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Career Guide for schools

News Letter Nr. 2/2007

Welcome

Dear Career Guiders,

Welcome to the 2nd Newsletter of "Career Guide For Schools" network! We already have covered the second year and we are prepared for the third and last year. We believe that we had a very productive, originative and creative year!

At his issue, you will find the presentation of the second career guidance conference, the presentation of the "Career Day" event, interesting information for career guide portal, creative activities for career guidance, significant articles and some more interesting topics. Enjoy your reading!!!



Portal

Career Guide Web Portal

The web portal has been developed as an integrated communication tool providing direct access to communication and information about Career Guidance. Since May 2006 the network's web portal is accessible under www.career-guide.eu.

Its design is based on a web-based content management system (CMS) with different features.

Structure

The website contains about 45 web pages including the following 6 main categories:

Home

On the CG homepage a large variety of information is provided, i.e. a career guidance definition, the projects aims, methodologies, activities (network conferences, project meetings, events), partnership and a download option of the project leaflets available in all 8 project languages.



Thematic Areas

The partnership of the CG network operates in collaborative working-groups. The working groups work independently in a particular topic of career guidance. In this web portal section the 3 working groups (Know About Yourself, Know About the Job Market, and Develop Your Career) are represented. Some examples of the research work and findings of the CG network are published in section public material.

Communication Area

The main focus of the CG portal is the communication and information support for an international network. Currently the web portal includes two different communication tools, a password controlled forum and a public forum (open for all). The public forum in form of a message board is dedicated to the facilitation of communication and exchanges within the network.

Comenius Action

Useful information on the Comenius programme is provided in order to promote Comenius European Cooperation in school Education. In addition to information about the Comenius programme website visitors can present their network or project by filling in an online registration form.

European Dimension

This section contains information on European Programmes and Actions supporting guidance projects (Vocational Training Programme, Joint Actions, Leonardo da Vinci Valorisation activities, Employment Programmes, EQUAL initiative, Social Inclusion Programmes, Career Guidance in Europe and projects on Career Guidance in Europe).

Contact

A link to the password controlled forum (online registration form for new network members), the imprint, access to the administration interface (CMS) and a graphical representation of the website (sitemap) are provided in the last section.

The whole material of the website is published in all 8 project languages, i.e. English, German, Greek, French, Lithuanian, Rumanian, Bulgarian and Estonian.

Career Guide Forum

In November 2006 a protected area for network members has been set up with the following key features:

- Uploading mechanism for all user
- Forum communication (contact to network members)
- Valuation system (Creation of polls with multiple options per thread)
- Calendar for project activities
- User Control Panel

We currently have 104 network members registered. 170 contributions (posts) contain information about career guidance e.g. links, tips, information material and exercises/ tools which can be used in school lessons or for career counselling.

The forum itself is structured in accordance with the working groups. That means there are 3 main forums with different sub themes and 1 forum with further topics available.

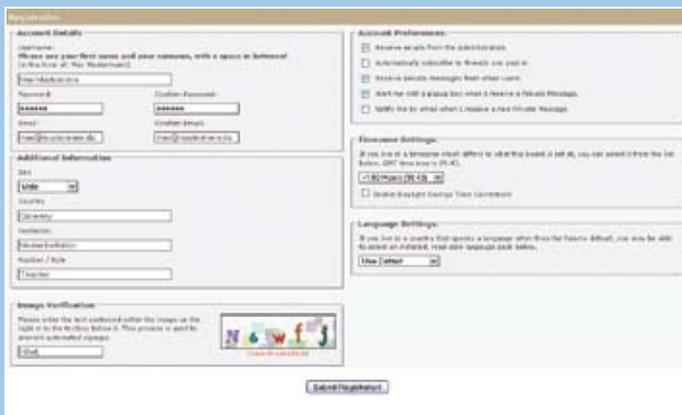


How to become a Career Guide network member?

The Career Guide working area is password protected that means you have to be registered and logged in to view and participate in the forum. The registration is free and takes a few minutes to complete.



1. Open the website www.career-guide.eu/forum
2. Create an account via the button Need to register? (Click on it)
3. Registration Agreement: Please confirm the Registration Agreement (Click on: I Agree).
4. Please fill in your registration data (first name and surname, password, email, sex, country, institution, role/position)
5. Please do not forget the image verification before you submit the registration. This process is used to prevent automated signups.
6. After submission you will receive a welcome mail with your login data. The administrator activates your account within 12 hours.
7. Now you can login in the forum by specifying



your username and you password
(www.career-guide.eu/forum).

Activity

Teamwork and Leadership Seminars for Teenagers in Kaunas Maironis Gymnasium (Lithuania)

Material provided in the portal of international project "Career Guidance for Secondary Schools" is very useful for teachers and career counselors that work with 11th – 12th formers in Kaunas Maironis gymnasium, Lithuania. Career counselors and specialists of the school started implementing career guidance activities for teenagers using the material of the portal www.career-guide.eu - a specialized free resource related to career counseling at schools on the internet.

It is essential to understand teenagers' needs. Career counselors should have various skills that are directly connected with team building such as organizational and communicational skills, creativity, good interpersonal relationships. Career counselors are persons who describe the idea, give attractive explanations of the activities and influence effective participation of students.

On the 25 of April 2007 two groups of 11th formers participated in a special event. The seminar was associated with leadership. "To be an effective leader you must know not only yourself, your strengths and your weaknesses, but also those of the people around you. You must build a team of people who understand your objectives and share your commitment to achieving them, and you must help each individual in that team to perform to their very best." – the main objectives of teamwork and communicational issues were explained.

Activities of the seminar had 6 steps: 1. Introduction; 2. Presentation of methodological background; 3. Division into teams; 4. Activity "Building a ship" 5. Presentation of teamwork results and reflection; 6. Certificates for students.

The seminar participants had a possibility to identify their leadership skills, act as a team sharing the goal and communicating about it. Effective communication was mentioned as the most important component of

work results.

Captains have just presented the SHIP with the song "I am sailing"

Career counselors, specialists and participants of the seminar.



Career Day

On April 2007 Ellinogermaniki Agogi organized a Career Day for students, teachers, counselors and parents. Two parallel sessions took place, one for the adults and another one for the students.

At the first part, for adults, there were speeches about the importance of career counseling, the role of parents, the status in Greece and of course the requirements of the labor market. Psychologists, representatives from universities, political authorities and from the labor market analyzed the importance of the career guidance.

The same time 80 professionals from different fields discussed with students about their every day professional life, the difficulties and the opportunities that their job has. There were seven different job's categories (human studies, science, medicine, artist, finance, military services), in seven different classrooms. In each category there were about six to eight professionals. More than 150 adults participated at the first session and more than 200 students discussed with the professionals.

Parents, students, teachers and professionals were more than glad to participate at the event. Everyone enjoyed the event and found it absolutely interesting and pleasant!!!

Definition of Career Guidance

Career Counselling and career coaching are similar in nature to traditional counselling (Kim, Li, Lian, 2002). However, the focus is generally on issues such as career exploration, career change, personal career development and other career related issues (Swanson, 1995). Typically when people come for career counselling they know exactly what they want to get out of the process, but are unsure about how it will work (Galassi, Crace, Martin, James, and Wallace, 1992). Career counsellors work with people from all walks of life such as adolescents looking to explore career options or with experienced professionals looking for



a career change. Career counsellors typically have a background in psychology, education, vocational psychology, or industrial/organizational psychology (Swanson & Parcover, 1998).

The approach of career counselling varies by practitioners/ counsellors, but generally they include the completion of one or more assessments (Swanson & Parcover, 1998). These assessments typically include interest inventories, cognitive ability tests, and personality assessments.

Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a U.S. (June 2007)

For UNESCO, Career Guidance consists of helping the student to become aware of his personal characteristics and to develop them in order to select studies and jobs in all the circumstances of his existence with the joint effort to serve society and himself as a responsible person.

Career Guidance in Rural areas

Distance Career Counselling is a new field which supports career counselling process from distance, when it is not possible to take place "face to face", for example when someone is far away.

"Career Guide For Schools" network, with the co-operation of three more European projects (Career Counsellors Interactive Training"project, Rural wings and Hermes) organized a session with four "lessons" of career counselling to rural areas, to career counsellors who provide counselling in rural areas in Greece.

Lewis Carroll refers to his famous fairy tale "Alice in Wonderland" that 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"

Necessity of 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. 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.

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.

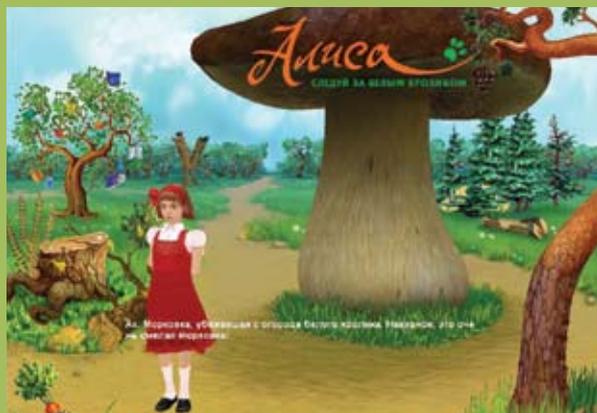
The demands of the labour market have multiplied in terms of skills (especially technological), experi-



ence, 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





Career Counselling From Distance

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 carcruit 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 disadvantaged 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 Greece, 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 believed 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,

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. Co-operative efforts of the school, home and community are needed to help young people successfully make the transition from school to the world of work.



Examples of best practices. Lithuanian experience.

Contemporary theory of career and process of globalization enter the field of education and labour market. New challenges set Life Long Learning principles as a background for personality. Everyone has his/her personal ideas about the future and the main steps to be taken to make career successful. Presenting oneself to labour market has always been a challenge testing social skills of a "freshman".

Ability to present your own ideas in public is very important in the world of professions. It is essential to give possibility to schoolchildren to gain experience in rhetorics. This skill is mentioned as one of necessary for successful social and personal life.

In April 28, 2008 Kaunas Maironis gymnasium in co-operation with Kaunas College organized a seminar for 15-16 years old teenagers, called "Importance of Rhetorics in the Process of Career Planning". Two lecturers – I. Skridlaite (representative of Kaunas Maironis gymnasium) and A. Kavaliauskiene (representative of Kaunas College) presented theoretical material on rhetorics principles. Schoolchildren had a possibility of watching practical examples of public rhetorics, understanding the meaning of communication with audience.

During this seminar three exercises were presented in different elocution situations.

- First exercise – "Disturbed Communication" – was prepared to demonstrate different ways of understanding of information. To show how people with different objectives communicate.
- Second exercise – "Peculiarities of Communication in Different Professions" – was presented to find out the meaning of vocational slang. It is essential to understand that communication at work place is always connected to terms of labour market sector and vocational field.
- Third exercise – "Interview with Employer" – job interview simulation. Pupils had to choose one of the roles: employer, job seeker or observer. Three different roles – three different points of view. Schoolchildren watched and commented on samples of formal communication and elocution skills.

At the end of seminar participants made reflection and highlighted their findings:

"I knew that communication is important, but it was new to me to find out that good elocution skills are so important for successful career" – Ernestas, II gymnasium class, Kaunas Maironis gymnasium.

"Information is the most valuable thing. To communicate with others effectively - it is art and science

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.

Students' comments

"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"

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.

New schools in France network

Upper secondary school Emile Mathis, Schiltigheim
Upper secondary school Marguerite Yourcenar, Erstein

Upper Secondary school Jean Monnet, Strasbourg

Upper secondary school Henri Meck, Molsheim

Lower secondary school Frison Roche, La Broque

Lower secondary school François Truffaut, Strasbourg

at the same time" – Kristina, II gymnasium class, Kaunas Maironis gymnasium.

"Development of elocution skills is very important not only for personal future career, but also for self-satisfaction and confidence" – I. Palaimaite, psychologist of Kaunas Maironis gymnasium.

2nd Annual Conference of "Career Guide for Schools"

The second international conference initiated by following the tasks of Socrates/Comenius project "Career Guide for Schools" was organized by Vytautas Magnus University with contribution of Kaunas Maironis Gymnasium on 26th of October, 2007, in Kaunas, Lithuania.

Given the title "The Future of Career Guidance in Schools" the conference gathered more than 120 European and Lithuanian specialists being engaged in career guidance subject area. Project's partners, teachers, psychologists, social pedagogues, career counselors working in schools and universities, as well as scientists and representatives of national governance authorities responsible for implementation of career guidance policy in Lithuania were active audience both delivering and listening to the presentations: "Methodological Ideas for Career Education at Individual and Social Level" (S. Daukilas, Assoc. Prof., Lithuanian University of Agriculture, LT), "Career Guidance in Lithuania – Promoting National Guidance Policies" (A. Sokolova, Ministry of Education and Science, LT), "Career Guidance in Lithuanian Secondary Schools" (A. Naseckaitė, Kaunas Maironis Gymnasium, LT), "Career Guide Network Description" (Network's Co-ordinator Eleni Lampou, Ellinogermaniki Agogi, GR), "Career Guidance and ICT – CareerGUIDE Portal" (T. Koehler, Technical University of Dresden, DE), "Games in Career Guidance" (K.D. Maxwell, INSEAD, FR), "The Importance of Emotional Intelligence in Career Guidance" (E.

Paraschaki, ALBA, GR).

The issues of career guidance, as well as conference participants' points of view, ideas and experience were shared in three conference workshops monitored by national career guidance specialists: "Transition From School to Work" (N. Miniotienė, Career Counsellors' Association, LT), "New Approaches in Career Guidance" (A. Mačiūnienė, Career Planning Centre, LT), "Competencies of Career Counsellor" (L. Navickienė, Vytautas Magnus University, Centre for Vocational Education and Training, LT).

The second international conference "The Future of Career Guidance in Schools" ended with certificates' delivery for the conference participants and their best wishes to promote career guidance issues for young people serving as successful integration and participation in their societies.



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