

# Employment, Family and Community activities: A new balance for women and men

## Italy

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EUROPEAN FOUNDATION  
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## Foreword

Under contract No 98-3030-31 the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions entrusted the CERFE with the task of undertaking a research project at European level into “Employment, Family and Community Activities. A New Balance for Men and Women – National Report for Italy”. The Foundation ran this project under its four-year programme 1997 – 2000 devoted to investigating the economic and social challenges faced by European society today, with particular attention given to employment and job creation policies, measures promoting equal opportunities and to combating social exclusion.

The aims of this research (in Italy as in the other countries) are as follows:

- to analyse the type and amount of employment in family services which traditionally are provided as non-paid work;
- to identify measures that can be implemented in the workplace and public policy to improve the balance between working in the family services sector and the family and community activities for men and women;
- to chart the types of people who work in the family services sector and their working conditions;
- to show the impact of work in the family services sector on the distribution of family services and community activities, especially from the point of view of equal opportunities.

A team, composed of Alessandra Cancedda, sociologist and director of research and Emanuela Mastropietro, economist, was selected to undertake this research.

The study took place over an eight month period (from December 1998 to July 1999 inclusive) and involved the following activities:

- preparatory study and work programme;
- research at national level, including the gathering of statistics, research, documentation and undertaking interviews with approximately 10 interviewees with national qualifications, belonging to trade unions, private companies, voluntary associations, government departments;
- a survey at local level of Rome and Florence, carried out by means of gathering statistics, documentation, research, company directories, interviews with ten interviewees qualified at local level, including workers and managers for the communal authorities, representatives of local trade unions, representatives of private companies, interviews with managers of companies providing family services (10 interviewees in 10 organisations);
- a survey on workers in the family services sector, comprising an interview and questionnaire completed by 43 workers in Rome and Florence;
- meetings between the researchers and meetings with the project coordinator;
- drawing up an intermediary report and this final report.

A workshop on policies to increase employment in the family services sector at which the results and conclusions drawn from the study will be discussed is also planned.

This report, which is the end result of the research undertaken, was written by Alessandra Cancedda.

# Chapter 1: An overview of employment in family services in Italy

## 1. Historical and institutional background

In Italy, the State has never been particularly active in organising services for families. Indeed, for many decades, the notion of relieving women of the burden of domestic work was not seen as an important objective of social policies, which were limited to action only in situations of extreme poverty or disadvantage. Even today, the impact of this attitude is evident in the mismatch between demand and supply as regards family services, despite the many attempts that have been made over the past few decades to redress the balance. Public intervention has been limited to two of the five sectors covered by our research, that is, childcare and care of the elderly, and has been virtually non-existent in the catering, cleaning and home-maintenance sectors.

### 1.1 Childcare and care of the elderly

With respect to childcare on a more full-time basis:

- **kindergartens** (for children aged 3-6) are run by central government (State kindergartens), local government (community kindergartens), private non-profit-making bodies (mainly religious institutions) and, to a limited extent, private profit-making enterprises;
- **nurseries** (for children up to the age of three) are either public (community nurseries run by local government) or private (run by either non-profit-making or profit-making bodies).

Alongside these services, which are the most significant and well-established, the past few years have seen the emergence of other more part-time or "top-up" services (pre-school and after-school), in which the non-profit-making sector tends to be the main service-provider with, in most cases, the local authorities providing funding. These new services include nurseries run by parents, crèches and family play groups; play schemes (according to the most recent survey run by the Associazione delle Ludoteche Italiane [Association of Italian Play Schemes], there are 215 such schemes in the country, 17 run by cultural and leisure associations, seven by private associations and the rest by local authorities); "laboratories", often run in schools outside school hours and involving recreational and creative activities; libraries aimed specifically at small children; parenting classes and family mediation services; entertainment agencies, which organise shows, games and entertainments for young children, both at home and in public places. There are, of course, also nannies, who can be employed privately on the job market, for whom there are no requirements concerning registration with the public authorities or formal certification of their professional competence.

With respect to care of the elderly, services that provide mainly full-time care come in the traditional form of:

- retirement homes for elderly people who are able to care for themselves, run mainly by private profit-making enterprises or non-profit-making enterprises (particularly religious

- institutions) and, to a very limited extent, directly by public bodies<sup>1</sup>; the public authorities sometimes pay for elderly people on low incomes to stay in private institutions;
- nursing homes (mainly for elderly people who can no longer care for themselves), run mainly by private profit-making or non-profit-making bodies (again, the public authorities will often pay all or part of the fees).

However, the past twenty years have seen the emergence of alternative forms of care for the elderly, including forms of residential or semi-residential care that offer an alternative to the traditional forms, such as residential communities (where small numbers of elderly people live together, with the help of skilled workers), residential care homes (which aim to provide residential care for elderly people who can no longer care for themselves, but in a more caring and skilled environment than is offered by traditional nursing homes), and day centres (where elderly people can benefit from various social, health and personal services, recreational activities, etc); home-help services (providing social care or a combination of social and health care), offered by teams of workers who help elderly people with day-to-day activities in the home, dealing with paperwork and other tasks, for a few hours a week; panic buttons, with equipment installed in elderly people's homes being linked to a central unit, thus offering both social and psychological support and access to emergency services.

There has also been an increase in the range of services that enable elderly people to take advantage of recreational and cultural opportunities, such as social centres offering cultural and leisure activities, universities for the elderly (of which there are now about 400) and summer holiday camps.

All of these services are usually run either directly by the public authorities (the communal authorities in the case of more "social" services, communal authorities and local health units in the case of those including health care) or by the non-profit-making sector, often with public funding.

For better-off families, there is also the possibility of full-time care provided by home carers or nurses recruited on the private market (it is only very recently that agencies offering contacts in this respect have begun to emerge in Italy).

## 1.2. Catering

With respect to **catering**, we are, in Italy as in other industrialised countries, seeing, on the one hand, an increasing availability of easy-cook meals, such as frozen or pre-cooked meals, in the shops and, on the other, the emergence of enterprises specialising in delivering meals to the home and the massive expansion on the market of fast-food outlets and other types of self-service restaurants. We are also seeing a concomitant adjustment of traditional outlets, such as bars and cafes, which are increasingly offering meals that can be eaten quickly during the lunch break. We also need to note the increase in the number of school canteens, which were

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Associazione Nazionale Strutture per la Terza Età [ANASTE - National Association of Structures for the Elderly], there are 4 637 retirement homes in Italy, of which 996 are public, 1 501 run by religious orders, 1 220 run by private non-religious bodies and 920 former IPABs. IPABs, or Istituzioni Pubbliche di Assistenza e Beneficenza [Public Welfare Institutions] are private, non-profit-making institutions, which have the legal status of public bodies under Law 6972 of 17 July 1890. Privatisation of IPABs began in 1988 but their status as public or private bodies is still ambiguous (Cartabia and Rigano, 1996).

an exception 20 years ago but have now become the norm (partly because full-time schooling is much more common).

The trend towards diversification is also being accompanied by changes in the classification of economic activities produced by the Istituto Nazionale di Statistica [ISTAT - National Statistics Institute] (Istat, 1991). In 1981, this classification included just one entry for the catering sector; in 1991, it distinguished between "restaurants, trattorias, pizzerias, inns and bars offering meals", "rotisseries, fried-food shops and pizzerias offering take-away services" and "self-service restaurants". In 1991, furthermore, the classification included categories of economic activity that did not even exist in 1981, such as "provision of prepared meals" and "non-specialised sale of frozen products".

There is also a "social" dimension to the changes on the supply side, such as, for example, the fact that some supermarkets arrange for shopping to be delivered to elderly customers, or the provision of "meals-on-wheels", again for elderly people, by the communal authorities or voluntary associations.

### **1.3. Cleaning**

In Italy, domestic cleaning services are offered by home helps, who are recruited directly by families on the private market (often through their network of personal acquaintances). There are virtually no agencies or organisations offering these services in a more organised way.

With respect to washing and ironing, there have long been many small laundries and dry-cleaners' shops and, over the past few years, these have been joined by self-service launderettes, usually franchised out by large companies.

### **1.4. Home maintenance**

Painting and decorating, the maintenance and repair of electrical appliances and plumbing, removals and other home maintenance activities have traditionally been done by a myriad of small firms. The main trend over the past few years has been, on the one hand, a drop in the number of these small firms and, on the other, the emergence of consortia and networks of small traders (for example, to provide emergency services).

## **2. Growth of employment in family services**

### **2.1. Current situation**

The main sources of statistics on the number of jobs in family services at national level are the quarterly labour-force survey, surveys of industry and services, and population surveys. In all three cases, however, the system of classification used both for economic activities and for occupations means that the data are not sufficiently broken down to provide a picture of all the sectors covered by our research; this is particularly true in the case of childcare, care of the elderly and cleaning services. We can, however, provide some figures, based on the most recent data; and a few estimates can be made on the basis of various ISTAT sources.

### **a. Childcare and care of the elderly**

According to the quarterly labour-force survey conducted in mid 1998:

- in 1998, there were 304 029 people employed in occupations classified as "relating to personal services" (companions, skilled workers employed as home helps, some childcare workers - such as nannies and childminders - and some workers offering services for the elderly - such as home helps and nurses offering care in the home);
- there were 60 728<sup>2</sup> people employed in occupations classified as "middle-management occupations in the area of family services" (including the most skilled workers in childcare and care of the elderly, such as social workers, child welfare workers and skilled and experienced workers providing services for elderly people still capable of caring for themselves).

Some recent estimates<sup>3</sup> suggest there are some 250 000 people employed in occupations relating to personal services (for the elderly, children and people with special needs) in the non-profit-making sector alone, while a further 50 000 are employed to provide personal services in the private profit-making sector.

### **b. Cleaning**

The number of people employed in domestic services is included in surveys (not as an occupation but as a sector of activity and, therefore, according to the classification of economic activities); however, the most reliable estimate seems to be the one made by the trade union, on the basis of the number of workers registered with the Istituto Nazionale per la Previdenza Sociale [INPS - National Institute of Social Insurance]. In particular, it is estimated that, for every home help whose position is officially registered with the INPS, there are three who are not registered. This would mean there are 700 000-800 000 home helps in Italy. Obviously, if we count as "jobs" only those of home helps whose position is regularised with the authorities (particularly those who pay social-security contributions), then the figure drops to the 186 214 home helps registered with the INPS in 1994.

According to ISTAT's mid-year survey of industry and services in 1996, there were 42 536 employees in laundries and dry-cleaners' shops.

### **c. Catering**

According to ISTAT's quarterly labour-force survey in mid-1998, the number of employers and employees in catering and public services amounted to a total of 663 185. According to ISTAT's mid-year survey of industry and services in 1996, however, the number of employees is lower (probably, since information is provided by employers, because some employees have not been included).

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<sup>2</sup> Data provided by ISTAT especially for this research project.

<sup>3</sup> Source: M Alboresi, CGIL - non-profit-making sector, personal interview.

Table 1: *Employees in local units in certain sectors of economic activity relating to meal preparation*

	<b>No. of employees</b>
Retail trade in frozen products	9 244
Restaurants, trattorias, pizzerias, inns and bars offering meals	214 501
Rotisseries, fried-food shops and pizzerias offering take-away services	20 690
Self-service restaurants	9 904
Bars and cafes	206 131
Canteens	47 647
Provision of prepared meals	11 148
<b>Total</b>	<b>519 265</b>

Source: *ISTAT, 1996*

#### **d. Home maintenance**

With respect to home maintenance, if we exclude people who install equipment (plumbers, electricians, aerial fitters, heating engineers, etc), who are not relevant to our research, the 1996 survey of industry contains the figure of 47 629 employees in "painting and window maintenance", which also includes decorators (obviously, the survey does not specify whether these people work mainly for families or organisations); there are no headings that enable us to identify the number of employees working in removals, house clearance, etc.

## **2.2. Women and men in family services**

Occupational segregation is a continuing feature of most family-services sectors. In particular, personal services (childcare and care of the elderly) and cleaning services are offered primarily by women; home-maintenance services are provided by men; and catering services are provided by both women and men. There have been no significant changes in trends, apart from an increase in the number of men employed as home helps, mainly non-EU workers.

According to some figures calculated by the Istituto per lo Sviluppo della Formazione Professionale dei Lavoratori [ISFOL - Institute for the Development of Vocational Training] on the basis of ISTAT data, the family-services sector (71.3%) and the cleaning sector (68.4%) are, together with teaching (73.4%), occupational sectors in which women account for the majority of the workforce (ISFOL, 1998), whereas the sector relating to small traders, including plumbers, electricians and painters and decorators, has a predominance of men (76.5%).

With regard to **childcare and care of the elderly**, if we look again at the ISTAT labour-force survey conducted in mid-1998, we can see that women account for 73% of employees in middle-management positions in the field of family services and 71% of employees in occupations relating to personal services.

In the **cleaning** sector (cleaning, dry-cleaning and laundry services, etc), women predominate (60-70%). Women account for 97% of EU citizens and 74.5% of non-EU citizens employed as home helps (or at least as far as those registered with the INPS are concerned).

In the catering sector, however, neither gender is particularly predominant, with women accounting for 44.6% of the total.

Occupations concerning home maintenance are less readily identifiable in the ISTAT classification, but the high prevalence of men employed in these trades as a whole remains a constant.

### **2.3. Recent employment trends and future prospects**

Family services have generated new jobs over the past 20 years. At present, it is impossible to assess precisely to what extent we are talking about additional employment and to what extent we are talking about replacement employment. However, given that in many cases the services provided are new, it is reasonable to assume that many of the jobs involved are also new.

#### **a. Childcare and care of the elderly**

The data on childcare and care of the elderly are unsystematic and fragmented but nonetheless seem to suggest a rise in employment.

This rise seems to be linked mainly to the expansion of the tertiary sector, with the number of social cooperatives more than doubling (from 2 300 to 4 800) between 1994 and 1998 and the number of people they employ almost tripling (from 38 000 to 108 000) over the same period<sup>4</sup>. A recent survey of a sample of organisations in the tertiary sector (IREF, 1998) also indicated that:

- over the past five years, the number of people employed by organisations in the tertiary sector offering welfare services has risen in 54% of cases and fallen in 36% of cases;
- 59% of the social cooperatives interviewed have seen their staffing levels increase over the past five years, whilst the number of people employed has remained essentially stable in 29% and fallen in 12% of them;
- with regard to other types of association, staffing levels have risen in 39% of organisations and fallen in only 5% of them over the past five years;
- 64% of organisations are intending to expand their workforce over the next few years, mainly via atypical forms of work (only 24% of organisations will be taking on full-time staff, 30% will be recruiting part-time workers, 14% helpers with continuous, coordinated collaboration contracts, and 23% workers with casual collaboration contracts).

In addition to the private, non-profit-making sector, the profit-making sector has also contributed to the expansion of employment in family services, though no data are available on this. Finally, a certain, though smaller, number of new jobs have been created in services run directly by public bodies: for example, the number of nurseries increased from 1 657 in 1980 to 2 180 in 1992, with the number of people employed in them rising by 5 455.

With respect to the most sought-after occupational job profiles, two features stand out: the rise in demand for managerial staff in tertiary-sector organisations and the increased demand for some specialists in the sector of home care for the elderly. As regards the first trend, it might be noted that the IREF survey shows that 26% of organisations in the tertiary sector are

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<sup>4</sup> Data produced by the Ministry of Labour, National Cooperation Observatory; also included in the Piano Nazionale per l'Occupazione [National Employment Plan] for 1999.



planning to employ people specialising in human-resources management, while 15% are planning to employ administrative staff, 10% marketing and fund-raising workers, 8% management staff and 7% public-relations staff (IREF, 1998). As regards the second trend, the table below is based on a survey conducted by Union Camere [Union of Chambers of Trade] of the staff needs of private Italian enterprises for the two-year period 1998-1999 (Union Camere, Ministero del Lavoro, 1998). It may be noted that the people most likely to be sought after by enterprises in the next few years are home carers and social/health workers, followed by social workers.

Table 2: *Staff needs of enterprises for the two-year period 1998-1999 - childcare and care of the elderly*

	No. of recruits	Percentage replacing outgoing employees (%)
Primary-school and nursery-school teachers and other qualified teachers *	956	36.5
Social workers	1019	42.3
Home carers	1453	27.9
Social/health workers	1722	55.5
Nurses to provide care in the home	57	17.5
Workers with the disabled	663	23.4

\* data on private schools only

Source: *Union Camere, Ministero del Lavoro, Excelsior system, 1998*

## **b. Catering**

Still more significant, partly because better recorded, are the data indicating expansion of employment in catering services.

Table 3 - Rise in employment in enterprises replacing the home preparation of meals

	<b><u>Increase 1991-1996</u></b>		
	<b>No. of enterprises</b>	<b>No. of local units</b>	<b>No. of employees</b>
Retail trade in frozen foods	+2861	+2974	+5578
Restaurants, trattorias, pizzerias, inns and bars offering food	+6709	+6473	+626
Rotisseries, fried-food shops, pizzerias offering take-away services	+1727	+1794	+245
Self-service restaurants	+225	+333	+5101
Canteens	+141	-1576	+6756
Supply of pre-cooked meals	+346	+156	+2593

Source: *CERFE calculations based on ISTAT data, 1991 and 1996*

As can be seen from the table, there has been a rise in employment in virtually all the more "innovative" categories of activity, such as the retail trade in frozen foods, self-service restaurants and the provision of pre-cooked meals, as well as in more traditional categories that are undergoing expansion, such as canteens in enterprises, schools and hospitals. The rise in employment seems, however, to be relatively modest, despite a marked increase in the

number of enterprises and local units, in the more traditional sectors, such as restaurants, trattorias, pizzerias, rotisseries and fried-food shops.

The forecasts concerning enterprises' staff needs over the next two years also indicate a rise in employment levels in the sector: even excluding bar staff and waiters and waitresses in "traditional" restaurants, forecasts suggest that more than 16 000 workers will be recruited in the sector, with more than three-quarters of them being recruited for new jobs.

Table 4: *Staff needs of enterprises for the two-year period 1998-1999 - preparation of meals*

	No. of recruits	Percentage replacing outgoing employees
Cooks in restaurants and meal preparation	7894	29.6
Other employees preparing meals	7743	24.4
Canteen workers	726	32.8
Serving staff in canteens	103	31.1
Buffet assistants	571	9.5

Source: *Union Camere, Ministero del Lavoro, Excelsior system, 1998.*

### c. Cleaning

In the domestic cleaning sector, the market for home helps is undergoing strong expansion, though this trend cannot be corroborated by data. Indeed, over the past few years, the statistics indicate only a huge drop in the number of domestic workers paying social-security contributions (the number of home helps officially registered with the INPS dropped from 257 018 in 1986 to 186 214 in 1994). The number of non-EU citizens working as home helps is rising, with this group accounting for 28% of registered workers in 1994 (though it is likely that the majority of non-EU citizens working in the sector are not registered). The job market in cleaning enterprises is also expanding though, as we have already mentioned, the services offered by these enterprises concern only a very small number of families. The number of employees in this sector rose from 70 672 in 1981 to 232 684 in 1996 (+229%). There has however been a drop in employment in laundries and dry-cleaners' shops, with the number of employees falling by nearly 7 000 over a fifteen-year period: from 49 492 in 1981 to 42 536 in 1996.

### d. Home maintenance

In the home maintenance sector, we are seeing a gradual drop both in the number of enterprises and in the number of employees. For example, the number of people doing painting and decorating work fell by 1 540 between 1991 and 1996 (from 49 169 to 47 629). This might be in line with a more general downward trend in the number of small enterprises (which would tend to take on this kind of work) and with the emergence of larger enterprises which bring together a larger number of workers but are not absorbing the jobs being lost with the closure of smaller enterprises<sup>5</sup>.

## 2.4. Employment, self-employment and other types of paid work

In Italy as in other countries, widespread use is made of undeclared labour in family services, particularly in the case of home helps (see preceding section). Because of this, many policies

<sup>5</sup> Union Camere, Ministry of Labour, Excelsior system, 1998.

associated with job creation in family services now tend to be designed to encourage the elimination of undeclared employment. However, lack of knowledge as to the extent and nature of undeclared employment and, sometimes, an inability to distinguish its various forms and degrees of "seriousness" are restricting the effectiveness of these policies.

Even within "official" employment, there are various types of situation. In sectors in which the public authorities are not involved in buying and selling services, there is a prevalence of self-employed workers in areas such as laundries and dry-cleaners' shops (68.6% of workers), painting and decorating (73.4%), rotisseries, fried-food shops and pizzerias offering take-away services (71.1%), and restaurants, trattorias, pizzerias, inns and bars offering meals (52.0%); whereas employed people account for the vast majority of workers in self-service restaurants (where self-employed people account for only 10.4% of workers), canteens (4.7%) and the provision of pre-cooked meals (8.3%).

Between employed and self-employed work, there is a vast intermediate group of workers known as "parasubordinati" [workers with quasi-subordinate status], who are employed under continuous, coordinated collaboration contracts. Attempts are being made to regulate this type of work, which probably accounts for a large proportion of employment in the family-services sector<sup>6</sup>.

Also coming between employed and self-employed work, we have the working members of cooperatives: since they share in the risks of enterprise, national collective labour agreements may be waived in their respect.

Another position that to a certain extent sits astride the fence between self-employment and employment is that of home helps. Domestic work has for some time now been governed by a national collective agreement (13 July 1988)<sup>7</sup>.

### **3. Aspects concerning the demand for family services**

According to some experts (Pollastri and Tozzi, 1999; Gallino, 1998), there is a vast, unsatisfied potential demand for family services in Italy.

#### **3.1. Childcare**

Most childcare is currently provided by mothers, sometimes with the help of other relatives. This might also explain the low rate of female participation in the labour force (42.9%), as well as the lowest birth rate in the world (1.2 children per woman) (OECD, 1996). Indeed:

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<sup>6</sup> For example, on 1 May 1998, various employers' associations and trade unions signed the first national collective agreement on continuing coordinated collaboration, including in the non-profit-making sector and social and health institutions.

<sup>7</sup> Among other things, there is a table of minimum wages for domestic workers, which is regularly updated by a national commission. For domestic workers who do not live in, the hourly rate of pay is set at a minimum of Lit 5 410 for the least skilled group and a maximum of Lit 9 800 for the most skilled; for domestic workers who live in, the minimum rate of pay ranges from Lit 691 120 to Lit 1 237 820 for full-time workers, from Lit 464 180 to Lit 711 750 for part-time workers (25 hours a week); for care during the night (from eight o'clock in the evening to eight o'clock in the morning), the rate of pay ranges from a minimum of Lit 1 031 510 to a maximum of Lit 1 423 490; for staying over night, the rate of pay is Lit 825 220. However, it might be noted that the rates actually paid on the market tend to be higher (see Chapter 3).

- there are only 5.8 nursery places for every 100 children aged 0-2 (there were 5 for every 100 in 1983), with marked regional differences (ranging from a maximum of 9.8 places per 100 children in the north-east to a minimum of 2 places per 100 children in the south) (Istituto degli Innocenti, 1998);
- there are very few crèches or family play groups (childcare in someone else's home), though the recent law on the Fondo Nazionale per l'Infanzia [National Children's Fund] is intended to promote the spread of such arrangements;
- the lack of services is countered by the use of nannies, but this involves only 3.7% of families with children up to the age of 13 (Pollastri and Tozzi, 1999).

### 3.2. Care of the elderly

As regards care of the elderly, too, it is reasonable to state that the burden of caring for elderly people who can no longer look after themselves falls largely on families, and particularly on women.

Home care services are used by 358 090 families, or 7.8% of all Italian families; in addition to these, there are a further 2255 000, or 11% of families, who do not use these services but need them; of these, 864 000 (or 4.2% of families) say they need them badly. Overall, then, only 13.7% of families who need home care services are actually able to benefit from them.

Other figures confirm the lack of both social and health services for the elderly in Italy. In particular:

- in 1996, in only eight of 13 Italian regions did the percentage of communal authorities providing home care services exceed 50%, whilst in another five, these services were available in fewer than half (sometimes only a fifth) of communes (Censis, 1996);
- also in 1996, panic buttons and telephone assistance services were systematically provided by public administrations in every commune in only four regions, and in a limited number of communes in another seven regions (and were not offered at all in ten regions) (Censis, 1996);
- in 1995, 49.8% of elderly people interviewed in a national survey complained about the lack of centres for elderly people in their town (SPI-CGIL, 1996).

As regards social/health care, too, the slow spread of new services is evidenced by the delayed implementation of the Progetto Obiettivo Anziani [Project Objective the Elderly] approved some ten years ago by the Minister for Health. In 1996 (Censis, 1996):

- day centres had been opened in only 10 regions;
- hospital services in the home were being offered by only five of the 200 or so health authorities in Italy;
- only 8% of planned bed places in residential care homes were actually available.

On the other hand, more progress seemed to have been made as regards the spread of integrated home care services (social and health care), which had been introduced by 156 local health authorities (about three-quarters of all health authorities in Italy).

### **3.3. Catering**

In 1980, an Italian family spent an average of LIT 38 145 a month on eating out; by 1996, this figure had risen to LIT 127 937 (EUR 64). Although Italians tend to eat out less than people in the other major European countries (84 times a year, as against 102 in Germany, 103 in France and 124 in the UK), annual per capita expenditure on eating out is higher in Italy than in any other European country (LIT 699 000/ EUR 350, as against LIT 689 000/EUR 345 in France, LIT 530 000/ EUR 265 in Spain, LIT 513 000/ EUR 345 in Germany and LIT 434 000/ EUR 217 in the UK. Expenditure on eating out is higher in families in which the head of household is in a high-status occupation: LIT 278 660/ EUR 139 in the case of the liberal professions, but only LIT 101 942/ EUR 51 for the families of agricultural workers. Also, age is inversely proportional to propensity to eat out. Nonetheless, it is believed that the eating habits of pensioners in the near future will be completely different from those of the past or of today; this for many reasons, but primarily because of higher levels of education and greater awareness in the use of leisure time (FIPE-CESCOM, 1998).

### **3.4. Cleaning services**

There are still very few families (and women) who can count on help with domestic cleaning.

According to ISTAT's multi-purpose survey<sup>8</sup>, fewer than 1.5 million Italian families (or a little more than 7% of the total) say they use domestic services (with the "core" service usually being cleaning). These services are used more often than average by single-person households and one-parent families, and by the families of managers, employers and professionals (although these services are not used only by the middle and upper classes but also by the families of blue-collar workers, pensioners and office workers). It might be noted that use of domestic services is particularly common in metropolitan areas (being used by 13% of families in these areas, as against a national average of 7%), and that they are used very little in southern Italy (5%). With respect to families that do not currently take advantage of domestic services, in some 4 388 549 of them, or 21.5% of all Italian families, all the adults are employed full-time in a job outside the home (which means no adult is available to do household chores). This group is, therefore, the one that could give rise to further expansion of these services.

## **4. Public policy measures to promote employment in family services**

On the basis of interviews with informed experts at national and local level and an examination of the documentation, we have been able to identify five main groups of policy measures that are having or may have an impact on the generation of employment in family services.

### **4.1. Policies to strengthen the tertiary sector**

The first, most visible and successful policy has been the one to strengthen the tertiary sector, on which potential development of family services over the next few years will largely

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<sup>8</sup> The data are drawn from CER calculations based on data from ISTAT's multi-purpose survey relating to 1996, reproduced in Corrado Pollastri and Massimo Tozzi, 1999.

depend. In this respect, we can mention a few measures that are already being implemented or are in the process of being adopted:

- **establishing the legal status of social cooperatives**, under Law 381/91, which defines their legal status and prerogatives and provides them with certain benefits in terms of social-security contributions and taxation. This has had a considerable impact, including in terms of job creation (as we mentioned earlier, the number of social cooperatives more than doubled between 1994 and 1998 and the number of people working for them nearly tripled over the same period);
- **measures to integrate social enterprises** in the system of programming and providing services at regional and local level. These measures have been introduced by several regions, with forms of concerted planning and the increasing involvement of the tertiary sector in the management of services (the national framework law to reform social services, which is currently under debate in parliament, should lead to moves in this direction at national level);
- **tax and contributions relief** for social cooperatives, which is currently being looked into;
- **extending the tax relief and incentives already available for small and medium-sized enterprises to social cooperatives**. These measures were introduced by a recent financial law (extension of VAT exemption to social benefits provided by social cooperatives; relief from social-security contributions for three years for new employees recruited by social cooperatives; extension to social enterprises and cooperatives of all the public incentives relating to benefits of any kind provided for industry under current regulations);
- **review of the regulations governing public contracts and agreements** with a view to improving quality and not merely containing costs, so as to avoid the tendency to give preference to the lowest tenders, which was creating huge problems for cooperatives, which were being forced to pay their workers as little as possible and use poor-quality products;
- **giving incentives for the introduction of quality control and certification systems**. The Department of Social Affairs, in particular, is pursuing a policy of encouraging the emergence of forms of certification promoted by the actual organisations representing social enterprises, rather than imposing standards and regulations from the outside;
- **funding service structures for the voluntary sector**, particularly under Law 266 of 1991, which provides for the creation of service centres for the voluntary sector at regional and local level. These centres are run by voluntary associations themselves and funded with a fifteenth of the profits of the Fondazioni Bancarie [banking foundations], which manage savings banks and the bodies that have emerged from public credit institutes (there are currently 44 centres in 12 regions; three of these are regional centres, and the others are provincial or interprovincial);
- **tax deductibility of donations to non-profit-making organisations offering social services** (a category that includes all associations, committees, foundations, cooperatives and other private bodies that provide social services), as established under Law 460 of 1997, which allows donors (whether individuals or enterprises) to deduct from their declared income any donations made to such organisations. The impact of this measure is, however, limited by the fact that the deductible amount may not exceed LIT 4 million (or about EUR 2 000);
- **relief for social-welfare associations**, which is to be introduced under the forthcoming law on social-welfare associations.

## 4.2. Sectoral policies to expand family services

A second group of measures of significance for job creation in family services comprises policies to expand services in some sectors, particularly childcare and care of the elderly.

With respect to childcare services, the trend is both to strengthen "traditional" services, such as nurseries, and to promote new types of services, to be offered mainly by the tertiary sector.

As regards the latter, the most important measure in terms of impact on job creation is the establishment, under Law 285/1997, of a Fondo Nazionale per l'Infanzia [National Children's Fund] of about LIT 880 billion (EUR 440 million) to finance measures for infants and children. These will include services to support the parent/child relationship, measures to combat poverty and violence (including alternatives to putting minors into educational/care institutions), experimenting with social and educational services for infants, setting up free-time leisure and educational services, and a series of positive actions to promote the rights of children and adolescents. These funds are managed by local bodies, which are tending to use the voluntary sector to provide services.

As regards care of the elderly, steps are being taken to reorganise existing services and introduce new ones, with a view to promoting better integration of social and health services by, for example, setting up integrated home care teams offering both social and health care, or establishing forms of residential care that enable elderly people to benefit from health care without being hospitalised (residential care homes). These measures take a long time to implement, however, and their impact in employment terms is certainly more limited than that of traditional residential structures for the elderly managed by the private sector or families' increasing use of home carers to care for elderly people, drawing on the enormous supply of low-cost labour represented by non-EU immigrants.

Parliament is debating a bill for a framework law on an integrated system of services for individuals and the community, which would involve the creation of a national fund of LIT 500 billion in 1999 to set up integrated networks of personal and family services, with particular focus on elderly people who are no longer able to care for themselves. The intention is for the non-profit-making sector to be involved in designing, planning and managing these service networks.

## 4.3. Policies to promote private demand for services

A third group of measures is intended to promote private demand for family services, by encouraging families to purchase these services directly (rather than through local authorities) and promoting the development of a family services market, with the additional aim of reducing social enterprises' dependence on public funding. However, it would seem there has been little practical take-up of these policies. Of the measures currently under examination, two seem to be particularly significant:

- **deductibility from income of expenses incurred for the purchase of home-help services**, which is to be introduced under a law that should soon be adopted. This would contribute significantly to expanding quality employment in this sector;
- **experimenting with service vouchers** to promote the purchase of family services.

#### 4.4. Policies to promote the regularisation of undeclared employment

There still seem to be very few measures to bring out into the open the enormous amount of undeclared employment in the family-services sector. Those that have been implemented or are being studied include:

- **setting up databases, bulletin-boards and other forms of establishing contact between supply and demand for domestic services** (examples in this respect are a CGIL initiative in the region of Campania, with the creation of a database of domestic workers that can be used by families; and the register set up by the communal authorities in Rome of the some 6000 qualified teachers without permanent posts in nurseries, whom families can confidently employ to care for their children);
- **enforcement of compliance with labour regulations by bodies working under agreement with the public authorities** (a measure which, when applied strictly, is nevertheless of doubtful effect with regard to the creation of new jobs and, above all, will have no influence on the great bulk of hidden labour, namely self-employment);
- **introduction of incentives to declare domestic labour** (which is, however, coming up against considerable obstacles, since it is still very convenient, for both the employer and the employee, not to declare the employment relationship).

#### 4.5. Policies to promote professional competence and status in the family-services sector

A last group of measures comprises those intended to promote the greater professional competence and status of workers in the family-services sector. At least two types of measures can be distinguished here:

- measures concerning the **training of workers with specialist tasks**, such as home carers, teachers or community workers. These measures are usually implemented by the regional authorities, often in collaboration with non-profit-making organisations;
- **measures concerning training in enterprise skills and the management of social enterprises** (initiatives include the Meridia project to train managers of social enterprises and develop cooperation networks in Apulia, Calabria and Sardinia; several projects on cooperative enterprise run by the regional authorities of Emilia Romagna; various projects on service innovation and optimum use of human resources run by Confcooperative [confederations of cooperatives] in Lombardy, Umbria, the Marches, Veneto and Emilia Romagna);
- general measures to support **female enterprise** (Law 215/927) and various programmes financed with European funds).

To conclude, we should like to draw attention to the findings of a survey of voluntary sector organisations conducted by the IREF in 1998 and concerning measures that would be the most likely to increase these organisations' ability to generate new jobs.



Table 5: *Measures that have the most impact on job creation in the tertiary sector, according to tertiary sector organisations*

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	%
Promotion of services and infrastructures	45.6
Public service management concessions	44.3
Special contracts of employment	37.7
Access to low-interest funding	37.0
ONLUS law	33.5

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Source: *IREF, 1998*

As the researchers note, these data seem to suggest that tertiary sector organisations are calling not for assistance (such as tax benefits) but rather for promotional measures that will help to establish rules governing the market in social services and improve relations with the public authorities.

## Chapter 2: Case studies: Florence and Rome

### 1. Background data on the two cities

We conducted our case studies in Rome and Florence. The table below provides some data on population, employment and services in the two cities. Unless otherwise indicated, the data are taken from the 13th General Population Survey of 1991.

Table 1: *Background data on Rome and Florence*

	<b>Rome</b>	<b>Florence</b>
Resident population	2 775 250 <sup>9</sup>	403 294 <sup>10</sup>
Total population	2 819 232	432 112
Population over the age of 65	14.5	22.0
Children under the age of 14	12.3	9.1
Single-person households	24.7	29.7
Unemployment rate	18.9	10.1
Female unemployment rate	22.4	13.1
Activity rate	43.7	44.5
Female activity rate	32.4	34.6
% single-parent families	15.0	14.7
% total population that commutes daily into or within the commune	55.8	65.2
% workers who take more than 30 minutes to travel to their place of work	13.1	41.2
% resident active population employed in the economic sector of "other activities" (services)	83.3	74.6

Source: *CERFE calculations based on ISTAT data, 1991*

<sup>9</sup> At 31 December 1997, however, the resident population of the commune of Rome had fallen to 2 653 245.

<sup>10</sup> At 31 December 1997, however, the resident population of the Commune of Florence had already fallen to 379 689.

## 2. Florence

### 2.1. Existing services <sup>11</sup>

#### a. Childcare

Age group 0-3 years

- Florence has 35 nurseries: 29 run directly by the communal authorities, two run by private non-profit-making bodies under agreement with the communal authorities, and four run by private bodies. The communal nurseries take children aged 3-36 months and most of them are open from 7.30 to 16.30, though some are open longer hours (7.30-17.30) and others shorter (7.30-14.30);
- there are three services offering an alternative to nursery at eight different centres. These are called "spazi gioco" [play groups]; their opening hours are different from those of nurseries (sometimes until as late as 18.30 or 19.00), though some of them do not allow children to attend more than twice a week or more than four hours a day. In some, the arrangement is that parents stay with their children (which means they essentially offer play facilities and assistance) or a parent might be required to stay on a rota basis;
- finally, there is a trial service providing parenting training and support, which operates within nurseries. This is known as "Spazio incontro Il Bruchino" and enables parents to experiment with different ways of playing with their children and to compare and share experiences with other parents and experts.

Age group 3-6 years

- Florence has 103 kindergartens: 43 run by the State, 32 run by the communal authorities and 28 run by private bodies (35 religious and 3 non-religious bodies).

Age group over 6 years

For this age group, there are:

- children's libraries (one central library plus specialist children's sections in the five district libraries);
- several play schemes;
- pre-school and after-school services within primary schools.

Summer schools for children are also organised during the summer months, with participation being coordinated by the district authorities. There are also several entertainment agencies in the city, which organise recreational activities.

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<sup>11</sup> The data provided in this section are drawn mainly from documentation supplied by the education and social-services departments of the Commune of Florence, from the publication "Estate Serena '98" produced by the Department of Social Affairs of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, from telephone directories and Yellow Pages for 1998-1999, and from the 1996 mid-year survey of industry and services.

## **b. Care of the elderly**

Services for the elderly are mostly managed at decentralised level (by the five district councils) and coordinated at communal level:

- direct home care services. Within the five districts, the social services decide who is eligible for home care provided by specialist workers. Services include assistance with daily functions, help with housework, dealing with paperwork, shopping, accompanying elderly people on visits to the doctor and medical centres, help with functional recovery or rehabilitation, as prescribed by competent professionals. Some users of this service also receive meals-on-wheels. In 1998, the service was provided to some 1 400 elderly people in Florence, for a total of about 18 000 hours per month;
- indirect home care services. This service provides grants for families with elderly members who are totally or partially dependent, to help them pay third parties to provide care. In 1998, 500 users received funding under this service;
- day centres. Florence has eight day centres run by the communal authorities for elderly people who are totally or partially dependent or who are alone and need care. The centres provide social services (social secretariat, social service, legal and welfare advice), health care (in conjunction with district health units), social and cultural activities and personal care (canteen, laundry, bathing, help with personal hygiene);
- residential care homes. There are three residential care homes in Florence, each with a capacity of 40-60 beds. They offer personal care and support, together with nursing, re-education, rehabilitation, and general and specialist medical services;
- retirement homes. Florence has one communal retirement home and at least 27 private homes<sup>12</sup>;
- tele-assistance service. This service, run by the communal authorities, is provided in collaboration with voluntary associations.

There are also 14 cultural and leisure centres for the elderly run by the communal authorities, as well as a University of the Third Age.

## **c. Cleaning**

There are no organised services apart from those already mentioned that offer home care services for the elderly. According to the 1996 mid-year survey of industry and services, Florence has 230 laundries and dry-cleaners' shops<sup>13</sup>.

## **d. Catering**

The following table indicates the number of enterprises and local units in the catering sector in Florence, according to the 1996 mid-year survey of industry and services.

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<sup>12</sup> Whose addresses appear in the Yellow Pages for 1998-1999.

<sup>13</sup> However, the Yellow Pages for 1998-1999 contain listings of 120 laundries, 61 dry-cleaners' shops and 13 self-service laundromats.

Table 2: *Enterprises in the catering sector in Florence*

<b>Activity</b>	<b>No. of enterprises</b>	<b>No. of local units</b>
Restaurants, trattorias, pizzerias, inns and bars offering meals	494	525
Self-service and fast-food restaurants	5	6 <sup>14</sup>
Provision of pre-cooked meals	12	13
Canteens	11	39
Retail trade in frozen foods	54	56

Source: *ISTAT, 1996*

#### **d. Home maintenance**

Florence has 248 enterprises, with 256 local units, offering "painting and window maintenance services".

### **2.2. Jobs created in services**

#### **a. Childcare and care of the elderly**

As regards childcare and care of the elderly, the only available data concern employment by the communal authorities and, to some extent, in the tertiary sector.

With respect to childcare, the communal authorities employ 421 teaching and other staff (388 women and 33 men) in communal nurseries and 305 teachers in communal kindergartens.

With respect to care of the elderly, there is a core group of workers employed by the communal authorities, comprising 25 social workers, 126 social/welfare workers, 10 social/health workers and two cooks. Twenty-three workers and five cooks from two private firms work in the retirement home run by the communal authorities. Local home care services are provided by 147 workers from the Zenit Consortium, a temporary enterprise set up by social cooperatives.

It is estimated<sup>15</sup> that between 800 and 900 people work in the social cooperatives in Florence that run services for children or the elderly, often on behalf of the public authorities.

Workers in this sector tend to be mainly young people (childcare) and young adults aged between 25 and 35 (care of the elderly). There are very few men, particularly in services for very young children, though it should be noted that the majority of managers are men. There are also some foreign workers in social cooperatives, some of whom have completed vocational-training courses in Italy and have thus been able to obtain a qualification recognised by the public authorities (who rarely recognise qualifications obtained in the country of origin).

<sup>14</sup> However, the Yellow Pages for 1998-1999 list 16 outlets.

<sup>15</sup> Personal interview with the officer responsible for social cooperatives in the regional Lega delle Cooperative [Union of Cooperatives].

## b. Cleaning

In 1996, there were 7 004 home helps registered with the INPS in the province of Florence<sup>16</sup>:

- 5 682 women (81.1%) and 1 322 men;
- 3 007 Italians and 3997 foreigners (57.1%). The percentage of women in this latter group is lower (70.4%), which means that one in every five home helps is a man, or one in every four foreign home helps.

According to trade union estimates, for every home help whose position is regularised with the authorities, there are three whose position is not. This would mean there are some 25 - 30 000 home helps working in the province of Florence.

Laundries and dry-cleaners' shops employ a total of 403 people, of whom 105 are employed and 298 are self-employed (ISTAT, 1996).

## c. Catering

The following table indicates the number of people working in catering enterprises in the Commune of Florence, according to the 1996 survey of industry and divided into employed and self-employed workers.

Table 3: *Workers in catering enterprises in Florence*

	<b>Total no. of workers</b>	<b>No. of employees</b>	<b>No. of self- employed workers</b>
Restaurants, trattorias, pizzerias, inns and bars offering meals	3 139	2 157	982
Self-service and fast-food restaurants	46	39	7
Provision of pre-cooked meals	85	61	24
Canteens	253	227	26
Retail trade in frozen foods	122	227	26

Source: *ISTAT, 1996*

## d. Home maintenance

There are 479 people working for enterprises offering "painting and window maintenance services", of whom 166 are employees and 313 are self-employed (ISTAT, 1996).

## 2.3. Employment trends and future prospects in family services in Florence

### a. Childcare

According to the communal education department, employment in childcare has risen over recent years, particularly in connection with the expansion of nurseries and the offering of new types of services, mainly by cooperatives. Some kindergartens are closing because of poor intake, but this is being offset by the fact that new ones are being set up in more modern establishments. Policies promoting the re-uniting of non-EU immigrant families have been a determining factor as far as expansion of this sector is concerned. Law No 285 has been of

<sup>16</sup> According to the 1991 survey, the province of Florence (excluding Prato, which has recently become a separate province) had a population of 967 437, which is a little more than double the population of the Commune of Florence. At 31 December 1997, the figure was 952 277.

prime importance in this, with a large number of social cooperatives being set up in Florence especially to implement projects eligible for funding under this Law No 285. In this context, some new occupational figures are also emerging, such as cultural mediators or interpreters, interpreters for the deaf and nannies with music-teaching skills.

As far as the outlook is concerned, it is believed that employment levels will remain more or less stable, or even rise, particularly in the tertiary sector; in the public sector, it is expected that the number of public employees will fall, with an increasing tendency to contract services out to the private sector.

The communal authorities of Florence are promoting various initiatives to improve the quality of childcare services, and workers are being involved in these initiatives, which include surveys and research, refresher courses (teaching theory and practice, safety, health and safety regulations, etc.), meetings with parents and staff to discuss the functioning of certain services (e.g. school canteens). Social cooperatives too, particularly the larger ones and those organised into consortia, are offering training for the introduction of quality systems.

#### **b. Care of the elderly**

In recent years, this sector, too, has seen stable employment levels in the public sector and rising levels in the private sector, with social cooperatives offering services for the elderly and private profit-making enterprises running residential care homes. It is expected that employment in this sector will continue to expand, not least because the communal authorities' programme of action includes developing services over the next few years.

Training and refresher courses for workers, organised jointly by the communal authorities and social cooperatives, are being offered to improve quality of service.

#### **c. Cleaning**

Local trade unions estimate that employment levels among home helps who offer cleaning services have remained stable over recent years and will rise in the future, though these forecasts are not based on any accurate data, given the high proportion of undeclared employment in this sector. However, if current trends continue - and there is no reason for them to change - the sector will continue to be dominated by undeclared employment. With respect to laundry and dry-cleaning services, it may be noted that, in Florence as in the rest of Italy, the number of traditional laundries and dry-cleaners' shops is falling (e.g. the number listed in the Yellow Pages fell from 148 in 1995 to 120 in 1998), whereas the number of self-service laundromats is rising (though only slightly, from 10 in 1995 to 13 in 1998). This trend is likely to be reflected in a drop in employment levels, since laundromats require fewer workers than laundries and dry-cleaners' shops.

#### **d. Catering**

According to local trade-union representatives, employment in the catering sector has remained relatively stable over the past few years. A rise in employment in this sector is expected over the next few years, in connection with the general growth of the service sector and with specific events, such as Jubilee 2000, in which Florence, already a traditional tourist destination, will also be the city of art closest to Rome. It should be noted that self-service and fast-food restaurants are on the increase, while the number of traditional rotisseries, charcuteries and delicatessens is falling; this means that self-employment and small enterprises are in decline, while employed work in big fast-food chains is increasing.

## 2.4. Comments

Certain features seem to make Florence a good place for the development of employment in family services:

- on the supply side, a highly organised tertiary sector, including social cooperatives and voluntary organisations, and a regional and local public administration with a good record for planning and collaborating with organisations within civil society; the decline of Florence's industrial area over the past few decades and the growing expansion of service industries within the city's economy;
- on the demand side, the significance of trends such as the ageing of the population (and hence the demand for services for the elderly) or the influx of non-EU immigrants (leading to expansion of demand for childcare services and compensating, at least partially, for the drop in the birth rate among Italians); in addition to this, the relatively high rate of female employment is another factor likely to promote expansion of these services.

The potential for further growth of this employment sector is, however, dependent upon the ability of local actors to take positive advantage of these features and avoid risks such as monopolisation of the supply of services by a few particularly well-organised agencies or the emergence of competition between voluntary organisations and social enterprises (though there is certainly no evidence of this at the moment, with positive synergy appearing to prevail).

Certainly, as far as equal opportunities are concerned, the occupational segregation of women appears to be an unsolved problem in Florence and, by contrast with other parts of the country, no important initiatives to combat this seem to be emerging. As regards access by the immigrant population to job opportunities in family services, the public authorities and tertiary sector need to continue to take action to promote better integration of immigrants in training and integration programmes, as they are already doing to a certain extent.



## 2.5. Examples of innovative developments

In this section, we shall give some detailed information on organisations that have helped to create jobs in the family-services sector in the city of Florence over the past few years.

### **"IL CUBO MAGICO" (private enterprise)**

**Registered address:** Via C Balbo, 5 - Florence

**Working premises:** Via del Madonnone, 19 - 50136 Florence. Tel. 39-055-671377, Fax. 39-055-6235371

**Legal status:** limited liability company

**Main services provided:** childcare, recreational activities, entertainment and family services

**Users/clients:** children aged 1 to 12 years

**Number of workers:** 6, all women

**Skilled professionals:** 1 psychologist, 2 teachers, 2 graduate music teachers

**Institutional figures:** one president and two directors

**Management and coordination staff:** none - coordination is guaranteed by discussion at monthly meetings

**Clients:** individuals (families) only

**Premises and equipment:** a range of play and teaching equipment and all equipment necessary for childcare

#### **History of the enterprise**

The company was set up in 1998 by two women in their fifties who were attending the "Intraprendere" vocational-training course organised by the provincial authorities with a view to reintegrating women in the world of work, and who drew up a plan for setting up a private nursery. Their project was granted funding by the regional authorities of Tuscany and therefore went ahead. Their aim was to provide a service that was more flexible (in terms of organisation and opening times) than that offered by the public authorities. Originally, the service began as a childminding service for children over the age of three, but demand has recently emerged among families with younger children and authorisation to open a nursery is being sought from the communal authorities. Over the past two years, the company has taken on a music teacher and a teacher of psychomotor skills, both under collaboration contracts. The company is planning to take on another teacher of psychomotor skills in the near future.

#### **Organisation of the service**

The service involves looking after children between the hours of 7.30 and 19.30. The company will also arrange for selected nannies to care for children in their own home, organise birthday parties on its premises, and organise musical activities, shows (puppets) and painting sessions. Parents are encouraged to visit and take part in debates and meetings, consult the library or ask for names of specialists. The three shareholders work alongside three other workers employed under continuous, coordinated collaboration contracts or under consultancy agreements. Any problems concerning the reconciliation of work and personal and family commitments are tackled by the temporary replacement of workers by other helpers.

## **"L'ABBAINO" (social cooperative)**

**Registered address:** via delle Panche, 65 - Florence. Tel. 39-055-4221036, Fax. 39-055-4368771

**Legal status:** social cooperative under Law No 381/91 (cooperative type A)

**Main services provided:** childcare (children's centres, play schemes, play groups, nurseries); educational services for people with disabilities; services for adolescents and young people living in disadvantaged social or environmental conditions

**Users/clients:** children and families, marginalised adolescents and young people, people with disabilities

**Number of workers:** 104 (85 women and 19 men)

**Skilled professionals:** 1 psychologist, 2 social workers, 16 teachers, 2 other graduates, 7 specialist teachers, 3 outreach workers, 5 community leaders, 32 qualified tutors and childcare workers

**Institutional figures:** president, administrative board, members' meetings, auditors

**Management and coordination staff:** general coordinator, quality officer, manager, personnel manager, service coordinators (very young children, guidance and minors, vocational training for minors, people with disabilities)

**Turnover in 1997:** Lit 3 billion

**Clients:** public bodies only (communal and provincial authorities and local health units)

**Premises and equipment:** computer, fax, data-processing room, video-recorder, TV

### **History of the cooperative**

The cooperative was set up in 1987 on the initiative of nine people, including general and specialist teachers, all with experience in the voluntary sector. The opportunity of establishing the cooperative arose out of a chance of entering into an agreement with a religious body caring for children and young people in difficulty, Madonnina del Grappa. The desire to achieve changes in the area in which these children and young people lived and fill the gaps left by the public authorities was one of the spurs that led the young founders to set up the cooperative. Initially, the cooperative worked mainly with delinquent and socially disadvantaged adolescents; later, it extended its activities to younger children. In 1990, the cooperative reorganised its activities and began to work on introducing skilled professionals who would be dedicated to developing the enterprise, which thus finally moved out of the voluntary sector. In 1994, with the launching of several services for very young children, both the number of workers and annual turnover doubled. Over the past two years, a further 50 teachers (including infant teachers) have been recruited under short-term or fixed-term contracts. The cooperative is also planning to recruit 30 more teachers over the next two years. At present, the plan is to divide the cooperative into several smaller enterprises to avoid the disadvantages of being too big.

### **Organisation of services**

Working in collaboration with various communal authorities in the province of Florence, local health units and other non-profit-making bodies, the cooperative runs nurseries and other services for very young children and young children, vocational and pre-vocational training centres for people with disabilities, activities to support disabled children in nurseries and kindergartens, educational services for young people and family houses. Work is organised on the basis of implementation of specific tasks and regulations governing each service, weekly team meetings and monthly sectoral meetings, and systems to document activities. Considerable use is made of part-time workers. There has been an attempt to improve pay conditions by introducing an incentives system, but this programme has been blocked. Issues concerning the reconciliation of work and family commitments are dealt with by the personnel manager, who tries to meet workers' needs in a way that is compatible with flexibility requirements. Particular attention is paid to staff training, with cycles of thematic courses being organised each year. In 1998, for example, there was a training and re-skilling course for working members on the subject of "social quality", which was also made use of by specialist advisory agencies. Finally, it should be mentioned that parents participate in the running of some services, as volunteers.

## "DI VITTORIO" (social cooperative)

**Registered address:** via del Cesarino 38 - 54100 Massa.

**Local branch:** via Aretina 332 - 50136 Florence. Tel. 39-0585-833841, Fax. 39-0585-830487, E-mail. info@divittorio.it. <http://www.divittorio.it>

**Legal status:** social cooperative under Law No 381/91 (cooperative type A)

**Main services provided:** social care for the elderly, school support services, management of day centres for people with disabilities, psychiatric care in the home, psychiatric day centres and homes, educational support for children and young people, nursing services for drug dependency, rehabilitation services

**Users/clients:** elderly people, children and young people, people with disabilities and terminal illnesses, drug addicts, people with psychiatric problems. A total of 2 321 users in the region

**Number of workers:** 907, of whom 65% work in the area of Florence. 734 women and 173 men. 654 working members and 253 employees. Age: 7.39% under the age of 25, 39.17% aged 25-35, 39.17% aged 35-45, and 14.24% over the age of 45

**Skilled professionals:** 56.9% care workers, 32.3% teachers (general and specialised), 5.1% cleaning staff, 2.9% nurses, 0.8% therapists, 0.5% graduates, 1.5% others (administrative staff, coordinators, managers)

**Institutional figures:** president, vice-president, administrative board

**Management and coordination staff:** various (including area officers, service heads, commercial manager)

**Turnover in 1998:** Lit 33 246 641 215

**Clients:** public or private bodies only (communal authorities, local health units, other non-profit-making bodies)

### History of the cooperative

The Di Vittorio social cooperative was set up in Massa in 1978. The founder members, mostly women, initially concentrated on industrial cleaning before entering into public contracts. In 1988, people who wanted to work in the social-welfare sector were gradually integrated in the cooperative. In 1994, with the passing of Law No 381 (which prohibited social cooperatives from performing certain activities), members definitively opted for social cooperation and a block of 400 workers from another cooperative, LAT (which decided not to pursue social activities), joined as members. Initially, the Di Vittorio cooperative provided home care and ran a centre for people with disabilities. The LAT cooperative had several day centres, sheltered-accommodation units and host families for the elderly, people with disabilities, psychiatric patients and drug addicts. The services offered have remained more or less the same since 1995. Staffing levels have been rising constantly since 1994, with particularly marked increases in 1997 (13%) and 1996 (15%). Some 350 jobs have been created over the past five years.

### Organisation of services

Home care for the elderly is one of the services provided by the cooperative in Florence on behalf of the communal authorities. Workers are organised into teams, each of which has a leader who has a meeting each week with the manager responsible for care of the elderly. Workers comply with in-house regulations that lay down basic rules concerning relations with users. Considerable use is made of part-time workers. The reconciliation of work and personal and family commitments is usually dealt with informally, unless specifically covered by workers' contract of employment (including maternity leave and leave of absence). In addition to this, each year a special committee allocates solidarity payments (for childbirth, marriage, death and other causes): in 1997, 52 such payments were allocated, to a total value of Lit 17 700 000. Workers attend numerous training courses, particularly those organised by the regional authorities. The cooperative has recently been experimenting with quality indicators.

### 3. Rome

#### 3.1. Existing services <sup>17</sup>

##### a. Childcare

Age group 0-3 years

- Rome has 185 nurseries: 147 run by the communal authorities and 38 private ones. Communal nurseries accept children aged 3-36 months and are usually open between 7.00 and 18.00 hrs. Parents can choose between various sessions, which nonetheless offer about an hour's flexibility in arrival and departure times. Parents share the cost of the service by paying a fee that is proportional to their household income.
- Under Law No 285, the teaching staff in two nurseries are involved in trying out two new services for children and households, which are run in different ways and at different times from the traditional nursery, using the same premises but with the space organised differently. Three female teachers are also running a group for children and families in especially adapted premises.
- As regards parenting support services, there are 17 projects of various kinds (to be funded under Law No 285) that involve collaboration with the tertiary sector, though they are not all running yet.

Age group 3-6 years

- There are 489 kindergartens in Rome, 365 of which are run by the State or communal authorities and 124 of which are private.

Age group over 6 years

For this age group, there are:

- children's libraries (there is a central children's library, and there are computer terminals for children in 12 district libraries);
- play schemes (three schemes are to be set up with funding under Law No 285 and another is about to be opened in Tor Bella Monaca as part of a project with European funding);
- pre-school and after-school services in primary schools.

In Rome, as in Florence, recreational activities are organised for children during the summer months.

Various entertainment agencies offer activities for children (private parties, entertainment in public parks, etc.), and at least 15 such agencies are listed in the Yellow Pages. Finally, the communal authorities contribute to the organisation of theatre laboratories for children run by cooperatives and associations in Rome.

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<sup>17</sup> The information contained in this section is drawn from documents and data provided by the communal departments responsible for education policies, facilities for children and social services, as well as from telephone directories and Yellow Pages, and the publication "Estate Serena '98" produced by the Department of Social Affairs.

## b. Care of the elderly

Social services for elderly people are managed by the public authorities in Rome's 20 districts.

- **Home care service.** This service, coordinated by district social-services offices, is offered to elderly people who are totally or partially independent and whose income does not exceed a certain ceiling (Lit 1 400 000 for people who live alone and Lit 1 700 000 for people who are part of a married or cohabiting couple). Benefits include personal care and hygiene, help in the home (cleaning, shopping, errands), relations with doctors and the local health unit, accompanying elderly people for appointments and dealing with paperwork, preparing hot meals and a telephone monitoring service for elderly people who are particularly frail of body or mind.
- **Health care in the home.** This service is run by local health units for elderly people who can no longer care for themselves and concentrates particularly on providing health-related services.
- **Day rehabilitation centres.** There are 44 private centres run under agreement with the public authorities (data for 1993-1994).
- **Residential care homes.** In 1996, there were plans to open two residential care homes, but neither of them has gone ahead.
- **Retirement homes.** The communal authorities directly manage three retirement homes for the elderly and make a contribution towards some people's fees in a further 59 homes. The telephone directory lists a total of 132 public and private retirement homes. In 1991, there were 128 homes (Census, 1996) offering a total of 5144 bed places.

There are also 93 social centres (offering cultural and leisure activities) for the elderly run by the communal authorities, plus a few others run by the non-profit-making sector; there are also seven universities for the elderly listed in the register for the region of Lazio.

## c. Cleaning

A small number of private agencies also offer help in the home. According to the mid-year survey of industry and services, Rome has 1324 laundries and dry-cleaners' shops run by 1311 enterprises. The 1998-1999 Yellow Pages lists 21 self-service laundromats, many of which are franchised out by the same national company.

## d. Catering

The following table indicates the number of enterprises and local units in Rome, according to the 1996 mid-year survey of industry and services.

Table 4: *Enterprises in the catering sector in Rome*

Activity	No. of enterprises	No. of local units
Restaurants, trattorias, pizzerias, inns and bars offering meals	2 515	2 574
Self-service and fast-food restaurants	50	66 <sup>18</sup>
Provision of pre-cooked meals	50	59
Canteens	86	315
Retail trade in frozen foods	360	368

Source: *ISTAT, 1996*

<sup>18</sup> However, the 1998-1999 Yellow Pages list 88 units.

#### **e. Home maintenance**

Rome has 233 enterprises, and the same number of local units, offering "painting and window maintenance services".

### **3.2. Jobs created in services**

#### **a. Childcare and care of the elderly**

Here too, the only precise figure available is for staff employed by the communal authorities. There are 1 921 teachers working in communal nurseries, of whom only eight are men. A further 852 auxiliary staff and 147 cooks also work in these nurseries. It should be pointed out that there is a list of more than 6 000 supply teachers who can be called upon to cover absences in nurseries. According to the competent communal office, this group, whose members have no permanent work, is organising itself in the tertiary sector, giving birth to associations and social cooperatives to implement projects under Law No 285.

With respect to services for the elderly, the communal authorities employ a total of 79 people to work in retirement homes: two social workers, 26 home carers and other workers with various skills. Of these, 45 are women and 34 men (which means women account for 57.0%). Nine more people (six women and three men) are employed in sheltered accommodation units, though most of the work in these units is done by social cooperatives. It has not been possible to establish the exact number of workers, but each of the 20 district authorities has an agreement with a cooperative to provide home care.

Nor are there any figures for the tertiary sector as a whole. However, if we take only people working for social cooperatives that are members of the Lega delle Cooperative (one of the two main associations of cooperatives), we have a figure of about 1700. Women predominate in these cooperatives, among both workers and managers. Workers have an average age of 35-37, which means that the sector is offering stable permanent employment rather than just temporary jobs.

#### **b. Cleaning**

In 1996, there were 33 379 home helps registered with the INPS in the province of Rome:

- 6 672 men and 26 707 women (80.0%);
- 9 850 Italians and 23 529 foreigners (70.5%). Although still clearly predominant, as in Florence, women account for a lower percentage of foreign home helps (74.3%).

If we apply the usual criterion whereby the ratio of home helps in regularised employment to those in undeclared employment is 1 to 3, we can calculate that there are about 120 000 home helps in the province of Rome<sup>19</sup>.

A total of 1 796 people work in laundries and dry-cleaners' shops (ISTAT, 1996), with 332 of them being employed and 1 464 being self-employed.

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<sup>19</sup> The population of the commune of Rome represents about 70% of the total population of the province of Rome; however, account should also be taken of the fact that home helps are much more common in urban areas.

### c. Catering

The following table indicates the number of workers in catering enterprises in the commune of Rome, according to the 1996 survey of industry, once again divided into employed and self-employed workers.

Table 5: *Workers in catering enterprises in Florence*

Activity	Total no. of workers	No. of employees	No. of self-Employed workers
Restaurants, trattorias, pizzerias, inns and bars offering meals	9 633	5 987	3 646
Self-service and fast-food restaurants	970	905	65
Provision of pre-cooked meals	433	370	63
Canteens	4 477	4 371	106
Retail trade in frozen foods	709	200	509

Source: *ISTAT, 1996*

### d. Home maintenance

A total of 368 people work in enterprises offering "painting and window maintenance services", with 96 of them being employed and 272 being self-employed (ISTAT, 1996 survey of industry).

## 3.3. Employment trends and future prospects in family services in Rome

### a. Childcare

The current rise in employment in childcare services in Rome is linked, on the one hand, to the expansion of the network of communal nurseries and, on the other, to the introduction of new types of services (some, though not all, with funding under Law No 285). With respect to communal nurseries, this expansion has in recent years led to the creation of new jobs (e.g. 140 new teachers were recruited in December 1998) and should continue to do so, with a further 27 new nurseries due to open in the next four years. The introduction of new types of services has not yet led to the creation of any significant number of new jobs, but is likely to do so as projects that have received funding are implemented. The city council department responsible for children's affairs has decided to match State funding for the opening of new services for children. One problem that has arisen so far is that, in an initial announcement, the communal authorities have laid down some minimum requirements that have to be met by any premises to be used for these new services, and it would be difficult for the tertiary sector to meet these requirements with its own resources or with the funding allocated to it. To alleviate this problem, the requirements are to be modified in the next announcement, though minimum quality and safety standards will still have to be met. There is no shortage of obstacles to job creation via these new types of services: for example, the trade unions covering workers in traditional nurseries have perceived the communal authorities' support for new types of services for children as indicative of a wish to privatise all childcare services, which would have a negative impact on existing employees. In fact, the communal authorities seem reluctant to launch services that are organised in an informal way or are very different, in terms of organisation, resources, workers, etc., from traditional nurseries. For example, the regional authorities of Lazio recently promoted a training course for "tate familiari", figures similar to the UK's childminders, who look after groups of children in their own homes, but it is by no means certain that the communal authorities will support this initiative.

One argument against the opening of very informal services is that parents do not want to see any drop in the standards that are a feature of traditional nurseries. However, the truth is that Rome has an abundance of private "hidden economy" childcare services that are not always up to standard (in terms of both premises and personnel management) and that have emerged spontaneously to meet the large unsatisfied demand, the extent and characteristics of which the local government is unaware. Finally, we should mention that the communal authorities have set up a register of teachers who are in some way "certified" by them, which parents can consult to find someone to care for their children. The aim of this initiative is to integrate into the world of work this group of some 6 000 teachers who do not have permanent jobs in nurseries but are known to the communal authorities.

On the question of quality, the communal authorities of Rome are also promoting refresher courses for nursery teachers, particularly, most recently, on experimentally opening premises to parents at certain times of the day. The authorities are also taking part in a survey on quality of service that is currently being promoted by central government.

#### **b. Care of the elderly**

With respect to services for the elderly, employment levels have been relatively stable in services funded by the communal authorities (and managed by cooperatives) over the past few years. Future employment prospects however are not particularly promising: although the demand for home care is far from satisfied (some people suggest that current coverage is a mere 20% of demand), any expansion of services is dependent on policy decisions that will not necessarily be forthcoming. No data are available with regard to the private market but it is likely that employment levels have risen in this sector, particularly as regards home carers who are recruited individually or with the help of "loose" forms of intermediation, and not so much as regards help provided by teams working for companies or cooperatives. For example, the number of private profit-making and non-profit-making companies offering "home care and nursing services" listed in the Yellow Pages has risen very little over the past five years (from 36 in 1994-1995 to 40 in 1998-1999), whilst the number of retirement homes has seen a greater increase (from 118 to 132).

#### **c. Cleaning**

It is reasonable to believe that the past few years have seen an increase in undeclared employment in the domestic cleaning sector. The first agencies offering cleaning services are moreover beginning to appear on the market. Nevertheless, we have yet to see to what extent these more organised forms of intermediation will succeed in taking over from the more informal channels (churches, friends, neighbours, relations, etc.) that have traditionally been used to recruit home helps, and whether the services they offer are of better quality than those accessed individually. In line with the national trend, the number of laundries and dry-cleaners' shops in Rome is falling.

#### **d. Catering**

In the catering sector, trends in Rome over the past few years have been in line with those at national level, with a rise in the number of canteens and self-service restaurants (the number of self-service and fast-food outlets listed in the Yellow Pages has risen from 88 in 1994 to 147 in 1998) and a drop in the number of traditional outlets, such as delicatessens, charcuteries and rotisseries (from 375 to 228). Even more than Florence, Rome might benefit, in employment terms, from the influx of tourists for Jubilee 2000 and, of course, from the continuation of the general upward trend in demand for eating out, which is affecting Rome as much as or perhaps more than other Italian cities.



### **3.4. Comments**

In Rome, too, there is certainly considerable potential for the expansion of employment in family services, since there is a sizeable unsatisfied demand both for care for the elderly and for childcare. Of crucial importance if this demand is to be reflected in employment is the public sector's ability to organise its relationship with the tertiary sector and private organisations in general. At present, there is a split between, on the one hand, public bodies and a limited number of bodies in the tertiary sector which have been integrated, some of them for many years, in the system of service provision (we are thinking here particularly of cooperatives providing home care services) and, on the other, a multitude of organisations, both profit-making and non-profit-making, which are operating directly on the market and with which public bodies appear to have very little contact. Of course, this does not mean that all the bodies operating in the family-services sector should be granted public resources or that the public authorities should legitimise services of all kinds. In any event, the policies followed at city-council level should be defined on the basis of a knowledge of all the actors operating in these fields, and not only of public actors or those already working in collaboration with the authorities. Unequal access to relations with the public authorities is, to some extent, also an equal-opportunities issue for all those who decide to create a job for themselves or for others in the family-services sector.

With respect to access to employment by men and women, again we find a prevalence of women, particularly in the provision of services for very young children and the elderly; only in services for school-age children (summer schools, entertainments, etc.) do we see a higher proportion of male workers, mostly young men. Immigrant workers do not seem to have significantly penetrated this area of employment, except in the case of activities aimed specifically at multi-cultural education. This means that equal opportunities are an issue on which further action needs to be taken.

### **3.5. Examples of innovative developments**

In this section, we shall present three examples of organisations that have, to differing degrees and in different ways, created jobs in the family-services sector over the past few years: in childcare, care of the elderly and cleaning.

## **META (social cooperative with limited liability)**

**Registered address:** via Poggio Tulliano, 5- Rome - Tel. 39-06-76963371-7610328 - Fax. 39-06-76964469 - E-mail. meta@is.net.it

**Legal status:** social cooperative under Law No 381/91 (type A)

**Main services provided:** personal, socio-educational, social/health, cultural

**Users/clients:** elderly people, minors, adolescents, young people, people suffering from a high level of marginalisation

**Number of workers:** 42, comprising 11 men and 31 women; 33 working members and 9 employees

**Skilled professionals:** 3 psychologists, 2 social workers, 2 other graduates, 4 teachers, 19 home carers, 5 physiotherapists/rehabilitation specialists

**Institutional figures:** president, vice-president (a woman), three members of the board of administration (including two women)

**Management and coordination staff:** organisation and human-resources officer, and officers responsible for the elderly, minors, young people and emergency social action

**Turnover for 1998:** Lit 2.5 billion

**Clients:** only public bodies (district authorities, communal authorities of Rome, regional authorities of Lazio) or private bodies (there is no provision for the direct purchase of services by users)

**Premises and equipment:** material resources for service management, two premises for conducting activities, two coaches, two cars

### **History of the cooperative**

The cooperative was set up in 1980 at the initiative of a group of people already working in the social sector, in response to an invitation to tender published by the communal authorities of Rome for the provision of home care for the elderly. The aim was both to contribute to the creation of a new service and to create new jobs. Beginning with home care in a district in the south of Rome (District IX), the cooperative gradually extended its services to other districts. In the early 1990s, when the communal authorities launched a policy for minors, the cooperative set up a day centre for children and young people and a service to provide assistance to the families of young people with difficulties. More recently (1997-1998), the cooperative has established an outreach unit to help disadvantaged young people. Finally, in 1999, the cooperative opened a day centre for the elderly. Over the past two years, the cooperative has created about ten new jobs, particularly for teachers working with children.

### **Organisation of the service**

Within the service offering home care for the elderly, the 20 workers are divided into four teams, who visit users in their homes, on a shift basis. These teams are backed by a specialist team comprising a social worker, psychologist and administrative coordinator. Everybody works an average of 36 hours a week and cares for several users. This form of organisation allows a certain degree of flexibility and the possibility of informal adjustments to enable workers to meet any personal or family requirements, in addition to the application of contractual clauses concerning holidays, maternity and leave of absence. Everyone (from psychologists and social workers to basic workers - home carers) is involved in a broad range of training activities, both internally (continuing training with team meetings, service meetings, supervision sessions) and externally (e.g. seminars on quality). The cooperative is involved in various forms of collaboration with the university and the school for social workers (among other things, it serves as a training placement for psychologists and social workers).

## **"IL FLAUTO MAGICO" (association)**

**Registered address:** viale G Mazzini, 14 - 00195 Rome - Tel/fax. 39-06-5816816 - E-mail. Error! Bookmark not defined.

**Legal status:** association

**Main services provided:** leisure and cultural activities for adults and children

**Users/clients:** children, families, schools, public and private bodies

**Number of workers:** 6 founder members, 8 ordinary members, 100 casual helpers

**Skilled professionals:** 1 psychologist, 3 social workers, 1 doctor, 5 sociologists, 3 teachers, 10 specialist teachers, 4 community leaders, set-designers, carpenters, photographers, musicians, ISEF (Istituto Superiore di Educazione Fisica – Higher Physical Education Institute) graduates

**Institutional figures:** president, administrative board, meeting of members

**Management and coordination staff:** not formalised, but there are officers responsible for children's theatre, entertainment, teaching laboratories and activities in schools, summer schools, administration

**Turnover in 1997:** Lit 135 million

**Clients:** individuals (families) and public or private bodies (communal, provincial and regional authorities, schools, ministries, etc.)

**Premises and equipment:** activities are based mainly on human resources but use is also made of theatrical equipment and a "Ludobus" (playbus)

### **History of the association**

The association was set up in 1994 at the initiative of six young people aged 25-30 (four women and two men) from the world of sport, the scout and guide movement or with experience as entertainers, actors, teachers, brought together by the wish to start up business on their own after having experience, and not always happy experience, of working for someone else. Activities began with organising private parties for children, and then the association became involved in running summer schools for children organised by the communal authorities. Time saw the arrival of the first public funding for activities and the association offered an increasing number of theatre shows for children as part of various public initiatives. At present, the association's main activity is the "Ludobus" (playbus). In the past two years, the association has provided work for about 30 new members.

### **Organisation of the service**

Activities are based on the occasional involvement of a broad network of helpers with varying backgrounds, coordinated by the six founder members. A "package" of activities is offered to potential clients (laboratory, play scheme, street games and entertainment, private birthday parties, etc.), some of which require the presence of two or three people with specific skills (play leaders, entertainers, puppeteers, etc.). There is maximum flexibility in the organisation of work, which is managed informally with a view to meeting helpers' needs. Workers are provided with support in the form of in-house texts and materials concerning leadership techniques, distributed during training courses. The association also encourages individual workers to take part in training courses covering their various specialisations.

## **"QUADRIFOGLIO" (company)**

**Registered address:** via Riano, 54 - Rome. Tel. 39-06-3338350-3338262

**Legal status:** limited partnership

**Main services provided:** personnel search and selection; organisation of parties for adults and children; organisation of working meetings; technical advice and free estimates for restructuring; typing and copying of texts, interpreting and translations

**Users/clients:** private individuals, professionals, firms

**Number of workers:** 3 (two members and a full-time helper)

**Skilled professionals:** one child psychiatrist, one teacher, one qualified worker with the disabled

**Institutional figures:** administrator

**Management and coordination staff:** officer responsible for seeking and selecting staff and administration; head of services for enterprises; officer responsible for entertainment, parties, events and meetings

**Clients:** individuals and public and private bodies (ministries, schools, banks, companies, professionals)

**Premises and equipment:** one of the main resources is the database of home helps

### **History of the company**

The company was formed in 1995. There are three founders: an owner and two associates - two women with political, trade-union and voluntary-sector experience in care of the elderly and aid for non-EU immigrants and travellers. The idea was to create a company offering a broad range of services. Then, following some market research, it was realised that the areas in which there was most demand were the selection of home helps and the organisation of parties. Initially, the company worked mainly in the area of caring for people with disabilities. Its activities were then extended to various types of home help and services (home maintenance), and later to services for organisations and enterprises. The selection of home helps is still one of the company's major activities.

### **Organisation of the service**

Every year the company selects 400-500 home helps and people to offer various family services (home helps, nannies, waiting staff, cooks, drivers, plumbers, carpenters, blacksmiths, gardeners, electricians, party organisers, etc.). In the case of home helps, the employment relationship is arranged via mediation between workers and employers. This leads to a written agreement concerning working conditions, terms and conditions of employment, pay and methods of regularising the relationship. Once employment relationships have been established, the company continues to monitor workers, who can turn to it if employers do not abide by the rules (e.g. if they refuse to regularise the employment relationship, particularly in the case of non-EU workers who need the relationship to be regularised if they are to receive a residence permit). In these cases, the company tries to persuade the employer to correct the situation and, where this proves impossible, tries to find the worker another position.

## Chapter 3: People's experience of working in family services

### 1. Workers interviewed

To obtain more in-depth information on working conditions in family services, which it is difficult to obtain from informed professionals or secondary sources, with specific reference to childcare, care of the elderly and cleaning services, we interviewed 43 workers: 23 in Florence and 20 in Rome. Twenty-five of these work in the organisations described in the previous chapter, while 18 of them (cleaners and nannies) are employed directly by families. Within each sector and enterprise, we sought to interview three workers (or two, in the case of very small organisations) with the same occupation, giving preference to workers "in the field", who are in closer contact with users. The following table gives a breakdown of interviewees, by sector, occupation and location.

Table 1: *Workers interviewed, by sector, occupation and locality*

	Florence	Rome	Total
<i>Childcare</i>	10	7	17
- nursery teachers	5	2	7
- teachers/leaders of older children	3	3	6
- nannies	2	2	4
<i>Care of the elderly</i>	6	6	12
- home carers	3	6	9
- teachers/community leaders	3	-	3
<i>Cleaning</i>	7	7	14
- home helps not living in	5	6	11
- live-in home helps	2	1	3
Total	23	20	43

Source: *CERFE, 1999*

## 2. Childcare

### 2.1. Nursery teachers

#### a. Characteristics of the workers interviewed

The nursery teachers we interviewed work in a childminding service for children up to the age of six and in a pre- and after-school service (primary level). We interviewed six women and one man, all of them Italian and aged between 25 and 35. Five of them have upper-secondary-school certificates, one has a degree in teaching and another has a university-level diploma in

music. Three live with a partner, three live with their family of origin (parents and brother/sister), and one lives alone. None of them have children. Only one of the six teachers who live with others is the main wage-earner in the household; in the case of the other five, there are other sources of household income. None of them is a member of a trade union. Three of them do other occasional work.

### **b. Nature of the work**

Teachers working with very young children care for their well-being in every way - feeding them, changing their nappies, looking after them while they play, and maintaining relationships with parents. Some teachers perform more specific activities: musical education through play, nursery rhymes, listening to music, story-telling, introducing musical instruments, physical exercise, dance and movement. Workers in the pre- and after-school service collect children when they come out of school and supervise them as they eat, do their homework and play. During the summer, when the service moves to a leisure centre outside the city, they supervise transport and lead activities. They all say they are happy with the way their work is organised and that they have a good level of autonomy and freedom and good relationships with colleagues.

Some of the interviewees have chosen this type of work precisely because they enjoy the contact with children, or because they have pursued related studies; others simply because the opportunity arose or because they wanted to become independent of the family. Many of them had previous experience with children, as nannies or dance and music teachers. They learnt of job opportunities either from friends and family or from the newspaper and advertising by the enterprise; some began as supply staff or seasonal workers (summer schools) for the same organisation. None of them came to the work through public or private placement agencies.

None of the people interviewed in either Rome or Florence take longer than 30 minutes to travel to work, while some take as little as 10-15 minutes.

### **c. Working conditions and quality of work**

Working hours vary: from 30-38 hours a week for full-time teachers, to two hours a week for those performing specific activities, while one of the workers in the pre- and after-school service works 18 hours a week. The hourly rate of pay is about Lit 10 000 (EUR 5) for full-time teachers (who receive a monthly salary of Lit 1 400 000-1 500 000/EUR 700-750), but is higher (e.g. Lit 23 000/EUR 12.5 per hour) for those who work only a few hours a week. Most of our interviewees are only partially satisfied with their pay, which they feel is low for the type of work they are doing and the skills required of them. Some say they are happy with their pay, given their age and the fact that they have no dependents.

Most of our interviewees, those working full or half time, have a fixed-term or permanent contract, which provides for holidays, sick leave, maternity leave and social-security contributions. They are not eligible for overtime pay. Some of them - those working fewer hours - have continuous, coordinated collaboration contracts, which provide only for social-security contributions. Some are happy with their contractual position (accepting the temporary nature of their contracts), while others are only partially satisfied (either because of the small number of hours or because it is not "permanent" employment).

Some of the workers we interviewed (those working in the private nursery) have been able to take advantage of refresher courses on quality, meetings with staff from other nurseries, and

special courses on Law No 285; others have not had these opportunities but do not (at least in some cases, such as workers in the pre- and after-school service) see this as a disadvantage.

Most of them feel they will continue to do this kind of work in the future. One interviewee said she might change jobs once she has graduated (she is studying at the moment), and two said they were not sure what they would do in the future (one mentioned the possibility of stopping work when she married). In general, most of our interviewees felt there were career prospects in the work they were doing - with "career" essentially meaning taking on greater responsibilities.

The opportunity for contact with children and to have an impact on their education through play, music and helping them in their day-to-day activities, and the emotional gratification of doing so, is the aspect of their work that our interviewees liked best. The less pleasurable aspects are relationships with some parents and contact with bureaucracy; the constant moving from place to place (in the case of a teacher who works for a few hours in several different places); and, in the case of the one male interviewee, "changing nappies". Overall, the level of job satisfaction seems to be relatively high.

#### **d. Issues relating to equal opportunities**

As we have seen, this is an occupation in which there is an overwhelming predominance of women. Only a few interviewees felt that being a woman (and, in particular, "the maternal instinct") gave them a greater predisposition for this kind of work; others mentioned the current social situation, in which it is felt that women are more capable of doing this kind of work, though they did not feel this was confirmed by their own experience; others dismissed the notion that there was any automatic link between being a woman and the ability to teach. The one man we interviewed said he had never come up against any obstacles because of his gender and did not feel men and women had a different attitude towards teaching as an occupation - "you simply have to be yourself".

#### **e. Reconciliation of working life, family commitments and voluntary activities**

Only very rarely have our interviewees had any problems in reconciling work and family life, though we need to bear in mind that none of them has children or elderly relatives to care for and many of them live with their family of origin; also, some of them work either part time or for just a few hours a week. One interviewee who said she had had difficulties in reconciling commitments said she had solved the problem by changing her working times, with the help of colleagues. Another who needed to study said she had found her employing body willing to be cooperative and flexible. Interviewees' relatives approve of the work they are doing. In terms of measures that might improve the reconciliation of work and family life, some of our interviewees suggested the possibility of split shifts (with a break at lunchtime); others, those who work more irregularly or discontinuously, would like to be surer of when they are going to be working.

Some of the workers we interviewed have had experience of voluntary work. Some of them have continued their voluntary work, while others have stopped. The passage from voluntary to employed work tends to be seen as "natural" and linked with entry into adult life and the world of work.

## **2.2. Teachers/group leaders of older children**

### **a. Characteristics of the workers interviewed**

The people we interviewed who work as teachers or group leaders for older children are mostly men (five out of six), mostly between the ages of 27 and 35 (except for one, who is 41), all Italian and with either a university education (teaching or the arts) or university-level vocational training (design, theatre, community education and leadership). Most of them live with their family of origin (parents - none of them older than 60 - and brothers/sisters), one lives alone and another has two children aged 2 and 4, who are usually cared for by his partner. Virtually none of them (including the man with a partner and children) is the main provider. None of them is a member of a trade union. Three of them also have other jobs.

### **b. Nature of the work**

Interviewees who work as teachers in the youth centre are responsible for socialisation, lead cultural and recreational activities and are people the youngsters can turn to at any time. Some of them are also working on setting up a database for young people ("Informagiovani"). Those who work in the entertainment agency are employed as actors or theatre set designers to put on shows for young children and also work as leaders at summer schools.

The amount of time spent travelling to work varies enormously from one person to another, with the maximum being an hour in Rome and 45 minutes in Florence (several Florentines live in other communes in the province).

All our interviewees felt they had sufficient autonomy in their work. As regards organisation, however, most of them are only partially satisfied, sometimes experiencing problems related to the ties dictated by the relationship with a public body (e.g. rigid budgets), sometimes internal relations within cooperatives or associations.

It seems, in particular, that workers expect to be able to have better human relationships in voluntary organisations than elsewhere, but that these expectations are not always met ("Relationships, and even friendships, among the people I work with are very hierarchical"; "it ought to be possible to work better in social cooperatives").

The workers we interviewed came into this work as a result of chance opportunities, contacts with people already working in this field, seasonal work in summer schools or, in some cases, the course of study they had followed. Virtually all of them learned of job opportunities from friends or because they were already in the know; none of them had been placed by public or private bodies.

### **c. Working conditions and quality of work**

In terms of working hours, workers at the youth centre work either 20 hours a week (five afternoons of four hours) or 10 hours a week (four hours on two afternoons, which may be subject to change). Some of our interviewees felt that working times were too rigid (depending on the opening hours of a public service). For those working in entertainment, it is impossible to specify fixed working times: some work three hours a day including Saturdays and Sundays, while others work six hours a day five days a week. Workers seem to appreciate their flexible working times and the fact they can organise them themselves; the fact that every so often they have to "be up all night working" is something they appreciate rather less.



Pay is, on average, relatively low: between Lit 10 000 (EUR 5) per hour net and Lit 23 000 (EUR 11.5) gross. Virtually none of our interviewees were happy with their pay, though some (such as the one who is making a career in drama) are simply happy to have a reliable pay packet after working for nothing, or virtually nothing, for years. Types of contract vary: from permanent employment contracts (with benefits such as holidays, sick leave, paternity/maternity leave, overtime pay, social-security contributions, etc) for workers in social cooperatives with fixed working times, to continuous, coordinated collaboration contracts (for those with shorter, variable working times), to other unspecified types of contract (probably consultancy agreements or contracts for occasional services) for those working in entertainment. Some of those on permanent employment contracts nonetheless complain about their job classification level, which is low in relation to the amount of training involved; those working under continuous, coordinated collaboration contracts with a cooperative complain about the lack of job stability. Actors and entertainers, on the other hand, say they are happy with their contractual situation, which actually appears less "secure" ("in this sphere, I have no great expectations").

Virtually all our interviewees have had vocational training, though mostly before starting their current job or on their own initiative, albeit encouraged by their employing organisation.

As regards the future, our interviewees have differing opinions on whether there are career opportunities in this field, with career being seen mainly in terms of "improving my position" or "using my skills". They also have divided opinions on future prospects: half of them plan to continue in their present job, one would like to change direction, and two are as yet undecided.

Contact with very young children and children is, once again, the aspect of their work they most appreciate, while bureaucratic problems in relations with public institutions, limited spending power and, for some, lack of job stability are seen as the most negative aspects.

#### **d. Issues relating to equal opportunities**

As we have seen, men are in the majority in this group of workers. Some of them feel the fact they are men has had no influence, either positive or negative, on their work, whilst about half of our interviewees feel it has helped them: one who works in the youth centre says that "being a man creates fewer problems when making initial contact with the boys"; and an interviewee who works in entertainment says that "perhaps men command more respect from the children". However, the one woman worker we interviewed says that being a woman has been a positive factor: for example, it gave her an advantage at the recruitment phase because the organisation she works for was looking for a woman, since all its other workers were men.

#### **e. Reconciliation of working life, family commitments and voluntary activities**

Several of our interviewees said they had had difficulties in reconciling work and family life. The only one who has children says he often has problems with his working times and is not always able to concentrate properly on his work. A woman interviewee, who does several jobs, leaving the house at seven o'clock in the morning and getting back at nine o'clock in the evening, often has difficulty in reconciling all her commitments. Our interviewees did not however call for any particular forms of help from their employing organisations. The measures they suggested to promote reconciliation mainly concern greater clarity around working times: "having a general idea of when I'm going to be working" (in the case of a worker whose working times are arranged from week to week, depending on requirements),

"having the same day off every week" (in the case of an entertainer who often works at weekends and holidays).

One of the workers we interviewed has experience in the voluntary sector, performing activities very similar to his current ones (group leadership in a centre for children with disabilities), and seems to have no problem in combining work in the two sectors - in fact, he actually pointed out that he can use the skills he is acquiring in his job in his voluntary activities (just as, in all likelihood, he has drawn on his experience of voluntary work in his job).

## **2.3 Nannies**

### **a. Characteristics of the workers interviewed**

The four nannies we interviewed are all Italian women of varying ages (19, 23, 38 and 62). The younger ones have upper-secondary-school certificates and one is attending a course for child social workers; the older two have, respectively, a lower-secondary-school diploma (the 38-year-old) and a primary-school certificate (the 62-year-old). One of the younger women also works in a private nursery, and the 62-year-old also works as a home help and a seamstress. With regard to family composition, the older woman lives with her daughter and son-in-law, both of whom are in their thirties and work; she says her wage enables her to be independent of them (she started work after her husband died). The others live with their family of origin and are not the main wage-earners (their parents either work, in the case of the younger women, or are pensioners, in the case of the 38-year-old, whose parents are 75). None of them is a member of a trade union.

### **b. Nature of the work**

The work consists of caring for children, feeding them, taking them to parks or to the swimming pool; one is also expected to do the shopping. Three feel relatively free to organise their own work, while one says she does not have a good relationship with the child's mother and that, although she had tried to "do her own thing", she had not always had a positive reaction and now always asks permission before following her own initiative.

Some of the women live close to their place of work (2-3 minutes away), while the others take, respectively, 15 minutes (in Florence) and 25 minutes (in Rome) to get to work.

They found their jobs through friends or acquaintances or, in one case, through the church. In general, it seems to be work chosen because of a wish to work with children, rather than out of economic necessity.

### **c. Working conditions and quality of work**

The nanny with the longest working hours works 40 hours a week, six days a week, or sometimes more; another works 35 hours, five days a week; while another works 25 hours, five days a week; finally, one works 10 hours spread over two days a week. The level of job satisfaction varies from one nanny to another. The one who works 40 hours a week is also the most poorly paid, earning Lit 5000 (EUR 2.5) an hour; the one who earns the most is on Lit 12 500 (EUR 6.25) an hour. They are all paid in cash. Our oldest interviewee says she chose not to declare her employment so she can continue to claim her husband's transferable pension; the one who has another job says she does not need another contract; but the one who works the longest hours complains bitterly about her low pay, the fact she is not legally employed, is not entitled to sick pay and does not receive overtime pay.

With respect to the future, our oldest interviewee says she would like to continue to work for the same family "because the children need me"; the 38-year-old, on the other hand, would very much like to change her job and work in a public nursery. Of the younger two, one already has another job and is thinking of carrying on with both jobs, while the other says she is going to change jobs. In general, our interviewees did not see many career opportunities in being a nanny, though one acknowledges that her position has improved in recent years.

The thing that nannies like most about their work is playing with the children; the most negative aspect, for some, is the relationship with employers, with whom there tend to be disagreements and misunderstandings about pay and the organisation of work.

#### **d. Issues relating to equal opportunities**

All four nannies we interviewed said that being a woman is an advantage, because women "have the maternal instinct", even if they are not mothers themselves, or, more pragmatically, because "parents only trust women".

#### **e. Reconciliation of working life, family commitments and voluntary activities**

The nanny with the greatest difficulties in this area is the one with elderly parents: she would like to be closer to her mother and go with her when she needs to leave the house, but her employer will not allow it; fortunately, her brothers often take over this responsibility. The nanny who is living with her daughter and son-in-law says she has some difficulty in running two households at once, but she has found her employer to be accommodating and has been allowed to leave early or arrive late if necessary. None of the nannies could think of any measures that might make it easier to reconcile their work and family commitments, apart from "more flexibility on the part of employers" or "more authority to organise the working day". The interviewees' relatives generally approve of their choice of work, though sometimes with a few reservations ("they'd prefer it if I had a permanent job", "it's fine for the moment, but they're hoping I'll soon find something else").

Three of the four nannies we interviewed have done voluntary work involving childcare or care of the elderly. Two of them have given up their voluntary work and one of them says she did this because, once she got her job as a nanny, she no longer had time. Our oldest interviewee, however, still prepares lunch once a week in a day centre for the elderly. The two who have done voluntary work with children recognise that there is a positive link between their voluntary work and their decision to work as a nanny.

### **3. Care of the elderly**

#### **3.1. Home carers**

##### **a. Characteristics of the workers interviewed**

The home carers we interviewed all work in social cooperatives that have agreements with the communal authorities. Six of them were women and three men; eight Italian and one Iranian; all aged between 30 and 40. Some of them have upper-secondary-school certificates, while others have lower-secondary-school certificates; some have completed the vocational-training course for home carers, while others have completed courses unrelated to their current work (e.g. typing, ISEF). Their previous jobs are very varied and often unrelated to their present

occupation. Only one of our interviewees still occasionally does another job (actor in advertisements).

Five of our interviewees live with their partner and have children: of these, only one, a woman, has a child who still needs looking after (a 6-year-old son) and he is cared while she is at work by her partner and parents, who live with her. Three of our interviewees live with their family of origin: one, in particular, has a 73-year-old mother who occasionally needs her care, and her brother helps her with this.

It should be noted that none of our interviewees is the main wage-earner (except, of course, those who live alone). Two of the nine are trade-union members.

### **b. Nature of the work**

Home carers' work involves visiting three or four elderly people every day and helping them with their personal hygiene, physical well-being (massage, preventing bed sores, exercises, help in moving around, checking blood pressure), housework, shopping, dealing with paperwork and accompanying them when they go out. All of this also involves a willingness to listen to the elderly person and provide emotional support where necessary. One of the home carers we interviewed said that the aim of the work was also to encourage the elderly person to be as independent as possible. Our interviewees take a maximum of 20 minutes in Florence and 30 minutes in Rome to get to their place of work. Account also needs to be taken, however, of the time involved in travelling from one house to another.

All of the home carers we interviewed are relatively happy with the degree of autonomy they have in performing their work. In fact, they also stress the importance of being able to share experiences with other home carers, service coordinators and other specialists, such as social workers.

The level of satisfaction concerning the organisation of work is not always high. In particular, we heard some complaints about the lack of resources (e.g. transport) and inadequate contact with the service coordinator.

In some cases, work was found through friends; in others, contact with the sector was established through attendance of the vocational-training course. Some of our interviewees had done similar work previously, on a voluntary basis, and had heard of their current job that way; others were already doing a different job in the same cooperative and, having acquired the necessary skills, had moved into this new occupation. The reason for choosing this type of work also varies: some seem to have become home carers by chance or because they had not found other jobs (though they say they love it now); others, more than anything else, came to it because of a personal commitment developed through their voluntary work.

### **c. Working conditions and quality of work**

Most of the home carers we interviewed work 36 hours a week, six hours a day for six days, mostly in the morning. Some have shorter working hours (28-30 hours, five hours a day), while some work longer hours (eight hours a day for six days, totalling 48 hours a week). In general, the home carers we interviewed have chosen their working hours, and most of them say they are happy with them. Hourly pay varies from Lit 8000 (EUR 4) to Lit 12 000 (EUR 6) net. Nearly all of our interviewees are only partially satisfied or are dissatisfied with their pay. All of them (except one, who is paid on invoice) are covered by the national

collective agreement, which makes provision for holidays, sick leave and maternity leave and social-security contributions.

Nearly all of the home carers we interviewed have attended meetings and refresher courses organised by the social-cooperative movement, such as seminars on Alzheimer's disease or psychology and sociology courses.

Most of our interviewees (five of the nine) say they will stay in their current job for the next five years; one says she will be trying to get a job in the public sector by taking part in open competitions; and three do not have any clear ideas about the future. In general, most of our interviewees feel their work provides career opportunities if they look for them, such as becoming a member, rather than an employee, of the cooperative or taking on coordination tasks.

The aspects of their work that our interviewees like the best are, once again, the human relationship with elderly people, which provides major job satisfaction, but also, more generally, the sense of helping to combat loneliness and marginalisation. As one home carer said:

I like the fact that my work is truly about people. It's hard, too, but it gives you so much satisfaction, even if you don't always manage to do everything as well as you'd like. It gives you an awareness of some very diverse situations, enables you to do something about situations that nobody is tackling. For example, everyone talks about elderly people as "poor things", but they don't do anything about it.

The aspect of their work they like least, on the other hand, is the lack of recognition of their professional status, both economically and socially:

Home carers should have more status; instead, because it is a relatively new profession, they tend to be seen as a kind of home help.

In addition to this, our interviewees said they were sometimes disturbed by the constant contact with situations of extreme poverty and suffering or the need to tackle difficult caring situations, as in the case of incontinent old people. One of our interviewees also mentioned difficult relationships with the rest of the cooperative as a problem. Another complained about the fact that the communal authorities do not cover the cost of travelling from one house to another or of transporting elderly people.

#### **d. Issues relating to equal opportunities**

According to most of our interviewees, being a woman makes it easier to be a home carer, mostly because of users' attitudes and prejudices. First and foremost, because most of the elderly people cared for are women (for example, one male interviewee said he had not been accepted as a replacement for a woman carer by an elderly woman); however, when the user is a man, it can happen that he feels awkward about, for example, being helped to get out of bed by a woman. Secondly, it would seem that women are felt to be better than men at doing housework and shopping; on the other hand, elderly people "have less trust in women's ability to do 'technical' jobs, even if it's just hammering in a nail" (interview with a woman). As regards chatting and communication, some of our interviewees argue that women are preferred, while others say that "many elderly people see male carers as grandsons, or the son they never had, which means they are happy to talk to them" (interview with a woman). With

respect to nationality, the one non-EU worker we interviewed claimed not to have come up against any specific obstacles.

#### **e. Reconciliation of working life, family commitments and voluntary activities**

As a rule, working as a home carer does not seem to pose any particular problems as regards reconciling work and family life. However, a few of the home carers we interviewed have come up against some difficulties, that have nonetheless been solved by asking colleagues to replace them for a few hours. In general, teams seem to offer fairly good flexibility of working times. In terms of measures to promote a better balance between work and family commitments, the only one suggested by the home carers we interviewed was an increase in hourly pay, which would enable those who needed to to earn a reasonable wage not to have to work too many hours (home carers are paid on an hourly basis and can choose the number of hours they work). It is often women with the most children who work the longest hours, because they need to earn more.

As we have said, several of the home carers we interviewed had previously done voluntary work with the elderly, people with disabilities, those in need in their neighbourhood, either within organisations or on their own initiative. Some are still doing their voluntary work, while others, especially those working longer hours, have stopped (for example, a woman carer who works 46 hours a week says she is too tired and stressed to continue her voluntary activities).

### **3.2. Teachers/Community leaders**

#### **a. Characteristics of the workers interviewed**

The teachers and community leaders we interviewed work in a day centre for the elderly run by a social cooperative. We interviewed one man and two women, all Italian and aged between 30 and 36. Their qualifications are the lower-secondary-school diploma, the certificate of attendance of the vocational-training course and, in one case, a university-level diploma. They come from very different occupational backgrounds (labourer, hotel receptionist), sometimes from other sectors (e.g. support teacher, childcare worker). At the moment, none of them has any other job. The man we interviewed lives with his 60-year-old parents, who have no particular need for him to care for them; one of the women is single and the other lives with her partner and 17-month-old son. Once again, neither of the two who live with other people are the main wage-earner. Finally, none of the three are trade-union members.

#### **b. Nature of the work**

The work consists of organising and running the centre's activities, which include reading, drawing, gymnastics and pottery, and, in general, encouraging the elderly people to socialise. They also maintain relationships with families and the communal authorities' social workers, organise care services, and listen to and follow up users' complaints and requests.

One of the women we interviewed takes a good 45 minutes to get to work, travelling in from another commune.

They all seem to have a satisfactory level of freedom and autonomy in performing their work; in fact, one of our interviewees said the work was left too much to individual initiative and would like more support, both from competent institutions and from the cooperative.

One of our interviewees found the job through working in the same cooperative's summer centres; another became aware of the vacancy while in another job; and yet another found the job through attending the vocational-training course. They all chose this type of work for genuine reasons: the possibility of establishing human relationships, the fact that it is not routine work and is emotionally satisfying, personal experience of not receiving support at a time of difficulty in the family.

### **c. Working conditions and quality of work**

Working hours are 35-37 hours a week, spread over five or six days (in the latter case, including Sunday). Only the interviewee who works on Sunday expressed dissatisfaction with working hours. In return, workers receive a monthly salary of Lit 1 350 000-1 450 000 (EUR 675-775) net, which is equivalent to a net hourly rate of a little less than Lit 10 000 (EUR 5). They all said they were unhappy with their pay, especially considering the skills they use and the complexity of their work. They are all regularly employed under permanent contracts, which provide for holidays, sickness and maternity leave, and social-security contributions (though not overtime pay). The low pay is the one cause of dissatisfaction concerning the contractual position.

Workers have been able to take advantage of various refresher and reskilling courses run by cooperative training institutes, including several seminars on Alzheimer's disease.

With respect to future prospects, one of our interviewees is planning to continue in the same job, another might take a job elsewhere, and the third has not made any decision about the future. In general, all three feel the work offers career opportunities in terms of either improving the contractual position (from fixed-term to permanent contract) or taking on management responsibilities at the centre. On the other hand, one of the women we interviewed pointed out that "she does a lot of voluntary work and is not interested in a career".

The aspects of their work our interviewees most liked concerned their relationships with elderly people, especially elderly people's "appreciation" when they have been taught something, and, in the words of one of our interviewees, "the possibility of interacting with lots of people and dealing with a broad range of situations and circumstances", and "the possibility of having a certain degree of autonomy in selecting content and initiatives, though within the framework of some established rules".

The aspects that are the most difficult are the physical and mental exhaustion caused by the need for constant self-monitoring in the many human interactions involved in the work, and the frustration caused by the bureaucratic and financial problems encountered when implementing certain initiatives.

### **d. Issues relating to equal opportunities**

With respect to the significance of the worker's gender in facilitating or hampering the work, our male interviewee said that, in some cases, elderly men prefer to turn to someone of the same sex and feels that men are more able to deal, for example, with aggressive behaviour in the group or to take action in the event of an accident. Women workers, on the other hand, say that it is personal qualities that matter, irrespective of gender; for example, according to one of our women interviewees, women have "a different way of seeing things", which is very important at the centre for the elderly. None of our interviewees have felt personally hampered in their work by their gender.

#### **e. Reconciliation of working life, family commitments and voluntary activities**

The woman we interviewed who has a young son and lives outside Florence says she has often had difficulties reconciling work and family commitments and has therefore asked for a reduction in her working hours. Her partner and relatives, who have not been of any particular help in dealing with the problem, are happy with the work she does, but feel it does not leave her with enough energy for her family. The other workers we interviewed have had only occasional problems and say they have been helped by the cooperatives they work for on these occasions. In terms of measures that might ease the reconciliation of the various areas of life, our interviewees indicated full use of contractual instruments and the granting of more free time for family and personal activities on certain occasions.

With regard to voluntary activities, the one woman who has done voluntary work continues to do so despite the fact that she is in paid employment.

### **4. Cleaning**

#### **4.1. Home helps who do not live in**

##### **a. Characteristics of the workers interviewed**

We interviewed 11 home helps who do not live in the employer's home: six foreigners and five Italians; seven women and four men (all the men are foreigners). Their ages range from 31 to 62. Their academic qualifications vary: two have none at all, two have a primary-school certificate, one has a lower-secondary-school certificate, three have an upper-secondary-school diploma and, unusually, three are graduates in, respectively, marketing, economics and industrial engineering. These are examples of the notorious cases of the occupational deskilling of immigrant workers, who often have high-level qualifications (that are not recognised by the Italian government) and are reduced to low-status jobs in Italy.

Many of our interviewees have children: of the three home helps who have small children, two have secured places for them in a public nursery and one has herself taken on a home help/nanny.

Most of the workers we interviewed are not the main wage-earner. In two cases, however, they are, and in other cases, home helps have to provide entirely for themselves.

Most do not have other jobs, and those who do have other jobs in the family-services sector (caring for a paraplegic, nanny, small plumbing jobs).

Previous jobs, particularly those of the immigrants we interviewed, vary widely: driver, waiter, pharmaceutical sales representative, running own business, working in a leather-goods shop. One of our interviewees is a Peruvian industrial engineer who used to work in an electrical household appliance enterprise and who subsequently lived in Japan for a few years as a grant-assisted post-graduate student. On returning to Peru, he tried to set up his own business but failed, and so decided to emigrate, ending up doing cleaning work. Four of the home helps we interviewed are members of trade unions or occupational associations.



## **b. Nature of the work**

The work of a home help consists, as a minimum, of doing the housework, washing and ironing. Many also do the cooking. Some do the shopping and one also serves as the employer's driver. In several cases, workers have to travel a considerable distance to their place of work - up to an hour and a half or even two hours in the case of two of our interviewees who work in Rome.

Nearly all of our interviewees said they have a high degree of autonomy in organising their tasks and are happy with this.

They found their current jobs through friends, previous employers, relatives who immigrated to Italy before them, Caritas and a service agency.

They all decided to become home helps as a makeshift solution, since they had failed to find other jobs, either because they were foreigners or because they were people with few qualifications and a real need to work.

## **c. Working conditions and quality of work**

The number of hours worked in a week varies enormously from one interviewee to another: from nine to 61 hours a week, working with one or several families. Because they have freely chosen their working hours, most home helps are happy with them. Some are regularly employed and paying social-security contributions; others are paid in cash. In both groups, there are people who are satisfied and dissatisfied with their contractual situation. Indeed, while some (particularly foreigners, who need to be in regular employment if they are to get a residence permit) appreciate the fact that their position is legal and regularised, others complain about the few benefits they receive compared with the social-security contributions they have to pay. Those working by the hour are paid an average of Lit 11 000-12 000 (EUR 5.5-6) per hour if they are working for cash, or Lit 10 000 (EUR 5) per hour if social-security contributions are paid, but may be paid as much as Lit 15 000 (EUR 7.5) per hour. Those who work long hours each week and are paid monthly by the family receive less: for example, Lit 1 100 000 net per month for 36 hours a week, which is equivalent to Lit 7600 (EUR 3.8) per hour. The great variety in pay also gives rise to varying degrees of satisfaction among the workers we interviewed.

As might well be expected, none of the workers we interviewed have received any special training for the work they do; two of them would, however, be interested in improving their skills by attending cookery courses.

Most hope to change their occupation in the next five years, but there are also some (three) who think they will carry on. Career possibilities - generally understood as the possibility of having higher pay or more responsibility - in this sector are correctly judged as being scarce by most of the home helps we interviewed; two of them, however, feel that career possibilities do exist.

As regards the most enjoyable aspects of the work, in terms of tasks, our interviewees prefer cooking, while the task they like least is ironing. Many of our interviewees simply do not like the job they are doing. Yet there are some optimistic, positive views of the occupation, with some home helps seeming to appreciate the high level of autonomy and flexibility, the challenge of combining several different employment relationships, sometimes even the human relationships with their employers. It is mainly immigrant men who take this view,

seeing themselves as "entrepreneurs in their own right". For example, the Peruvian industrial engineer says that his work "amuses him". Working 61 hours a week, he says he is working "at 75% of capacity" and has set himself the objective of raising this to "90%", or 66 hours a week. This is an extreme case, but it does give an idea of the way in which these workers perceive the relationship with work.

#### **d. Issues relating to equal opportunities**

Most of the home helps we interviewed say that women are more trusted by employers, though a few also mentioned some advantages associated with being a man. One male home help told us that two employers initially wanted to take on his wife rather than him, but changed their minds:

They decided to employ me to clean the 600 square metre villa because I'm a man. I have an advantage when it comes to heavy work and I cope with tiredness better than my wife does.

Being foreign does not seem to have been an obstacle to employment for any of our interviewees.

#### **e. Reconciliation of working life, family commitments and voluntary activities**

Home helps sometimes have to tackle considerable difficulties in reconciling the life of their own family with that of the family for whom they are working. For example, a 31-year-old Peruvian worker who lives with her partner and a young son who goes to nursery, and works 56 hours a week, told us:

I don't manage to do the chores at home because I get back too late. I argue with my partner, because he works until midnight and would like me to work until just two or three o'clock in the afternoon.

In cases of emergency, the home helps we interviewed said they had found their employers understanding and had been allowed to change their hours or take time off. However, this does not alter the "structural" problem associated with the fact that many of them (particularly the foreigners) choose to work very long hours.

With respect to measures that might facilitate the reconciliation of work and family commitments, most of the home helps we interviewed had no suggestions. Some said it might be easier if there were more nurseries or if kindergartens were open longer hours, and if nurseries and kindergartens were cheaper. As regards voluntary work, a few of our immigrant interviewees had done voluntary work in their country of origin, but stopped when they came to Italy because of lack of time. Some of them, however, collaborate with associations that support immigrants.

## **4.2 Live-in home helps**

### **a. Characteristics of the workers we interviewed**

We interviewed three live-in home helps: two women and one man, all foreign (foreigners are now virtually the only people who will accept this kind of employment relationship). They all have high levels of education: upper-secondary-school diploma or even a degree (education science). Their previous jobs in Italy have all been as home helps, though one was a primary-school teacher before immigrating to Italy. In terms of marital status, our male interviewee is

married and has a seven-year-old daughter who lives with her mother; both partners are in live-in posts and therefore live separately, seeing each other only on Saturday and Sunday; another of our interviewees has father, mother and eleven brothers living in her country of origin; while the third has a 22-year-old son who does not live with her. One of our interviewees is the main wage-earner for her family, while the other two are not. None of them have any other job.

### **b. Nature of the work**

In addition to the tasks usually performed by home helps, those who live with their employers often have other tasks, such as personal care of an elderly employer or dealing with practical matters on their behalf (such as going to the post office). The amount of freedom they have in organising their work varies: some say they are limited by the fact that the employer is elderly, while others say they can organise their work as they wish.

They all found their jobs through friends and personal acquaintances, usually other home helps. Their reasons for choosing this type of work are mostly a matter of necessity, though one of our interviewees said she enjoyed having contact with elderly people.

### **c. Working conditions and quality of work**

Working hours vary between 30 and 66 hours a week and, in some cases, home helps are virtually on call around the clock. Pay is also quite variable but always low, though these workers also receive board and lodging. In one case, for example, net monthly pay for 66 hours a week is Lit 1 000 000 (EUR 500); in another, the home help receives monthly pay of Lit 1 100 000 (EUR 550) for only 30 hours a week; and in a third, monthly pay is Lit 1 400 000 (EUR 700) (the interviewee did not specify the number of working hours). Satisfaction with the pay received is, therefore, also variable. The position of all the live-in home helps we interviewed is either regularised or in the process of being regularised, which means they can get residence permits. However, some of them are unhappy with the amount of money they have to pay out in social-security contributions.

As regards the future, one of our interviewees expressed the intention of returning home, another plans to stay in Rome but to change employer, and the other is planning to continue in the same post. One of our three interviewees said there is some potential for making a "career" in this kind of work, essentially meaning that there is the possibility of better pay; the others, however, do not see any career prospects in their work. None of them has ever attended any training courses to aid them in their work.

The difficult conditions in which these live-in home helps are working emerge from their descriptions of what they like most and least about their work:

I like it when I'm doing something like cooking or cleaning, but I don't like taking the old lady out in her wheelchair, especially when she stops to chat and I have to wait around with nothing to do.

I enjoy going shopping, because it gives me a chance to have a little stroll around and enjoy the fresh air, and I can 'phone my wife from a call box; I don't like washing the windows, cleaning the bathrooms and dusting all the knickknacks. My employer doesn't like me using the vacuum cleaner, so I have to do everything by hand. And I don't like taking the dog for a walk, because I have to do it during my hour off.

#### **d. Issues relating to equal opportunities**

As far as the issue of being male or female is concerned, our two women interviewees say that "it is women's work" and that "a man might not have as much patience as I do with my employer". Our male interviewee, on the other hand, said he had never come up against any particular obstacles because of his gender. With respect to the issue of discrimination against foreigners, our interviewees do not seem to have suffered from discrimination in their employment relationships.

#### **e. Reconciliation of working life, family commitments and voluntary activities**

Reconciling work and family is a real difficulty for home helps who live with their employers. We have already mentioned the case of the two partners, both living in with families, who see each other only on Saturdays and Sundays. Moreover, distant relatives often do not even know what kind of work the person is doing. As one of our interviewees explained:

I haven't told them; they could never even imagine the amount of work I have to do to get my wage; here in Italy, we do things we have never had to do at home.

None of our interviewees had any ideas concerning measures that might improve the situation as regards reconciling work and family life.

With regard to voluntary activities, some of our interviewees used to do voluntary work in their country of origin, while others still do voluntary work, but mainly on an informal basis. For example, the Ecuadorian we interviewed used to do voluntary work in a home for the elderly and with street children and says that this experience made him aware of old people who had been abandoned by their families; now, however, he is unable to do this voluntary work. One of our women interviewees helps to find work for other women of her nationality who have children and need to earn money.

## **5. Comments**

### **5.1. Future prospects concerning the occupations studied**

The information that has emerged from this recent analysis of actual experiences of work in the family-services sector (with some examples of more modern and innovative occupational figures, such as nursery teachers, teachers and leaders of older children, home carers, community leaders in services for the elderly, and other figures in more traditional occupations that nonetheless have a major impact on the world of work, such as nannies and home helps) enables us to make a number of comments.

- A) The occupations associated with the more innovative services for children and the elderly seem to be a valid occupational prospect for young people when they first enter the labour market, which they come to at the end of a training curriculum that is generally quite coherent, making use of vocational-training courses established in recent years specifically to provide occupations in the social sphere with greater depth and skills. Generally performed within social cooperatives or other organisations in the tertiary sector, these occupations are a somewhat more skilled alternative to individual employment as a nanny or home help with families or elderly people (occupations that are highly de-skilling). Their impact on the labour market is severely limited by the fact

that their development is still too dependent on the availability of public funding for social services.

- B) Some of the more long-standing occupations, such as home carer for the elderly or community teacher in residential or semi-residential services for the elderly, appear to offer good long-term employment prospects (as evidenced by the fact that they are often performed - and often for a long time - by workers who are no longer young and who want to continue in the future). Other occupations, particularly those related to new services for children, have developed only recently (during the 1990s) and it is therefore too soon to evaluate their long-term occupational significance.
- C) Although workers in family services still tend to be women, we are beginning to see young men becoming established in certain sectors traditionally dominated by women, such as care of the elderly or teaching. We are also seeing an increase in the number of foreign workers in these sectors - people who are escaping under-employment as home helps.
- D) The potential for these occupations being transformed from temporary jobs into stable employment is nonetheless linked to their qualitative features. From this viewpoint, they have many attractive features, such as:
- the possibility of having human relationships that are both professionally and emotionally satisfying;
  - the considerable degree of creativity and autonomy that can be exercised in this work;
  - the possibility of constantly experimenting with innovation and quality of service;
  - the opportunity to make a practical contribution to implementing public policies to combat the social exclusion of women, children and the elderly;
  - the chance of working in a highly motivated environment;
  - the possibility of acquiring new skills and knowledge as a result of being integrated in networks of organisations and public bodies working in the social field.
- E) There are, however, some very discouraging factors concerning certain aspects of this kind of work, which might affect its feasibility in the long term:
- pay tends always to be quite low, particularly in relation to the occupational skills and abilities required of workers (it is not by coincidence that none of the workers we interviewed are the main wage-earners for their family and that many workers in this sector are women);
  - there are problems concerning the contractual formalisation of employment relationships, which do not always offer workers a minimum of security (in this respect, the efforts being made by social cooperatives and other bodies in the tertiary and public sectors to ensure that work is governed by national collective agreements are particularly valuable);
  - often serving as the interface between user, public body and the employing organisation, workers are particularly vulnerable to the risk of burn-out that can make these occupations unsustainable in the long term;
  - the social status of these occupations - precisely because they are new and relatively unknown - is not very high (for example, home carers are seen as being the same as home helps). This, together with pay, seems to be a decisive factor if we are to see an

end to occupational segregation and the over-representation of women in the family-services sector.

## **5.2. Impact of work on family life and voluntary activities**

Generally speaking, employment in the family-services sector does not seem to have a particularly negative impact on workers' family life - at least by comparison with other types of work. On the contrary, work in this sector appears to offer considerable flexibility, which facilitates the reconciliation of work and family life. This flexibility is not only a result of the application of official regulatory mechanisms but is often also a result of informal arrangements among colleagues or between managers and workers.

Here, too, however, there are some causes of potential friction between the two spheres:

- working times are rarely specified with sufficient notice;
- workloads cannot always be anticipated;
- the work often involves several journeys during the day, with a consequent loss of time;
- the low hourly rate of pay forces workers to work longer hours or have several jobs at the same time (for example, in the case of home carers, we found that it is precisely those who need to work fewer hours, that is, women with several children, who have to work longer hours to obtain a wage that enables them to support the family);
- the work is often physically and mentally exhausting, which means that a strong emotional commitment is also required of workers;
- many workers enjoy fewer benefits, such as leave of absence and time off, than people in other types of employed work (though not self-employed people), and their employing enterprises are too small to allow for the creation of in-house childcare facilities; this means that the possibility of reconciling family and work depends, more than in other cases, on the local availability of childcare services or care for the elderly.

In general, employment in the family-services sector does not have a negative impact on voluntary activities. Some of the workers we interviewed have stopped doing voluntary work, but in only a few cases can this be directly attributed to the fact that they are employed in family services and it is often part of the broader context of moving into adult life. Several of the workers we interviewed are continuing to do both paid and voluntary work in the social field, with reciprocal benefits for the two activities (for example, using skills and contact networks built up in voluntary work in their employed work, and using abilities developed in their work in their voluntary activities).

## **5.3. Measures to improve the balance between work, family and involvement in social activities**

In the light of the problems mentioned and suggestions made by workers, it is possible to identify at least the following measures that might improve the reconciliation of work, family life and social activities for people working in family services:

- increasing workers' pay so that they do not have to work an excessive number of hours or do several jobs simultaneously;
- promoting the planning, in advance and in agreement with workers, of working hours and times, whilst maintaining flexibility of service provision;

- making enterprises in the family-services sector (and particularly management) aware of the problem of reconciling work with family life and social activities, in order to increase their willingness to make informal arrangements to meet workers' needs;
- rationalising the journeys that have to be made by workers who work in several different places during the same day;
- promoting the opening of local public childcare services and services providing care for the elderly, or encouraging enterprises to collaborate to launch private non-profit-making services managed collectively by workers;
- applying existing contractual instruments concerning maternity and paternity leave and sick leave.

## Chapter 4: Conclusions and suggestions for policy-makers

### 1. Implications of our research results for public policies

In completing this report, we can highlight some research findings that might help to identify possible policy initiatives to create quality employment in family services and improve the reconciliation of work, family and social life for both men and women. Particular mention might be made of:

- certain issues concerning the expansion of employment and quality of work in family services;
- certain issues associated with equal opportunities.

#### 1.1. Issues concerning the expansion of employment and quality of work in family services

Our research confirms the trend as regards **the expansion of employment in family services** in Italy. In particular, we have noted that, especially as regards childcare and care of the elderly, this expansion is in line mainly, though not solely, with **growth in the tertiary sector**, including social cooperatives, associations and other non-profit-making organisations. In sectors involving the preparation and provision of meals and home maintenance, on the other hand, it would seem that private enterprise is predominant. In the cleaning sector, it is self-employment and undeclared labour that seem to be undergoing the greatest expansion.

In services for the elderly and childcare services, we are seeing the gradual consolidation of new occupations or occupations involving considerable innovation with a high quality profile. However, much remains to be done to encourage this consolidation, particularly with a view to transforming them from unstable and, in many cases, still relatively unknown occupations into real **careers**, that are socially recognised and sufficiently defined in terms of content, working methods and working conditions. We are not referring here to linear career paths, which might suggest gradual progression within the same working environment, with little risk or self-promotion (paths that are, in any case, increasingly rare on the labour market). Rather, what we are talking about are occupational routes, or **spirals**, with some internal discontinuities, in which personal initiative and the willingness to learn new techniques and working methods are of major importance, but which nonetheless offer an acceptable amount of stability and advancement and give rise to occupational figures that are adequately defined and recognisable. From this viewpoint, even activities that do not lead into recognised careers (such as, for example, nannying or home care for the elderly) might serve as points of access to better structured careers in the field of childcare or care of the elderly.

If this is to be the case, however, some important conditions need to be met.

- **Better pay.** Pay in the family-services sector is still quite low considering the professional and personal skills required (as is evidenced by the high proportion of women in this sector). Thus, occupations associated with family services risk being relegated to the limbo of unstable employment, which people enter only while waiting for better jobs. A rise in pay levels is probably dependent upon certain "structural" factors: economic consolidation of the private and non-profit-making enterprises operating in the



sector; greater recognition of the economic value of services by purchasing public bodies (avoiding, for example, disparities of treatment between people employed directly by public bodies and people working in the tertiary sector); consolidation of the family-services market by promoting the purchase of services by private individuals; general promotion of enterprises' marketing, fund-raising and strategic-planning abilities, thus reducing the existing disparities between large and small undertakings.

- **Better structured career paths.** The definition of better structured career paths, without disturbing the horizontal and solidarity-based relationships that are a feature of social enterprise, should give workers the possibility of improving their employment position and becoming increasingly professionalised, with the assumption of increasing responsibilities and the acquisition of new skills and abilities.
- **Better rationalisation of the system of service provision.** To maintain their economic viability, enterprises providing family services often have to coordinate their activities on a variety of fronts (e.g. working with disadvantaged young people, providing care for the elderly) and in a variety of contexts (from users' homes to local services). In this context, it seems vital that managers acquire an ability to optimise their use of labour by, for example, minimising travel costs and times and adopting more standardised working methods, within the limits of a service that must necessarily be personalised and designed to meet the specific needs of each user.
- **Creation of a support network for workers.** We have seen that workers very much appreciate the level of autonomy and creativity they can exercise in their work, but also that they would often like more support, both from their employing body and from the public bodies for which they provide their services. In particular, the task of reconciling the user's needs, the enterprise's resources and the limitations set by the public administration seems particularly burdensome and can cause frustration and burn-out if it has to be managed by workers alone, with no institutional coordination.
- **Vocational training and refresher courses.** We have noted that what makes the difference, in terms of quality of work, in enterprises that provide family services is often the chance for workers to take part in vocational training and refresher courses, either in the form of actual courses or in the form of seminars, meetings or even public initiatives in which issues concerning social and family services are discussed. These opportunities need to be multiplied and made accessible to even the smallest organisations, with the creation of consortia, associations or informal networks connecting organisations in the same sector (including civic and voluntary organisations).
- **Adjustment of contractual instruments.** The contractual position of workers in the family-services sector varies considerably at the moment, not only because of practical differences in the ways in which work is performed (from full time to a few hours a week), but also because of the problem of framing the many emerging new forms of work in traditional contractual forms. There is a particular problem in the case of the tertiary sector, where the distinction between employed and self-employed work is often unclear (e.g., in the case of working members of cooperatives). In this respect, it is good that steps are being taken to define specific contracts for the non-profit-making sector and that the regulations governing continuous, coordinated collaboration contracts are being developed. But further steps need to be taken in this direction, with concertation between all the interested parties, so that the protection of workers' basic rights is compatible with the need to avoid rigidities or an excessive increase in labour costs, at the expense of potential expansion of employment.
- **Regularisation of undeclared employment.** In the cleaning sector, in particular, but also in childcare services and services for the elderly, there still tend to be more workers in undeclared employment than there are in declared employment. In many cases, this

situation continues because workers and employers both benefit from not regularising the employment relationship, particularly from the point of view of social-security contributions. In this context, there is an initial need to increase knowledge of the situation so as to define more clearly targeted policies. The next step would be to promote demand by easing the costs incurred by families in purchasing services (by providing for deductions from taxable income, but also through other mechanisms), on the condition that the workers' situation is regularised. There is also a need to define new social-security schemes that enable those with semi-dependent status or who work by the hour for several different employers to secure, at the end of a reasonable working life, an adequate pension that is comparable to the benefits that might be secured by investing the same amount on the financial market or in a private pension.

## 1.2. Issues specifically associated with equal opportunities

We can identify at least three areas in which the issue of equal opportunities comes into play as regards the development of family services:

- the expansion of family services as a way of **relieving women of the burden of family care**, thus enabling women to enter into working life;
- dealing with the **occupational segregation that is a feature of family services**, either by increasing the number of male workers in these services or by ensuring that the quality of work in this female-dominated sector is as high as that in male-dominated sectors;
- ensuring **access to the labour market in the family-services sector**, with equality of treatment, **to socially disadvantaged groups** and, in particular, to non-EU immigrant workers.

With regard to the **first point**, we have already noted (see Chapter 1) that the demand for childcare, care of the elderly and domestic services is still largely unsatisfied and that the burden of care still falls mainly on the shoulders of the family and, in particular, women, especially in the case of families on low and average incomes who cannot sustain the cost of private services. This means that promoting the expansion of family services (in terms of the number of structures, users, hours, etc) that meet users' needs both qualitatively and quantitatively is in itself a significant social-policy objective. The question of the availability of services is still relatively new, the aim being to move beyond the current situation, in which we have highly specialised and very innovative schemes that tend to be aimed at a limited user group, in the broader context of a general lack of services. This means that there is a need to avoid excessively rigid approaches in defining the standards with which services have to comply, so as not automatically to exclude actors with fewer resources from the possibility of creating new services and to avoid inadvertently promoting the expansion of undeclared employment. An approach that is being tested, and which seems to be coherent with what we have just said, is that of promoting forms of quality certification developed by the bodies operating in the sector and that provide for considerable user involvement.

With respect to the issue of **equal opportunities for men and women in access to employment in family services**, working to improve the skills and pay of occupational figures in the sector is already a major step in the right direction, including in terms of making those occupations attractive to women who are, for family reasons, forced to opt for part-time working. Indeed, the issue is not of making work compatible with family life (it tends to be chosen because it is *already* compatible), but of making it acceptable to people who have to support their family alone, without implying an excessive work commitment (with hours as

long as 46 hours a week for home carers or even 60 hours a week for home helps) that actually impedes the reconciliation of work and family life.

Mention also needs to be made of the lack of any specific measures to increase the number of men working in family services in Italy. Most of the public and private bodies interviewed during our research seem to take the current situation for granted, even though they do not like it. It would therefore seem appropriate to begin to make the various policy-makers aware of this issue, encouraging them to be proactive and increasing the visibility of the limited but significant experiences of male integration - and particularly of young men - in childcare services, in the sector of entertainment and education for older children and in home care of the elderly, in which male workers are already becoming far more common. The rise in voluntary work by the younger generations is another factor that might encourage the gradual integration of men in the family-services sector.

As regards the issue of **equal opportunities for non-EU workers**, it should be noted that there are significantly more of them in less skilled jobs and they are still in a minority in better quality jobs. Lack of recognition of qualifications obtained in their country of origin is often an obstacle to their integration, which means that many non-EU workers who have sufficient occupational experience and skills to occupy high-level posts are forced to take jobs in the lowest segments of the market. If these obstacles are to be overcome, we need to improve non-EU workers' access to vocational courses (those financed by the regional authorities and also, for example, those promoted by the European Social Fund), encourage the establishment of family-service enterprises by non-EU workers<sup>20</sup> and, as a matter of urgency, introduce instruments that make it possible to improve the living and working conditions of immigrants working as home helps.

## 2. Suggestions for policy-makers

The following points indicate some general strategies and some specific suggestions for the various actors involved in defining and implementing social policy.

### a. General strategies

- improving awareness of employment dynamics in the family-services sector, with particular focus on the issue of undeclared employment and with a view to developing ways of measuring the impact on employment of the policies implemented by public and private bodies;
- promoting improved integration of the tertiary sector in social policies promoted by the public sector;
- expanding training opportunities and encouraging the social and institutional strengthening of occupational figures;
- sustaining the development of entrepreneurship (particularly among women) in the field of family services;

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<sup>20</sup> For example, a training course in enterprise-creation for immigrant women with considerable occupational skills, funded by the ESF and organised by CERFE in Rome in 1998-1999, led to the formation of the Associazione Donne Straniere Insieme [Association of Foreign Women Working Together], whose aim is to provide support services for immigrant families, such as after-school services, holidays and summer camps, and the enterprise "Vitality", which is setting up a social secretariat for elderly people who can no longer care for themselves or who have difficulties in relating to others.

- improving the inter-sectoral coordination of social policies, employment policies and gender/equal-opportunities policies, at both national and local level;
- promoting demand for family services, so as to strengthen a private market independent of public funding;
- sustaining quality improvement in family services, particularly by developing forms of communication between those involved in the sector.

#### **b. Parliament and government**

- following up the commitments made under the agreement between the Forum Permanente del Terzo Settore [Permanent Tertiary-Sector Forum] and the Government in December 1998 concerning increased tax relief for the tertiary sector, supplementing the regulations governing the sector (e.g. law on social-welfare associations) and reorganising services and social protection (framework law to reform welfare benefits);
- improving information on family services, by encouraging bodies, including ISTAT, to use systems for classifying occupations and economic activities that are more capable of reflecting the actual situation (particularly as regards childcare, care of the elderly and cleaning services) and by promoting special ad hoc surveys;
- constantly monitoring the implementation of Law No 285 on the Fondo Nazionale per l'Infanzia (National Children's Fund) and attempting to assess its impact on employment;
- speeding the passage of the bill on the tax-deductibility of the cost of domestic services purchased by families;
- identifying time and space for coordination of the various agents responsible for all those policies that have an impact on job creation in family services (policies concerning social services and regulation of the tertiary sector, employment policies, equal-opportunities policies).

#### **c. Regional administrations**

- ensuring rapid and effective approval and implementation of national legislation to promote female entrepreneurship, stimulate the creation of new childcare services and speed implementation of all other measures concerning family services;
- ensuring that employment trends in family services are given sufficient attention by regional labour-market observatories, with particular attention being paid to sectors in which there is a major information deficit, such as domestic work or, more generally, undeclared employment;
- promoting full integration of the tertiary sector and private-sector agents as partners in the regional programming of social and labour policies;
- increasing and monitoring vocational training in the skills required in the family-services sector, seeking to assess its long-term impact in terms of occupational integration, and taking full account of the issue of equal opportunities in training strategies and content.

#### **d. Local administrations**

- acquiring a better knowledge of family services and employment in family services, not only in the public or public-funded sector but also in the private sector operating exclusively on the market, including undeclared employment, with a view to developing policies concerning the planning and development of more appropriate services;
- making maximum use of national funds for the creation of family services, such as the Fondo Nazionale per l'Infanzia, with attention being paid not only to experimenting with

new forms of intervention but also to increasing the availability of services for a broader spectrum of users;

- according greater significance to the criterion of quality, rather than solely to cost-containment, in assessing bids in public invitations to tender and agreements;
- promoting the establishment of local support networks for workers in family services, so as to facilitate their role as mediators between users, the public administration and the world of social enterprise.

#### **e. Trade unions**

- setting up national, regional and local observatories on pay and working conditions in family services, with a view to identifying disparities and planning action to improve working conditions;
- introducing specialist internal structures and officers, not only at national level but also at regional and local level, to be responsible for domestic work and work in the non-profit-making sector and for implementing trade-union policies in this sphere.

#### **f. Organisations representing cooperatives and employers' associations**

- developing vocational training and refresher courses for workers in family services, which might also be open to non-members, and with particular attention to the involvement of smaller organisations;
- promoting the spread of quality and self-certification systems in the family-services sectors in which they are active, with maximum involvement of workers and users;
- identifying best practices (including of an informal nature) concerning the reconciliation of work, family commitments and social life at grassroots level and encouraging the spread of those practices among organisations providing family services;
- encouraging member bodies to integrate an increasing number of men in family services, though obviously not at the expense of female employment.