



Labour migration

Ethically recruiting and managing migrant workers

Bruxelles, December 2008



Recruiting specialized workers for ‘Old World’ countries in Europe

Recruiting specialized workers for “Old World” countries is a part of a context in which labor migration still encounters cultural, linguistic, and bureaucratic obstacles that make it even more difficult to bring together job supply and demand in an increasingly global market. There is a huge, unexpressed demand in destination countries for numerous jobs that do not require a high level of instruction. As a result, there is a risk, on one hand, of losing ancient trades (i.e., carpenter) and, on the other, of being unable to satisfy essential needs such as healthcare and housing (think of the chronic need for nurses and skilled workers in these countries).

Foreign labor is therefore a strategic factor that greatly contributes to the economic development of European countries. There are several critical aspects, however, such as verifying and ensuring legal entry and residence in destination countries, guaranteeing worker qualifications, and the worker’s actual ability to integrate within the host country and to overcome inevitable cultural and language barriers.

The leader - Obiettivo Lavoro

Obiettivo Lavoro – Italy’s largest human resources management group – has developed a model for recruiting and managing foreign workers that ensures the respect and full integration of migrant workers and provides economic, social, and ethical benefits to companies. Obiettivo Lavoro has therefore chosen to affirm its social identity through a strong ethical philosophy and to make the ethical recruitment and management of specialized workers for Italy an element of distinction.

The group is present throughout Italy and also works through 5 companies and 12 branch offices abroad: Rumania, Slovak Republic, Poland, Brazil, Peru. In 2006, Obiettivo Lavoro recruited more than 800 persons abroad to work in the Italian healthcare, construction, metal and engineering, and woodworking sectors. The countries involved – through Obiettivo Lavoro’s direct presence in the country or its cooperation with institutional partners such as embassies, consulates, universities – were Bolivia, Bosnia, Brazil, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Romania, Serbia, the Slovak Republic, and the Ukraine.

After carefully analyzing the need for specialized workers in the Italian labor market, Obiettivo Lavoro directly recruits potential workers in their country of origin. Afterwards, it selects resources based on professional and language skills.

The selected worker receives language and professional training in his or her country and is assisted in completing all bureaucratic procedures necessary for emigration.

When the workers reach the country of destination, they are met by Obiettivo Lavoro staff and given accommodations. They are assisted in completing additional bureaucratic procedures. Workers receive on-the-job training at the company and are assisted during the entire period of their contract (this “training in everyday life” can also include, for example, calling branch managers late at night for the name of a good doctor).

During the entire period of the contract, the client and Obiettivo Lavoro monitor the worker’s performance to ensure that he or she satisfies requirements. Obiettivo Lavoro also checks that the worker has no problem settling in and adapting to the place and company.

The facilitator – Impronta Etica

Impronta Etica is a non-profit organization established in 2001 for the promotion and development of corporate social responsibility. The purpose of the association is to favor sustainable development by creating a network between companies and organizations that consider social commitment an essential part of their mission and that practice corporate social responsibility.

The primary objective is to maintain contacts between members and with similar national institutions, and to encourage them to actively participate in international networks dealing with business ethics and accountability. As a National Partner Organization of CSR Europe, the association also works to strengthen Italy’s presence in Europe.

Impronta Etica organizes themed work groups with member companies to identify innovative tools and processes. It also provides updates and information about successful experiences and projects in Italy and abroad.

Today Impronta Etica has 25 member companies, including 11 small and mid-sized companies: Coop Adriatica, Granarolo, Conad, Camst, Coopfond, Scs Azioninova, Coop Ansaloni, Unipol Gruppo Finanziario, Coop Murri, Hera, Nordiconad, Coop Consumatori Nordest, Homina, Piacenza74, Argon

Sette, CMB, Manutencoop, Obiettivo Lavoro, Coop Costruzioni, GamEdit Srl, Emil Banca, CCC – Consorzio Cooperative Costruzioni, Palm Spa, Indica Srl, and Tetra Pak.

Workshop objectives

The main objective of the workshop was to favor transferability of the Obiettivo Lavoro method, to extend the benefits that it generates:

- **Economic:**
 - It contributes to the economic development of the area through qualified and motivated specialized workers that are hard to find in the destination countries.
 - It helps preserve trades that risk disappearing (i.e., carpenters) and sectors that are important to society (i.e., healthcare).
- **Social:**
 - It fights black-market work in high-risk sectors (i.e., construction).
 - It is people-oriented.
 - It helps create a culturally integrated and balanced society.
 - It reduces bureaucratic red tape.
 - It helps improve the functioning of essential services that are important to society.
- **Ethical:**
 - It guarantees transparency (through process traceability) and ensures legality in managing the influx of foreign workers;
 - It transfers ethical values to client companies involved in the process.

Workshop results

The main result of the workshop was the creation of the document:

A people-centered approach to labor migration: Guidelines for Companies and Stakeholders

The Guidelines were designed to examine labor migration based on a multi-stakeholder approach.

The information in the Guidelines derives from the notions discussed during four separate meetings between the companies and other stakeholders:

- The choice of theme: the importance of recruiting specialized workers abroad for “Old World” countries in Europe (September 2007);
- Worker selection in the countries of origin and reception in the destination country (November 2007);
- Insertion in the company (March 2008);
- Preparation and promotion of the Guidelines (June 2008).

The guidelines can be downloaded at the Impronta Etica website: www.improntaetica.org.

Stakeholders involved

Companies: CMB Carpi, Coop Adriatica, Coop Ansaloni, Manutencoop, Torno Spa, ZML Industries, Monte dei Paschi di Siena, WAM

Italian and international public institutions: Regione Emilia - Romagna, Agenzia Veneto Lavoro, IOM - International Organization for Migration.

Services sector: Progetto Promozione Lavoro Social Cooperative, Cospe

Universities and research institutes: Altis – Università Cattolica di Milano, IRES CGIL, Fundación Ética ed Economía (Argentina).

For more information:

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