

First Draft

ITALIAN NETWORK FOR REFINE

Draft Report – October 2004

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Network Partners:

Aiesec – Youth Organization
Asvi – Third Sector
Centro Italiano di Solidarietà – Third Sector
Giovani delle Acli di Roma – Youth Organization
Cnos-Fap – Vocational training
Sol. Co. Consorzio della Cooperazione sociale – Third Sector
Lumsa University – University
Scuola Iad, Università degli studi di Roma Tor Vergata - University

Foreword

The Italian network has tested two tools: the European curriculum vitae (cv) and the Diploma Supplement (ds). They seemed to us to be the best available for allowing mobility between different sectors.

The logic of the cv was easily understood by partners; the cv is a picture of the person. The logic of the ds was less clear, particularly for those sectors which do not issue diplomas or certificates.

The cv was first filled in by interviewees and then discussed and modified, if necessary, during the interview. The ds was discussed within each organization; each partner tried to use it as the final record of learning activities (formal, informal and non formal) that are carried out within each organization.

The testing of Ects was also considered, but after discussion the majority of the partners thought that its mode of calculation, i.e., 1 credit=25 hours workload, was not a transferable feature. What kind of "work" should be calculated where no work is involved? And, where work is involved, what is the unique measure for different levels of skills and responsibilities within one single organization?

In order to put the following notes into context, please remind that in Italy Third sector does not indicate unpaid, voluntary work, but mainly non-profit organizations, like Ong, cooperative societies and social enterprises. All of the Italian partners working in the Third sector correspond to this definition.

Not all of the interviews are done yet.

The European cv

Following the European format for cv, we present suggestions and problems that were raised during the interviews.

Work Experience

This part is easy to use because it is clear and well structured.

- Some candidates from Lumsa University, Third sector ASVI and Third sector Sol.Co. made a selection of their work experiences, so not all of them were included in the cv. They felt that providing prospective employers with a long list of previous experiences could be ineffective. When one reads this list one can find it too long, too detailed, and maybe not very clear. In the end, it is not very useful to give an clear idea of the candidate's profile.
- So one suggestion for the interviewee is: before filling the cv, think of your profile. Second suggestion for the interviewer: do not take for granted that the cv is exhaustive of the person who is in front of you. Go into deeper detail during the interviewee, for something important might be missing.
- A third sector candidate Sol.Co. proposes to regroup the work experiences for thematic activities (i.e. research, coordinating projects, and sector head, etc.) instead of listing them in chronological order.

Education and Training

- Third sector ASVI candidates pointed out the difference between education (high school diploma or university degree) and training. They believe that training is extremely relevant for professional goals; therefore while they describe in detail the subjects they covered in training, they omit this kind of information for what refers to education.
- According to the same candidates, it is not clear if and how one should insert training experience (i.e. Erasmus, LLL courses, language courses) not perfectly fitting into the format requirements (i.e. there is not a title, attendance, or a point of reference institution).
- Most candidates emphasized the difficulty in understanding the expression "level in national classification". Italian education does not have a formal National education framework which is spelled out as a point of reference for qualifications, although there is obviously an implicit framework.

Other Languages

Third sector ASVI candidates suggest that candidates should specify the kind of training or experiences certifying their linguistic competences (i.e. classroom course, language certification exams, living abroad, etc.). This would be an appropriate description of the level attained.

Personal Skills and Competences

Surely this is the part of the cv that generated more doubts, and discussions. Almost all candidates had difficulty writing this part of their cv.

- First of all we have to highlight how little candidates are used to consciously describing, evaluating and judging themselves.

Furthermore they show strong reticence and a remarkable embarrassment to admit and declare to another person their personal qualities, because they mistake self-evaluation with self-celebration. The format requirement that the context where skills and competences were developed must be indicated, is of fundamental help, because it allows candidates to frame their own statements, which they believe “arbitrary”, in real and concrete situations.

- Anyway, candidates said it is difficult to understand if and how personal experiences developed into competences, and social and organizational skills.

In particular, the interviewer from Scuolalad University remarked some initial embarrassment from candidates when facing this section, and later observed an important change: candidates recognized the importance of this kind of information, and considered the social and organizational skills they use in their daily life (i.e. family life, sports, volunteer work), highlighting the need of having these skills and competences in the workplace.

A candidate from Scuolalad University thinks the management of a family unit of five to be a fundamental element to add to her profile, because in the family context she developed a skill for facing anything with method and organization, which is very useful in the workplace.

- Analyzing and defining one’s own social and organizational skills was difficult; in this part of the cv, it could be useful to identify some basic and advanced skills, and give examples. It could also be useful to distinguish between formal, informal and non formal learning, and to explicitly ask candidates to link developed skills to actual experiences.

During the interview, many candidates talked about important experiences outside the working or educational world and in the volunteer organizations, which were not included in their cv because they did not come to mind as they filled the cv. The interviewer’s role in identifying these informal and non formal experiences, and letting them come to the surface, was crucial. The cv was a tool that could be use to register them, but not a tool that help the candidate understand what the relevant things were.

- For this reason the interviewers from Lumsa University, Scuolalad University, Third sector Sol.Co. and VT Cnos-Fap suggested to meet with the candidate before he/she writes his/her cv: helping them see themselves as having skills and personal and organizational competences, distinguishing the different fields in which the working and non-working experiences are divided, and spotting skills and competences they have to use and develop in different context.

Items to add

- Third sector ASVI candidates highlight the lack of a specific section dedicated to expectations and future goals, they emphasize the need for expressing their professional and life goals and future intentions for work and education. Future projects could help structuring more adequately the candidate’s present profile.
- Some Third Sector Sol.CO. and CNOS-FAP V T candidates stressed the same need.
- GA Youth Organization candidates, who are under 28 and have little work experience, think they are missing the possibility to explain why their cv is sent to a specific potential employer. There is not a section dedicated to the motivation leading the candidate to apply to a certain organization for a certain position. They regard the impossibility to present oneself in a direct way as a negative feature. The cv format was seen as a dry repetition of facts, which were not very telling.

Many candidates feel the need to present themselves in a more personal way, highlighting their values, which can emerge not only from their past experiences, but more importantly from their future plans.

Finally, a specific section for publications is missing.

Comments by interviewers

- The interviewer from CNOS-FAP VT indicates the difficulty some young candidates may have to understand some concepts (i.e. *multicultural environment*, or the difference between *occupation* and *position*) and thinks that this format is suitable for people with a high cultural and educational level. Therefore, he thinks it would be advisable for a tutor or a trainer to meet the candidates, once before they write their CVs, to help them use this tool and to recognize their own personal skills and competences, and a second time after they have written their cv.
- The interviewer from Third Sector ASVI highlights the lack of a section dedicated to describe candidates' values, dreams, and professional and life objectives. Providing information about personal objectives is fundamental, especially for people such Third Sector ASVI course participants, who feel the need of move from the "For Profit" to the "No Profit" professional field. This kind of information actually seems to be useful for any kind of employer, who wants people to share the values of the organization.
- Third Sector Sol.Co., LUMSA University and Scuola IAD University interviewers indicated that the section on "personal skills and competences" was very difficult to fill.
- GA Youth Organization interviewer said that, in order to write the cv, candidates must already have a high level of self-reflection. The format requires information not only on education and work experience, but also on personal skills and competences; young candidates were forced to a self-analysis, which they all judged in a positive way, but were not prepared to.

Diploma Supplement

Only some partners of the Italian network have tested the ds so far. The results were very different; therefore we will present them separately.

1. Scuolalad University: The ds was written in every part without difficulties.

2. CNOS-FAP Vocational Training: Ds is easy to fill and it can be used by the vocational training centers. However, it is not easy to establish what is the level of the qualification attained, as well as the grades, since the final test is not always required.

3. Third Sector ASVI: Two suggestions.

The ds in section 3.1 requires the level of qualification and the classification of the title within the National educational system. ASVI organizes courses for the management of non profit organizations, which are not part of the officially recognized VT sector. In order to better asses the good level of training involved in this kind of "informal" certification, ASVI proposed to integrate ds with a section on the organization that issues it, and particularly on the percentage of people employed, after obtaining the qualification. This could give more impact on prospective employers. It would be useful to integrate information on grades with others concerning the student's commitment and participation to the course, as well as goals and future plans.

4. Third Sector Sol.Co: in the area of third sector, in particular cooperative societies, the ds could be used as a "work certification" and should be modified in a radical way to offer a description of the candidate's work background. Third Sector Sol.Co. proposes its modified version of ds.

Section 1: No changes.

Section 2: Area of the work experience.

Section 3: Rank occupied and roles held.

Section 4: Position held and assessment by the coop.

Section 5: Possible responsibilities and demonstrated potential of the worker.

Section 6: No changes.

Section 7: No changes.

Section 8: Information about the market sector where the coop operates.

5. Giovani ACLI youth association: they tested the tool and propose substantial changes of the diploma supplement but are currently working on a proposal.