

In collaborazione con il Centro Studi Internazionali e Comparati Marco Biagi

A job for everyone. The key word is ‘education’

by Michele Tiraboschi

The dignity of the individual and the demands of justice require that we continue to prioritize the goal of access to steady employment for everyone, particularly today. This is a key concept in Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*. It is significant that paragraph 32 of the encyclical also states that 'The significant new elements in connection with the development of people today in many cases require new solutions'. Innovations of this kind, however, are difficult to implement. In recent months, many institutions at a national and international level have had to deal with a sharp increase in unemployment and the loss of many jobs. The results, however, have not been encouraging. There is growing awareness that a strategy merely aimed at limiting the effects of the current economic and financial downturn in employment might turn out to be unsuccessful. On the other hand, according to many experts in the field, the recession offers a real opportunity to change current policies and to experiment with new solutions, as stated in the encyclical. In this connection, the governments of two influential countries, the UK and USA, have been the first to introduce innovative measures aimed at overcoming problems linked to the world of work. They have tried to focus on the promotion of training and new skills for the workers rather than on their legal protection, which is not always provided in practice. These countries have recently adopted a number of employment provisions with the intention of preparing today's workers for tomorrow's labor market. Nowadays, the provision of adequate training and

competencies is the only way for many people to avoid long-term labor market exclusion and dependence on social security (benefits and welfare measures), which affect individual creativity and freedom, as well as family and social relations. In this perspective, the White Paper issued by the Minister of Health, Labor, and Social Policies, Maurizio Sacconi, plays a leading role in outlining a new social model, as it states that a modern legal framework for industrial relations should be based on three main principles. First of all, a safe working environment should be provided, and in second place, adequate remuneration, so as to ensure decent living conditions. Finally, the White Paper safeguards the right to lifelong learning as a means to provide workers with employment stability, offering them an opportunity to realize their potential. In order to overcome the economic crisis, Italy also needs to invest in human capital again, especially in young people, providing educational programs which meet the needs of the production system. In this connection, we welcome the reform involving the education system and the school-to-work transition, aware of the fact that the term 'education' should also refer to the promotion of the individual, as highlighted by the encyclical.

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