Counselling and Human Resource Development in Enterprises for Higher Education and Training in Practice (CONNECT!)

## IO1: REVIEW OF LITERATURE, MEDIA AND RESOURCES

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National Report - Italy

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## CHAPTER 1: INNOVATION AND TRENDS AT THE EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL LEVELS

In this section, we summarise the main aspects that characterize the Italian 2020 megatrends and then the actual Italian labour market. At this regard, after some national trends, we briefly focused on SMEs.

### 1.1 ITALIAN 2020 MEGATRENDS

The 'Long-Term Megatrends 2020' report (*website: <https://www.instituteforthefuture.it/shop/report-paper/long-term-megatrends-2020/>*) published by the Italian Institute for the Future presents the 10 trends that are emerging from the events and situations happened in the last year. Of course, these differ from the megatrends that are more general and very well known as for example the necessity to reduce poverty, the increasing income disparity, the growth of population and that we can find in the SDGs of the UN Agenda 2030. The 10 Italian megatrends discussed in the report could be considered an annual horizon scanning of those emerging phenomena that should be known and considered by citizens, companies, institutions because their evolution could change our readiness toward the future.

1. **Internet decoupling** with more than one DNS root zone, that at the moment is in the US.
2. **The gap between the urban world and the provincial** (or rural) **one** is increasing to the point of becoming the new political fault line, replacing the traditional one between left and right.
3. A renewed interest in **psychedelic research** for patients with depression and many other neurological diseases.
4. The escalating **space arms race** *with the establishment of space forces and the development of hypersonic arms.*
5. *The **intergenerational conflict**, as in the past young people is more progressive as concern political choices, cultural and social changes. A new element is represented by the perception that the old generation didn't preserve their social, economic and environmental future.*
6. *Toward a new green deal.*
7. **Quantum supremacy** to solve a problem that classical computers practically cannot. The country that will achieve this goal first will become a new world power.
8. **The growing importance of Artic.**
9. *An increasing escalation of far-right terrorism.*
10. **The pet boom.**

## 1.2 2019 LABOUR MARKET IN ITALY

The annual publication of the National Council for Economics and Labor (CNEL) on 2019 labor market in Italy was used to describe the most important national trends. In general, it emerged a worrying situation as concern competitiveness and future development

(website:

[https://www.cnel.it/Portals/0/CNEL/MercatoDelLavoro/Rapporti/MERCATO%20DEL%20LAVORO%202019\\_17dicembre2019\\_DEFINITIVO\\_web.pdf?ver=2019-12-17-214316-173](https://www.cnel.it/Portals/0/CNEL/MercatoDelLavoro/Rapporti/MERCATO%20DEL%20LAVORO%202019_17dicembre2019_DEFINITIVO_web.pdf?ver=2019-12-17-214316-173)).

### 1.2.1 *Employment*

Data shows that despite the employment rate has exceeded pre-crisis levels and reached the highest level in the recent history of the Italian labor market (59.4%), it remains the lowest in Europe and far below the EU average (69% excluding Greece); the intensity of this, measured on the hours worked, remains lower than that of the period preceding the outbreak of the economic crisis. In this regard, the alarming fact is that no Italian region has managed, ten years after the crisis, to return to the level of well-being recorded before 2008. The government also predicts that the employment growth rate in 2020 will be lower than in 2019.

Another worrying fact is represented by the growth of the territorial inequalities. In the Center-North highly qualified occupations are increasing, in South job disqualification is ongoing. This labor market situation, that also reflects the job conditions and quality of life of works, is considered structural and not contingent. In the last 20 years, in fact, the economic growth was stagnant and estimated around 0.2% per year.

### 1.2.2 *Women and Youth*

Woman employment is still far below male employment and far from European averages; youth unemployment remains three times higher than that of adults. They are most affected both by the involuntary part-time that has literally exploded in our country. All of this denounces the fact that many human skills are forcibly unused and that temporary work, an emblem of precariousness, is far from decent work.

### 1.2.3 *Migration*

Foreign workers are about 2.45 million that corresponds to 10.6% of all the employees. Unqualified jobs (construction, housekeeper) are the most frequent and this exposes them to many forms of exploitation.

### 1.2.4 Job mobility

Several institutions as the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) and the National Social Security Institute (INPS) highlight a reduction of part-time jobs because these positions are transformed in full-time jobs. Some governance measures as the ‘decreto dignità’ contributed to this trend.

Focusing on the type of working contracts, the main distinction is between permanent contracts (contratti a tempo indeterminato) that do not have a fixed-term and temporary employment contracts (contratti a tempo determinato) that include many forms. Data published by the Italian Institute of Statistic (ISTAT, 2020) show from 2015 to 2018 a tendency to increase for temporary employment contracts. As reported in the picture below, in the middle of 2018 this growing trend for temporary employment contracts (yellow line) stopped and a rapid decrease started so much that in 2019 the trend is completely changed with a positive increase for permanent jobs (blue line) and a continuing decrease for temporary jobs.

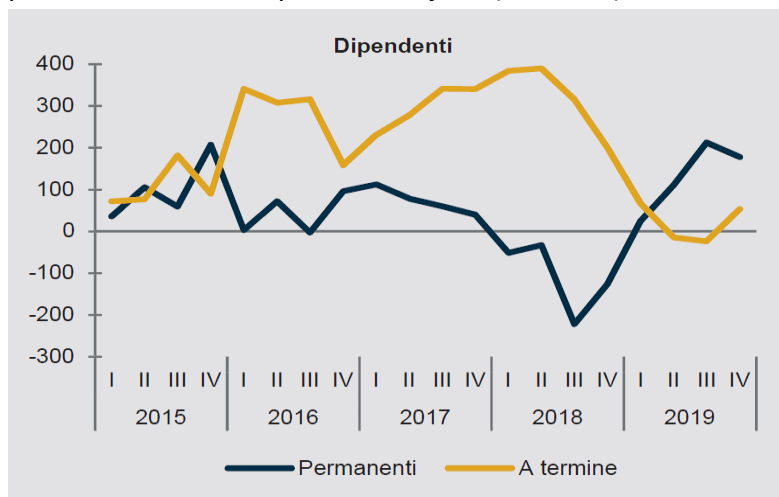


Figure 1: Reported by Istat (2020) p.291

Legend: yellow line=temporary employment contracts; blue line = permanent jobs;  
dipendenti=employees

### 1.2.5 Life Long Learning

As reported by Eurostat (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20190517-1>) in 2018 the adult participation to lifelong learning programs in Europe shows that in Italy it is about 8.2%. It is below the EU-28 mean that is 11.1% and the almost 30% of Sweden, the top country. In Italy a lot should be done both from the side of education-

al system and that of the world of work. Especially the SMEs do not invest in permanent education and in updating competences to increase employability of human capital.

### **1.2.6 Automation and digitalization**

The phenomenon of automation and digitalization is showing negative qualitative and quantitative impacts as for example, a reduction of the job growth in some sectors and professions - between 2011-2016 a negative growth in employment was recorded for jobs with medium level of competence and high levels of routines - , a reduction of the number of working days, a consequently lower acquisition of skills on the job and higher occupational uncertainty. This picture results in a plurality of methodological approaches and empirical strategies that used sample and administrative databases which comprised information on individuals' working histories, company characteristics, skills profile and training needs. The impact of automation and digitalization on human resources and professional needs also emerged as a crucial factor for the future of employment.

### **1.2.7 Aging population**

The aging of the Italian population is now considered a structural fact that requires new measures and tools of age management also as concern labor market issues. Two crucial data emerge from researches conducted by CNEL in collaboration with the Catholic University of Sacro Cuore and private organizations on about 9000 workers. First, the greater brevity of the working life of women compared to men together with the low presence of women in the workforce. Second the greater concentration of workforce in the older age groups. The issue of health conditions and the physical and cognitive abilities of older workers, and their consequent greater vulnerability compared to younger workers, emerge as urgent.

### **1.2.8 Sustainability**

CNEL and ISTAT developed a theoretical framework of Fair and Sustainable Wellbeing (BES) that includes three dimensions: economic well-being (estimated size through the disposable income per capita indicator), participation and social inclusion (through the employment rate compared to the total population and the failure to participate in work), safety at work (measured by the rate of fatal accidents and permanent disabilities). The non-participation rate intends to overcome the distinction between unemployed and inactive and introduce an indicator that allows capturing also that part of the inactive population that is potentially available to work. The differences detectable on the Italian territory in the economic and

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employment data was confirmed, as well as its persistence over time. These data introduce an innovative way of identifying crisis areas.

### 1.3 SITUATION OF THE SMEs

A second report we considered was published by Prometeia, an Italian Consultancy and Economic Research company employing over 900 experts worldwide. It shows that in 2017 the PMI with a business below 50 billion of Euros were 5.3 billion and represents the 92% of the companies active in Italy. The employees are more than 15 million corresponding about 82% of workers and produce more than 2000 billion euro. Main sectors are services, building and agricultural (*website: <https://www.infodata.ilsole24ore.com/2019/07/10/40229/>*)

As concern digitalization, a study conducted by EY Digital Manufacturing Maturity Index 2019 shows that only 14% of Italian SMEs has a good level of digitalization with a plan for the future; only 5% is classified as excellent; the 49% is at the beginning, and about 37% implemented piloting projects. Of course, this has many implications both for national and international competitiveness as well as future development (*website: <https://www.innovationpost.it/2019/07/11/solo-il-14-delle-aziende-italiane-e-a-un-buon-livello-di-digitalizzazione/>*)

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## CHAPTER 2: A REVIEW OF INNOVATIVE CONCEPTS OF COMPANY-BASED CAREER AND COUNSELING WORK

In this section, we focus on the main trends emerging from the literature on HR first, and on CGC subsequently.

### 2.1 INCONSISTENCY OF LITERATURE ON HR AND CGC IN SMES

This **inconsistency** clearly emerged in a study conducted by a research group in organizational psychology of the Professional Body of Psychologists of Lazio Region (Ordine degli Psicologi della Regione Lazio) and presented during a conference titled 'The Psychology in the Employment Services' in 2016 (*website: <https://www.ordinepsicologilazio.it/professionisti-istituzioni/percorsi-orientamento-al-lavoro-pmi-lazio/>*). They involved 24 SMEs with about 40 employees on average. The interview aimed to explore the relevance of CGC included questions as: Is career counselling offered into the companies? If yes, how? What are the psychological functions involved in services offered into companies? What is the benefit for the companies that offer career counseling that considers psychological aspects?

As concerns Career counseling, 63% (vs 37%) do not know this process/service, only 3 (7.5%) used it and only 1 (2.5%) continues to use it. As concern a possible budget to devote to a CGC service into the companies, 64% answered it will be devoted to new skills and competences (i.e. employees who, in the manager's evaluation, could change their qualification or activity; employees who wish to change qualifications or activities), 36% to possible critical situations such as unmotivated employees or employees who would like to leave the company.

The most important potential benefit of CGC is the support to change. It is seen as a way to stimulate improvements and developments, and consequently, thanks to a higher awareness, positively impact performances. On the contrary, it is considered difficult to realize: budget and structural limitations of SME are mentioned as the most relevant obstacle (it is considered easier to implement in big organizations). As concern the psychological functions involved in services offered into companies, 73% mention investing in people (staff evaluation and training) and 33% mention investing in organizations (organizational climate and consulting).

The lack of research that connect the two fields is recognized also in another recent article by Bagdadli and Gianecchini (2019) who developed a **framework** that tries to understand why and how organizational career management (OCM) translate into employees' career success. Based on a systematic review, they included in the framework three mechanisms that characterize the OCM practices and two types of contingency factors that impact on the

relations between OCM practices and career success. As concern the OCM practices, The **informational** mechanism refers mainly to signalling theory and comprises assessment and development centre, performance appraisal, training, career paths, international assignment, job posting, succession planning. The **developmental** mechanism is based mainly on human capital theory and social learning theory and comprises training, external seminars, developmental assignment, lateral moves, job rotation, international assignment, job enrichment, mentoring, networking. The **relational** mechanism is based mainly on developmental career theory and social career theories, and includes mentoring, networking, career counselling, developmental assignment, international assignment, career workshops. As concern the contingency factors, the **individual and organizational** one includes *Individual characteristics* (e.g. personality traits, learning styles, nationality, career stage and experience, age, gender) and *Organizational characteristics* (e.g. informal HR practices, communication processes, supervisor/managerial support, organizational structure, international scope); the **institutional** one includes *Organizational level* (e.g. Internal Labor Market rules, organizational culture and climate, organization of work) and *Societal level* (e.g. national culture, employment laws, industrial relations).

## 2.2 SUSTAINABILITY

The increasing popularity of the UN 2030 Agenda is driving the attention of many on **sustainability** issue and many articles in the field of HR were published after 2006 (De Stefano, Bagdadli & Camuffo, 2018).

An interesting paper by Guerci and Pedrini (2014) links sustainability to HR professionals as agents of change and innovation in the organization. They developed a questionnaire for testing the sustainability-driven change defined as the process of searching for a balance between economic, social and environmental performance as an alternative to profit maximization.

Answers of a total of 48 HR and sustainability managers working in 41 Italian companies belonging to CSR Manager Network Italia, the professional association of managers in charge of social, environmental and corporate sustainability issues, were used to develop a questionnaire aimed to study HR practices related to sustainability. Items were developed using the list of HR practices related to sustainability developed by Ehnert (2009). The questionnaire assesses four dimensions of HR practices related to sustainability:



The factor *'Sustainability-driven change through caring'* describes the importance of sustaining employees by caring for them, which implies the implementation of specific policies regarding work-life balance, health, benefits and employees' well-being.

The factor *'Sustainability-driven change through social inclusion'* describes the way in which employee safety is helped (including ergonomic workplace conditions and reduction of stress) and the diversity of employees in terms of culture, gender, and age. The factor also includes outplacement services for redundant employees.

The factor *'Sustainability-driven change through the development of competencies'* describes the intensity of practices directed at the employees' personal and professional development by means of career counseling, training, education and mentoring.

The factor *'Sustainability-driven change through career growth'* measures the propensity to invest in developing the professional skills and talent of the workforce.

Some differences emerged in the vision of HR managers and sustainability managers. HR managers consider sustainability as an adaptive capability where learning mechanisms facilitate the adaptation of the organization to the constant economic, social and environmental change. This implies the HR management system should contribute to the company's strategic objectives and provide the competencies needed for sustainability on a long-term time. Sustainability managers value more the role of economic incentives, work-life balance and employees' well-being to align them to the overall sustainability strategic goals of the company. What is interesting for our project is that many actions that here are considered sustainability-driven change are in common with the CGC.

The issue of sustainability was considered also by Battaglia, Testa, Bianchi, Iraldo, and Frey (2014). More specifically they studied the link between the adoption of **corporate social responsibility** (CSR) and competitiveness performance among SEMs operating in the fashion industry. The CSR is today considered as a strategic resource that aims to improve the employees' performance and no more as the moral responsibility of corporate managers. They involved 213 SMEs located in Italy and France. A significant correlation emerges between the innovation process, both technical and organizational, and the intangible performances (personnel motivation, personnel productivity, reputation, relation with stakeholders and relations with credit institutions which represent key partners for SMEs' investments. Also, the market performance (measured as demand trend, turnover and business attraction) positively correlates with a market-oriented CSR practice. From our perspective, this paper suggests HR

who adopts a sustainability approach can play an innovative role that involves taking care of people in many ways, some more personal oriented and other more work oriented.

Following this line of thinking, the framework that refers to the people/processes and external/internal dimensions, widely used in the literature on HRM and sustainability was used by De Stefano, Bagdadli and Camuffo (2017) in their systematic literature review from 1966 to 2015 on the role of **HR in CSR and sustainability**. 69 (over 50%) of the selected papers were categorized as internal/process-oriented and focus on the technical role played by the HR in implementing sustainability initiatives at the organizational level. That is, how human resource management practices and systems support organizations in becoming more sustainable. These include staffing, training and development to performance evaluation; compensation; safety management; standards implementation; practices able to establish an overall climate favorable to sustainability as for example the greening process. 28 of the articles are considered people/internal oriented and based their assumptions on the idea that HR is mainly employee-oriented and should operate for pursuing and fostering social sustainability in the organization: guarantee procedures for hiring, developing, and terminating employees are fair, avoiding large layoffs and other practices detrimental to employee well-being, health conditions, and job security. Fewer articles are categorized as external/people-oriented and consider HR as a driver for community sustainability. There are two areas of working: a) planning, implementing and supporting employees' volunteering programs that allow a company to share sustainability values more quickly; b) providing development and training to generate employment opportunities, and take part large initiatives on human rights for external stakeholders. Few articles are categorized as external/process-oriented and focus on codes of conduct and work standards. These show a prevalence of environmental issues over social ones.

Their first remark concerns the unclear organizational and competency boundaries of the HR function relative to CSR and sustainability issues and the reinforcement provided to this by business and academia.

In general HR involvement is valued as marginal, even if CSR and sustainability (e.g., occupational health and safety, labor standards, involvement in local communities' employability programs) involve HR processes and professional competencies as strategic success factors (e.g., training and selection in the supply chain and in the local communities). Authors consider these areas the most promising for HR professionals who intend to increase their influence over sustainability and CSR processes. We believe that CGC could play an

innovative role also in this framework as a way to contribute both to people that the organization as well as the community where the organization is. Issues related to decent work, employability, health, well-being, volunteering, training, community involvement, for example, are in common with the literature of CGC.

### 2.3 KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES OF MANAGERS, ENTREPRENEURS, AND HR

Some papers are also interested in the innovation capabilities of companies and try to identify the factors that positively impact it, highlighting the role of **knowledge and attitudes of managers, entrepreneurs, and HR**.

Usai and colleagues (2018) conducted a case study with one Italian and one UK SME, to study the role of the entrepreneurs in dealing with the imperfections of the innovation process that is characterized by risk management, asymmetric information in the knowledge management process, and hold-up problems. They found that the entrepreneurs' skills attributes, attitude, and aptitude play a crucial role in growing the business and continually developing new products. This happens when the imperfections are seen as a challenge rather than an obstacle and the entrepreneurial attitudes and knowledge combined with external talent or human resources, with formal and informal collaborative partnerships in developing innovative approaches.

Previously, Agostini, Novella, and Filippini (2017) found that SME innovation is related to the **Intellectual capital** of entrepreneurs and managers. They defined intellectual capital as human capital, innovation capital and relational capital. SMEs that show higher IC in the three components score higher in innovation performance.

In terms of practices, **diversity management** is increasing their relevance in the ability of companies to improve employment relationships and achieve higher ethnic equality. Janssens and Zanoni (2014), for example, found innovative diversity management practices should enlarge dominant norms and foster multiple competencies and cultural multiple identities. In another research, Lazazzara, Karpinska, and Henkens (2013) studied factors influencing human resource (HR) professionals in deciding whether to approve training proposals for **older workers**. They found that access to training is related skills, absenteeism rates and performance as well as the age of the HR professionals. Older HR recommends more older workers for training.

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## 2.4 TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Finally, Antonioli and Della Torre (2016) studied the link among the adoption of organizational and technological innovation with investments in **training activities** in a group of 118 Italian manufacturing SMEs. The results of the econometric analysis show organizational innovation is related to higher investments in (formal and informal) internal training. They also found awareness of the risks related to underinvesting in training during the implementation phase of the innovation process is quite low.

More recently Capriati and Divella (2019) for example, found that work organization matters more than the education level of the workforce for the firms that value innovation. More specifically it should focus more on practices aimed at human capital development by increasing the firm-specific technical skills, engagement and motivation of employees.

## 2.5 ASSESSMENT TOOLS AND EMERGING TRENDS FOR CGC

As concerns the field of CGC in the organizations a first trend is represented by the development and/or adaptation of some **assessment tools** that aim to equip career counselors who work with workers and could contribute to achieving SDGs. These tools signal the importance of some emerging constructs. Among them, we can list The Italian adaptation of the Decent Work Scale (Di Fabio & Kenny, 2019) and the Organizational Career Growth scale (OCG scale), a measure of employee perceptions of their chances of development and advancement within an organization (Spagnoli & Weng, 2019).

Among the constructs, those that are recently receiving the attention of many researchers highlight the importance of **attitudes** toward the many career challenges.

The **Intrapreneurial Self-Capital**, for example, is defined as a career and life resource that enables people to cope with ongoing challenges, changes and find innovative solutions. Alessio, Finstad, Giorgi, Lulli, Traversini, and Lecca (2019) includes dimensions of core self-evaluation, hardiness, creative self-efficacy, resilience, goal mastery, decisiveness, and vigilance. ISC results related to positive outcomes such as life satisfaction and flourishing (Di Fabio, Palazzeschi, & Bucci, 2017) and innovative behavior (Duradoni, & Di Fabio, 2019).

Another line of research refers to the theoretical approach of the psychology of sustainability and sustainable development and on the theoretical Job Demands-Resources model. Ingusci, Spagnoli, Zito, Colombo and Cortese (2019) found **seeking challenges** can represent an effective approach to promote sustainable development through the improvement of performance at work, maintaining its sustainability over time. In another study, Ingusci et al

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(2019) involved middle-aged workers and found job crafting plays a crucial role in mediating the influence of personal resources, as **self-efficacy**, on the performance at work.

Some papers drive attention to the **working context** with its uncertainty, unpredictability and rapid changes that require to find new approaches to CGC. Sgaramella and Ferrari (2019) for example propose a **sustainability-guided and context-based approach to Job Analysis** and provide a case example that shows its usefulness with vulnerable workers.

Matricano and Sorrentino (2019) used data retrieved from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor – GEM website and referring to the years 2012-2014 in investigating the relevance that **financial support** provided by family, friends, and fools, can have on vocational behavior and more specifically on the survival of entrepreneurial firms. By applying estimated Logit models, they found financial resources provided by family and friends affect the survival of entrepreneurial firms.

## CHAPTER 3: A DATA TABLE OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT/SUPPORT PROVIDERS

Several public and private institutions are involved in the actions addressed in this section.

### 3.1 PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SERVICE PROVIDERS

Services related to professional career guidance, career counselling, and related forms of career development for employees are provided by different services and companies. The following are examples of main and different providers in Italy.

- a. **Servizi per l'impiego [Employment Services]** Public Employment Services at both national, regional and local level work with employers as *providers of information* timely and immediately usable for companies; *providers of professionals* (pre-selection and demand-offer meeting) aimed above all at more specialized and qualified support for SMEs; *skills providers* (connection with the training system) so that the training system can respond promptly to the heterogeneous needs of workers and markets. The training offer is increasingly focused on the needs, co-designed and consistent with the real training and skills needs of workers and businesses. *Website: <http://www.cliclavoroveneto.it/centri-per-l-impiego-del-veneto>*
- b. **Sindacati e associazioni di categoria [Trade Unions and Trade Associations]** They actively participate in the life of companies and in industrial relations, with the aim of protecting and preserving the rights of their members and of the entire class of workers to which they refer to. Among the main services offered by there are training and qualification activities; worker protection and assistance, union advice and personnel management; assistance, support, and coaching for personnel management (*website: <https://www.ascom.bo.it/personale-relazioni-sindacali>*). Among the associations, some are specific for SMEs and have national and local system as for example CONFAPI (Confederazione Italiana Piccola e Media Industria Privata [Italian confederation of small and medium private industries; *website: <https://confapi.org/it/>*]) and Confartigianato (*website: <https://www.confartigianato.it/>*).

Also the **Chambers of Commerce**, Unioncamere, the public body that from 1901, unites and institutionally represents the Italian chamber system (<https://www.unioncamere.gov.it/P42A0C430S147/orientamento-.htm>), take CGC initiatives for young people, students, the unemployed / unemployed, entrepreneurs and employees interested in outplacement or professional mobility paths. Unioncamere supports these actions with guides, manuals and other information system tools and, at a statistical level, through the enhancement and dissemination of survey results with the information system 'Excelsior' started in 1997. A continuing effort, in fact, concern the monitoring of employment prospects in companies and the related demand for professional profiles.

The Chambers of Commerce also carry out specific actions to support the school-university-work transition and to support the positioning processes through the creation and management of territorial networks: a network system based on relationships of trust and proximity, which brings together the actors premises of the school-work chain (schools, business and professional associations, CPI, etc.) within which each Chamber of Commerce can play an important role in propulsion and animation to encourage the generation of solutions for the needs of the territory. The “CameraORIENTA” territorial events dedicated to job orientation, professions and self-entrepreneurship are organized annually for young people and in particular for high school and university students. Through these meetings, data and information are made available to learn about the world of work and the professional needs of companies, testimonies of experts in the macro-areas of information guidance (starting from the data of the Excelsior Information System), in an "on the job" situation "(Corporate visits and orientation internships) and orientation towards business culture and self-entrepreneurship, also through the dedicated territorial branches (Servizi / Punti Nuova Impresa / Genesi Desk, etc. ..).

- c. **EULAB Consulting** adopts process consultancy and a transitional life-long oriented perspective as an approach. The vision is that of Job Coaching, the goal is not to "inform" the individual but to support self-realization starting from a careful analysis of interests and personal values. It promotes specific consultancy services for individuals, such as orientation, coaching, placement, self-entrepreneurship; consultancy on management systems, HR, strategic planning, business management and more. It offers useful and innovative training, also supported by the new ICT and e-learning platform.

*Website: <http://www.eulabconsulting.it/job-coaching-2-0>*

- d. **The Adecco Group** is a multibrand consultancy platform and HR solutions with more than 300 branches throughout the national territory. It includes research and selection services, training, organizational consultancy, headhunting. Creating individual and company training courses that exploit the most advanced technologies and data analysis it is aimed to improving the competitiveness of businesses and people; support companies in internal transformation and leadership processes by identifying the best career transition solutions or in the transition to new opportunities in the world of work

*Website: <https://adecgroup.it/>*

- e. **Orientamento.it** offers both distance learning and career counseling for guidance practitioners, career consultants, coaches or people who, even if they have no experience, have undergone specific guidance training, and service to people regarding career counseling, career skills profile. Materials for practitioners are also offered.



Website: <https://www.orientamento.it/>

### 3.2. RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

Several public and private institutions and companies are relevant in this analysis insofar they are involved both in research actions and in providing services. The most representative for type and the specific theoretical and methodological choices made are the following:

- a. **Istituto per l'Analisi delle Politiche Pubbliche** [The National Institute for Public Policies]. Thematic areas are: innovation, employment, welfare; professions and skills; labor market dynamics, institutions, and policies; training institutions and policies; poverty, disability, social inclusion. With regard to work and professions, the focus is on trends of employment by professions, contractual aspects and industrial relations, job placement, technical and consultancy support to national and regional subjects responsible for defining labor and employment policies; the production of periodic investigation, monitoring, and evaluation reports.

Website: <https://inapp.org/>

- b. **Euroguidance Italy** carries out three main types of activities: production of information materials on education; training and career opportunities at national and international levels; dissemination of information on education, training and guidance systems in Europe; organization and participation in relevant events on guidance and mobility. The services provided cater to the information needs of a wide range of individuals interested in training, guidance service experts and practitioners; students and graduates; and the wider public.

Website: <http://www.euroguidance.it/>

### 3.3. UNIVERSITY CENTERS

There are also research centers in several different universities and national associations aimed at both conducting research studies and to a different degree. They are also committed with providing career development and management services. The following are representative of the diverse choices made.

- a. **The University of Firenze**, for instance, offers Group Career Counseling and Life Design focused on career planning, developing awareness about personal goals; reflecting on personal professional life plan to gain awareness of the value to be offered within the world of work; enhance communication, proactivity, resourcefulness for the profession; Life/Work Group Counseling.

(Website: <https://www.unifi.it/vp-8311-career-counseling-e-life-design-di-gruppo.html>)

- b. **At the University of Bologna**, CETRANS [Center for work and work transitions] is interested in the transition to and within work contexts with research groups interested in new stress risk



factors but also the development of preventive organizational interventions, such as strengthening of management skills in the line and in senior management. Another area of research concerns diversity in the workplace, with specific attention to age and psychiatric disabilities. (Website <https://psicologia.unibo.it/it/ricerca/laboratori-di-ricerca/centri-di-ricerca/cetrans>)

- c. A deep interest in both career Counseling and HR characterizes research and service centers at the **University of Padova**. *The Larios Lab*, for instance, is focused on career counselors and practitioners knowledge and competencies relevant for implementing and carrying out accurate actions and assessing their efficacy; and on career education and counseling targeting students of different ages. The *Quality & Marketing and Human Resources Laboratory* aims to promote and carry out research, consultancy and training activities for the improvement, development, and quality of services and products. In particular, the activities are aimed at the development and validation of data collection and analysis tools; consultancy/services and supervision in response to emerging needs; organizational action research; networking, communication, social marketing and promotion of change (Website: <https://www.fisppa.unipd.it/ricerca/laboratori-ricerca/>)
- d. An additional example comes from the Diversity Management Monitor and the Research and Training Center in the Diversity Management area at the **SDA Bocconi**, in Milano. It is firmly anchored to the school of management. Since its beginning, its effort is devoted to research, training, ad-hoc projects on women's participation in organizational contexts. With time also gender, intercultural, disability, and age issues became of interest. Two recent research topics concern the cost of maternity for businesses and the Workforce aging Job quality and HR Management. (Website: <https://www.sdabocconi.it/en/diversity-management-monitor>)
- e. At the **University Roma3** the CEFORC lab "*Formazione Continua & Comunicazione*" [Continuous education and communication Lab] focuses on research/intervention activities in the field of education within institutions and organizations. In particular, the research activity aims at implementing training programs in the public and private sectors; experience with innovative professional training models; agree on evaluation models and mechanisms for recognizing training credits. (Website: <http://www.master-hrspecialist.com/chi-siamo/centro-ricerca-ceforc>)

### 3.4. ASSOCIATIONS OF PROFESSIONALS

Finally, it is worth mentioning the work conducted by associations of professionals dealing with hot topics in career counseling and HR activities.

- a. **Associazione Italiana per la Direzione del personale (AIDP)** The association deepens and investigates hot and current issues of the HR profession with a specific attention to innovation in

human resource development and is focused on a series of projects on Digital & Social Change; Social network & HR; Change Management Observatory; Management of cultural, ethnic and religious differences in organizations; Active Aging in work context, that is how to make sustainable the work of the over 55 in the manufacturing sector in Italian companies.

Website: <https://www.aidp.it>

- b. Società Italiana di Orientamento (SIO)** The *Italian Society for Career counseling and Guidance* (SIO) brings together teachers, university researchers, and professionals working in the field. Its focus is on a proposal of good quality practices, the promotion of CGC as a process of personal fulfillment throughout life.

Website: <https://www.sio-online.it/>

- c. Società Italiana di Psicologia del lavoro e dell'Organizzazione (SIPLO)** The *Italian Society for Work and Organization Psychology (SIPLO)* pursues "the promotion, development, and diffusion of work and organizational psychology as a scientific and professional discipline". It promotes training initiatives to encourage the growth of professional skills operating in the development of the individual and in the management of organizations. Attention is devoted to wellbeing and HR management, assessment of skills and competencies.

Website: <http://www.siplo.org/associazione/>

## CHAPTER 4: A COMPILATION AND ANALYSIS OF INNOVATIVE RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYEES

### 4.1 RESOURCES FOR PROFESSIONALS

Several resources are available for professionals as HR Experts and Practitioners, Trainers in University and VET context, Counsellors working with employees in enterprises or in other contexts. The following companies are representative of the current situation.

- a. Hogrefe Editore** adheres to the new approach of Life Design hence adaptability, flexibility, learning, and orientation throughout its life. As regards adult career development resources developed and available for the Italian context consist, for instance, in training for adolescents, instruments for the assessment and turning potentials into capacities in the work contexts.

(Website: <https://www.hogrefe.it/>).

- b. Isfol Digital Library** These are materials intended for people who experience different professional situations: people who are facing some kind of transition, who therefore can feel the need to undertake a consultancy path and reflect on their own ways of managing various life

situations, first of all, the working ones; persons in the transition from absence of perspectives to a designed and sustainable future (recover and recognize personal aspirations, dreams and ambitions; persons asking orientation consultancy for work-life balance). (*Website: <http://inapp.infoteca.it/bw5ne2/opac.aspx?WEB=INAP>*)

#### 4.2 ACADEMIC STUDY PROGRAMS

Current and future professionals have several opportunities and study programs. A first option consists of the numerous Master's Degrees in Psychology or in Economy widespread across Italy and proposed by many public and private universities. Focusing on what interests our project, at the University of Padova, for example, in the master course of Social Work and Communication Psychology, students can find as mandatory<sup>1</sup> 6 erts credits courses 'Human resource management' and, 'Formation and personal empowerment', and as optional ones 'Career construction and career counseling' and 'Managing diversity in working contexts'. In the master course in Entrepreneurship and Innovation, students can find as mandatory 6 erts credits courses 'Economics of human resources' 'Organization design and governance of human capital' and 'Entrepreneurship and strategies for growth'. In business curricula students can find courses such as 'Organization development and behavior', and 'Human capital and health' as optional ones.

A second option consists of specific postgraduate Master Courses. Besides common second level degree courses, they both differ for some specific choices regarding themes and target groups. The following examples are useful to highlight possible differences at work.

- a. **Master in HR & Organization** The postgraduate master course proposed at the University of Bologna, is aimed at making companies and people more competitive with attention to international growth, to applying specific theories, research and tools to the human resources function Actions are tailored to enhancing human capital, a systematic approach to the management of organizations, which tightens on the core design activities of the area. (*Website: <https://www.bbs.unibo.it/hp/master-in-hr-organization/>*)
- b. **HR, Lavoro e sviluppo manageriale** [*HR, Work and Management Development*] This postgraduate Master course, proposed by Sole 24 Ore, is aimed at young graduates and undergraduates in humanities, socio-economic and legal disciplines who wish to pursue a career in the HR departments of companies, banks or consultancy companies. Distinctive elements are

<sup>1</sup> In the Italian university students should generally achieve most of the credits with mandatory courses that characterise the specific curriculum they are attending. A low number of credits could be chosen by students among several other courses that are considered the optional ones.

HR Team Building; Practical approach with a study method based on successful business cases, laboratories, teamwork and testimonials from HR Manager and HR Director; empowerment stories; successful HR Manager interviews on team working and self-improvement issues; acquiring the key skills to introduce themselves and start a career path in the sectors of Energy, Environment and Sustainability. It includes a managerial laboratory for the strengthening of soft skills, among the CSR and sustainability study modules, green marketing and communication (*Website: <https://www.24orebs.com/hr-lavoro-e-sviluppo-manageriale>*).

- c. **Organizzazione e Gestione delle Risorse Umane** [*Master on Organization and Management of Human Resources*] This postgraduate Master course provided by the autonomous university LUISS aims to encourage the acquisition of methods and tools to intervene in an innovative and effective way in the conscious and integrated management of people in organizations. In particular, the program is focused on developing skills in analyzing organizational design; management of change and organizational innovation; issues and challenges in organizational contexts, linked to the evolution of technology and digital transformation. (*Website: <https://businessschool.luiss.it/executive-organizzazione-gestione-risorse-umane/>*)
- d. **Human resource evaluation, training, and development.** The postgraduate Master program proposed at the University of Padova, by developing the wide and diverse knowledge and experience acquired by participants in the various training paths and work contexts, convert them into specific professional competences. Participants are interested in human resource management and personnel selection; in evaluation, training, and development of work-related risk prevention and health and safety, within public and private, production and service, profit and non-profit, organizations. Specific themes involve economic, social and environmental sustainability; the development of entrepreneurial capacity in the perspective of sustainable development. Attention is also given to Disability, Life Design and Diversity management. (*Website: [www.risorseumane.psicologia.unipd.it](http://www.risorseumane.psicologia.unipd.it)*)

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## CHAPTER 5: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

The analysis briefly outlined suggests that currently in Italy there are several diverse providers, both private and public, organized in Companies or as human resources/career counselling agencies, research and service centres or even they can be individual professionals. These providers deal with training professionals, develop resources or services either on career counselling and guidance for adolescents and young individuals focusing on transition *towards* work context or, and this is the case of HR professionals, on everyday challenges in work context and, to a less extent, on transitions *within* and *between* work contexts, on diversity issues and technological innovation.

- Several approaches seem to characterize both research efforts, resources available and academic programs. They often seem to coexist and emphasize the diverse aspects of the current complex situation:
- life-design approaches, with their attention to building capacities and person-to-context relationships.
- a capability approach, with a focus on social justice and people flourishing.
- job resources and job demand approach, with specific attention to activities in work contexts and people wellbeing in the organization;
- a sustainability approach, with a focus on diversity and inclusion issues as well as impact on larger/global community.

A possible direction seems to emerge that goes beyond the specific choices made in most recent approaches, suggesting that more resources should be devoted systematically to a career development anchored to life contexts (see work/life balance, diversity management). A wider view of the individuals emerges where near the space given to actions for competence development relevant to the current productivity of the organization, the need for sustaining personal development finds a place. This requires going beyond the current and ongoing situation to promote an increase in the employability of the individuals across companies and contexts as well as an investment in the sustainable development of enterprises.

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## GLOSSARY

**Career Counselling/ consulenza di orientamento** describes the core competence of CGC professionals to support their clients in understanding their situations, in working towards solutions and in making decisions.

**Career Counsellor/oriatatore/ consulente d'orientamento** supports individuals in understanding their situations, so as to work through issues towards solutions.

**Career Guidance and Counselling/ orientamento** a general term that describes a field of research and intervention that focuses on career and life designing.

**Career management competences /gestione delle proprie competenze professionali** The competences which people need in order to shape their lives autonomously and to plan and create their educational paths and their work lives on their own.

**Training/formazione/corso di formazione** general term that refers to education and employment training offered by the companies or by training agencies or both, in or outside the company and generally focuses on improving learning, knowledge, skills, and competences of participants.

**Job Placement/collocamento/collocamento lavorativo** activities that aim to specifically assist participants to find unsubsidized jobs that may include job search assistance and training.

**Human resources/risorse umane** a general term that describes a field of research and intervention that focuses on employees into an organization.

**HR manager/HR** is in charge of employees' life cycle into an organization.

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## ANNEX 1

Providers <sup>2</sup> of career guidance services to employees	Short description of providers <sup>3</sup>	The type of services provided	The target group to whom the services are provided	Link to more information <i>on a representative provider</i>
Public Agencies	Public Employment Services acting at both national, regional and local level	information, skills development, pre-selection actions	employed and unemployed persons and employers	<a href="http://www.cliclavroveneto.it/centri-per-l-impiego-del-veneto">http://www.cliclavroveneto.it/centri-per-l-impiego-del-veneto</a>
Private agencies	career transition solutions or transition to new opportunities in the world of work	selection services, training, consultancy, head-hunting	employers and companies	<a href="https://adeccogroup.it/">https://adeccogroup.it/</a>
Private companies	companies specialized consultancy on management systems	consultancy services such as counseling, coaching, placement, self-entrepreneurship	companies and individuals in transition	<a href="http://www.eulabcconsulting.it/job-coaching-2-0">http://www.eulabcconsulting.it/job-coaching-2-0</a>
Public research and service center	Research and service actions aimed at supporting transition to and within work contexts	training for strengthening management skills	employees and employers	<a href="https://psicologia.unibo.it/it/ricerca/laboratori-di-ricerca/centri-di-ricerca/cetrans">https://psicologia.unibo.it/it/ricerca/aboratori-di-ricerca/centri-di-ricerca/cetrans</a>
Private society of professionals	researchers and professionals interested on research and service	training professionals and training programs	professionals and organisations asking for career management and development	<a href="http://www.siplo.org/associazione/">http://www.siplo.org/associazione/</a>
Private organizations	organization of crafts and SME.	consultancy services,	employers interested in	<a href="https://www.confartiquianatoimpresa">https://www.confartiquianatoimpresa</a>

<sup>2</sup> Type of providers, e.g. private consulting companies/agencies, instead of naming each particular provider. Case studies of some useful examples may be provided in the narrative of the national report.

<sup>3</sup> Here you can explain the specifics or diversity within one mentioned type, e.g. private coaching agencies, private training providing agencies, etc.

Providers <sup>2</sup> of career guidance services to employees	Short description of providers <sup>3</sup>	The type of services provided	The target group to whom the services are provided	Link to more information <i>on a representative provider</i>
		information, skills training, entrepreneurship	personalized advice	<a href="http://adova.it">adova.it</a>
Public organization	Italian chamber system	consultancy services, information, skills training, entrepreneurship	CGC for people interested in outplacement or professional mobility paths.	<a href="https://www.unioncamere.gov.it/P42A0C430S147/orientamento-.htm">https://www.unioncamere.gov.it/P42A0C430S147/orientamento-.htm</a>