

5,000 found jobs through agency

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Staff Reporter

MORE than 5,000 job seekers successfully landed jobs during the last year, with the help of the Employment Service Bureau (ESB), the only office of its kind in the GCC.

The ESB, at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, which is one year old today, provides professional assistance and placement to potential job seekers.

On its first anniversary, Abdulnabi Al Sho'ala, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs said: "The ESB was set up as part of the Ministry's strategy



Mohammed Dito

to increase employment and training opportunities" - for Bahrainis, and I thank the management and staff of the ESB who have worked very hard to offer personal attention and professional service to every customer."

Mohammed Dito, acting head of the ESB, spoke to the *Tribune* about the good work of the Bureau.

"ESB grew out of an evaluation arrived at from past experiences in dealing with both the job seeker and the employer.

"The applicants at the ESB belong to a young generation of jobseekers, with 85 per cent of them educated up to the secondary school level or less.

"They are new entrants to the labour market. 70 per cent of those registered are below the age of 24 years with 28

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500 each month register at ESB

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per cent female job-seekers," confirmed Dito.

Explaining the aims that the bureau set out with and the many areas that have been understood, Dito said that the essential requirements for the job-seekers are guidance and counselling, and presenting themselves to the competitive labour market.

"We have two clients, the job-seeker and the employer. The guidance and counselling that we offer is targeted towards both of them," said Dito.

The point that is stressed by the ESB is that employing Bahrainis is a long-term investment, with the fruits to be reaped by the employer and the national economy.

"This message, we realise, has to be brought to the employer in an environment of dialogue. When the private sector employers feel that the Ministry of Labour is a patient listener and is trying to fully understand their specific problems and concerns, they are satisfied and offer complete co-operation," Dito said.

This was confirmed by the Minister, who said, "as part of the process, we required the full support of the private sector and I am personally pleased with the level of commitment shown by the employers in Bahrain, who have come forward to help. They have participated in meetings, talks and seminars identifying the challenges we face, and have now formed committees to find workable solutions to these issues."

The steps taken by the ESB have proven to be the correct and realistic ones, with the course taken by the Ministry in full understanding of the labour market.

"We have seen these efforts bringing tangible results," he said.

Within two weeks after the successful launch of the ESB last year, an additional five temporary staff were taken on to deal with the number of job-seekers registering at the centre.

"Though the numbers fluctuate according to certain months, an average of 500 applicants register at the ESB each month and each applicant is given professional counselling," said Dito.

The ESB employs 10 employment counsellors, two

supervisors and four receptionists.

Three types of counselling - individual, group sessions and job-seekers' workshops - are provided at the centre.

Individual counselling ensures that every job-seeker who is registered at the bureau goes through vocational and psychological counselling with one of the trained counsellors.

Group sessions are held for those preparing to go for interviews at specific establishments. They are given guidelines on how to present themselves at interviews.

The third type of counselling is in the form of job-seekers' workshops which was started in April last year. These are now held twice a week with 20-25 students at each session.

"We introduce them to the world of work and help them to understand their expectations more realistically," explained Dito.

Not content to rest on their past laurels, the ESB has realistic and serious plans for the second year of their functioning.

"Ours is a learning organisation," said John Wade, the labour market advisor at ESB, "and we are interested in getting both views. Weekly meetings with employers have given them a feeling of confidence that the Labour Ministry has adopted a new approach by creating an atmosphere of trust. We take suggestions from them and ask them how we can improve ourselves to serve them better."

Dito added that the ESB has seen potential among job-seekers for technical-oriented fields and we motivate them towards working at their strong areas.

Attitude at the workplace is another important issue that the ESB has taken up to address, in an effort to give to the market, a group of employees who have the right attitude to work.

"We now want to further improve and develop the services that we are already providing. We are constantly looking for new training channels.

Our customer-oriented approach is creating an environment of strong relations between the Ministry of Labour and the private sector," said Dito.

The bureau which is fully computerised, has details of vacancies and matching skills.