

Qualitative Profiling in Practice: The Italian Public Employment Services Experience

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Abstract : The development of a qualitative method to profile jobseekers is needed to improve the quality of the Public Employment Services (PES) in Italy. This is why the National Agency for Active Labour Market Policies (ANPAL) decided to introduce a Qualitative Profiling Service in the context of the activities carried out by local employment offices' operators. The qualitative profiling service provides information and data regarding the jobseeker's personal transition status, through a semi-structured questionnaire administered to PES clients during the guidance interview. The questionnaire responses allow PES staff to identify, for each client, proper activities and policy measures to support jobseekers in their reintegration into the labour market. Data and information gathered by the qualitative profiling tool are the following: frequency, modalities and motivations for clients to apply to local employment offices; clients' expectations and skills; difficulties that they have faced during the previous working experiences; strategies, actions undertaken and activated channels for job search. These data are used to assess jobseekers' personal and career characteristics and to measure their employability level (qualitative profiling index), in order to develop and deliver tailor-made action programmes for each client. This paper illustrates the use of the above-mentioned qualitative profiling service on the national territory and provides an overview of the main findings of the survey: concerning the difficulties that unemployed people face in finding a job and their perception of different aspects related to the transition in the labour market. The survey involved over 10.000 jobseekers registered with the PES. Most of them are beneficiaries of the 'citizens' income', a specific active labour policy and social inclusion measure. Furthermore, data analysis allows classifying jobseekers into a specific group of clients with similar features and behaviours, on the basis of socio-demographic variables, customers' expectations, needs and required skills for the profession for which they seek employment. Finally, the survey collects PES staff opinions and comments concerning clients' difficulties in finding a new job and also their strengths. This is a starting point for PESs' operators to define adequate strategies to facilitate jobseekers' access or reintegration into the labour market.

Keywords : labour market transition, public employment services, qualitative profiling, vocational guidance

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