

Career Guidance in Europe

**In the framework of "Career Guide for Schools" project
and "Career Counsellors Interactive Training" project
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Preface

The 'new era' of information and knowledge which is characterized by unexpected and rapid changes in technology and in the labour market often shocks individuals who feel lost and vulnerable in the midst of the flux created around them causing insecurity and anxiety. McLuhan (1994) has already suggested that we live in 'an anxiety era', whereas Giddens (2001) uses the term 'manufactured uncertainty', which has been developed in the last four decades and needs to be analyzed in the context of globalization. In this context, that is, in the process of connecting the local with the global, through the new methods and channels of communication, new forms of uncertainty and risk are emerging and anxiety is intensified. According to Habermas (1999), the extension of interaction in the time-space context may lead to further anxiety which creates a sense of loss. Rapid changes in multiple contexts (educational, socio-economic, cultural) often invalidate predictions and 'investments' one makes for one's future and cause disappointment, insecurity and anxiety about the uncertainty which seems to be a dominant characteristic of today's world. Giddens (ibid) supports the argument that globalisation creates new forms of uncertainty and new kinds of social stratification.

The sense of uncertainty can be even more intense in 'fateful moments'. The uncertainty to which we referred above increases because of the emergence of post traditional forms of organization. Detraditionalisation implies new forms of management and power which need to be analyzed in new ways. Forms of power and authority, such as governments or teams of management, are de-centred and increasingly become dependent on a broader system of power which is exercised by multiple sources.

This phenomenon increases the insecurity individuals feel as they realize that the decisions of their country depend on other centres of power in the context of European unification and globalization, despite intense resistance to this phenomenon.

In this context one can understand the reasons why today's globalised society is often characterised as a risk society.

We support the view that uncertainty cannot be faced with traditional approaches and methods without our own involvement and critical approach to things and the world: both the external as well as our own internal world. Its facing also requires a kind of knowledge that can give us a sense of security in our wandering about in the realms of an unpredictable world. It is not coincidental that nowadays (e.g. Lisbon Strategy) it is emphasised that we need 'knowledge' and not merely information. For us, this is the kind knowledge that can support us to take the 'risk' needed for flexible and creative orientations. Therefore, an important issue is to define the kind of knowledge required for facing uncertainty with responsibility and studying our processes in a way that can help us survive in a world that often appears to be chaotic.

Career Counselling is a rather new scientific field, which combines theories and methodologies from the areas of field of psychology, pedagogy, economy and labour market. In each country career guidance implemented in different ways and the educational background of career counselors varies. Furthermore, in a lot of cases the training concerns a theoretical background and not interaction sessions and workshops, concerning the personal and professional development as career counselors. In addition, career counselors have to implement career counselling in a world of continuous changes in the field of labour market. In this framework "Career Counselors Interactive Session" addresses to career counselors who provide career guidance at schools and aspires to create a holistic critical model which will develop the required skills of career counselors. Emphasis will be given to interaction sessions and to various links with the labour market. Furthermore, the project will bring closer the theory with the required competences in the process of career guidance. In addition, the model will be flexible enough, in order to be easily adopted in different countries.

According to surveys and articles, career counsellors who provide guidance at schools have to deal with the lack of awareness concerning the labour market and the needs of the companies. Most of the time, career counsellors know very well the school environment but they do not know the way a company works and what demands from an employ to hire him/her, which are the company's expectations and how an employ must present him/herself.

At the other hand a significant part of career counsellors needs concerns the personal and professional development. Career Counselling, as a science, deals with the human, adults and young people. In order someone to help other people must have developed at first his/her own self. For sure, it is one of the most difficult parts of career guidance training and the effects are not direct and clear in a short time.

The link of theory with practice, developing personal and professional skills of counselors and the link with the labour market is two of the most flame issues for career counselors. Career counselors will have the chance to participate in interactive seminars and a workshop, according a new critical model of career counselling that focuses on the holistic personal and professional development of counselors. The first impact concerns an integrate theoretical background combined with specific interactive sessions.

Given the opportunity of the European Projects "Career Guide for Schools" and "Career Counsellors Interactive Training" the International Conference titled "Career Guidance: A European Dimension" has been taken place in the premises of Electra Palace Luxury Hotel in Rhodes Island. We aspire to provide a platform for the exchange of innovative ideas on Career Guidance and raise the awareness of all people involved in the field of Education and Workplace. We aspire also to disseminate the idea of Career Guidance in Europe and to contribute to the development of a Career Guidance network in Europe.

Nora Gikopoulou



"Career Guide For Schools" project

Eleni Lampou, Ellinogermaniki Agogi

Abstract

Career awareness has to be an integral part of the comprehensive career guidance program in schools. Developing a positive attitude towards careers can show children that the future is theirs for the taking. Opening their eyes to the possibilities of what they like and what they might like to do...is exciting. Career development is a life long process. It is the total constellation of psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economical and choice factors that combine to shape a young person's life. In order to help guide young people in their career paths, the CareerGUIDE for Schools network try to promote career education as a central theme in all schools through experts' collaboration in order to offer substantial and complete orientation to school children as well as to those who support them in this process. The work of the proposed network aims to promote effective career education in European schools.

Introduction

The CareerGUIDE for Schools network's main aim is to promote career education and awareness in European schools. The network collaborates with experts in pedagogy, labour market, career guidance, school to work transitions and technology in order to contribute in offering substantial orientation to school children as well as to those who support them in this process. The partnership of the CareerGUIDE for Schools network will form collaborative working-groups throughout the entire network's lifetime.

CareerGUIDE for Schools network has developed a Network of Schools across Europe in order to implement the partnership's research results and activities, as well as to use the CareerGUIDE Web Portal. Disseminating the network's results and activities, a virtual career guidance European Community will be formed highlighting the significance of Career Guidance in schools. In addition, support and useful resources will be offered to teachers for implementing Career Guidance in schools and new curriculum guidelines will be developed.

Career Guide For Schools Project

In order to meet its ambitious objectives the proposed network brings together experts in pedagogy, psychology, technology, labour market, teachers and students. The partnership of the CareerGUIDE for Schools network form collaborative working-groups throughout the entire network's lifetime. The working-groups include different-subject scientific experts, sharing the same interest in researching a specific aspect of career guidance (e.g. competencies and skills, psychological factors, ICT tools as means of guidance, standardization and quality issues, teachers training and professional development). There are three working groups which indicate the main areas or steps of career guidance, adopted at the career counseling at schools. The first working group, titled "Find out about yourself", concerns the personal development. Personal development is a long life process, is an essential hard continuous process, vital part in the procedure of Career Guidance. Actually helps pupils to understand and articulate all aspects of their personality, helps pupils to make specific plans for a stable future achievement and connects their emotional, educational and the vocational aspects of self. At last but not least helps pupils to clarify their strengths or talents, their weaknesses and their "will" and then helps them to find the appropriate educational and occupational environment, according to their personal values. For Career Guidance Personal development is student's first step in a long life path, in a path of realizing and acting. That's way we give great importance at the development of life skills. With the term of "life skills" we mean Communication skills, Career Design skills, Decision making skills, Problem solving skills, Leadership skills, Time management, and Information skills.

Apart from any educational or occupational choice a successful transition from school to college or university and then to a workplace, demands strong life skills. These are the skills that will make the difference and guarantee a successful vocational and personal life.

In this stage various exercises and activities have been collected or created concerning the identification of personal traits, and then have been implemented in schools, in order to choose the best practices that a teacher/ counselor can use and the same time help effectively pupils.

The second working group includes the area of information and has as a title "Find out about the job market". The part of collecting significant educational and occupational information it is a very important step at the process of career guidance. Actually the educational options, specific job description, the every day life of professionals, duties and rights are some of the questions that a pupil has to face. Concerning the rapid and repeated changes in the world of work mostly, but and in the educational field too, the demand of accurate information is becoming unsustainable. For example, a lot of pupils have in their mind a specific occupation but actually they do not know a lot of details that concern it, such as the difficulties, the perspectives, how they can obtain that title..etc. In many cases when pupils learn more details and information about the job that are interesting, change their mind and confess that they had something completely different in their mind.

The third group titled "Develop yourself for your career path" concerns exercises and activities which help individual to develop personal and life skills and to make right educational and occupational choices. Actually pupils learn to deal with every

day dilemmas and to make choices according to their beliefs, values and dreams. In Career Guidance, to make the right decision is a process that mostly concerns the responsibility of choosing the individual by himself, according to personal criteria. In this framework, there are a lot of exercises and activities adapted to pupils' every day life, which bring pupils front of dilemmas and ask them to make a decision. In the framework of "Career Guidance for Schools" network, there are plenty activities that have been taken place and some more that have been planned for the future.

The 1st International conference took place in Athens, on November 2006, with great success. The afflux of participants in great numbers confirmed that the core of career guidance appears a great interest for teachers, career counsellors and parents. Specialized experts from the field of education, counseling, psychology and labor market presented their own view concerning career guidance.

The first Newsletter of "Career Guidance for Schools" network was published on December 2006, including topics concerning the importance of career guidance, personal development, career guidance functions, services provided by career offices.

On April of 2007, Ellinogermaniki Agogi, as the coordinator, organized a "Career Day". Students had the opportunity to discuss with professionals from all fields of the labor market. Seventy professionals answered all the questions and presented their every day job life. The same time, experts from the field of counseling, pedagogy, psychology and labor market gave speeches to parents. At the end, students and their parents were excited having attended the event.

Epilogue

Year by year, students, parents, teachers and counselors realize more and more that career guidance is not a luxury but a necessity. A life plan seems like a cornerstone in the professional and personal life of individuals. Personal Development, information management, awareness, setting goals, decision making, decision implementation, career change, are some of the main steps of career counseling. Concluding in two words, we can say that the two "magic" words are adoptability and flexibility in new circumstances.

"Career Counsellors' Interactive Training" project

Nora Gikopoulou, Ellinogermaniki Agogi

Abstract

The CarCouIT project intends, at first, to identify the needs of career counsellors in different countries, concerning various levels and aspects at the process of career guidance. The consortium of the project records and analyzes these needs. After the identification, the partners developed a training model adapted to those needs, having as main characteristic the interaction and the orientation to the awareness of the labour market. The created model will be implemented in some countries and will be evaluated from the counsellors. The working groups will analyze the evaluation and will adapt the model in order to correspond to the needs of the counsellors. Having concluded to the specific model of training, a handbook will be created, including the whole material. Also, a web portal will be integrated where the material will be uploaded.

Introduction

The main contribution of the CarCouIT project is the provision of a new training material for career counselors bridging the theoretical background with interactive seminars of personal development and direct links with the labour market. Through a series of proposed methodologies, the network will analyse the career counselors' specific needs and will develop material which will cover these needs. Counselors' personal development is a vital and essential part of the process of career guidance. At the other hand, the awareness of labour market is something more than important. The labour market and the companies' needs change year by year and career counsellors must be aware of. Furthermore, nowadays the competition that young people face in order to get a job, especially the first job has not to do just with the educational level, as far as more and more young people get diplomas and masters. The crucial point is the development of personal and soft skills that a young people must have. These skills are not included in any official curriculum and a\the career counsellor is the responsible person to prepare students to get a career through personal development and career choice process.

"Career Counsellors Interactive Training" project

«The 'new era' of information and knowledge which is characterized by unexpected and rapid changes in technology and in the labour market often shocks individuals who feel lost and vulnerable in the midst of the flux created around them causing insecurity and anxiety. McLuhan (1994) has already suggested that we live in 'an anxiety era', whereas Giddens (2001) uses the term 'manufactured uncertainty', which has been developed in the last four decades and needs to be analyzed in the context of globalization. In this context, that is, in the process of connecting the local with the global, through the new methods and channels of communication, new forms of uncertainty and risk are emerging and anxiety is intensified. According to Habermas (1999), the extension of interaction in the time-space context may lead to further anxiety which creates a sense of loss. Rapid changes in multiple contexts (educational, socio-economic, cultural) often invalidate predictions and 'investments' one makes for one's future and cause disappointment, insecurity and anxiety about the uncertainty which seems to be a dominant characteristic of today's world. Giddens (ibid) supports the argument that globalisation creates new forms of uncertainty and new kinds of social stratification.

The sense of uncertainty can be even more intense in 'fateful moments'. The uncertainty to which we referred above increases because of the emergence of post traditional forms of organization. Detraditionalisation implies new forms of management and power which need to be analyzed in new ways. Forms of power and authority, such as governments or teams of management, are de-centred and increasingly become dependent on a broader system of power which is exercised by multiple sources.

This phenomenon increases the insecurity individuals feel as they realize that the decisions of their country depend on other centers of power in the context of European unification and globalization, despite intense resistance to this phenomenon.

In this context one can understand the reasons why today's globalised society is often characterized as a risk society.

We support the view that uncertainty cannot be faced with traditional approaches and methods without our own involvement and critical approach to things and the world: both the external as well as our own internal world. Its facing also requires a kind of knowledge that can give us a sense of security in our wandering about in the realms of an unpredictable world. It is not coincidental that nowadays (e.g. Lisbon Strategy) it is emphasized that we need 'knowledge' and not merely information. For us, this is the kind knowledge that can support us to take the 'risk' needed for flexible and creative orientations. Therefore, an important issue is to define the kind of knowledge required for facing uncertainty with responsibility and studying our processes in a way that can help us survive in a world that often appears to be chaotic.

Career Counselling is a rather new scientific field, which combines theories and methodologies from the areas of field of psychology, pedagogy, economy and labour market. In each country career guidance implemented in different ways and the educational background of career counselors varies. Furthermore, in a lot of cases the training concerns a theoretical background and not interaction sessions and workshops, concerning the personal and professional development as career

counselors. In addition, career counselors have to implement career counselling in a world of continuous changes in the field of labour market. In this framework "Career Counselors Interactive Session" addresses to career counselors who provide career guidance at schools and aspires to create a holistic critical model which will develop the required skills of career counselors. Emphasis will be given to interaction sessions and to various links with the labour market. Furthermore, the project will bring closer the theory with the required competences in the process of career guidance. In addition, the model will be flexible enough, in order to be easily adopted in different countries.

The European Multilateral project, "Career Counsellors' Interactive Training" started on December of 2007 and will last two years. In these two years, consortium aims to develop training material for career counsellors through Europe.

What we noticed was that career counselling is provided in different ways in different countries. The educational background of the counsellors, the specific lessons and the kind of training differ in each country. At the other hand the needs of young people are almost the same everywhere and the labour market changes in a rapid and demanding way day by day!

Information is one of the main tasks of a counsellor but we believe that is a part of the process of Career Counselling. The main issue is to prepare young people to face educational and professional difficulties and changes. Flexibility and adaptation will be the magic words in order young people to face the real world of work.

In this world of work with continual changes and evolutions, the key of success is the personal skills. In a competitive world of work, with so many bachelors, degrees and PhD, who is going to make the difference? According to the requests of the labour market personal skills are requested like communication skills, team building skills, leadership skills, time management skills, multi tasking skills etc.

The project intents, at first, to identify the needs of career counsellors in different countries, concerning the various levels and aspects at the process of career guidance. The consortium of the project, at he first year has recorded and analyzed these needs. After the identification, the working groups will develop a training model adapted to those needs, having as main characteristic the interaction and the orientation to the awareness of the labour market. The created model will be implemented in Italy, Austria, Slovakia and Greece and will be evaluated from the counsellors. Our partners will analyze the evaluation and will adapt the model in order to correspond to the needs of the counsellors. Having concluded to the specific model of training, a handbook will be created, including the whole training material. Also, a web portal will be integrated where the material will be uploaded. In addition, web portal will be an area of exchanging ideas and communicating.

Epilogue

According to surveys and articles, career counsellors who provide guidance at schools have to deal with the lack of awareness concerning the labour market and the needs of the companies. Most of the time, career counsellors know very well the school environment but they do not know the way a company works and what demands from an employ to hire him/her, which are the company's expectations and how an employ must present him/herself.

At the other hand a significant part of career counsellors needs concerns the

personal and professional development. Career Counselling, as a science, deals with the human, adults and young people. In order someone to help other people must have developed at first his/her own self.

The link of theory with practice, developing personal and professional skills of counselors and the link with the labour market is two of the most flame issues for career counselors. Career Counsellors Interactive Training project ambitious to contribute to these areas.

“Career Guidance for Schools” project : A different Approach

Eleni Lampou, Ellinogermaniki Agogi

Career awareness has to be an integral part of the comprehensive career guidance program in schools. Developing a positive attitude towards careers can show children that the future is theirs for the taking. Opening their eyes to the possibilities of what they like and what they might like to do...is exciting. Career development is a life long process. It is the total constellation of psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economical and choice factors that combine to shape a young person's life. In order to help guide young people in their career paths, the CareerGUIDE for Schools network try to promote career education as a central theme in all schools through experts' collaboration in order to offer substantial and complete orientation to school children as well as to those who support them in this process. The work of the proposed network aims to promote effective career education in European schools.

In order to meet its ambitious objectives the proposed network brings together experts in pedagogy, psychology, technology, labour market, teachers and students. The partnership of the CareerGUIDE for Schools network form collaborative working-groups throughout the entire network's lifetime. The working-groups include different-subject scientific experts, sharing the same interest in researching a specific aspect of career guidance (e.g. competencies and skills, psychological factors, ICT tools as means of guidance, standardization and quality issues, teachers training and professional development). There are three working groups which indicate the main areas or steps of career guidance, adopted at the career counseling at schools. The first working group, titled “Find out about yourself”, concerns the personal development. Personal development is a long life process, is an essential hard continuous process, vital part in the procedure of Career Guidance. Actually helps pupils to understand and articulate all aspects of their personality, helps pupils to make specific plans for a stable future achievement and connects their emotional, educational and the vocational aspects of self. At

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Epilogue

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“Career Counsellors’ Interactive Training” – CarCouIT project

*Nora Gikopoulou,
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Career Counselling Status nowadays

Career Counselling is a rather new scientific field, which combines theories and methodologies from the areas of field of psychology, pedagogy, economy and labour market. In each country career guidance implemented in different ways and the educational background of career counselors varies. Furthermore, in a lot of cases the training concerns a theoretical background and not interaction sessions and workshops, concerning the personal and professional development as career counselors. In addition, career counselors have to implement career counselling in a world of continuous changes in the field of labour market. In this framework "Career Counselors Interactive Session" addresses to career counselors who provide career guidance at schools and aspires to create a holistic critical model which will develop the required skills of career counselors. Emphasis will be given to interaction sessions and to various links with the labour market. Furthermore, the project will bring closer the theory with the required competences in the process of career guidance. In addition, the model will be flexible enough, in order to be easily adopted in different countries.

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The link of theory with practice, developing personal and professional skills of counselors and the link with the labour market is two of the most flame issues for career counselors. Career counselors will have the chance to participate in interactive seminars and a workshop, according a new critical model of career

counselling that focuses on the holistic personal and professional development of counselors. The first impact concerns an integrate theoretical background combined with specific interactive sessions. Furthermore, the handbook that will be published will comprise a useful training model for further use.

"Career Counsellors' Interactive Training" multilateral project

The European Multilateral project, "Career Counsellors' Interactive Training" started on December of 2007 and will last two years. In these two years, consortium aims to develop training material for career counsellors through Europe.

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Methodology

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Moving from the Mythology towards the Reality of Careers Education and Guidance based on a Critical Developmental Model

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Abstract

Chrysoula Kosmidou-Hardy¹ analysed the necessity of a Learning/Training Package, which is elaborated in the framework of a Transnational European Project SY.N.TH.E.SI (Synergetic New Thesis for European education SImera)². In the context of this publication only a summary of the synthetic model is included. The Synthetic model is a Critical Developmental Model which Kosmidou-Hardy developed, initially for Careers Education and Guidance. It is based on in-depth research both, in the relevant international literature, as well as in field research. The Careers Guidance Model was later used as the basis for the development of a Critical Model of Education and Cross-border Paedagogy which she developed. Since 1999, the model was applied through innovative activities in different European countries throughout the three years of the project and through the collaboration of transnational partners who contributed to its validity. The fundamental aim of SYNTHESI is the development of Active European Citizens and Intercultural Communication. Active European citizens need to be in a position to investigate the surrounding reality, to analyse social phenomena in depth and critically, as well as to contribute to the social reconstruction through efforts aiming at the democratisation and modernisation of institutions.

Introduction

In our globalized world, the continuous development of the Internet signifies the arrival of a new era. The creation of a new society, characterised by the decrease of interpersonal communication is connected with the consequences of modern communication practices. Through the use of the Internet, and electronic communication media in general, interpersonal communication and direct interaction between people is being limited thus increasing isolation and creating a sense of loneliness. Rapid changes in multiple contexts (educational, socio-economic, cultural) often invalidate predictions and 'investments' one makes for one's future and cause disappointment, insecurity and anxiety about the

uncertainty which seems to be a dominant characteristic of today's world.

We support the view that manufactured uncertainty cannot be faced with traditional approaches without our own involvement and critical approach to things: both the external as well as our own internal world. Its facing also requires a kind of knowledge that can give us a sense of security in the realms of an unpredictable world. It is not coincidental that nowadays it is emphasised that we need 'knowledge' and not merely information. Therefore, an important issue is to define the kind of knowledge required for facing uncertainty with responsibility.

We will thus refer in summary to the preconditions required for coping with transitions from known to unknown situations, to basic components of educational reforms in Europe which can be clearly depicted in the evaluation systems and their aims, to components of the Common European Framework of Reference (C.E.F.) and to the skills needed for the teacher as a professional. Following this, we will explain the reasons why such changes and reforms are attempted in the area of education. These reasons are directly connected with changes in the labour market, with globalisation and with the fact that education and production are directly linked.

We will proceed to suggestions concerning the person's personal and social development through critical self and social awareness, fundamental aims of our synthetic model which is based on an interdisciplinary approach with basic scientific fields such as: Counselling (eclectic approach), Education in Communication, and particularly in Media and Electronic Communication, as well as to qualitative research with emphasis on critical Active Research.

The critical model

In order for the person to be able to survive successfully in the context to which we referred in summary, she /he needs to come to terms with change and learn to face transitions from known to unknown situations with calmness and maturity. Therefore, the aim of Transition, an aim which is fundamental in the context of Careers Education and Guidance in countries like Greece and the U.K, is of particular importance today. The school, being isolated from real life, does not seem to help the person for such an aim and leaves the consequences of the responsibility for transitions from school to the labour market and to life itself almost completely to the individual. In her/his attempt to face the transition from her/his microcosm to the surrounding macrocosm, the individual, is affected by factors of the broader socio-economic context and, in particular, of the labour market with regard to the transition from school to work (see diagram below). These factors cannot be directly controlled. Our position is that, in order to find a balance to the pressures created by external factors, the person needs to develop a source of power derived from her/his own microcosm. Such a power can be given by critical self and social awareness which, aims which are also necessary for wise and strategic decision making.

A self-awareness process means, inter alia, that, after becoming conscious of aspects of ourselves, we proceed to their critical deconstruction and problematisation trying as well to accept what cannot be changed, attempting to change what can be changed and tell the difference between the two: what can and what cannot be changed. In a process of self awareness emphasis should be given to the necessity

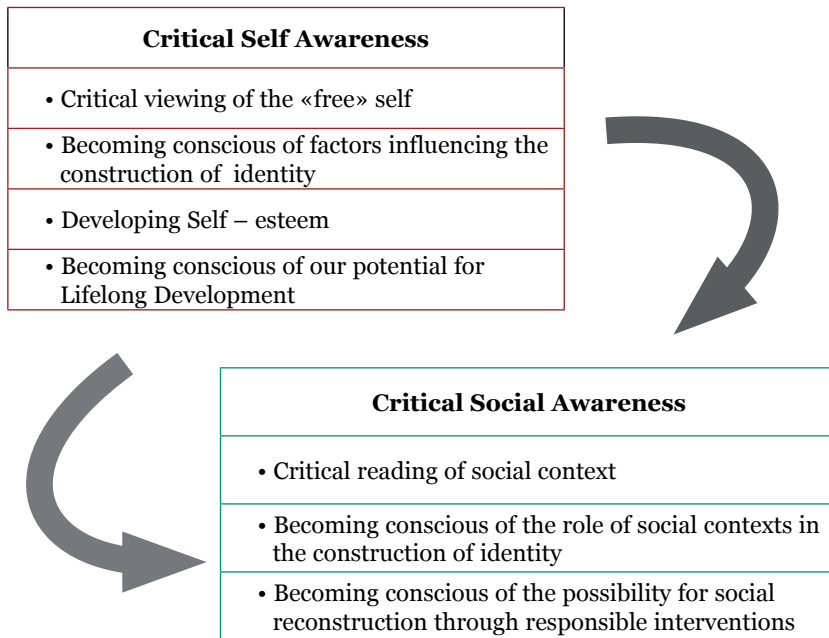


Fig. 1. The critical model

for holistic and lifelong development which can help us cope with uncertainty due to changes in our external reality and develop the skills required for facing effectively the multiple stages of transitions in life. After all, our life, “from the moment of our conception until death, is a transition involving interim crucial stations and stages”.

In the context of our attempt for personal development self-esteem plays a particular role. Transitions, and the way in which we face new and unexpected situations, is a complicated process and is directly connected with our self esteem.

An also vital parameter / aim which is necessary for healthy and dynamic transitions is Critical Social Awareness. In the context of the dominant approach to teaching what is implied is the students’ narrow and passive ‘information’ which is based on a linear communication model and which ends up with a usually uninformed individual. Critical social awareness promotes a stance for active searching and critical reading of an information text of any form –iconic, verbal or non-verbal-, organising information and being able to apply it in different contexts. It also promotes a stance towards our awareness for the broader social context in which we are situated and which influences our decisions and transitions. Broader awareness on our socio-economic, cultural and time-space globalised environment increases our possibility to prepare more timely and effectively for our synchronisation with it, developing our potential in a flexible and polymorphous way. The development of critical social awareness promotes the development of self awareness because the relationship between self and social

awareness is dialectic (see Figure 1).

As we have discussed, the processes of transition is related with the individual's self-esteem and, for the creative facing of transitions, self awareness and personal development is important. If one examines the labour market as well as the developments in the context of educational reforms at a European and global level, one realises changes that move towards this direction. These changes are clearly reflected in the context of evaluation processes and, for the needs of the present discussion, we will refer in summary to issues which are related with evaluation. Thus, for example, in the context of recent educational reforms in Greece we realise that, whereas the emphasis in the past was on memorisation of information, the basic aim in the evaluation processes today –at least in theory– is the evaluation of skills such as:

- Understanding information,
- Analysing and synthesising ability,
- Applying information to problem solving situations,
- Observing ability,
- Critical thought,
- Imagination,
- Creativity / innovation.

According to the positions of the Greek Ministry of Education (K.E.E. 1998, Pedagogical Institute 2002), evaluation has pedagogical and social functions. One of these is the development of students' self awareness. Therefore, at the level of educational aims and philosophy, educational reforms in Greece are synchronised with changes taking place at a European and global level where the process in teaching – learning and evaluation are characterised by the attempt for promoting the person's holistic development with emphasis on:

- The development of personal / interpersonal competences,
- The development of critical thinking and skills required for problem solving and decision making,
- Research skills, which we see as directly related with literacy or education in Information Technology and in Media Education, and
- Transition skills in general

According to our critical, developmental model, the teacher as a professional today needs:

- 1) To recognise the dialectic relationship between theory and praxis, which means that s/he needs to become conscious of her/his personal theory, look at it critically and enrich it in an interdisciplinary way.
- 2) To become conscious in particular of her/his view concerning the individual society nexus, analyse it critically and promote a dialectical relationship between the two, so that it is recognised that individuals are defined by the influence of external, social factors on the one hand.
- 3) The teacher as a professional also needs to use experiential learning critically
- 4) Finally, in the context of this critical, synthetic model one needs to follow

an interdisciplinary approach to teaching and a Cross-border pedagogy, a pedagogy, that is, which is common for the teaching of all school subjects, moving across the borders of all subject areas.

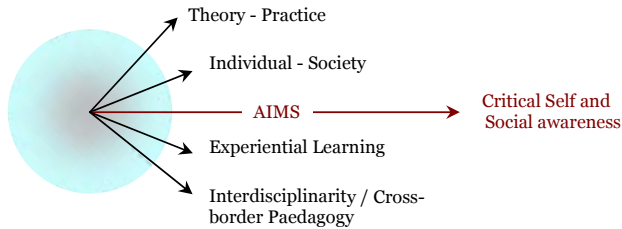


Fig. 2: A Model of Critical Education Basic parameters

Epilogue

According to our research, the majority of teachers is not characterised by qualities mentioned earlier on, while teaching is not based on a critical model of education. According to our analysis of teaching approaches at an international level, teachers seem to adopt the following teaching approaches: the dominant approach, which sees Teaching as Technology some basic characteristics of which are: the emphasis on methods / techniques, subject matter, external behaviour and the promotion of imitating others' external behaviour. This approach is not concerned with teachers' and, of course, students' personal development. In the context of our synthetic model, without devaluing the usefulness of Technology in the teaching / learning situation, we promote the idea of Teaching as Moral Practice. In this approach to teaching emphasis is given: to the teacher as a person, to her/his personal development which is a prerequisite for professional development. Through this interdisciplinary approach we promote holistic learning and development as well as the idea of the teacher as:

- Counsellor, who is in a position to support the psychological development of students and contribute in this way to a movement leading from Psycho-therapy to Psycho-development.
- Communicator of knowledge, healthy stances, values and attitudes, through a holistic model of communication.
- Researcher and Producer of knowledge, through the strategic approach of Critical Active Research. This role is very important today not only for the teacher but for the student too.

As can be seen diagrammatically below, in order to promote these basic parameters of the teacher's profile, the epistemological fields from which the model of Critical Education draws are Counselling, Communication and Research. .

With regard to the model of Careers Education and Guidance, which is based on an equivalent interdisciplinary approach, the 'suspended steps' of Careers Education and Guidance seem to be positioned between the traditional approaches which focus on diagnostic tools and methods and the Critical Developmental model.

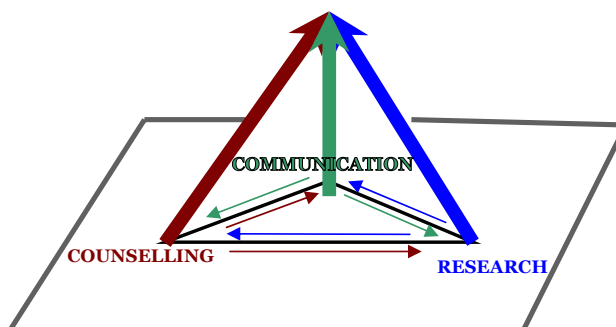


Fig. 3: Aims: Personal - Social Development

The new book of Careers Educational and Guidance recently developed by the Pedagogical Institute for the third class of the Gymnasium is based on the Critical Developmental Model the basic parameters of which have been presented in summary in this publication. This book includes activities which cover such parameters and promotes the role of the teacher as counsellor, communicator and researcher. It also upgrades the student's role as a researcher and motivates him/her to develop projects based on an Active Research approach.

Taking this opportunity, as the President of the SY.N.TH.E.SI. Society, I would like to mention a new initiative of this Society aiming to inform parents and young people about the role of Careers Education and Guidance today which is based on such a critical developmental model. The title of this programme, which will be implemented through encounters between young people and students all over Greece, is "Design' ('Sxediasse", www.sxediasse.gr).

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Career Guidance in Bulgarian Secondary Schools

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Abstract

The main aim of the study is to present the normative framework, educational policy and the realities in the field of career guidance in Bulgarian secondary schools. This aim corresponds with the increasing significance of career counseling and guidance for the future professional life and as well as for the employer's needs.

The research is based on the results of questionnaire survey with teachers and students from four different specialized secondary schools in three towns – Sofia, Dupnitsa and Sapareva banya. The survey is a part of the implementation activities of CareerGUIDE Comenius 3 project. The study aims to reveal the teacher's and student's attitude towards some organizational and methodological aspects of career guidance in secondary schools, the main factors, determining student's professional choice and the key skills, necessary to be developed for their successful career in the future.

The priorities and perspectives in the field of career guidance in Bulgarian secondary schools are outlined as a result of implemented research analysis.

Introduction

The dynamic global economics and high-rival labour market provoke new challenges in the education today. One of the most significant requirements is to build links between school education and labour market and to give career orientation of young people in time. The overall reform in Bulgarian educational system is based on this comprehension.

From historical point of view, the career guidance is an important part of professional education in Bulgarian secondary schools. The approved models and practices can improve the effectiveness of career guidance, but they need considerably modernization in the context of new social-economical realities. Furthermore, they turned out anachronistic and this provokes the demands of new strategies, tools and methods in this field.

The activities related with career guidance in Bulgarian secondary schools remain formal regarding to a certain approach at this stage. One of the reasons is the

lack of well-trained personnel. The establishment of career development system is one of the most important priorities in the National program for development of school education and pre-school training for the period 2006 – 2015, but it is oriented to the pedagogical stuff first of all, not to the students. The necessity of opportunely career orientation has a preference for the young people at the same time. This presupposes clear national policy and establishment a functional system for career education of the students with real measurable practical criterion. The acquaintance of the European policy and of the best practices as well as their adaptation in the light of national traditions, realities and specific needs are the right ways for providing modern and qualitative career education of young people.

Career guidance as an EU priority and social necessity

Career guidance turns to a key policy area in terms of lifelong learning. Career development and career guidance are pivotal not only for personal and for human resources development, but also for creating a sustainable future, economical, social and environmental. It can improve the efficiency of labour market and educational systems; also, it supports policy key objectives embracing from lifelong learning to social equity and after all, it enables to build human capital end employability throughout the whole live. Career guidance supplies more accessible information about labour market and educational opportunities by organising, systematising, and making it available when and where people need it (OECD, 2003). Career guidance at schools is a process whereby teachers give guidance and assistance to students systematically and continuously on the basis of information concerning individuals and their intentions concerning future courses by introducing former experiences and discussions so that students themselves can make decisions and plan their future careers, find work or go on to higher education and cultivate their ability to make progress so as to adapt themselves to their future life. (Kimura, 2006).

The first "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 recognized as an important part of the learning process. The Council recommended, among other things, the implementation of ongoing arrangements for vocational information, guidance and counseling for young people and adults, 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.

In 1990 a Joint Opinion of 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 institutions and the world of business and industry. First phase of Leonardo programme brought about the most recent innovations in systems, arrangements and actions. Guidance and counseling 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 was put on vocational guidance

activities within the Leonardo II Programme (2000 - 2006). (Career Guidance and Counseling, Budapest, 2000).

The best practices in EU countries show that the career guidance services have an important role for development of human resources. The accessibility and quality of those services vary in different countries but there are some common problems. This gives a possibility to be work out the following perspectives and priorities in the mentioned field:

1. Recognition of the comprehension for career guidance as a lifelong process.
2. Extension of European dimensions of the career guidance as a basis for improvement of the national systems.
3. Enrichment of applied measures, approaches and tolls with accent on the career guidance activities for adults and with attention to the specific needs of different target groups.
4. Improvement of the quality and accessibility of the career guidance services.
5. More complete use of the new ICT and development and introducing of quality software for the aims of career guidance.
6. Training of skilled career guidance experts.
7. Consolidation of the efforts of all social partners – educational institutions, employment agencies, business representatives, etc. (Panov, Sotirova, 2007)

The last point is very important, because the career guidance is an issue, in which education, labour market and personal development are concurring. Furthermore, as a system it has a functional affect on these spheres. The comprehension for these three applied aspects of career guidance should be on the basis of overcoming the 'decompartmentalisation' of the different measures and approaches, in relation to benefits for the single person and all community also (Career Guidance and Counseling, Budapest, 2000). The effective career guidance requires consolidation the efforts of three kinds of specialists, these which work out in touch with the others occupied in educational institutes, engaged with work force services and company guidance experts. Their functional network connection will enable the collaboration (national, international, transnational) between all concerned institutions.

In general, this is not only necessary, but also inevitable process. The young people are the main indicator for necessity of reorientation of traditional education to the student's person and his unique interests, needs and life aims. From the other side, the comprehension for the education as a social and economical investment provokes more and more global corporative interests. Thus, the educational institutions stay resistant to the challenges of this tripartite process.

In the field of secondary school education, career guidance is a component of professional education. It aims to ensure developments of basic professional knowledge and skills as well as to form the personal features necessary for effective career promotion. In a broad sense, the guidance is directed to develop all skills that may contribute to growing up of overall personal and to their positive adaptation towards social-economical changes.

The effective career guidance is a tool for prevention of students dropping out and it contributes to the improvement of learning achievements and to willingness

for self-development. The positive results of effective career guidance can be considered as development of individuality, widening of cognitive and professional competencies, building a clear vision for possible career paths, readiness for career choice and for career change in the future

The normative framework of Bulgarian system for professional education is given in Vocational Education and Training Act (1999). According to this act, the career guidance is considered as a part of professional education. It provides students, unemployed and other people with information and advices facilitating their professional choose and career development. The career guidance covers professions and specialties from the List of Professions for vocational education and training.

The most important strategic documents, related to the career guidance and development in the field of secondary school education in Bulgaria, are: National Education Act (1991), Rules and regulations for the application of the National Education Act (1999), Law for the degree of education, the general education minimum and the education plan (1999), National Strategy for Continuing Vocational Training (2005 – 2010), National program for development of school education and pre-school preparation (2006 – 2015).

The institutions in charge of vocational education and training are:

1. At national level

- Council of Ministers (CM) - The CM is a body that determines the state's policy in the field of education and employment.
- Ministry of Education and Science (MES) - The MES runs, coordinates and controls the implementation of the state policy in the field of vocational education and training.
- Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) - The MLSP develops, coordinates and implements the state policy in the field of vocational qualification of the work force (namely the employed and unemployed).
- National Employment Agency - The National Employment Agency is an executive agency to the Minister of Labour and Social Policy for the implementation of the state policy on employment promotion, protection of the labour market, career guidance, motivational training of the employed and unemployed citizens, as well as for providing mediation services for searching jobs.
- National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET) - The Agency carries out the development of State Educational Standards for the system of vocational education and training, as well as of the List of Professions for Vocational Education and Training. NAVET regulates vocational training realized in the licensed Centers for vocational training.

2. At regional and local level

- Regional Employment Service Directorates - Organize implementation of the state policy in training for acquiring professional qualifications, propose educational measures and projects, coordinate and support vocational training services in each region.

- Regional Educational Inspectorates - Elaborate programs and strategies for vocational education and training in each region.
- Municipalities - Take part in the formation of the local policy in the field of vocational education and training regarding the needs.

According to the Vocational Education and Training Act, the major institutions for continuing vocational training are vocational schools, vocational high schools, vocational colleges, and centers for vocational training (CVT). The Vocational schools network in the country comprises 470 vocational schools, high schools and colleges, 421 of which are public, 12 – municipal and 37 – private. At present, 146 licensed vocational training centers and 169 divisions are functioning.

The institutions providing career guidance services are information and career guidance centers. They are public, municipal or private, either Bulgarian centers with foreign participation, or foreign ones. Career guidance services are provided by:

- At national level – Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, National Agency for Vocational Education and Training and National Employment Agency, Virtual Career Center (<<http://www.careercenteronline.org>>).
- At regional and local level – Regional Educational Inspectorates, National Center of Pedagogy with 27 regional divisions, Regional Employment Agency Directorates, LODs and specialized divisions: vocational-information centers, vocational-information counseling centers and “Job” clubs.

Providers of career guidance services in the field of secondary education are also 3330 state and 111 private schools. 21,7% of them have pedagogical counselors, who are directly involved in the career guidance activities for pupils.

Private career guidance services are offered also in the last years. They aim at informing and consulting students, parents and citizens about the opportunities for education in secondary and higher schools. Other activities are different psychological and medical consultancies, printing and dissemination of brochures and leaflets as well as advising for admitting in school. Private career guidance is ensured by private educational institutions, organizations and counseling firms. Mainly and most of them provide internet access to the information, online materials, tests and counseling tools.

There are three main target groups of career guidance services in Bulgaria:

- Elementary, primary, secondary and vocational school students
- Particular target group students:
 - with special educational needs
 - gifted in the field of art, music and sports
 - children of school age who are not included
- Young people and adults who are:
 - over 16 to 29 year-old, who dropped out of school without acquiring an educational degree or professional qualification
 - university students
 - employed people needing pre-qualification or extension of their qualifications

- temporarily or permanently unemployed
- officers discharged from the army
- immigrants
- disabled

The following most important initiatives have been undertaken at this stage:

- Rendering the information regarding professional paths, fields and profiles, professions and specialties in secondary education;
- Developing programs for literacy courses, general education and vocational training for people with special educational needs, deviant ones and prisoners.
- Holding regional and school forums for career guidance – panoramas, markets, secondary and higher school exhibitions jointly with users of personnel;
- Developing methods and tools of studying attitudes, interests and skills;
- Developing a model of an inter-institutional approach called "Secondary School/ Higher School – users of personnel";
- Issuing paper, electronic and audio-visual products (brochures, leaflets, posters, information portfolios about professions, videos for students and adults, for job seekers and career guidance specialists, computer programs for self-test diagnostics, multimedia discs);
- Production of specialized radio and television broadcasts;
- Enrichment of the Internet resources.

There are some difficulties and problems in the field of career guidance in secondary schools at the same time. Their understanding does not undervalue the marked progress and achievements and it is an important prerequisite for their overcoming in the short run.

- Career guidance and counseling are not integrated in the school education system and in the labour market system.
- There are not common national standards and criterion for assessment of the quality of career guidance services and for the effectiveness of the professional orientation system in the secondary schools (graduates professional realization, employer's assessment, etc.)
- The possibilities of the social partnerships are utilized insufficiently.
- The coordination between different programs and initiatives is inadequate.
- The career guidance services are not enough specified with respect to specific needs of different target groups – special educational needs students, orphans, children with disabilities, minority pupils, etc.
- There are not trained specialists for fulfillment of career guidance activities in the secondary schools. The available personnel (assistant directors, pedagogical counselors and teachers) is not engaged sufficiently.
- There is a lack of special developed and approbated methodologies for career counseling and advising.
- The European experience and good practices are not sufficiently studied and used (Panov, Sotirova, 2007)

The National program for development of school education and pre-school preparation (2006 – 2015) introduces the career development system. Possible solutions along two major directions are defined in the program:

- In horizontal terms - The opportunity for development should be provided through differentiation of the position of "teacher". Introduction of five new positions is planned: "junior teacher", "teacher", "senior teacher", "chief teacher" and "methodologist". The horizontal career development is governed with accumulation of a specific duration of work experience, passing obligatory training forms and assessment of obtained results.
- In vertical terms - The changes are related primarily to modifying the requirements for occupation of administrative positions in the system of public education like principals, deputy-principals, experts and heads of regional education inspectorates, members of MES administration etc..

The following priorities are laid down in the Program regarding the career guidance:

- recognition the career guidance as a lifelong process
- expanding the European dimension of the career guidance as a key point for improvement of national systems
- enrichment of methods and tools with emphasis on the career guidance activities with adults and considering specific needs of different target groups
- improvement the quality and accessibility of career guidance services
- adequate using of ICT
- training of highly skilled specialists on career guidance
- unification and coordination of the efforts of all social partners – educational institutions, employment representatives, business and economical institutions

The question for ensuring an equal access to career guidance services is crucial now, obviously it is time to transform these services more attractive, desired and sought for young people. According to Bulgarian contemporary legislation, pedagogical counselors can be appointed only in secondary schools with more than 500 students. Round about 800 counselors work in our schools at present. One of their responsibilities is to inform the students for career opportunities and to advise them under career choice. Over than 95 % of this counselors work in big cities. This fact shows that the students in small settlements are devoid from career guidance services. The engagement of available pedagogical counselors is insufficient and career guidance services are more or less formal at the same time. The recently involved delegate budget system in the schools does not enable appointment of certified career counselors and development of corresponding activities. The question for career counselors training is pending also. The answers of the marked questions depend on establishment, development and real implementation of stable and functional strategy for career education. It must be applicable for all educational levels and enough flexible and adaptive to students and labour market needs.

What are the available resources that may be used for effective career guidance in Bulgarian secondary schools? Are the teachers open and ready for more stable support and collaboration? What is the student's and teacher's attitude towards

some organizational and methodological aspects of career guidance in secondary schools, the main factors, determining student's professional choice and the key skills, that are necessary to be developed for their successful career in the future? These questions are discussed in the next part of the present article.

Two national institutions (National Resource Center for Vocational Guidance and Centre of Training Firms to Ministry of Education and Science) and 10 secondary schools from 8 Bulgarian cities were involved as members of the network "CareerGUIDE for Schools". Four different specialized secondary schools in Sofia, Dupnitsa and Sapareva bania were selected and involved in the project activities. Survey with 75 teachers and 380 students (15-18 year old, 187 girls and 193 boys) was held during the implementation stage. The developed questionnaires for teachers and students aim to reveal their attitudes regarding career guidance. They have a similar structure with purpose to ensure a possibility for comparative analysis of the results. The main points are:

- educational level, from which must start career guidance of the pupils;
- factors, determining student's professional choice;
- tools and methods for effective career guidance;
- key skills, that are necessary to be developed for successful career in the future.

According to 57 % of teachers, the career guidance should start in the elementary educational level. This result shows a consciousness of the necessity of early career education and orientation of the students. Traditionally, the educational system is oriented mainly to the needs of the pupils, who continue their education. However, the number of out-of-school students is increasing in the last years especially students from different minority groups, 50 % of which leave the school in primary level yet. This puts the question for early information and counseling about the wide career opportunities in the future.

Almost half of the asked teachers (fig. 1) think that the parent's opinion is determinative to the student's career choice, 41 % fix the student's decision of the first significance. The friends are a factor in opinion of 7 % of them. Only one fifth render an account of subordinate place of the teachers in this process. It impress, that the students attach more importance to one-self decision (fig. 1). The influence of the friends and the teachers is negligible in their opinion. Nevertheless, one quarter from the pupils acknowledged that the family is the main factor determining their professional choice .

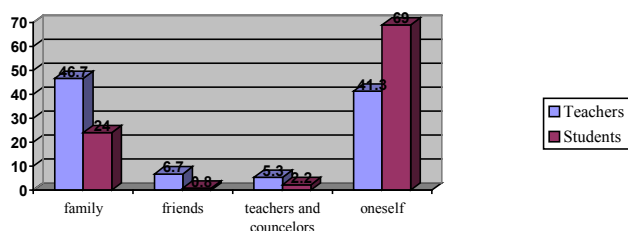


Fig. 1. Comparative analysis: What are the main factors determining the professional choice of the students?

Approximately 57 % of the inquired students (fig. 2) have made their career choice. The questionnaire results show that the students in small cities are less oriented in the future career than the students from big cities are. This fact confirms the described above circumstances and their influence. On the other hand, the percentage of students in common schools is higher in comparison with the students in professional gymnasiums in this respect (fig. 2). This is interesting result because the choice of vocational school after finishing elementary education can be considered as a career choice. The figure 2a shows some hesitations with respect to career choice after the beginning of secondary education. The fact that more than one third of 18-year-old students have not made their choice for a future career development is very disturbing.

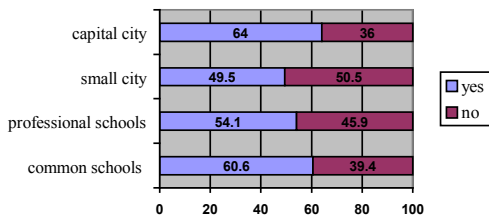


Fig. 2. Student's opinion: Did you make your career choice?

One of the main reasons is a lack of the system work in this regard. The inquire results show that the issues related with professional choice and career development are not discussed in the school in opinion of 40 % of the students. Only 18 % mention that these questions are considered in the class with the teachers, whereas most of them state that they discuss the professional issues mainly with the other students during the breaks.

For almost half of the pupils the main information resource for future career opportunities is Internet (fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Student's opinion: Where do you find the information regarding the career opportunities?

The personal satisfaction from the work has a main importance in opinion of half of the students (fig. 4). It is noteworthy fact that for only one fifth of the students the good career relates with good payment. The self-dependence in decision-making process has a less significance in comparison with payment and opportunities for career development in opinion of the students (fig. 4).

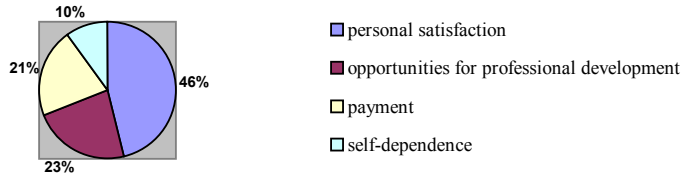


Fig. 4. Student's opinion: The good career relates with:

Establishment of career development centers in secondary schools and increasing the cooperation with the employers are necessary for effective career guidance in the schools according 63 % of the teachers (fig. 5) and 64 % of the students. This result shows recognition of the necessity from professional support and specialized career guidance services, but there are not corresponding legislative regulations, funding and well-trained professionals for this purpose. Almost one quarter of the teachers, think that for the effective career guidance has to be extended the link between schools and employers. Just about 12 % consider (fig. 5) that the teachers must be engaged more deeply with the career guidance activities in the schools. Only two teachers suggest widening the pedagogical counselor's responsibilities, because they do not correspond with the undertaken measures at national level. Presumably, the pedagogical counselor's role and functions are not well known to the inquired teachers in view of the fact that only one from four involved schools has an appointed counselor.

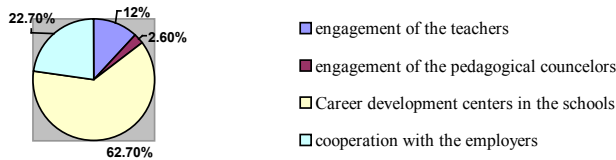


Fig. 5. Teacher's opinion: What is necessary for effective career guidance in the schools?

Meetings with professionals and employers and individual counseling and advising are indicated by the teachers as most effective methods for career guidance (fig. 6). This opinion reflects the need of extending links between the school and the labour market. It should be noticed that quite a few teachers point class discussions, games and exercises as efficient. This fact shows the necessity from more attention, engagements and complete use of class work for the career guidance purposes.

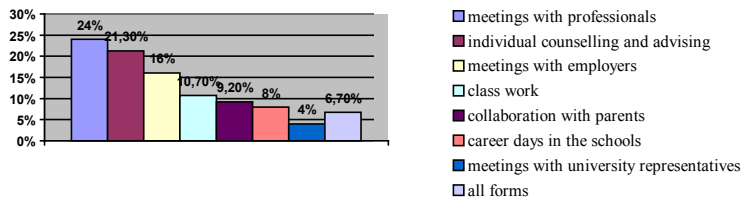


Fig. 6. Teacher's opinion: What kind of methods are the most effective?

The teacher's and student's opinions regarding the role of the schools in career development process cross each other (fig. 7). Three main steps in this process are arranged in a different manner. The revealing and developing of individual interests, abilities and skills ("Find out about yourself") is most important from teacher's point of view, but most of the students consider that they should develop professional skills ("Develop your career") in the school (fig. 7).

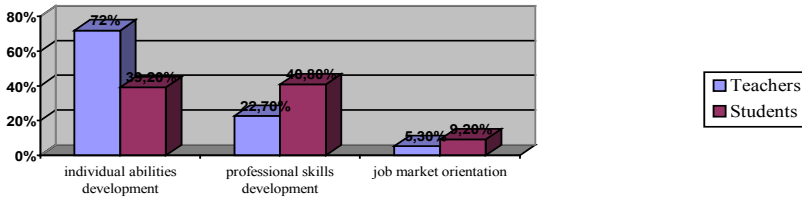


Fig. 7. Comparative analysis: The school's mission in career development process is:

The teacher's opinion for key skills that must be obtained during the school life is given in fig. 8. The need of development of self-assessment skills is of primary importance according to the teachers. The skills needed for successful career choice, career planning, job search and self presenting are with negligible significance. These results demonstrate once more the stated underestimation of job market orientation as a needed step in student's career development. Bulgarian school is oriented mainly to the needs of the students that continue their education in universities and this fact reflects in real teacher's attitude and work experience. The students are oriented more practically at the same time (fig. 8). They give an importance to the skills related to the future career path and employer's need as self-assessment, career choice, career planning, job search and self-presenting . The decision-making skills, communication and teamwork skills are the most important for successful career according teachers (fig. 9). They do not appreciate properly the skills needed for conflicts resolving, career management and career change because themselves have not developed this kind of skills in their professional life probably.

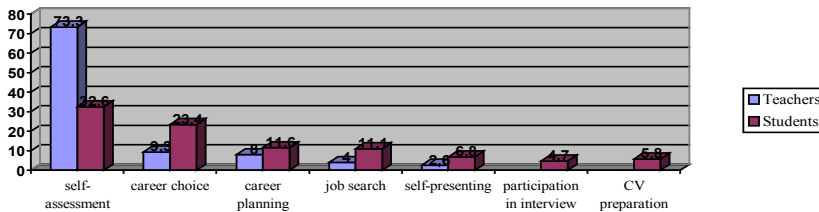


Fig. 8. Comparative analysis: The skills that must be obtained during the school life are:

The students lay equal impact to decision making and teamwork skills, the communication skills are appointed also as significant. The students give an

account of importance of the skills related with future career development (career planning and management and career change skills). It shows their readiness for more flexible and positive adaptation according to the changing realities.

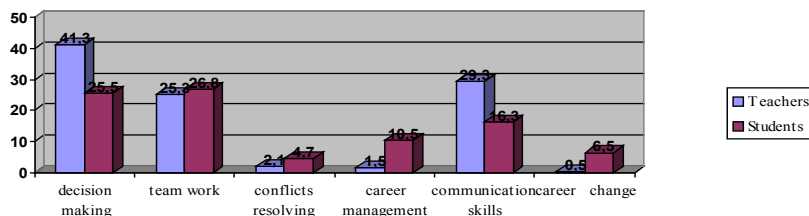


Fig. 9. Comparative analysis: The key skills for successful career are:

The obtained results from the survey and the given analysis can be summarized as follows:

- The students in Bulgarian secondary schools need widening career guidance activities and services, especially the students in small cities. The school and the teachers have a slight influence to the career orientation of the students. Their professional choice is determined mainly by the family.
- The teachers are conscious of the necessity from early career education of the students. It must start even at the elementary educational level in opinion of most of the teachers.
- Both the teachers and the students find that the establishment of career development centers in secondary schools is essential. They consider that the increasing of cooperation and links between schools and employers is indispensable. The teachers are unwilling to take new engagements for implementation of career guidance activities in the schools. The expansion of the pedagogical responsibilities of counselors is not acceptable as well.
- Meetings with professionals and employers and individual counseling and advising are more effective methods for career guidance than class work (discussions, games, exercises, etc.) in teacher's opinion.
- The role of the school in career development process is to reveal and develop individual interests, abilities and skills first of all according to the teacher, whereas the students consider that they should develop professional skills in the school. Both teachers and students, especially teachers, disparege the orientation to the labour market.

Epilogue

The modernization of Bulgarian educational system requires opportune orientation of the young people to the dynamic changed world of infinite opportunities for social realization. The establishment of functional system for career education of the students and its sustainable integration in the systems of school education and the labour market is one of the urgent tasks in this respect. It should be based on the good tradition in the field of professional education and European policy. The

best practices must be adapted in the light of national realities and specific needs. All available resources may be used for this aim – institutional (National agency for Vocational Education and Training, National Employment Agency, National Center of Pedagogy, Regional Educational Inspectorates), personnel (pedagogical counselors, deputy directors, school psychologists, teachers), financial, material and technical (funding programs, training firms, necessary equipment for schools), virtual (<http://www.career-guide.eu/>, <http://www.KakviDaStanem.bg>, <http://www.careercenteronline.org>), social relationships, European networks, etc.

The long-term view on career guidance is philosophy not only of education, but also of competitive economics and sustainable social development and prosperity (Panov, Sotirova, 2005). This view requires synergy between European scientific and research areas and expanding of European dimension of career guidance in the context of global labour market. The national policies should reflect the European strategies as well as the national traditions and specific educational realities, needs and priorities.

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Distance Career Guidance

Nora Gikopoulou, Ellinogermaniki Agogi

Abstract

The life career development of young people should be a process of planned intervention whereby educators, parents, government agencies and community members work together to provide students with hope for the future and to empower them to believe in themselves. Young people need help to keep their eyes open for opportunities in the world that will allow them to fulfill their values, beliefs and interests and to reach their fullest potential. Nobody can say that this is an easy task. In fact, it is hard work and much more harder for young people leaving in rural areas where they have limited or alternative choices. In the framework of these needs, Ellinogermaniki organized a telesession for career guidance at Leipsoi rural island in Greece.

Introduction

There is an excellent fairy tale "Alice in Wonderland" from Lewis Carroll. As Alice is walking around, she gets lost, she gets confused and she had no idea where to go. She was standing in the middle of crossroads and she didn't know which direction to choose. Then a cat came up, looked at her and told her:



"North, east, south or west
which direction is the best
if the choosing gets confusing
maybe it's the map you are using"

Distance Career Guidance

The 'new era' of information and knowledge which is characterized by unexpected and rapid changes in technology and in the labor market often shocks individuals who feel lost and vulnerable in the midst of the flux created around them causing insecurity and anxiety. McLuhan (1964) has already suggested that we live in 'an anxiety era', whereas Giddens (1994) uses the term 'manufactured uncertainty', which has been developed in the last four decades and needs to be analyzed in the context of globalization. In this context, that is, in the process of connecting the local with the global, through the new methods and channels of communication, new forms of uncertainty and risk are emerging and anxiety is intensified. According to Habermas (1987), the extension of interaction in the time-space context may lead to further anxiety which creates a sense of loss. Rapid changes in multiple contexts (educational, socio-economic, cultural) often invalidate predictions and 'investments' one makes for one's future and cause disappointment, insecurity and anxiety about the uncertainty which seems to be a dominant characteristic of today's world. Giddens (ibid) supports the argument that globalisation creates new forms of uncertainty and new kinds of social stratification.

The sense of uncertainty can be even more intense for young people who try to build their future and have to deal with an unknown world of work, full of changes and various educational and occupational dilemmas.

The demands of the labour market have multiplied in terms of skills (especially technological), experience, flexibility and mobility. Getting a job is a basic step towards becoming fully integrated in society. But today's young people are concerned not only with avoiding unemployment, but also with finding a job that offers some satisfaction. They realize that employment is a key factor of social cohesion and the basis for financing social and intergenerational solidarity. The transition between school and work is filled with obstacles and young people are becoming more depended economically. The area which significantly influences and will more and more influence the harmony between education and labour market is the area of career education and counseling. There is no part of life where the need for guidance is more empathic than in transition from school to work--the choice of a vocation, adequate preparation for it, and the attainment of efficiency and success.

At present, we may state insufficient transformation of career counseling to new socio-economic conditions, to crucial changes in the world of work. The career guidance in education sector has a principal significance not only for the choice of educational career of pupils and students but also for the transition of school-leavers to the world of work. It increases the probability of their success, interest in further education and will of retraining, that means, the preparedness for change of employment.

Studies of guidance and counseling programs, reports by the business community, and feedback from parents have raised concerns that many young people do not have the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to make a successful transition from school to the world of work. Career planning is not instinctive. The educational system must provide to students information and taught basic knowledge, skills and attitudes to facilitate a smooth journey from adolescence to adulthood. Life career development is self-development over the life span. It occurs

through the integration of the roles, settings and events in a person's life. The word "life" in life career means that the focus is on the total person -- the human career. The word "career" identifies and relates the roles in which individuals are involved (worker, learner, family member, citizen), the settings where individuals find themselves (home, school, community, workplace), and the events that occur over their lifetimes (entry job, parenthood, job change, retirement). Finally, the word development is used to indicate that individuals are always in the process of becoming.

According to the concept of life career development, it is practically unthinkable to prepare young people for their life of work without occupational exploration. This is accomplished through the student's school subjects and extra curricular activities with the help of parents, teachers, friends and representatives of the world of work and the community. This way of proceeding not only allows the students to explore who they are but to explore their surroundings. Thus, the students can be exposed to a whole range of occupational opportunities, establish a relation between their personal characteristics and those of occupations, and acquire more information about the knowledge, skills and values required in the world of work.

The life career development of young people should be a process of planned intervention whereby educators, parents, government agencies and community members work together to provide students with hope for the future and to empower them to believe in themselves. Young people need help to keep their eyes open for opportunities in the world that will allow them to fulfill their values, beliefs and interests and to reach their fullest potential.

Reviewing all the above mentioned facts one could conclude that it is absolutely necessary for actors implicated in the educational system to empower students to acquire the knowledge, skills, information, and attitudes to understand and positively enhance their own life career development. Young people must be prepared to cope with the changing trends of our days, by having the capacity to be resourceful, adaptable and flexible amidst change and ambiguity. It is in this context of constant change that adolescents must make decisions regarding their life careers. Cooperative efforts of the school, home and community are needed to help young people successfully make the transition from school to the world of work.

The distance career guidance session is the outcome of a synergy of four European projects, Career Guide for schools network, which concerns the collection of exercises and activities of career guidance, implemented in students, the carcoit project, which refers to career counsellors training and Rural Wings and Hermes projects, which provide broadband internet in rural areas through Europe.

As a product, the teleconference tool provides broadband internet in rural areas, a chat room and the possibility of a videoconference and power point presentations.

As counselors we have used this tool many times for distance career guidance lessons. We deem that is an excellent opportunity to help effectively students who live in those areas. We have noted that these students, have limited intensives in comparison with students living in town, limited information and limited perspectives. Students are planning their future, especially the professional future, according to the beaten track. They believe they do not have opportunities or alternative choices.

Via teleconference tool offered at the one hand, access to information, like educational system, departments of universities, jobs' descriptions etc...and at the other hand a full distance career guide session.

The conference tool and the career guidance process address to people who live in disantavantaged rural areas and especially to students from 12 to 19 years old, to teachers and counsellors who provide career guidance and of course to unemployed people who are trying to find a job.

At the conference presented a distance career guidance session in a small island in Grteece, Leipsoi.

Trying to evaluate the outcome of the session, we measured 5 parameters, before and after the session.

So, according to the questionnaires, before the session, just a 50% of students were believing that will enjoy the distance session, but after that, almost everybody enjoyed that.

Before the lesson only 36% believed that will learn something more for self concept, but after the lesson, 96% of the students had learn an unknown aspect.

About 82% were expected to be frustrated but after the session only one kid felt frustration.

65% of students believed that will be motivated and after the session 94% found new motivations for boosting their self esteem

Finally, most of the students felt anxious before the lesson, as it was an unknown process for them but only one student was feeling anxious after the lesson.

According to the students' point of view, the distance session was a fruitful and revealing process. Some of the students' comments were the following:

"It was funny and motivated"

"At the beginning, we felt uncomfortable but...then we enjoyed it!!"

"It was a different approach...we were focused...we didn't get bored"

"Actually it was a lesson...but not a lesson exactly"

Epilogue

Year by year, students, parents, teachers and counselors realize more and more that career guidance is not a luxury but a necessity. A life plan seems like a cornerstone in the professional and personal life of individuals. Personal Development, information management, awareness, setting goals, decision making, decision implementation, career change, are some of the main steps of career counseling. Concluding in two words, we can say that the two "magic" words are adoptability and flexibility in new circumstances.

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"The Greek Labour Market Barometer – The RCI Index"

Zoe Kourounakou, ALBA Graduate Business School

Abstract

One main aspect of career guidance is to know the labour market well enough in order to provide all useful information to candidates who are looking for a job. The recruitment trends of the Labour Market are a valuable input for those who are looking for a job. Will companies hire new personnel? In what kind of positions? Which departments/functions are more popular? In which geographical location? At what sector? What kind of method are companies going to use in order to select new employees? Do they expect an increase at the salaries? What skills the companies look for in candidates? All these questions can be answered with the assistance of the Recruitment Confidence Index Survey which is organized and conducted in Greece by ALBA Graduate Business School since December 2006.

Introduction

RCI Survey aims at presenting the trends on recruitment and labor market for the next 6 months. It was first conducted in UK in 1999 by Cranfield School of Management and Daily Telegraph and in 2005 the survey started in Spain by ESADE. The main objective of the survey is to explore the perceptions and the trends of the companies regarding their recruitment processes and methodologies. The survey illustrates the dynamics of the labor market and it provides valuable information to the business community and the public in general.

RCI Survey 2008

The 1st round of the 2008 RCI Survey was conducted during December 2007-January 2008, with the support of ECDL Hellas and with the collaboration of SEV. More than 1800 invitations were sent to companies based in Greece. In total, 213 companies, 63% Greek and 37% multinational, completed the online questionnaire. 11% of the respondents are companies from the telecommunication sector, 21% are manufacturing companies, 13% provide services, while 19% of the companies are commercial. Representative companies from the banking sector, construction industry, tourism, logistics and Media also participated in the survey (percentages varied from 2 to 8%). Concisely, 94% of the companies were private, with the vast majority based in Attica (74.4%) and the rest of the companies (25.6%)

based in other Greek areas. Concerning the size of the companies that participated in the survey, 43.2 % were companies with less than 100 employees, 19.2% were companies with 200-499 employees, 16.9% were companies with more than 1000 employees, while 10.8% were the companies with 100 to 199 employees.

The main conclusions from the first round (covering the period until June 2008) are the following:

- Companies at their majority are expected to increase their activities of attracting and recruiting new personnel, with the exception of construction industry, which appear to be less optimistic on employing new personnel the next six months.
- More than half of the companies of the sample are expected to increase the number of their employees during the next six months (approx. 58.3%).
- The majority of participating companies (41.7%) expect that salaries will be increased more or less equal to the collective employment agreements (up to 6%). Yet, a respectable percentage of the participants (27,5%), expect salaries to be increased by more than 6%.
- The percentage of the companies that are expected to select young graduates / junior level employees, as well as specialised personnel is very high (more than 65% and 40% respectively).
- Companies are expected to look for new personnel mostly to the fields of Sales, Customer Service, Marketing, Accounting & Finance and IT. It is worth mentioning that there is an increase in the trend of recruiting people for the HR Departments.
- However, companies expect more difficulties in finding the right people for the vacant positions, especially comparing to the survey results of the last semester.
- Companies at their majority appear optimistic for their future (75% of the sample)
- The methods/tools most commonly used by the companies during the process of attracting and selecting new personnel appear to be the job searching websites, the curriculum vitae database inside the companies and the internal search methods. There is also a good percentage of companies though, that prefer to publish newspaper ads.
- Recruitment Managers require candidates with certified advanced knowledge of IT, except for the cases they are looking for professionals such as receptionists, warehouse workers and store salesmen, where basic knowledge is adequate.
- Recruitment Managers give emphasis on the Communications and Decision Making skills of the candidates.
- Recruitment Managers believe that Organizational Skills, Team Work and Time management are the skills that influence company's productivity.
- The results of the 1nd semester of 2008 were quite similar to the results of 2007, with the exception of construction industry sector, which show a moderate optimism for the recruitment of new personnel. The general signs of the labour market remain consistent among all companies, from all industries and do not show great changes. However, there appears to be a slight increase in the optimism of the companies. Therefore, the general Recruitment Index remains

in high levels, the higher ones of the last one and a half year.
The collection of data for the 2nd semester of 2008 took place during June-July 2008. The Report with the results of the 2nd round can be downloaded at www.alba.edu.gr/rci.

The UK Labour Market Barometer for Spring 2007 was published at Personnel Today Magazine. UK companies expect an increase in all future recruitment activities. To be more specific:

- Business Confidence continues to rise with significantly more respondents feeling optimistic
- Turnover was expected to rise over the next 6 months
- Companies recruited more in the area of sales
- Recruitment difficulties had risen (82% of companies)
- Pay increase expected to remain in line with inflation
- Companies need to recruit over the next 6 months mostly in the areas of Sales (22%), Finance & Accounting (17%), Customer Service (16%), IT (16%)

In order to provide a holistic view of the Labour market a career counselor need to be aware of the working environment of major companies that are in the phase of recruiting. There are some critical questions that a Career counselor need to be able to answer: Which companies are the best workplaces? Will they treat me well if I go and work for them? What is the benchmark for the best working environments? How will I recognize a good one?

Each year the top 20 Best Workplaces are announced in all European countries. For Greece the top 20 companies for 2008 are:

- 1 PISCINES IDEALES (Special European Award on Respect, top 10 in 50 European companies)
- 2 MICROSOFT HELLAS (No.1 in Top 50 Europe 2008)
- 3 PROCTER & GAMBLE HELLAS (in top 50 Europe)
- 4 GENESIS PHARMA (in top 50 Europe)
- 5 CADBURY HELLAS
- 6 AION (ISTHMOS)
- 7 KRAFT FOODS HELLAS
- 8 EXODUS
- 9 BRISTOL-MYERS SQUIBB
- 10 PRAKTIKER HELLAS
- 11 HELLENIC AEROSPACE INDUSTRY (EAB)
- 12 MELLON FINANCIAL SERVICES
- 13 UCB
- 14 TASTY FOODS
- 15 AIG GREECE
- 16 ALDEMAR HOTELS & SPA
- 17 HEWLETT-PACKARD HELLAS
- 18 PEIRAIOS DIRECT SERVICES
- 19 EAGLES PALACE HOTEL & SPA
- 20 HELLENIC FABRICS

The list is developed in the framework of a pan-European competition. The competition is based on a survey which is conducted internally to the participating companies with the intention to: a) allow the employees to evaluate their workplace and b) give the human resources manager (or CEO) the opportunity to describe (and support with evidences) the company's human resources strategy and policies. In particular, a participating company is evaluated by the Trust Index employees' questionnaire (2/3 of the final score) and the Cultural Audit, top management questionnaire (1/3 of the final score). The Cultural Audit questionnaire provides information regarding the human resources strategies, policies and practices of each participating company. Moreover, supplementary material (e.g. video, employee handbooks, company newsletters, etc.) is welcomed in order to strengthen the understanding of the company's workplace culture and practices. The Trust Index questionnaire, answered by the employees is a brief opinion survey in which the employees respond regarding their workplace experience inside the company.

What makes a company a good workplace? A career counselor need to identify the following dimensions in a company and to provide candidates with tips and info on the working environment he/she is applying for. For each of the following dimensions a company implements a number of practices that make it unique and a good workplace.

Epilogue

It is a fact that we can promote career guidance without linking that field with the labour market. An effective Career Counsellor has to be aware of the needs and requirements of the labour market and prepare or inform students .

Career Guidance and ICT - The CareerGuide Web Portal

Claudia Börner, University of Dresden

Abstract.

Web portals, forums and wikis represent very good tools in collaborative work and coordination of tasks, in sharing opinions and best practices, in networking people all around the world. The European Comenius project “CareerGUIDE for Schools” has developed a network of school teachers and career counsellors that started to share their best practices, exercise implementation results and comments, interactively participate in the improvement of the exercises and in the dissemination of the different related events within an international framework. To set up and run such a network it is obviously necessary to use ICT. In the case of the CareerGuide network it was a core aspect right from the beginning of the definition of the network. The paper points out the results of the web portal developed within the “CareerGUIDE for Schools” European project.

Introduction

“CareerGUIDE for Schools” is an international network (Comenius Action 3 in the Socrates programme) started in October 2005 and ending in September 2008, which brings together experts in pedagogy, psychology, technology and labour market, promoting career guidance in European Schools.

The project partners adopted the definition of career guidance that was used in recent international reviews conducted by the OECD, the European Commission and the World Bank: Career guidance refers to services and activities intended to assist individuals, of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational training and occupational choices and to manage their careers. Such services may be found in schools, universities and colleges, in training institutions, in public employment services, in the workplace, in the voluntary or community sector and in the private sector. The activities may take place on an individual or group basis, and may be face-to-face or at a distance (including help lines and web-based services). They include career information provision (in print, ICT-based and other forms), assessment and self-assessment tools, counselling interviews, career education programmes (to help individuals develop their self awareness, opportunity awareness, and career management skills), taster

pro-programmes (to sample options before choosing them), work search programmes and transition services. (OECD, 2004)

Career Guide For Schools Web Portal

The career guidance in education sector has a principal significance not only for the choice of educational career of pupils and students but also for the transition of school-leavers to the world of work (Sultana, R.G,2004). It increases the probability of their success, interest in further education and will of retraining, that means, the preparedness for change of employment. Life career development is self-development over the life span. It occurs through the integration of the roles, settings and events in a person's life. The word life in life career means that the focus is on the total person - the human career (Wenger, E,1998). The word career identifies and relates the roles in which individuals are involved (worker, learner, family member, citizen), the settings where individuals find themselves (home, school, community, workplace), and the events that occur over their lifetime (entry job, marriage, parenthood, job change, retirement). Finally, the word development is used to indicate that individuals are always in the process of becoming. (CareerGUIDE for Schools network,2005)

The main aim of the Career Guide project network is to bridge the gap between school and work. The other concrete aims and objectives of the network were: to stimulate the effort of bringing career guidance to the education policy front and contribute to the upgrading of teaching and learning career development; to develop generic skills profiles relevant to key jobs and to create a dedicated web portal, the CareerGUIDE for Schools portal and a series of additional communications (workshops, info-days, conferences) to make this information available; to explore the best practices on the implementation of career guidance education in Europe through extended surveys; to offer specialised support and training opportunities to educators of career guidance in schools throughout Europe; to establish horizontal links between school & society; to evaluate the application of ICT-based methodologies and practices addressed to career guidance; to promote the European Dimension in career guidance reinforcing long-term mobility in Europe; to create the conditions for the network's sustainability and expansion.

Career Guidance itself is a topic that addresses different subject perspectives but also different target audiences and the question of accessibility (public vs. private). Target audiences include mainly experts (school teachers and policy makers for career guidance in schools), but also pupils and parents.

School teachers working on career guidance benefit by the acknowledgement of the importance of career guidance, the best practices in career guidance across Europe as well as the curriculum guidelines which will be offered by the network. Informing and supporting the actors who are involved in career guidance programs is crucial for the development and implementation of quality career education. Policy makers for career guidance in schools regularly are informed on the network's activities and outcomes and through them they will be updated on the European picture of career guidance. Through network's results, policy makers will be able to realise the current needs of career guidance as well as to take action in order to strengthen the link between schools and society. School children are affected by network's activities by being offered the adequate support they need in

order to plan their future life.

The Use of Information and Communication Tools was the core aspect right from the beginning of the definition of the Career Guide network. For the development of a suitable ICT concept the project consortium selected a design based on a combination of a web content management system with different communication tools.

A web content management system (WCMS or Web CMS) is a content management system (CMS) software, usually implemented as a Web application, for creating and managing HTML content. It is used to manage and control a large, dynamic collection of Web material (HTML documents and their associated images). A WCMS facilitates content creation, content control, editing, and many essential Web maintenance functions.

The WCMS developed for the Career Guide project is an Online processing System meaning that the system applies templates on-demand. The system is a proprietary development based on PHP scripting language, TinyMCE (web-based editor control) and Smarty (template engine). The authoring environment of the WCMS allows registered users easy and quickly upload documents and create the web content with relative ease of use. That means the system provides a non-technical way of creating or updating web content, without any knowledge of Hypertext Mark-up Language (HTML) or other special programming techniques. By that it is purposely designed to work like any word processing program (for instance MS Word) and to be used by average non technical members of the CG community.



Fig. 1 The CareerGuide Web Portal – Home Page

Since May 2006 the network’s web portal is accessible under www.career-guide.eu. The website provides direct access to information on the issues of career

guidance from different European Countries, to communication means and to professional support. The portal is designed and published in English. During the life span of the project, the website was translated in the languages of all project partners meaning the project website is now additionally available in the following languages: German, French, Lithuanian, Estonian, Greek, Romanian and Bulgarian.

Exploring the «CareerGUIDE Portal» one can:

- Be informed about the research work and findings of the network
- Gather information about Career Guidance related European projects
- Find out Career Guidance events across Europe
- Learn good practices on Career Guidance across Europe
- Meet other people interested in Career Guidance (teachers, counsellors, policy makers, students)

The structure of the website is organized into six main categories:

- Homepage (provides basic presentation of the project and access to the calendar)
- Thematic Areas (Here one may find the research work and findings of the CareerGUIDE network; provides access to the forum sections related to the specific thematic areas approached, access to the public material and to the exercise evaluation process)
- Communication Area (provides access to the forum and to the message board)
- Comenius action (promote Comenius European Cooperation in school Education)
- European Dimension (information on European Programmes and Actions supporting guidance projects)
- Contact (data of the co-ordinator, controlled access to the WCMS, become a member)

The main features and tools of the portal/WCMS are:

- Calendar (where project partners and forum members can insert events related to career guidance)
- Forum (and becoming a member) - The Forum has been set up in order to find, discuss and evaluate useful material about different thematic areas on Career Guidance (exercises, methods and tools) and finally to build up an Online-Community.
- Message board (dedicated to the facilitation of communication and exchanges within the network)
- Site Map for easy navigation through the web portal
- Thematic Area with access to public material

The Thematic Area section – i.e. the working area of the project – provides the opportunity to log-in into the specific working group section, to register and to become a network member or to view a variety of materials that have partially been transferred from the password-controlled forum, e.g. on

- Self-concept, self-esteem, personal values (working group 1),
- Overcoming job stereotypes, key skills, marketable and non marketable occupations in Greece and professions in Romania, essential tips for a job hunt (working group 2)
- How a successful CV should look like, employability, school to university transition (working group 3).

In total there were three working groups, each one focusing on one of the following thematic areas (figure 2):

- 1 Know about yourself
- 2 Know about the Job Market
- 3 Develop Yourself for your Career Path



Fig. 2 Thematic Areas Section of the Web Site

Each of these working groups had a specific section in the forum (www.career-guide.eu/forum) for posting different materials and exercises of interest, and for discussing the different methodologies and paths to follow. The forum became more interactive, once the teachers started logging in to the forum, and sharing their opinions and experiences regarding the different topics under discussion. They were strongly encouraged to express their views and to let the consortium partners know about anything that was missing or needed to be improved. The Forum has been set up in November 2006 as a password controlled area with the aim to build up the Career Guide community. The forum is structured correspondingly to the 3 working groups (i.e. 3 main forums with sub themes & 1 forum for "further topics") and includes the following features:

- Online Registration

- Uploading mechanism: Ability to attach multiple files per post
- Forum communication (discussion and cooperation)
- Evaluation system (Creation of polls with multiple options per thread)
- Email notification for the new posts
- Email contact to network members
- Member listing
- Viewing forum statistics
- Calendar for project activities (events also appearing on the website)

The advantage of accessing the forum is the more in-depth information available, the translations of the materials in different European languages, the insight into different experiences Europe-wide and the possibility to exchange ideas and to discuss with Career Counsellors, teachers or experts about different topics related to Career Guidance.



Fig 3: Career Guide Forum – Thematic Area 1

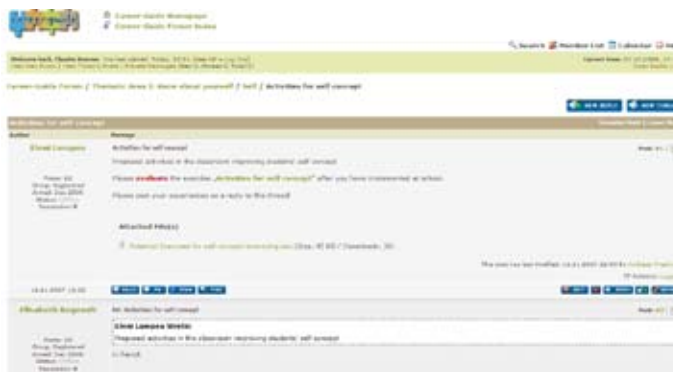


Fig 4: Exercise Posting and Discussing

Epilogue

The CareerGUIDE for Schools network’s main aim is to promote career education and raising awareness upon the subject in schools across Europe, bridging the

gap between school and the world of work. The main tool for accomplishing these objectives is the CareerGUIDE web portal, which acts as a forum for information, communication and promotion of career guidance in schools.

From the knowledge design perspective, we followed the model of an online community of practice as it was developed earlier, and described in many publications. Extending that approach towards ICT-based settings, current research concludes the necessity of an effective moderation of the thematic groups after they had been defined. This is in line with the experience of the CG network. With the development of the web portal, an infrastructure with all necessary functions has been set up, that allows informing, exchanging (experiences), discussing and cooperating within a community of Career Guide Experts across Europe. The CareerGUIDE web portal reached European and even international audiences. The community consists of 230 registered network members from all around the world: e.g. from Greece, Germany, Romania, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Denmark, Italy, France, Ireland, UK, South Africa, Nigeria, Maldives, Turkey, Armenia etc.

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Some moments of the Conference

