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## ABSTRACT

No longer is it possible for individuals to go through their working lives using only the skills and training they acquired during their initial schooling. Instead, they need to continually acquire new skills and re-think their career goals to meet changing job requirements and economic conditions. In order to help adults learn new skills and re-direct their thinking toward multiple careers instead of careers-for-life, more and different career guidance is needed. Instead of thinking of how to help individuals choose traditional careers, career guidance must focus on how to help them construct their own careers and to be open-minded to unplanned events that may lead to new careers. In particular, this concept of career guidance is relevant to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In these countries, shifts from the old paternalistic economy to a market economy have been abrupt and devastating, and career guidance must be made available to help people learn to plan and guide their own careers and lives. In the United States, in the meantime, policies, partnerships, and strategies are being implemented to support occupational and career information systems. These systems need to be refined and the best concepts applied to European countries. Staff development is central to the implementation of these initiatives. (Recommendations for European countries are provided. Four appendixes provide information on European countries' policy in the field of guidance, a blueprint for life and work designs, characteristics of Hungarian career guidance, and preparation of career guidance practitioners in the United States.) (Contains 10 references.) (KC)

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# Career Guidance and Counselling

## *Theory and practice for the 21st century*

Budapest, Hungary

29-31 March 2000

### Conference Report

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Career guidance and counselling in central and eastern Europe**

Since the revolutions of 1989, the economic and political systems of Central and Eastern Europe have been in rapid transition. This transition, however, has appeared not to be an easy one. In many areas, the conditions necessary for efficient private markets to develop have been absent. This is particularly the case in the labour market, where the initial effect of the reforms was largely to destroy economically inefficient jobs, without generating the means to replace them. It has now become evident that in many places there is a need for active labour-market policies, linked to economic development. Governments have to intervene in order to make the markets work. But this requires different kinds of intervention than those of the old command-economy model: interventions designed to support markets rather than replace them. In particular, it requires measures to be taken to build new markets, to regulate existing markets, and - where necessary - to compensate for market failure.

Career guidance is a classic intervention of this kind. It is a means of helping individuals to maximise their choices within their environment. It cannot of itself act as a significant instrument of economic regeneration but, linked to a range of structural measures, it can provide a means of lubricating these measures and reconciling them with the individual empowerment which ultimately is the engine that will determine their effectiveness. The subtlety of its modus operandi means that its importance can easily be overlooked by impatient policy-makers and belies its potential significance. Until fairly recently most political leaders saw school guidance and vocational guidance as a way of improving the match-up between the aspirations of the young people and adults and the jobs offered by the market. However, many people are now fully aware that what lies ahead of them is not a once-and-for-all transition from training to working life. People cannot hope to go through the whole of their working lives on the basis of what they learned during initial training.

### **1.2. The career-quake**

Alongside the massive transformations in the countries of central and eastern Europe, all advanced industrial societies are currently experiencing the transition to a post-industrial era, in which the structures of work and of careers are being reshaped thoroughly. The pace of change stems from two linked forces: the impact of new technology and the globalisation of the economy.

Today, all work organisations have to be prepared to change much more regularly and rapidly than ever before. As a result, they are less prepared to make long-term commitments to individuals. The psychological contract between the individual and the employer is being restructured: the old long-term relational contract, based on security and reciprocal loyalty, is in many cases being replaced by a short-term

transactional contract based on a narrower and more purely economic exchange; where the relational contract survives, it commonly involves exchanging job security for task flexibility. Individuals now have to take more responsibility for their own career development, including learning new skills and knowledge. Increasingly, security lies not in employment, but in employability, accumulating skills and reputation that can be invested in new opportunities as they arise. The idea of life-long learning, which has come to the fore, has deep-seated implications for guidance. It implies a series of phases during which people seek to update their knowledge and skills - an almost permanent interchange between training and employment.

These changes represent what has been called a 'careerquake'. The old concept of career was based on orderly progression up a hierarchy within an organisation or profession. The foundations of this concept are being shaken and in many cases destroyed. In its place, a new concept of career is being built, redefined as the individual's lifelong progression in learning and in work. This new concept is in principle accessible to all, not just to the few. But it requires policy supports. One of these supports is life-long access to career guidance.

This re-frames our approach to career guidance. Instead of thinking of how to help individuals choose traditional careers, it focuses attention on how to help them construct their own careers through a series of decisions made throughout their lives. It shifts the focus of career counsellors to helping people to be authors of their career narratives: to tell the story so far; to shape the themes and the story-line; and to start drafting the next chapter. This implies helping individuals to develop the skills and attitudes which will enable them to construct their careers. Such learning needs to be adapted to the new concept of career. Perhaps, instead of emphasising decision-making, we should emphasise the wisdom of open-mindedness. Perhaps unplanned events should be seen not just as an inevitable but also as a desirable aspect of everyone's career. Arguably, guidance services now need to encourage a clear but flexible sense of direction, which people are ready to adapt when unexpected events occur, but which will help them to spot these events and take advantage of them.

The relevance of all this to the countries of central and eastern Europe is evident. There are signs of regeneration of career guidance services in central and eastern Europe. The aid programmes provided by the World Bank and other international organisations have played an important role in supporting these developments. Underlying them has been a major shift in the philosophy of career guidance. In line with developments in Western Europe and North America, the paternalistic care-taking that once prevailed is being replaced by a form of counselling that offers help so that people will be able to plan and guide their own lives more independently and with more competence. But the harshness of the socio-economic reality have hampered the move towards modern counselling. Many of the initiatives to date have, understandably, been linked to the need to respond to high unemployment levels. This has dangers attached to it, particularly if the guidance is largely placement-oriented and based on a narrow matching model. In this situation, the scarcity of vacancies can easily cast guidance into disrepute. While, also in central and eastern Europe, the theory may have penetrated into the core of the profession, its translation into practice has only just begun.

## **2. Broad perspectives from central and eastern Europe, North America and the EU**

### **2.1. The revival of career guidance in central and eastern Europe - the case of Hungary**

The deepest roots of career guidance and counselling in central Europe are closely entwined with those of western Europe. In Hungary, for example, the first professional publications on the subject appeared towards the end of the 19th century. A government initiative launched in the early 1920s resulted in the establishment of the first Careers Guidance and Counselling Institute in Budapest in 1927. Contemporary initiatives in north-eastern and south-eastern Europe were less advanced.

After WWII the paths of East and West diverged sharply. In central and eastern Europe further development of career guidance and counselling services came to a grinding halt and remained in hibernation for almost half a century. Full employment under the command economy invalidated the need for guidance to be more than a referral service. In Hungary though, the development of guidance and counselling institutions was already started again in the early seventies and flourished during the eighties. Other countries had to wait until the early nineties for this to happen. In Romania for instance, a nation-wide initiative to revive counselling services was not started until 1995.

In general, the period of transition to a market economy, and the resulting turmoil in the labour market pushed the issue of career guidance into focus again. In Hungary, since 1991 career guidance and counselling services are gradually being moved to the labour centres, the new basic institutions of the organisation of the labour market. Other countries chose other institutions.

During the 1990s, the institutions of vocational training and of the labour markets throughout the region underwent fundamental changes but, despite extensive legal regulation being applied everywhere, the development of institutionalised career guidance services in this area remained a weak element in most countries.

*(See also: Annex III. Current characteristics of Hungarian career guidance)*

### **2.2. Putting Policy into Practice in the United States**

In the US, different federal and state agencies - like the US Bureau of Labour Statistics, the Census Bureau, and the National Center for Education Statistics - have long been collecting large amounts of relevant data but they did this for different purposes, over different time periods, using different classifications. This made them hard to locate, to understand, and to use in relation to each other. The challenge was to integrate data from already existing sources into comprehensive and coherent occupational and

career information systems for educators, counsellors, employment personnel, and vocational rehabilitation staff.

To this end, in 1976 the US Congress created the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (called NOICC). To guarantee extension of the problem beyond the boundaries of politics, it created counterpart State Occupational Information Coordinating Committees (called SOICCs) in all the states and territories. Members of the National Committee represented no less than 10 different agencies in 5 federal departments. It signalled the start of an exemplary inter-agency, inter-state, and inter-departmental collaboration programme. Public agencies, professional associations, and private vendors collaborated in developing systems and products. Federal seed money was matched by state and local funds to support and sustain information resources, delivery systems, and training.

Information systems and products were tailored to the needs of a wide array of user groups. As a result of the collaboration and teamwork, most States are now delivering useful occupational and career information to their constituents. More than 40 states offer access to computer-based career information delivery systems (CIDS) to millions of users annually. CIDS have become a major tool for career counsellors in many different settings across the United States and Canada.

#### **Training for information users.**

Occupational and career information may be essential but the NOICC/SOICC Network quickly learned that counsellors needed training if they were to use it effectively in their work. Therefore, as new information systems and products were introduced, their sponsors developed training programs in their use. SOICCs prepared guides to help teachers use career information newspapers in their classrooms. CIDS operators offered special training for counsellors using their systems. (*See Chapter 4 for a more detailed account of US staff training activities.*)

#### **Policy development**

Policies, partnerships, and strategies are needed to support career development. In the United States, the delivery of career information and counselling varies widely from state to state. Much depends on a particular state's policy, priorities and needs. On the whole, however, the public has greater access to career information and assistance because of the efforts of NOICC. The impetus for these improvements came from federal and state policies, expressed in legislation or funding.

To implement these policies, the NOICC/SOICC Network employed six basic strategies:

- it focused on identifying and addressing its user needs;
- it used federal funds as seed money to leverage state and private funds. This supported the development of information systems, products, and training programs;

- It encouraged states to share innovative models and best practices - at national and regional conferences, in newsletters, and, more recently, via the Internet. Its online Library now offers a global repository for best practices in career development;
- It provided technical assistance and training. This enabled states to adapt and enhance successful models from other states;
- It built partnerships - first among federal and state agencies and later among public and private organisations. It tried to engage all stakeholders in its initiatives. This allowed it to draw on the expertise of professional leaders in designing and disseminating materials and training in their use;
- It emphasised training. Its strategy of training trainers gave its small network a much larger outreach to state and local constituents.

### **2.3. EU Policy and Measures in Vocational Counselling and Guidance**

The way in which the EU is adapting information provision and training to the changed needs of the providers and users of career guidance and counselling is not unlike that of the US. However, the time-path is inevitably different, given the fact that close international collaboration in Europe is a more recent phenomenon than inter-state co-operation in the US. In fact, as we will see below, many of the integrating and facilitating processes described above are taking place at this very moment in time in the EU or are planned for the very near future.

On paper, EU action in the area of guidance dates back to April 1963, when a Council Decision laid down the general principles for the implementation of a common vocational training policy. In it, career guidance was recognised as an important part of the learning process. The Council recommended, among other things, the implementation of ongoing arrangements for vocational information, guidance and counselling for young people and adults, and ensuring that people would be able to use this system in good time before selecting a profession, whether during vocational training or at any other time in their lives.

From there, a leap in time moves us on to 1990, when a Joint Opinion by the European Social Partners on the transition from school to adult and working life pulled guidance into the spotlights again by stressing its preventive role in heading off failure at school and dropping out, in balancing supply and demand for training, and in creating and strengthening links between training institutes and the world of business and industry.

The vocational guidance strand (Action III) of PETRA, an EU youth programme, aimed at promoting Community co-operation on guidance and at exchanging national facts and figures, good practice and effective methods for vocational guidance. Its objectives were to ensure that all young people receive appropriate information, practical guidance and interviews, as well as personal assistance to help them discover the



occupational channels open to them, to assess their capacities and to encourage them to go for a vocational qualification and get into training. As a result, today all young people and their families can get access to up-to-date information on the training opportunities and guidance services available in the other Member States, and they are encouraged and supported to use such information.

The first phase of the Leonardo programme brought about the most recent innovations in systems, arrangements and actions. It covered a wide range of activities and tasks in connection with training and with the development of human resources in general. Guidance and counselling have thus taken on a new and increasingly important role. Following the extraordinary European Council on Employment in Luxembourg in 1997, vocational guidance became a tool of employment policy.

Even more emphasis will be put on vocational guidance activities within the Leonardo II Programme (2000 - 2006) for which the first call for proposal has just been closed.

Partly as a result of the community efforts, guidance is now becoming a central element of training, providing a basis for the aims of employability, adaptability and competitiveness, such as they appear in the texts resulting from the Luxembourg process.

#### **EU guidance systems in the years ahead**

The most advanced practices in EU Member States show that professional guidance services have a crucial role to play in the development of human resources. However, availability and quality of guidance services vary considerably among the various EU Member States. In none of them are all vulnerable sectors sufficiently covered yet. The offer of guidance is less developed for adults than for young people. In addition, the European dimension of guidance is still insufficiently developed.

It is therefore important for most countries to improve their guidance systems. In particular, increased efforts should be put into widening the recognition of guidance as an ongoing process which should start at school and continue ever thereafter.

Another issue which needs more attention is the 'decompartmentalisation' of guidance. As guidance lies at the cross-roads between training, employment and personal development, it can provide a meeting place for the three types of professional currently operating separately in guidance: those linked to education and training systems, those linked to labour offices, and those providing guidance within companies.

Finally, new information and communication technologies, training of advisers and the development of new tools, training hardware and quality software for guidance purposes need further exploration and exploitation.

### **3. Current developments in career information development and delivery**

#### **3.1. Aptitude and interest assessment**

The introduction of computers and the Internet in everyday life has dramatically accelerated the development of new tools for aptitude and interest assessment. In particular in the field of self-assessment the Internet has proven a valuable medium, if one that has to be used with care.

As the need for guidance increases, financial logic demands a rationalisation of expenditure on assessment methods. Tools for self-assessment can help extending guidance services to a wider audience without necessarily swallowing time and funds earmarked for those groups which require direct counselling or other more individual approaches.

Descriptive information on current assessment methods and comments on their usage are included in various paragraphs below, separately marked cases and the Annexes.

#### **3.2. Information collection**

Currently, much attention is being given to information systems and the use of information technology in such systems. Although not sufficient, career information is essential for effective career guidance. Under the communist regimes, career information systems designed for individual usage were ill-developed; the reforms mean that they now have a much more complex and volatile reality to relate to. Most countries in central and eastern Europe have commenced the collection of information related to job profiles, describing what skills, competencies and qualifications are needed for each job group and the different professions within them.

Although this is an important task, it needs to be stressed that the volatility of today's labour markets requires such data systems to be continuously updated and extremely flexible in order to be useful at all. Perhaps with the exception of some fields such as found in medicine and law, the classic meaning of the word job as 'profession' is becoming increasingly redundant and in many cases today the potential of a prospective 'job-candidate' will as relevant as his or her actual level of professional skills and knowledge. Such information needs to be accounted for in current data systems.

Although the task may be a daunting one, it is imperative for the effectiveness of career guidance that high-quality systems are developed for describing the structure of educational and vocational opportunities, and for ensuring that such descriptions are accurate, objective, comprehensive and up-to-date. Information technology is a

powerful instrument for collecting, managing and disseminating such data. In addition, sophisticated computer-aided guidance systems can be developed which enable IT to be used for both information collection and delivery.

Such an information system would need to keep abreast of rapid technological change and new legislation introduced, and monitor the specific situation of the populations served - both in terms of employment/employability and in terms of social background.

### 3.3. Information delivery

Aiming to reach out to everyone, old and young, male and female, irrespective of race and religion, means working with a target group which can impossibly be more varied. This has implications for the media used to transmit the information. Everyone receives information but for some, broadcast media may be the most important transmitter, for others this may be the printed media, for an increasing group of people the Internet is an important source of information, while others yet again may need direct communication to be best reached. If the aim of reaching out to all is pursued in earnest, this needs to be taken into account and a large variety of media need to be utilised for getting the right information to the right people.

Another complication is that what is appropriate to youth may seem patronising to adults, while vice-versa the repelling effect of even just a particular mode of addressing may be even larger. So, although the main message might be the same for a number of target groups, the transmitting media and packaging needs to be fine-tuned to each individual group.

Special tabloid magazines have in many countries, also in central and eastern Europe, proven to be useful media as distribution can be controlled. Although not yet even nearly accessible to all, the Internet holds perhaps the most promising potential due to its interactive capacities and the possibility to continually update distributed information without the expense of new production, distribution or print.

#### The Real Game

In each of our countries we have long assumed that all young people require core skills in literacy, numeracy, science and social studies to enjoy fulfilling lives. In fact, we make it obligatory that young people spend a minimum number of years engaged in acquiring these academic skills. We have only recently realised that, just as they need ten to twelve years of sequenced learning in these disciplines, they also need several years of sequenced learning in 'life/work building' to successfully navigate the many transitions they are certain to encounter throughout their adult lives. When presented in experiential formats, role-playing their future selves, most people actually have fun mastering these skills, and do so relatively effortlessly. As they do, they appreciate and benefit more fully from the career and labour market information resources and

delivery systems available to them.

One successfully tested example of such experimental formats is the originally North American Real Game Series. It was developed in Canada on the basis of the pioneering work of the US NOICC/SOICC network and found its way back into the States soon after. Within a year of its release, The Real Game was being used in 10,000 classrooms across the United States and Canada.

The Real Game Series (TRG Series) are developmentally sequenced programs helping students at all levels, as well as adults, master essential life/work building competencies.

The TRG Series includes six programs, as follows:

The Play Real Game Ages 6-8

The Make It Real Game Ages 8-10

The Real Game Ages 11-13

The Be Real Game Ages 14-15

The Get Real Game Ages 16-18

The games compose a career development curriculum that begins in elementary school and extends in 2-year increments over the school years into adulthood. All programs in the series are experiential, involving role-playing, and are set in participants' futures. Realistic scenarios are created, based on contemporary labour market realities. The scenarios engage participants in activities they enjoy without actually realising they are learning essential life/work building competencies. They establish lifestyles, budget time and money, transition through job-loss and acquisition scenarios, plan business trips and vacations, balance family and work, engage in community activities, etc., all in safe roles that allow them to experiment in a risk-free environment. They also clearly see the relevance of the subjects they are learning in school within the context of the future scenarios they are experiencing.

Each programme in the series offers rich opportunities for team-teaching, involvement of senior student mentors, participation by community members and organisations, and parental involvement. Moreover, when people are engaged within the context of any of these programs they are more motivated to seek out, process and absorb traditional career and labour market information resources (print, computer, video, Internet). The key is that participants become excited about their future opportunities, and are motivated to take action !

NOICC and the SOICCs have developed supplementary materials and set up registries of trainers to support the use of The Real Game Series. Canada and the U.S. are now designing a single international Real Game web site for countries using the Series. Currently England, Australia, New Zealand, and France are using U.S. and Canadian materials as models to develop their own Real Game programs.

### 3.4. The blessings and curses of information technology

Technological developments over these decades have posed enormous challenges in the workplace, for employers and for workers. But they have also presented exciting opportunities, especially in the area of information delivery. Nowhere is the importance of career information more apparent than on the Internet. Since 1995, the number of career-related web sites has mushroomed - from dozens, to hundreds, to thousands of sites. They reach millions of individuals and establishments using the Net to find jobs, employees, or training.

Whereas early co-ordinated initiatives, such as the US NOICC/SOICC network, were created to address a lack of information, one of the challenges we face now is information overload.

Another challenge we must all face is that many of the people we serve are not yet 'wired' to the Web. Even in the United States, about half of all homes do not have Internet access. As the use of the Net increases, the 'digital divide' between the 'haves and have-nots' grows wider and harder to bridge. We cannot forget, in a world captivated by high-tech tools and toys, that many people still prefer to write with fountain pens - and others can barely afford a pencil. We must keep their needs in mind in delivering career information and career development programs and use appropriate media for reaching them.

### 3.5. Adults

Recent research in Canada has revealed that there is a huge gap between the expectations of young people before they enter the labour market and the reality they find themselves in afterwards. Although this suggests that the school-to-work transition process is not as efficient as one might hope for youth, adults face a starker reality. Adults encountering involuntary career transitions due to privatisation and "right-sizing," especially older workers, must cope with serious challenges in re-connecting with work and learning opportunities, as most career and employment specialists at this conference know only too well. While it has been shown that youth tend to be unrealistically calm, confident and positive as they approach major transitions, adults, who may have responsibility for dependants, must deal with issues of shock, anger, fear, uncertainty, diminishing self-esteem and dignity, as they cope with transitions. Moreover, generally they must navigate and manage their career transitions with significantly less support in researching and exploring options than youth.

All of this may be even more important in countries that do not have long free market economy traditions. In some countries in this region, for example, adults (teachers, parents, counsellors, policy-makers, etc.) with little personal experience with free market realities, are trying to help other citizens (displaced adults, youth) prepare themselves for new workplace dynamics they too do not fully comprehend. This can be like trying to find one's way in unknown territory without a map, compass or other

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directional device. Adopting a national framework of life/work competencies, and implementing experiential programmes keyed to this framework, helps citizens of all ages to be excited about their own and their country's future, and motivates them to want to take charge of their destinies. As a result, citizens become empowered to actively participate in creating successful local communities and national free market economies. Ideally, national Departments of Labour and Education and relevant professional associations will be pivotal, collaborative partners in doing in central and eastern Europe what their counterparts in Western Europe, North America and the Pacific Rim are already doing.

### **3.6. Special needs groups**

So closely related to confidence and self-esteem building and self-empowerment, career guidance and counselling holds the potential of being one of the most powerful tools for achieving equity across age, gender, religious and racial boundaries. One participant to the conference in Budapest said quite aptly: 'We need to give people a chance to feel success.' This not only touches the core of the profession, it also illustrates its potential of integrating special needs groups into society. Particularly in Europe and not least in central and eastern Europe this is an urgent issue.

People's sense of integration into a society is for a large part dependent on whether they feel they take part in shaping it. Offering sufficient and targeted guidance to special needs groups is an effective means of helping and encouraging them to contributing to their society again, thereby raising their self-esteem and confidence. The opposite, lack of access to information and guidance, may be one of the factors contributing to the social exclusion of people with a disadvantage in the labour market.

Also this model requires a new approach to the idea of 'counselling' as, in the classic sense, the word is stigmatised and generally associated with solving rather than preventing problems (often of selected individuals and of a psychological nature). This in itself can be enough to counterbalance any possible positive effects of counselling. It is not precisely beneficial for one's self-esteem to be offered counselling when family, friends and neighbours are not. Extending counselling, or rather 'guidance' to the whole community would undoubtedly remove any stigma attached to it and thus unleash its potential much more effectively.

### **3.7. Financing and co-ordination**

The modern approach to guidance needs a strong base of skill training at an early to sow the seed for further development. The most desirable means of building such skills would appear to be career education programmes in schools. Thereafter, further help needs to be available on a continuing basis throughout life - including, incidentally, the 'third age', when many individuals have more choices open to them than ever before.

This raises the question, however, of how such guidance is to be provided and funded. Hitherto guidance services, also those revived in central and eastern Europe, have mainly been concentrated around the transition point from full-time education into the labour market. The resource base required for this is reasonably modest. But if guidance is to be available on demand throughout people's lives, a major scaling-up of resources is needed. What is the role of government in relation to such scaling-up?

One model is for government to organise and administer the guidance provision. This however raises the difficulties already mentioned about the bureaucratic and political constraints which such a model imposes on the nature of the provision. At the other extreme, some have argued that guidance should be viewed as a market good like any other. If individuals want it, they will pay for it. But this ignores the public interest in guidance as a means of making the labour market work more effectively, and of reconciling economic efficiency with social equity and individual liberty. It also ignores the fact that many of the people who most need guidance are in the least effective position to pay for it.

This suggests that in reviewing appropriate structures for career guidance, we need to look at mixed models in which there may be roles both for the public and private sectors. In such models, government may reduce or withdraw from its role as provider, but maintain roles as funder and/or as regulator and/or as facilitator.

#### 4. Staff development and training

The extension of career guidance and counselling services to a wider audience than just those approaching the transition from full-time education to employment requires a corresponding extension of staff training provisions. This is problematic for a number of reasons.

Many existing training initiatives are still in their infancy and not sufficiently developed to warrant a successful expansion on the scale required. Curricula are often rigid so they outdate quickly. They may serve an immediate need but may not justify spending the resources required for extension of training until a flexible system of updating the curricula is set up. Ideally, such a system of curricular updating would be linked to the information system discussed in chapter 3.2.

The array of the funding mechanisms currently utilised in different countries are neither capable of financing a substantial expansion of the counselling provision nor of the training capacity.

One way of speeding up the process of increasing the capacity on career counsellor training programmes would be to pool international expertise. The rapidly globalising labour market too would justify international collaboration in this area. But even internationally, there is very little established practice experience to be shared. To give just one example: in the United States, no undergraduate training in career counselling exists yet. Although a Masters degree is not always required, the undergraduate path to the profession requires added training and continuing education. With the majority of training opportunities currently available being offered at master level only and often as a specialisation within faculties of psychology or educational sciences, it may become ultimately difficult to match the higher demand for counsellors which would arise from an extension of services. This problem needs to be addressed by investigating alternative training paths. Although lacking dedicated undergraduate training, the US might provide a useful model for this with its Career Development Training Institute. (See inset.)

##### **The Career Development Training Institute.**

In 1991, the U.S. Congress increased NOICC's appropriation to provide training for personnel to deliver career development services. To implement this policy, NOICC established a Career Development Training Institute. It was an 'institute without walls', its expertise drawn from several universities and individual leaders in counselling and career development.

Among other accomplishments, the Institute addressed the need for appropriate training among staff in workforce and career development settings. The Labour Department was promoting the creation of One-Stop Career Centers, staffed by state employment security personnel. Many community agencies and businesses were



setting up career development services and wanted their staff to be more knowledgeable about theory and practice.

Under the Institute's auspices, a Career Development Facilitator Curriculum was developed. The college-level course is appropriate for staff who do not have a master's degree, as well as for counsellors untrained in career development. It includes four modules and requires about 120 class hours.

The National Career Development Association has provided leadership in training and registering qualified instructors to offer the course. NCDA maintains the registry and posts it on its web site. A third step, taken in co-operation with the Center for Credentialing and Education, was to secure national credentials for students who complete the course successfully.

Even without taking into account an eventual introduction of 'life-long counselling', training capacity in central and eastern Europe is insufficient and in need of support. Good as they may be, the duration of Masters level courses on offer today (such as those in Gödöllő, Hungary and Łódź, Poland) is a bad match to the urgent need already existing.

On the positive side, the fact that demand for the courses in Gödöllő in Hungary is six times higher than its current capacity and even its correspondence courses are twice overwritten suggests that the potential human resources are available. Career counselling is, quite rightly, recognised as a field with good job prospects, also in the longer term. This argument can and must be used in promoting the profession.

In the mean time, (re)training initiatives of a cascading model such as used in Romania may relieve the immediate pressure in countries throughout central and eastern Europe. Faced with a suddenly increasing need for large numbers of career counsellors, in 1995 Romania embarked on a large scale training/retraining programme supported by the World Bank. Short-term and long term needs were addressed in two different parts of the programme. First, 700 professionals were updated during a short intensive course which introduced them to the essentials of modern counselling. When they returned to their practice, three teams of Romanian trainers were prepared to provide full-fledged courses for trainers. In a cascading exercise, these three teams subsequently trained 471 Romanian career counsellors following a thorough programme including modules on theory, counselling skills, adult development, special needs groups, group counselling, etc.

The US NOICC and SOICCs apply similar training strategies. NOICC has limited staff and funds. To increase its outreach, NOICC usually provides training and materials for instructors or teams of trainers from the states. This equips SOICCs to supply training for constituent groups in their states. An added advantage is that this also enables them to tailor their training to fit state-specific needs, information, and resources.

A summarised overview of the preparation of career guidance practitioners in the United States is included in the annexes. (See Annex IV).

## 5. Conclusions and recommendations

*Information alone is not enough.*

We have long assumed that all young people require core skills in literacy, numeracy, science and social studies to enjoy fulfilling lives. In fact, we make it obligatory that young people spend a minimum number of years engaged in acquiring these academic skills. We have only recently realised that, just as they need ten to twelve years of sequenced learning in these disciplines, they also need several years of sequenced learning in life/work building successfully to navigate the many life/work transitions they are certain to encounter throughout their adult lives.

Rather than just providing access to information when needed, it is the task of career guidance professionals to first give citizens legitimate and realistic hope, even excitement about their futures, then help as many citizens as possible master a set of essential life/work designing and building skills.

This will empower and enable them to locate and process information, and make good choices, at the many transition points they will inevitably encounter throughout their lives. These skills are as identifiable, and as important, as the language, mathematics, science and social studies skills today's students are expected to acquire and master.

All of this may be even more important in countries that do not have long free market economy traditions and where adults (teachers, parents, counsellors, policy-makers, etc.) with little personal experience with free market realities, are trying to help citizens (displaced adults, youth) prepare themselves for new workplace dynamics they too do not fully comprehend. This is like trying to find one's way in unknown territory without a map, compass or other directional devices. Adopting a national framework of life/work competencies, and implementing experiential programs keyed to this framework, helps citizens of all ages become excited about their own, and their country's future, and motivates them to want to take charge of their destinies. As a result, citizens become empowered to actively participate in creating successful local communities and national free market economies.

Ideally, national Departments of Labour and Education and relevant professional associations will be pivotal, collaborative partners in the process of building new and upgrading existing career counselling services for all.

### 5.1. Recommendations

1. Countries in the region are encouraged to build an integrated school guidance and vocational guidance system with unique access points for information and guidance services for both young people and adults.

In this context, guidance activities are to be interpreted in a much wider sense than has traditionally been the case. They should include:

- the development of comprehensive and widely accessible databases on educational and career choices and the establishment of contact points for further assistance;
  - the introduction and development of training in 'life/work skills' in school curricula and the counselling of young people;
  - guidance on educational opportunities, career choices and placement services for adults by trained guidance professionals;
  - support tailored to the needs of specific groups of disadvantaged people;
  - counselling of people threatened by unemployment;
  - the design of aptitude or competence assessment schemes for use by both labour offices and companies.
2. Vocational guidance is to be recognised as a key element in training and employment policies at national, regional and local levels. Guidance at regional and local levels should become a concerted action of different institutions and actors.
  3. In the context of on-going privatisation and economic restructuring processes in the region, it is deemed particularly crucial to develop, on the one hand, guidance measures of the preventive nature and on the other hand increased support to disadvantaged groups. The former concerns guidance measures for both the prevention of failure at school and dropping out, as well as the prevention of unemployment by assisting redundant workers to re-orient themselves before they become unemployed.
  4. Those in charge of developing career guidance and counselling services are recommended to exploit the experience already available at European level by analysing project outcomes particularly of the PETRA and Leonardo programmes, and study the local relevance of structures, tools and methods applied in EU Member States. Countries which may take advantage of Leonardo actions are advised to explore and join the National Resource Centre, ESTIA and Academia initiatives.

## Annex I. EU policy in the field of guidance - four new work tracks

Future EU instruments will aim at:

- ensuring life-long access for all to guidance;
- supporting the development of transnational co-operation;
- creating a European framework for staff training to support the dissemination of innovative practices and to develop a European dimension in guidance;
- encouraging networking among research and expert organisations;
- strengthening the European network of resource centres for guidance.

Four new work tracks are envisaged:

*Track 1. Strengthening the European dimension in guidance services*

*Track 2. Renewing guidance methods & tools and redefining the occupational profile of advisers*

*Track 3. Expand and support guidance initiatives in business and industry*

*Track 4. Investigating the link between guidance and occupational integration*

### **Track 1: Strengthening the European dimension in guidance services**

Under the first track, in particular the role of the National Resource Centres for Vocational Guidance (NRCVG) should be mentioned. NRCVGs have been set up in all EEA countries. Operations of these centres have been strengthened and an Internet site has been developed to allow for a rapid exchange of information across centres.

Another project worth mentioning here is ESTIA, a Leonardo pilot project. Its basic aim is to introduce and facilitate the use of information technology in the work of European career advisers.

Concrete actions include:

- the development of an Internet site as a portal leading to the national homepages for each Member State;
- experiments with the use of video-conferencing for the communication of information, as well as distance learning by the identification and dissemination of good practice and
- intercultural training in the various guidance systems in the participating countries.

## **Track 2: Renewing guidance methods & tools and redefining the occupational profile of advisers**

As mentioned above, guidance practice is changing. Both the PETRA and Leonardo programmes support and encourage the development of innovative methods, products and training supporting current aims of guidance.

## **Track 3: Expanding and supporting guidance initiatives in business and industry**

People have to be able to come to terms with interruptions in their occupational pathways. This increases the need for guidance measures of the preventive type with a mid to long-term perspective, and for measures in the form of an immediate response to short-term requirements, such as for the unemployed. Dissemination of innovative ideas and good-practice in both types of measures will be encouraged.

## **Track 4: Investigating the link between guidance and occupational integration**

In a context of outsourcing on the employment market and considerable mobility of labour, it has been widely recognised that "basic skills" or "social skills", etc. are becoming essential for workers. Employers themselves are increasingly aware of the importance of psychosocial skills at all levels of company activity.

Being able to build up one's own training and employment pathway through the steeplechase of a professional career is rarely an innate skill. Unskilled or low qualified adults who make up the biggest contingents of unemployed persons can and should be able to benefit from guidance. A particular task of vocational guidance should be to assist needy people in any possible way so as to enable them to profit from either training or employment opportunities.

Track 4 will focus on support for disadvantaged groups.

## **Annex II. The Blueprint for Life/Work Designs**

While the pioneering work in a new career development competency framework was done by the National Occupational Information Co-ordinating Committee (NOICC) in the United States, with NOICC's permission and support, the American National Career Development Guidelines have been adapted and implemented across Canada as the Blueprint for Life/Work Designs. This exercise was carried out by the National Life/Work Centre in collaboration with the Government of Canada (Department of Human Resources Development) and all Provincial Governments (Departments of Education and Labour).

The matrix they used lays out the eleven core competencies, sorted into three "areas" on the vertical axis (A. Personal Management; B. Learning and Work Exploration; and C. Life/Work Building), and four "levels" on the horizontal axis.

Level One is Early Years (Primary/Elementary)

Level Two is Middle Years (Junior High)

Level Three is Senior Years (High School)

Level Four is Adult.

### Annex III. Current characteristics of Hungarian career guidance

Career guidance in Hungarian primary schools is provided by class teachers and by career guidance professionals. Based on their activities, parents and pupils are given advice on the choice of further education, career and profession. Site-visits help informing children about different occupations and information material is edited and distributed. The counselling institutions and secondary schools annually review further education opportunities in special publications, outlining the different qualifications, related jobs, and subject requirements.

Activities promoting career choice in secondary schools are basically limited to grammar schools, although occasionally they are extended to VET schools. The advice provided is generally more thorough than in primary schools. This guidance is assisted by specialist pedagogical services.

Introducing the subject Careers Guidance, as specified in the National Basic Curriculum for forms 7 to 10 of school education, was a major step ahead in promoting career choice. The subject is part of a cultural area known as "Lifestyle, Way of Life...", which covers psychological components of successful career choice and the skills related to careers and the labour market. To date, the new curriculum has been introduced by 40 per cent of schools so the process of introducing teaching in career orientation skills is not yet complete. Careers Guidance as a subject aims at stimulating the autonomous development of relevant skills by the pupils. In the academic year 1998/99 a new World Bank project was launched, the basic goal of which is to develop and introduce up-to-date qualifications, including the preparation of pupils for employment.

Joining the World Bank project entitled 'Development of Human Resources' has also resulted in favourable changes in fields related to career guidance and counselling. A National Council of Professional Training now annually reviews the relevance of qualifications to the labour market. It may use its findings to recommend school authorities to transform and alter curricula. It is hoped that its exploratory, analytical and advisory work will help combat unemployment among school leavers. Also, the activities of county labour centres and branch offices which promote career orientation have become more dynamic.

Employment organisations now offer special information to the young on careers choice, training opportunities and employment. They organise individual and group programmes, perform thematic counselling related to work, career, job seeking and rehabilitation. They organise their activities through job seekers' clubs, specialist psychological services, and a service known as Occupational Information and Counselling (Hungarian abbreviation: FIT). The latter though, for the time being, only in Szeged, Szolnok and Budapest.

In the guidance and counselling activities of employment organisations, special computer programmes such as the North American *Choices* program, are now

successfully combined with traditional practice (personal advice, psychological tests, etc.)

As illustrated above, much activity has taken place in the past decade to move career guidance and counselling into the position it deserves. Where originally much of the focus was on guidance during the stage of initial education, recently attention has focused increasingly on the role of employment organisations in this field. But the process is far from completed and some urgent problems have yet to be addressed.

Firstly, professional counsellors in general and teachers in particular are still far from prepared to take on their new roles as guides rather than oracles. Secondly, there is insufficiently detailed knowledge of the existing knowledge and current activities of a host of providers of counselling services. Their activities need to be mapped and perhaps even streamlined. And finally, although many relevant counselling services are provided by the labour organisation as a whole, these are not available at all branch offices yet. Officers have insufficient time at their disposal and the material basis for efficient counselling is often insufficient.



## **Annex IV. Preparation of career guidance practitioners in the United States**

Preparation of career guidance practitioners in the US varies by sector (education or employment) and by level (undergraduate or graduate).

Education sector practitioners include school counsellors in elementary schools, middle schools and high schools as well as career counsellors in community colleges and universities.

Employment sector practitioners include human resource development specialists in organisations and counsellors and employment specialists in workforce development.

Undergraduate education can be sufficient for human resource development professionals and workforce development professionals. Common training for diverse backgrounds is the Career Development Facilitator (CDF) course.

The typical path leading to undergraduate qualifications includes:

- a two-year Associate Degree from a community college;
- a four-year Bachelors degree from a college or university;
- CDF training (120 hours) or work experience;
- credentialing examination (e.g. CDF) and certification.

Graduate education is required for school counsellors and career counsellors (Masters level) and educators (PhD level).

The typical path leading to graduate qualifications includes:

- one- to two-year courses;
- supervised practice;
- an exit examination and graduation;
- a credentialing examination and certification of licensure.

Both undergraduate and graduate paths require continuing education to maintain the credential.

## Key resources

### Programme standards:

NOICC Guidelines

<http://www.noicc.gov/>

### Professional competency standards:

NCDCA Career Counselor Competencies

<http://ncda.org/polcar.html>

### Certification standards:

US National Certified Counselor

<http://www.nbcc.org/appinfo.htm>

### Accreditation standards:

CACREP - Career counseling - Masters degree

<http://www.counseling.org/cacrep/main.htm>

### Examples of education and training resources:

Improved Career decision Making in a Changing World: A Training Program for Career Development Professionals and Facilitators

<http://www.noicc.gov/>

Workforce in Transition: A Blueprint for Adult Career Development and Job Search Training

<http://www.noicc.gov/>

International Career Development Library

<http://icdl.uncg.edu/>

### The Career Development Facilitator Initiative

CDF Curriculum

<http://www.noicc.gov/>

CDF Trainer Training and Registry

<http://ncda.org/cdfmain.html>

Certification - CCE of NBCC

<http://www.cce-global.org/cdf/overview.htm>



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