INNOVATIVE **MODEL OF** FACE-TO-FACE CAREER GUIDANCE





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Table of Contents

- 1. Introduction | 01
- 2. Actual context in Europe | 04
- 3. Positive examples of career guidance integrated in education system | 08
- 4. Definitions of career guidance | 14
- 5. Career guidance for NEET in practice | 17
- 6. Roles and coordination of youth workers and practitioners | 20
- 7. Importance of combination of digital world and offline actions | 22

Model of Face-to-Face Early Career Guidance | 24





- 1. INTRODUCTION -



Youth employment is a key policy concern in Europe over the last decades. Just right after the 2008 financial crisis youth unemployment experienced a significant rise from 16.0% and reached 24,4% in 2013. In the following period, these figures recovered to a low record number of 14,9% in 2019. However, the COVID pandemic has again brought a less light picture to this reality. With the world facing a serious economic contraction. evidence suggests that the young population will be amongst the most affected and will have to deal with harsh conditions in the labour market in the forthcoming years. This scenario is likely to be more severe for individuals in vulnerable groups, such as young people of racial and ethnic minorities, or holding any disabilities.

A key concern that is specific to young individuals has been the condition of

NEET. The concept of NEET has been coined to designate individuals that, at some point in their lives, are 'not in education, employment, or training'. The concept has been widely applied in the study of the transition of young people to the job market, shedding light on some frequent barriers and challenges faced by many in moving from education to a meaningful career.

The label NEET is ample in scope and aims to capture a broader population than the term "unemployed". Overall, the classification of NEET points towards a wider societal perspective, focusing on the nature and the challenges placed by the relationship between young people, work and education. NEET status is addressed as a transitory condition, that can apply to a very diverse range of young population, but that undoubtedly affects a substantial

volume of people and, therefore, calls for the development of specific policies for the improvement of education, job markets and the development of the fluidity and inclusiveness of local economic systems. Youth unemployment raises several concerns as it has been acknowledged as carrying long term effects, both in the levels of future employability and career development of individuals and in their health condition.

Many countries have developed specific programmes targeting NEET Young people, aiming at fostering opportunities for this population to move on to education and job contexts. The prevalent policies aim to offer opportunities for requalification and retraining, and some forms of subsidizing to mitigate cases of disadvantaged conditions that can

perpetuate the NEET condition.

NEET population was highlighted as one of the most vulnerable groups following in the aftermath of the 2008 Recession. Nowadays this population is again at the top of policy agendas since there is a big concern now is how these young people will again be affected by the economic consequences from COVID-19.

The project MCOG aims to introduce innovative early career guidance methodology as a sustainable tool for the prevention of young people becoming NEET, providing an innovative face-to-face approach. The proposed model is based on the experiences of the three project partners and existing positive practices in various countries in Europe. The innovation is confirmed through experiences of early career



guidance in both non-formal and formal education.

The project builds on a stepwise approach that aims to, in the first moment, develop a Model of Face-to-Face Early Career Guidance, that advances a framework to identify different moments in career guidance projects. Such a framework allows for a structured identification of methods and good practices that can be employed to improve career guidance of NEET young people at each step. The proposed model builds on several sources of knowledge, including literature review (including academic literature and grey literature from key reports and policy European documents); and on the experience on career guidance practices collected at each partner country.

Career guidance is the guidance given to individuals to help them attain the knowledge, information, skills, and experience competences necessary to identify career options and narrow them down to make one career decision¹. The unemployment phenomenon in European Union is connected with the fact that the skills and competences of young people in the EU do not usually match with the skills and type of training for new types of work. Sophisticated skills are needed for science and engineering jobs. The importance of career guidance is high, especially during this period with huge economic crisis mostly in the south European countries and Balkan states. The European Union understands career guidance and counseling as an instrument to effectively combat social exclusion and increase citizens' employability.

In general, young people tend to be more disadvantaged when entering the labor market due to limited or no work experience, a bad linkage between the skills young people have and those demanded by a specific job, a lack of career management / job search skills or access to professional networks, as well as a higher share of temporary contracts. This is the most usual phenomenon of unemployment, concerning the European countries. Most of the young people cannot match their skills and competencies with the job they would like to apply for, and although sometimes they may have these skills, gained from their studies or internships, those skills are not acknowledged, since they are not gained from a real job (so they have no practical experience on that).

The share of young people neither in employment nor in education and training is an indicator that measures the proportion of a given subpopulation who are not employed and not involved in any further education or training; these people may be subdivided into those who are unemployed and those who are considered economically inactive (in other words, they do not have a job and they are not actively seeking employment).

The project targets youth at risk to become NEET in secondary and higher education, providing career guidance via formal and non-formal / curricular and extracurricular activities in North Macedonia, Portugal and Poland.

1. Tomislav Gajtanoski, Luiza Tsikala, Guidebook on career guidance and counselling for youth workers. September 2018, Workpetence Project, Youth Council Prilep





Youth employment in Europe

Traditionally, most young people only started work once they had completed their highest level of education or training, and they rarely combined education with a job. The transition has, in recent years, become more prolonged and increasingly unpredictable, with young people switching jobs more frequently and taking longer to become established in the labour market, either by choice or necessity. It has also become increasingly common to find tertiary education students taking part-time or seasonal work to supplement their income, or for young people already in employment to seek a return to education and training in order to improve their qualifications (for example, through evening classes or distance learning). As a result, the transition between education and work has become less clear, with a growing share of students also working and a rising proportion of people in employment also studying (for example, apprentices are generally considered to be employed and in formal education). In 2019, some 11,1% of young people aged 15-19 in the EU made use of this more flexible transition from education to work, a share that rose to 18,7% among those aged 20-24, before falling somewhat for older age groups - 14,3 % among those aged 25-29 and 10,6 % for those aged 30-34.

According to the newest data provided on EuroStat related to employment, EU labour markets are increasingly described as being precarious, with a higher proportion of the workforce working on temporary, part-time or casual (so-called zero-hours) contracts; many of these workers are relatively young people. Indeed, people who strive to move from education or training into the world of work are often particularly vulnerable, as they may be the first to exit and the last to enter the labour market, as they compete with other job-seekers who have more experience².

The persistently high share of young people who are neither in employment nor in education or training in the EU may mean that employers recruiting in EU labour markets have a wide choice of potential candidates, although the high share may reflect labour market mismatches, for example geographically or in terms of skills. Some employers criticise the lack of basic skills (poor levels of numeracy and literacy) with which some young people leave the education system, as well as their under-developed life skills (communication and presentational skills, ability to work in a team, problem-solving skills), or their lack of work experience and knowledge in relation to their chosen profession. With a surplus of labour, employers may prefer to recruit young people who have completed a tertiary level of education or an apprenticeship. As such, young people with few or no qualifications may struggle to enter the labour market and may be 'locked out' of work or increasingly find themselves stuck in a cycle of low pay with little opportunity for progression. This was particularly the case during the financial and economic crisis, when tertiary graduates also faced difficulties in finding a job and may have taken jobs for which they were over-qualified in order to get into the labour market.

The level of education that a young person achieves therefore has a strong influence on his/her chances of finding work and remaining in work. A relatively high proportion of young people in the EU are neither in employment nor in education or training and policymakers are increasingly concerned by the economic and social consequences of their disengagement.

2. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/pdfscache/44911.pdf



NEET

The term NEET - "not in employment, education or training", refers to young people, who do not work (unemployed young people and young people economically inactive, i.e. young people who are not working and not available or not looking for work) and are not in education or training. This term was used for the first time in the United Kingdom, in a 1999 report "Bridging the Gap" by the Social Exclusion Unit. The Social Exclusion Unit report was connected to a discussion and research conducted in the early 1990s regarding young people aged 16-18 who were disengaged from education, training and the labour market. In the European policy, discussion NEETs were explicitly referred to in the Europe 2020 flagship initiative "Youth on the move", formulated during the economic crisis which had just started to hit young people and the term was broadened to include those young people aged 15-24 and later those aged 15-29.

There are a wide range of factors that may contribute to young people being NEETs, among which: having a low or intermediate level of educational attainment; living in a household with a low level of income; coming from a family where a parent experienced unemployment; being raised by a single parent; living in a rural area; having been born in a country outside the EU; or having a disability. Young people who spend a considerable period of time as NEETs are often affected by a range of social conditions, such as poverty and social exclusion, insecurity, crime, or health problems.

Share of youth aged 15-24 not in education, employment or training (2019, ILO Stat)

| | Total | Male | Female |
|-----------------|-------|--------|--------|
| North Macedonia | 18,1% | 17,1 % | 19,2% |
| Poland | 8,1% | 6,8% | 9,5% |
| Portugal | 8,0% | 7,4% | 8,6% |

As reported by International Labor Organization, **North Macedonia** has made considerable progress in terms of economic development and integration into global economic markets. Unemployment rate has significantly decreased over the last decade, but it is still one of the highest in Europe (17,3% in 2019), especially of youth (35,6% in 2019). Low labour market participation, in particular among women, and low job creation are the main challenges in the North Macedonian labour market. Inadequate earnings and unproductive work, lack of stability and security at work, unequal opportunities and treatment in employment, unsafe work environment, and

lack of voice through representation are also a concern for the country.

Data on unemployment in **Poland** show that the situation has improved significantly over the years. In 2002 unemployment affected every fifth Pole and in 2019 the unemployment rate was 3,3% (3,0% for men and 3,6% for women)³. It is to be noted that in the NEET rate in Poland decreased. In 2018, the NEET category amounted to 11,7% among youth aged 15-24 and in 2019 it was 9,5% (Eurostat). We need to consider that according to legislation in Poland there is education obligation up to age of 18 (they are registered as pupils). It means that it is almost impossible to measure NEET group at age 15-17.

Recent data addressing the status of the young population in **Portugal** highlight the issue of unemployment and restate the significance of the NEET phenomenon in the country. According to the report "Youth guarantee country by country" (EU, 2020) in Portugal "Youth unemployment remains relatively high, though measures have been taken to tackle the challenge." Youth unemployment is important in the country (standing at around 18,2% in the last couple of years, and above the EU average). The proportion of young people neither in employment nor in education or training decreased from 9,3% in 2017 to 8,4% in 2018 (below the EU average of 10,4%). However, the report also highlights that NEET rate differs greatly between regions in Portugal, from 17,8% in the Azores to 7,2% in the Centro region.

3. Concise Statistical Yearbook of Poland, Warsaw 2020



Youth work is commonly understood as a tool for personal development, social integration and active citizenship of young people. Youth work is a 'keyword' for all kinds of activities with, for and by young people of a social, cultural, educational or political nature. It belongs to the domain of 'out-of-school' education, most commonly referred to as either non-formal or informal learning. The main objective of youth work is to create opportunities for young people to shape their own futures. The range of themes that youth work covers is just as diverse as the types of people and organisations involved. Political activism, street work, sports activities, social enterprise and leisure-time activities can all be termed 'youth work'⁴.

The **Council of Europe** describes youth work as a broad term covering a wide variety of activities of a social, cultural, educational, environmental and/or political nature by, with and for young people, in groups or individually. Youth work is delivered by paid and volunteer youth workers and is based on non-formal and informal learning processes focused on young people and on voluntary participation. Youth work is quintessentially a social practice, working with young people and the societies in which they live, facilitating young people's active participation and inclusion in their communities and in decision making (Council of Europe 2017).



For the **European Union**, youth work is a broad term covering a large scope of activities of a social, cultural, educational or political nature both by, with and for young people. Increasingly, such activities also include sport and services for young people. Youth work belongs to the area of "out-of-school" education, as well as specific leisure time activities managed by professional or voluntary youth workers and youth leaders and is based on non-formal learning processes and on voluntary participation (EU Council Resolution 2009).

Youth work happens where young people are and on their terms. It is based on their voluntary participation and trust. Youth work can take place at any level, in any space or interactive environment, including virtually, or through direct contact. It can be one activity or a regular programme of activities where young people interact with each other. In a youth work process, young people and youth workers grow together by, for example, challenging prejudice and individual, social and societal problems and by practicing democracy. Youth work is based on non-formal education and learning processes, facilitated by youth workers, whereby young people learn to voice their aspirations - for themselves and for their communities - and work to bring about change. It is also a social practice, which often focuses on the social inclusion of young people, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Youth work can be crucial in providing tailor made career guidance to young people during education process, acting as partners and supporters to practitioners and teaching staff. Appropriate guidance helps young people understand their learning needs and career preferences based on their strengths and characteristics rather than stigmatising them as "bad students" and generating feelings of inadequacy. It can lead young people to have an active, engaged attitude to education and learning in general. Support during studies can also be key to a successful learning path. Such support may involve help with the choice of a specialization, the transition to the workplace (e.g. for work-based learning), or networking into the occupational community, among other aspects.

Career guidance is also suitable to help reengage early leavers from education and training. Career guidance services, employment services or social services are well placed to provide career guidance to low-qualified people.

4. Tanya Basarab, James O'Donovan, Youth work essentials, Youth Partnership, October 2020



Description

Project name

Experiences for "Career Guidance / Employability" in Higher Education (Curricular University of Aveiro Activities)

Experiences for "Career Guidance / Employability" in Higher Education (Non-Curricular University of Aveiro Activities)

Methodology

Target

audience

Docent /

Institution role

Regarding experience in University of Aveiro (UA), our first step was to identify some good practices which are developed as curricular or non-curricular activities in the University. After that, we made a literature review in order to verify another experiences in Portugal and in other countries, which may

| experiences ar Project name | e presented below: Description | Methodology | Target audience | Roles | Poliempreende | Poliempreende is an activity of the network of higher education institutions (Polytechnic Institutes, nonintegrated higher schools and polytechnic schools of | Present the idea and the business plan, and choose the best ideas to be promoted | Students of Polytechnic Institutes | Docent / Institution Provide training related to the program and accompany |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| I@H | Internationaliza tion at home pretends to collaborate with international institutions without going aboard | Do team works between different institutions | Students of UA and other universities or polytechnic schools | Docent / Institution Coordinate the system and accompany students. Evaluation of students. Students Develop the evaluation works | universities), which emerged in 2003. This is an initiative that aims, through a competition of ideas and business plans, to evaluate and reward projects developed and presented by students, graduates or teachers of these institutions, or other people, as long as they integrate | | | Students Develop ideas and business plans | |
| "Managers at School" | Managers present firms problems to be solved by students or ask students to do business plans | Students develop their suggestions to solve firms' problems or business plans, present them to managers and managers comment and give their opinions and suggestions | Students of Higher Institute for Accountancy and Administration (ISCA) of UA | Docent / Institution Coordinate the system and accompany students. Evaluation of students. Students Develop their suggestions to solve firms' problems, or the | | teams made up of students and / or graduates. The objective is to foster an entrepreneurial culture that promotes the development of skills by students, stimulating entrepreneurship and providing professional opportunities through the creation of their own jobs. | | | |
| | · · · · | | · · · · · · | business plan | Tutoria Gestão Comercial | Students have mentor from the business world throughout | Student/Mentor formation on a school event | Students BSc Commercial | Docent / Institution Find the mentors |
| Trainee | Students do an internship in firms | Students are in firms doing an internship and a report related with the developed activities | Students of UA | Docent / Institution Be a tutor of the student and evaluate the report | | the 3 years of the degree | | Management | and organize the event where students and mentor meet each other |
| | | | | Students Develop tasks and competencies related to their degrees and make a report about this work | | | | | Students Interact with mentor during the 3 years |

| Act Youth. From Theory to Action | The project responds to the educational challenges of the higher education in Europe and worked towards developing competencies that the labour market requires, such as transversal, entrepreneurial and innovation skills. | Development of competence assessment tools, dissemination and training activities. | Young graduates, students | UA: project partner |
|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| SES-EU - Social Entrepre neurship Support | Developed with the aim of fostering the employability by upgrading and developing the competences in the field of social entrepreneurship and turning Europe into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy, delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. | Training materials specific for promoting social impact entrepreneurship. | Youth workers; young graduates | UA: Project partner |
| Craftsma nship | Proposed a new approach to the teaching of Crafts and Semi-Industrial activities with a specific focus on business, integrating production, entrepreneurship and innovation as support contents for an ICT based training course. Contributed to the economic and social development by supporting the growth of Crafts and Semi-Industrial activities in Europe and creating favourable conditions for young adults to create their own employment but also by equipping adult workers with the skills and competences in entrepreneurship and innovation that enable them to keep being active members of society. | Digital learning platform; cases; training materials. | Youth workers, young people | UA: Project leader. |

Experiences for "Career Guidance / Employability" in AEI projects

We have completed many projects in which young people gain competences thanks to active participation in non-formal education.

It is related to early career guidance as these competences are useful in both social and professional life. Young people are very eager to attend such trainings and like to work during workshops. Most of our projects involve youth, who are responsible for tasks. We do appreciate evaluation of each step we make in projects. We talk to young people and do coaching and evaluation games in order to give them time for reflection, self-evaluation and help them name the competences and realize how many new competences they have gained thanks to active participation. It helps to build self-confidence and they are able to try new things and check themselves in different fields (sometimes it just gives feedback to themselves that the role in the project was not for them).

| Project name | Description | Methodology | Target audience | Roles |
|--|--|--|---|-----------------------------|
| Comprehen sive recommend ations for the Świętokrzys kie Voivodeship | The aim of the project was to increase the scope and accuracy of the activation offer for young people who are in the most difficult situation on the labour market (NEET youth) by developing a set of recommendations for labour market institutions aboard. | As part of the project, an analysis of available documents was prepared (desk research) and a survey was carried out among young people who are in the most difficult situation on the labour market, including NEETs, and among enterprises. Subsequently, reports were compiled containing recommendations regarding youth belonging to the NEET group. | Labour market institutions | AEI: project coordinator |
| PlaNET Social Enterprise 2 | The goal of the PlaNET Social Enterprise 2 project is to reduce the unemployment rate and improve regional (national) competitiveness. | As part of the project, participants had internships in local enterprises, trainings on teamwork, team management, presenting their own views or expressing their thoughts clearly opinions and suggestions. | Students, youth, teachers, youth workers, experts, decision makers | AEI: project partner |
| E-active youth | As part of the project, training for young people, meetings with decision-makers / experts, debates and a participatory school budget were introduced. | The participants took part in trainings on working in a group, team management, presenting their own views, expressing their thoughts clearly, expressing themselves in a large group of people and acquiring various skills. | Students, youth from the Świętokrzys kie Voivodeship | AEI: project coordinator |

| Key professions - the path to | The main goal of the project was to increase the knowledge and skills | The students took part in classes improving their knowledge and skills, in | Students of the Secondary School | AEI: project coordinator | Project name | Description | Methodology | Target audience | Roles |
|---|---|--|--|-----------------------------|--|--|---|--|--------------------------------|
| success! | in the field of key competences necessary in the context of the future employment of high school students and to equalize professional opportunities among students of IT and logistics by acquiring key competences, professional competences and disseminating modern education and establishing cooperation with entrepreneurs through internships context of the future employment of students of vocational schools. | training and vocational courses, and took part in internships in local enterprises. | Complex no. Fr. Stanisław Konarski in Jędrzejów | | Shake up Start ups | The aims of the project are: developing basic and transversal skills (entrepreneurship, digital skills and language competences) of young people by participating in testing and implementing the Non-formal Academy of Entrepreneurship method; internationalization and professional development of youth workers; strengthening digital skills used in youth work and promoting access to open educational resources (OER). | The activities were based on training and consultancy with professionals, exchange of inspiration, new ideas, motivating, gaining practical knowledge, networking, promotion and internationalization. | Students, youth, youth workers, experts, decision makers | AEI: project partner |
| Świętokrzys kie Youth Forum - We care! | One of the activities of the project was the Youth Debate: Unemployment or employment of young people, or what features should a good candidate for a job have. | During the debates, young people could discuss issues important to them with invited guests and work on problems in smaller groups. | Students, youth from the Świętokrzyski e Voivodeship | AEI: project coordinator | The fair is the future of the region | The aim of the project The fair as the future of the region was to increase the chances of young people on the labor market through additional courses and internships, establish cooperation with entrepreneurs and introduce an innovative method of teaching "Value Chain". | As part of the project activities, we have implemented a number of activities: professional courses, internships for course participants, meetings with entrepreneurs, fairs. | Students, teachers | AEI: project coordinator |
| Catch it! Non-formal academy of activities | The aim of the project was to improve the quality and relevance of non- formal education offer in the field of youth work by developing new and innovative approaches and supporting the dissemination of best practice. | The project included, among others: study visits to support the dissemination of best practices; appointing a panel of experts who developed a method of non-formal academy of activity as a result of the intellectual work of the project; training for youth workers on the developed method. | Students, youth, youth workers, experts, decision- makers | AEI: project coordinator | "School, internship, work - your way to success!" | The aim of the project was to support the process of vocational education of young people and increase their chances on the labor market. | The main activities were the substantive preparation of young people for vocational exams and the establishment of the "Small Career Office", under which students could take advantage of career counseling and workshops on entrepreneurship and starting their own business. | Students | AEI: project coordinator |

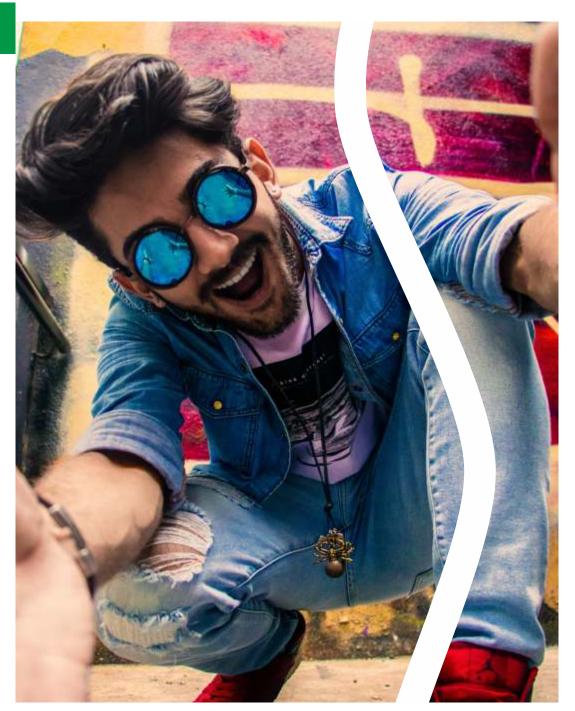
Experiences for "Career Guidance / Employability" in Youth NGO sector (SEGA)

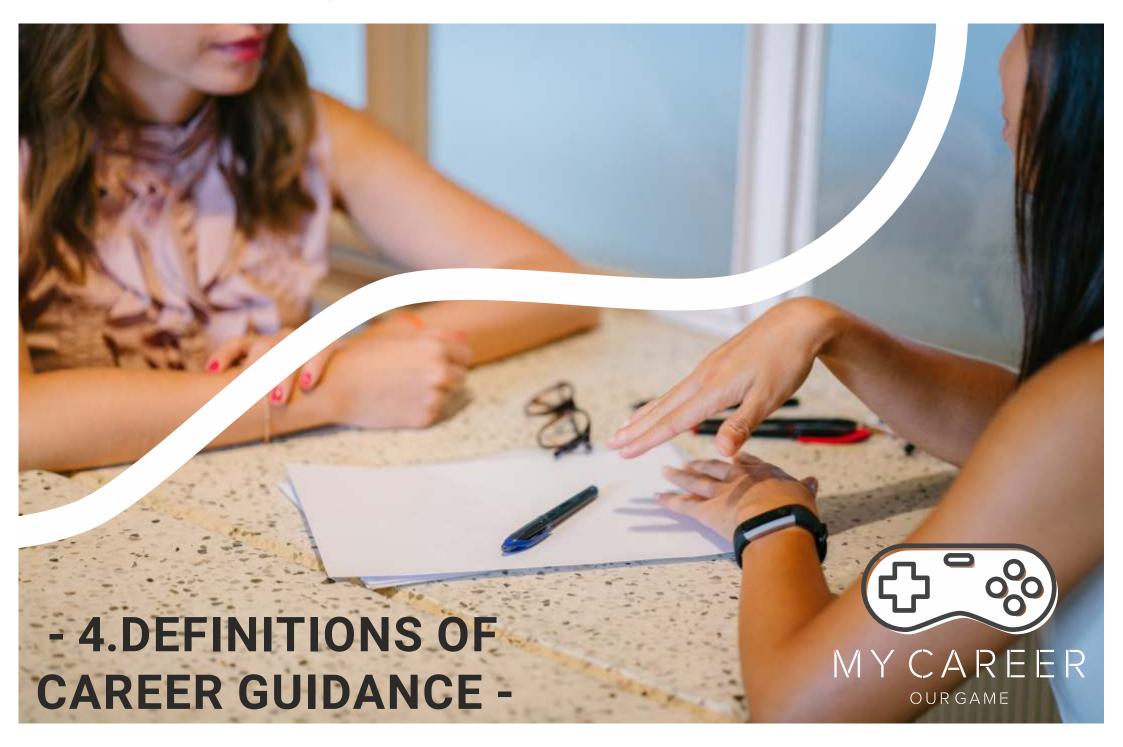
| Project name | Description | Methodology | Target audience | Roles |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| Open door - for youth by youth | The project aimed to facilitate the social inclusion of vulnerable young people through the creation of equal opportunities for accessing the labour market. | Through Training of Trainers, representatives from SEGA, other NGOs and institutions were trained to conduct trainings for hard-to-employ young persons (youth at risk) based on specific career guidance and counseling methodology with the project SEGA also established Youth information centers "Open Door" used for the capacity building of the identified youth at risk. In addition, Social Cards were developed for 60 young people at risk (young offenders and young people without parental care aged 15 - 21). | Young people at risk, aged 15 - 29 | SEGA: project coordinator |
| Youth Information Centers fit to NEET | The overall aim of the project was to increase the quality of youth work in meeting the needs of NEETs in Europe. Getting to know the experiences of various European countries was crucial in delivering innovative results of this project. | The project examined different models for youth information; Methodology for innovative and individually tailored youth information for NEETs; Methodology for conducting ToT (training of trainers) webinar for youth workers. | Youth, youth workers | SEGA: lead partner AEI: project partner |
| Youth Information and Counseling Center | The project aimed to provide quality information and counseling to young people in Prilep and Kavadarci. | The project enabled trained staff to conduct workshops and trainings for youth employability skills, connecting them with local businesses and providing them quality education and employment information and guidance. | Youth aged 15 - 29 | SEGA: project coordinator |

| NEET group integration | This project aimed to improve integration of youth in NEET situation through larger cooperation with different institutions and organizations at national and local level (educational, national, youth sector and labor market). | SEGA organized 2-day workshop with decision makers, to collect opinions and suggesting suitable measures for integration of youth NEETs. The project included National workshop resulting with Policy Paper for NEET Integration in Education, Employment and Training and further submitted to the national relevant institutions. | Youth workers, youth NGOs, decision makers | SEGA: project coordinator |
|----------------------------------|---|--|---|---------------------------------|
| From Information to career | The project established Youth INFO Clubs in Bitola and Shtip in 2014. Youth Info Clubs were focused on disseminating information and counseling of young people, with focus on the university students. | The Youth INFO clubs aimed at providing accurate and timely information for all interested students, potential users of the employment programmes and served as networking tool for business sector and employment agencies in the region. Through the Info Clubs 1560 students were introduced in the conditions and opportunities offered to young people within the Operative plan of the Government of RNM, by organizing various events such as promotions, video projections, trainings for students in Competence Balance and Career Guidance, meetings with local business etc. The Info Clubs established cooperation with local businesses and promoted the active measures and the benefits for the business sector. | Young people (students) aged 19 - 24 | SEGA: project coordinator |

Experiences for "Career Guidance / Employability" in Youth NGO sector (SEGA)

| Project name | Description | Methodology | Target audience | Roles |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| Youth Guarantee | This project aims to include the inactive young people (with a special focus on youth in NEET situation) in the labor market through utilizing the Governmental employability measures, through increasing their personal and professional competences and to gain quality employment. | SEGA is partner of the Ministry of labor and social policy in piloting the Youth Guarantee Scheme. SEGA is responsible for field activities within the Youth Guarantee in the South-West Region, involving the following activities: (1) identification and mapping of young people - potential beneficiaries of the Youth Guarantee in South-West region; (2) organization of promotional activities and info meetings for dissemination of information of Youth Guarantee; (3) support of young people in the registering process in the Centers for Employment. | Youth aged 15-29, unemployed youth, NEET youth. | Ministry of labor and social policy, SEGA is partner |
| Social inclusion of young people through employability | The project aimed to provide career guidance and career counseling to young people from Prilep, recipients of social welfare. | The project included workshops for employability and job-search skills of young people. The project also facilitated internship of some of the trained youth in local businesses and NGOs | Young unemployed youth aged 19 - 35, recipients of social welfare | SEGA: project coordinator |





Career guidance should be understood as a support provided to young people so that they can be better prepared to make decisions regarding their education, technical training or career, based on understanding their own interests, aptitudes and abilities, as well as the resources and opportunities around them.

Career guidance is: A process which involves much more than taking a test or learning about the selection of careers or occupations available. Rather, it is a well-defined process through which a youth receives information and support so that she/he can make realistic choices about her/his future in terms of career, further education and personal goals; Active since it assumes that young people should be active participants in the process of defining their goals and taking steps to meet those goals; Motivating in a way that they can understand better who they are and what they can accomplish, and become more hopeful about the future.

Now the most commonly used **definition** of career guidance, introduced by the OECD, when, in cooperation with the World Bank and later with the European Commission, they have begun to systematically map the existing policies and approaches in career counseling, starting in the OECD countries, and later in countries of the European Union and countries that at the beginning of the 21st century were candidates for EU accession:

"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 webbased services). They include career information provision (in print, ICT-based and other forms), assessment and selfassessment tools, counseling interviews, education career programmes (to help individuals develop opportunity their self-awareness. awareness, and career management skills), taster programmes (to sample options before choosing them), work search programmes, and transition services." (OECD, 2004)

Scope of career guidance

The range of services that refer to career guidance can be understood at three different levels:

- Career information covering labor market systematic information, (occupational outlook) as projections of the labor market, jobs on demand, labor market survey, numbers and ratios unemployment, future career and job opportunities, courses and occupations;
- Career guidance (education, professional orientation) - services related to the choice of profession or education, making decisions at key transition points, supports managing career pathways and opportunities

- throughout life. It helps students understand their motives, their values and how they might contribute to society. It provides them with knowledge of the labor market; skills to make education/training, life and work choices;
- Career counseling deeper counseling with elements of therapy, classical interactive advisory relationship between counselor and client, one-to-one basis or in small groups, in which attention is focused on the distinctive career issues faced by individuals. It helps people clarify aims and aspirations, understand their own identity, make informed decisions, commit to action, and manage career transitions, both planned and unplanned.





These areas can be interrelated and adapted to the needs of youth. This interaction is especially important when the guidance targets disadvantaged youth who require a comprehensive approach that combines different resources, such as the use of psychometric instruments, sharing information on educational or job opportunities, psycho-pedagogical assessments, and the detection of psychosocial risks, etc.

With this new understanding, career guidance should be concerned not only with the matching of the existing attributes, but also with self-development and growth. Furthermore, the aim of this process is to help people make decisions for themselves. In other words, careers are commonly not "chosen" at a single point in life, but "constructed" through a series of interrelated learning, experiences and work choices throughout life.

Why should career guidance be offered to disadvantaged youth?

Defining career aspirations and realistically matching personal interests and abilities with job opportunities are big challenges for all young people, even more so for those living at an economic and social disadvantage. Many young people have no job or education and are often busy ensuring their own and their families' subsistence. They tend to know little about their own personal interests

and abilities and lack clarity about what they want to be and do in the future. In many cases, they tend towards unrealistic expectations and objectives and a lack of knowledge about the work-related needs and opportunities around them. The career guidance approach proposed in this guide aims to respond to these needs and help youth define the path their lives will take, in particular during their transition from school to work, or from job insecurity to continued education or towards what the International Labor Organization (ILO) calls **decent work**.



Based on the literature review, we identify high education initiatives or evaluations of different strategies developed in various countries which may use to support our career guidance. In Germany data shows that besides graduates from higher education often enter the labour market a considerable amount of work experience, they do not profit from their work experience that is unrelated to the field of study or was a mandatory part of the study programme, based on a comparation of the labour market benefits of different types of work experience⁵. In Greece, different transition strategies among Greek university graduates were assess in order to verify their effectiveness for successful labour market integration 5-7 years after graduation⁶. The impact of curricular internships in transition to labour market in Portugal showed that students who had the opportunity do a curricular internship presented better results⁷. Other experiences were evaluated such as the contributions of practicum training in the transition-towork8 and a Work Integrated Learning which is a pedagogical model of higher education/industry engagement aimed at enhancing employability and professional practice in selected built environment disciplines9.

Thus, it was possible to observe a gap regarding the lack of tools for helping the youth to find out job opportunities focused on their own personal skills and professional education, as well as necessary training and courses. In this



context, we identify the necessity of improving their searching in online career opportunities websites such as LinkedIn, but also showing how to make that search and the best sources of information. To do so, we propose to develop a search career tool and create games which teach how they present themselves to the employers and how to be more prepared for job interviews.

Early Warning Systems

Early warning systems showed that the idea of approaching early school leaving as a process that can be altered by timely prevention and intervention measures is broadly supported by school staff. Most early warning systems focus on the detection of more overt cognitive and behavioral indicators like students' grades, truancy or transgressive behavior. Only a few early warning systems also systematically aim at detecting and monitoring student's emotional well-being. Staff members (e.g., class teachers and support staff) often try to detect early signals of emotional distress during their one-on-one contact moments with students

Therefore, the early warning system to identify that one student is at risk to leave education or to become NEET should focus on the following signs: Lack of interest and running away from classes, poor grades, poor motivation / lack of information, lack of self-confidence, distrust in the system, comes from a family at social risk,

avoids classes due to employment, disturbed family relations, impaired communication with a peer group, premature entry into a marital / extramarital union.

The records for persons at risk should be kept by a special institution that will analyze and record and collect data from the schools, Social Welfare Centers and Employment Service Agency will classify them. SWCs can contribute by sharing information with schools through direct and continuous cooperation with the pedagogical-psychological service in the school.

Possible actions:

- · Tutorial support measures,
- Socio-emotional and Behavioural Support,
- Social (life) skills training, Communication skills,
- Promoting staff and parental involvement.
- Database of students divided by gender (ethnicity) per skills and interests towards coordination process with job / internship / apprenticeship/providers,
- Individual education / development plans,
- Coaching and mentor support.

How to recognize NEET? How to find NEET?

Labour market problems are very diverse and complex. They concern both people with long work experience, middle-aged people and young people who are starting their professional careers. A difficult issue in the labour and education sector is the NEET phenomenon. These youth are characterized by a lack of involvement in two basic spheres of life - the sphere of education and the sphere of work. These are not only unemployed people, but also those who left their education too early, do not look for a job, and are dependent on their parents. However, this environment is very varied. Career counsellors most often recognize such a person during the interview, when they get to know her better, her problems, family situation, etc. There are many factors that may influence this state of affairs, we can distinguish, among others: low level of education, social competences (often affected pattern of parents with a low level of education), place of residence away from larger cities, health problems, disability. The family situation is also of great importance, e.g. alcohol problem, divorce of parents, early parenthood, growing up in poor social and living conditions, as well as social factors, such as staying in a correctional facility, negative patterns of work, education, contact with addicts, aggressive behaviour, incidents of breaking the law. Career counsellors most often deal with

NEET while working on projects addressed to this target group from the European Social Fund. Many young people are also people who have a predisposition to become NEET for reasons not entirely dependent on them, i.e. high unemployment in the inhabited region, maladjustment of the education system to the labour market needs. However, it is worth observing such situations and reacting earlier to prevent this phenomenon from occurring. There are certain features where a career counsellor should increase vigilance in working with a young person. We can distinguish here: low self-esteem, failure to perceive one's advantages, lack of trust in one's decisions, closing oneself, pessimistic attitude towards one's actions, towards the environment, problems with coping with difficult situations in life, difficulty in defining one's life goals, life's way, postponing major decisions until later, reluctance to enter adult life and become independent, low level of motivation to work, to take initiatives, high level of stress in life, lack of family support.

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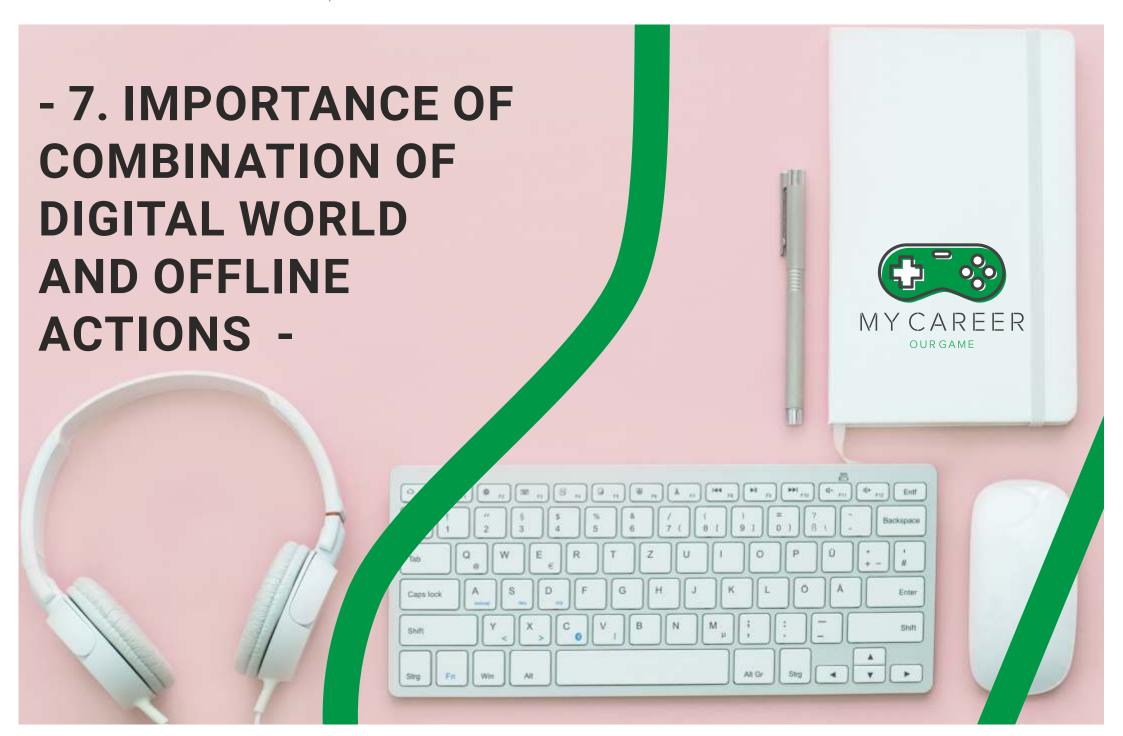




A career counsellor is a person who helps their clients at various stages of their professional career - when they are looking for a new job or want to find the first one and they do not know the labour market, but it is also helpful to the person looking for appropriate educational path, because this decision may have a direct impact on the future professional career. Career counsellors are often employed in offices and in schools. Their clients belong to different age and social groups. A particularly difficult case of a person from the NEET group. The term refers to young people who are not studying or working. The task of the counsellor, in this case, is to determine the professional preferences of people, learn about its advantages and limitations and iointly setting professional goals and the path to be followed. Counsellors must be communicative, patient, empathetic, friendly and kind, must be able to listen, ask the right questions, see strengths. Young people are often not positive about contacts with counsellors, they believe that they do not need it, they are self-sufficient and their current situation suits them. Employees must show great care when performing their duties so that the client does not feel trapped and understands that the counsellor wants to help him and plan his development path together with him. The counsellor, with his attitude and behaviour, must "prove" to the young person that he cares about him and is there to support him. They must choose their words and the way they work carefully. Such people quickly get discouraged when someone



puts too much pressure on them and they are closing. An important element of the advisory process in this case, there will be actions to increase customer motivation and increasing his interest in the labour market and improving his qualifications. Apart from another motivation, issue commitment that influences achieved success. A young person must be convinced of the rightness of his actions, only then is he able to put in a lot of effort to work on himself, which then brings results and satisfaction. Once the action plan is established, persistence and regularity are what counts. Only all these elements will contribute to achieving the next stages in the planned career path. As you can see, the career counsellor process is complicated and lengthy. Each person should be approached individually and only this case should be considered carefully. Actions must be started with research, preliminary analysis, then define the goals and path to achieve them and successively implement assumptions. It is also important to monitor the actions when necessary, the frequency of meetings and the pace of action are set individually.



Role of youth workers in early career guidance - Experiences and Practices

Employees of organizations and institutions working with young people implement many initiatives, projects and actions to which young people are involved. Youth workers have direct contact with a young person, often carrying out activities together, preparing actions, planning the next steps in projects. Youth workers are treated as colleagues and friends who work together with a common goal. Youth workers are people who are patient, willing to act, committed and empathetic, but also open, smiling and willing to help. These qualities help to establish real relationships between people. NEETs do not want to cooperate and do not see such a need. An employee who works with a group of young people gains their respect, but most of all gains their trust. Over time, young people confess their problems, talk, discuss and look for solutions. It is the time for the youth worker to intervene and help the young person choose a career path, and even more so to take actions that will cause the young person to continue their education, undertake activities aimed at preventing future unemployment. Trust in the leader and the variety of activities increases the young person's interest in the process. Youth workers are often qualified career counselors who can help young people choose a career path. However, the most important thing is that a youth worker who is close to the young person and can persuade him/her to try. In particular, youth workers who work with problematic youth, including NEET youth, should have knowledge and tools to introduce into career guidance. It is important that youth workers know how to approach a young person and how to start a conversation with him about education, career, future and values. The next step is to refer the young person to a professional career counselor or to continue working with the young person, when the experience of the youth worker allows it and he is competent to conduct counseling sessions. Trusting a young person in a youth worker and understanding that there are people who support him and want to help will allow him to go through the counseling process with greater commitment and more satisfactory results. It is important to use different tools when taking actions related to career counseling.

INNOVATIVE MODEL: Step by Step IN CAREER GUIDANCE

The Model of Face-to-Face Early Career Guidance is an innovative model consisting of 10 main steps of career guidance. It is a scheme that allows young people to be prepared to enter their professional life at the appropriate level and so that they feel that they are doing what they like. This process is very important, especially in the NEET group.

The first stage of this model involves initial contact, understanding and information exchange about NEETs. Young people can learn what the process of career guidance is about and what they can gain from it.

The second step is to initiate a meeting with young people who may be in the NEET area. The sphere of the young person's attitude and his/her relationship with the counsellor are very important here. They present what a career path could look like, share their experience. A big challenge at this stage may be the lack of motivation and willingness to cooperate of the NEET.

In the next stage, you go on to prepare a question form for each young person to carry out the diagnosis.

Then, set goals based on talents, predispositions or skills. You have to consider, among other values, beliefs, learning style, but also barriers or difficulties. A SWOT analysis may be a helpful tool in this section. It is worth focusing here on building self-esteem, getting to know yourself and your strengths.

The next step concerns the cooperation of a career counsellor with relevant school services. Psychological support for young people should be provided here, but they may feel reluctant to open to others. The job of a career counsellor is to maintain a friendly, open relationship with young people.

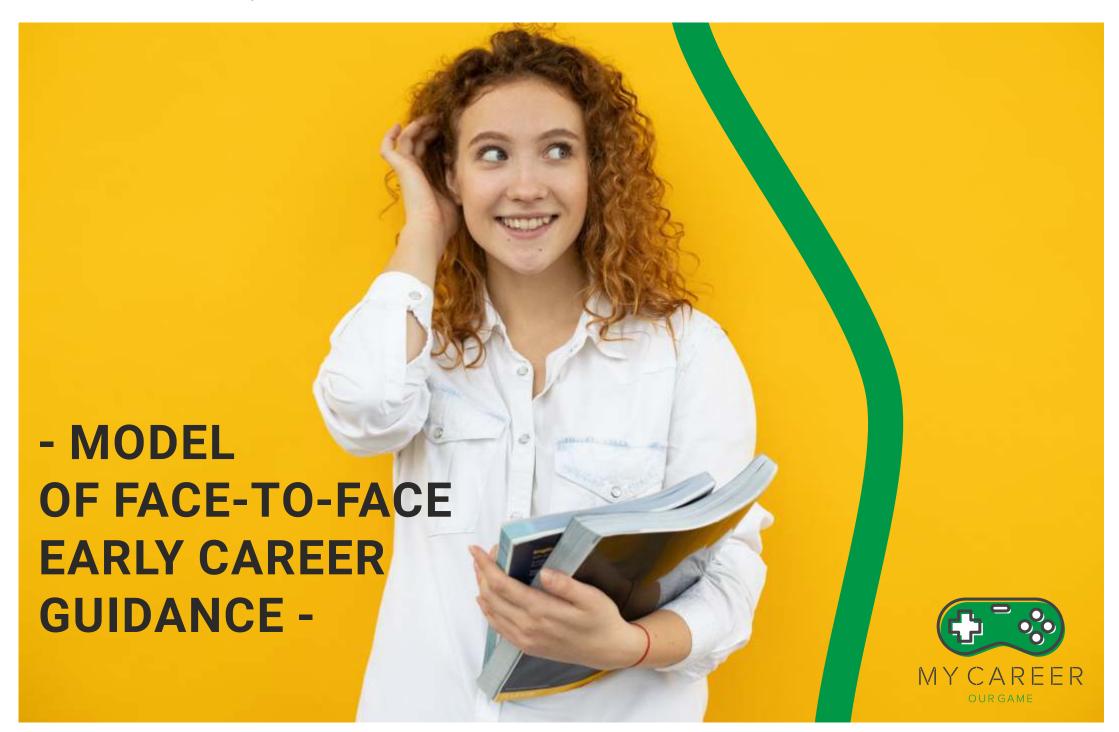
In step number 6, you should prepare an Individual Development Plan. It is a document that collects all the most important information about a young person, from his/her knowledge and skills or weaknesses and strengths to professional goals and the path to be followed to achieve these goals.

Subsequently, workshops with young people should be organized. People are more productive in a group, they support each other, help each other, learn from each other and at the same time compete and can become better and work on themselves and practice communicating in a group. Social competences are extremely important in terms of employment.

In the next step, you should get to know the current situation on the labour market and compare it with your competences and expectations. On this basis, IDP should be established, what the career counsellor and a young person do jointly in order to teach how to look for information, search for a job for a person with specific qualifications. This stage also covers the topics of training and educational programs that are currently available. To set your goals, you need to consider a number of different factors to come up with the best solution.

Then the mentoring and support phase begins. The mentor should be the kind of person young people want to follow. He should supervise their current activities and encourage them to develop further. An important feature of it is active listening and empathy.

At this stage, everything should be analysed and summarized. You should pay attention to these good actions and bad ones. Then you can start the whole process from the beginning to overcome any negative actions that have arisen.



Step 10:

Step 1: Coordination of school services with youth workers

Evaluation

Step 2: Initial meetings with possible NEET youth

Step 9: Mentorship and Tutoring to support

learning process

Step 8: Identify labor market trends and self-reflection

MYCAREER OURGAME

Step 3: Open case management

Step 4: Identify the young's person personal resources

Step 7: Organize joint workshops with youth

> Step 6: Prepare Individual **Development Plan**

Step 5:

Ensure potential psychological assistance to the young person

Step 1: Coordination of school services with youth workers

Short description of step

This is the first step towards effective early Face-to-face career guidance. Through this step, the youth workers and practitioners will establish joint understanding and exchange of information on regular basis towards identifying possible NEET youth. This step also involves presentation of career guidance opportunities to youngsters in the formal education process.

Methods

Discussions; online communication; joint shared databases; structured presentations to students.

Possible challenges and alternative interventions

Challenge: Lack of access to data/information by youth workers. Intervention: Define communication dynamics in the very beginning including a joint applicable database.

Duration

Regular meetings on a monthly basis between youth workers and practitioners (1-2 hours).



Step 2: Initial meetings with possible NEET youth

Short description of step

The basis for this step is establishing a relationship between the career counselor and the young person identified as one prone to become NEET. A key role in building a relationship with a career counselor in pedagogy of experience is the scheme "Tell me and I will forget, show me and I will remember. Let me do it and I will understand". The young man must trust the counselor as a precondition, he/she must feel safe and comfortable. Young people will be faced with physical, mental and social challenges. The counselor will guide them through the process, wanting to support their personality development and prepare them to shape their life environment with responsibility. The counselor will give an overview of what will happen during the process and what we would like to achieve.

Methods

The pedagogy of experiences sharing; performance-oriented methods; Conversation during performing a common task, puzzles, games etc.

Possible challenges and alternative interventions

Challenge: Negative attitude of the young person. Intervention: Creating a friendly environment. Challenge: Lack of motivation and discouragement.

Intervention: The counselor will adapt the level of challenge to the psycho-physical and health predispositions of the participant - this will happen thanks to the relationship established on the counselor-student level.

Challenge: Feeling that the bar is set too high.

Intervention: Individual conversation with a counselor - establishing an action plan to

achieve the goal using the small steps method.

Duration

Up to 1 hour.

Step 3: Open case management

Short description of step

Though this step, should it be decided to continue career guidance with the young person, the counselor will open folders for each young person that includes an Application form with basic data, questions and answers on the conditions for living/personal background (in consultation with school services) and preassessment form.

Methods

Printed Forms/documents, self-assessment, hard and electronic copy folders. structured and semi-structured interviews.

Possible challenges and alternative interventions

Challenge: Insufficient information of the school services, young person will probably be closed and non-accessible.

Intervention: Detailed explanation of the process prior starting expressing the aims of the case management helping us to monitor progress and make decisions.

Duration

4-6 hours

Step 4: Identify the young's person personal resources

Short

This step will aim to identify the available personal resources and information related description of : to: interests, abilities, talents, competences, professional predispositions and health conditions. Among others, this step will identify the following:

- Professional preferences and interests
- Character traits (type of character discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of each type)
- Giftedness
- Beliefs
- Values
- Learning styles
- Competence
- Level of motivation
- Personal advantages
- Situational advantages
- Difficulties, barriers, gaps to be filled
- External difficulties

Methods

Questionnaires, pre - post tests, advisory interview, checklist, projection techniques, SWOT analysis

Possible challenges and alternative interventions

Challenge: Low level of internal motivation and Lack of self-confidence Intervention: Individual conversation aimed at making the youth aware of the benefits of participating in the Face-to-Face Career Guidance process (using the language of benefits, talking on arguments).

Challenge: Problem with identification and formulation of the main goal and sub-

Intervention: Individual work of a career counselor with a participant aimed at increasing motivation to act, strengthening faith in one's own abilities, overcoming existing stereotypes, building positive thinking and learning about one's own predispositions and strengths.

Duration

4-6 hours.

Step 5: Ensure potential psychological assistance to the young person

| Short description of step | Psychological counseling and career counseling are delivered by different people, with unique approaches and missions. Some young people may require a more holistic service. This step indicates that specific psychological support by relevant person may be needed. Therefore, regular communication and meetings with relevant school services should be carried out by the career counselor. |
|---|--|
| Methods | Direct meetings, online/phone communication, conversation, tests. |
| Possible challenges and alternative interventions | Challenge: Young person may not be willing to discuss personal problems with another person. Intervention: Creating a friendly atmosphere during face to face/online/phone communication. |
| Duration | Based on needs |



Step 6: Prepare Individual Development Plan

Short description of step

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a document that helps to identify and outline: knowledge, skills and abilities and also provides information on the career pathway. Together with a young person the career counselor will prepare an individual development plan for the young person. The document will include:

- · a list of young person's skills, knowledge and abilities,
- · a list of young person's key weaknesses/development needs,
- · a list of young person's short- and long-term goals,
- an outline of young person's developmental objectives, what you need to do to reach your goals,
- a list of the strategies that a young person could use to achieve those objectives.

Methods

Interview, discussion, case management folder, specifically developed IDP format.

Possible challenges and alternative interventions

Challenge: Young person not open for discussion, sharing information regarding his/her skills, knowledge and abilities; weaknesses/development needs. **Intervention:** Possible support from school psychologist/person in charge of psychological assistance at a school.

Challenge: Not obtainable or/and unrealistic objectives, goals in the IDP; Challenges regarding young person's goals and developmental objectives. **Intervention:** Setting short term goals/objectives which help with achieving long-term goals/objectives; Always set the timing for completion.

Duration

Up to 3 hours

Step 7: Organize joint workshops with youth

Short description of step

This step is focused on direct capacity building and awareness raising of the young people on improving their life skills and employability competences. The youth will participate in joint events such as workshops since learning process is more productive in group. The subject will derive from the IDP of the young people, but focus will be given to communication skills among others.

Methods

Small group work, role plays, simulation games, positive examples and case studies.

Possible challenges and alternative interventions

Challenge: Lack of expertise of the career counselors for specific subjects.
Intervention: Identify local CSOs or associates to perform workshops for youth.

Duration

2-4 hours per workshop

Step 8: Identify labor market trends and self-reflection

Short description of step

Through this step the career counselor should be able to define progress of the young person and to reflect on the planned developments. This might be performed through individual meetings and group sessions depending on the compliance. The counselor and the young people will review the current requirements in the labor market based on the interests and capacities of the young people. Based on this, the counselor and the young person will adjust the IDP and will assess potential future education possibilities. The types of provided labor market information should be adapted to the needs of a young person and the capacity to understand it.

The above information should be related to:

- current labor market information (employment and earnings by sector, occupation, including the regional and local information),
- jobs postings (information on occupations and required skills, working conditions), information on recruitment process,
- education programmes and training courses information (descriptions of courses, entry requirements, financial issues, etc.),
- trends in skills skills needs, skills gaps current and future skill demands (including the regional and local information),
- career planning information (matching occupations, learning and training opportunities, etc.).

The used labor market information must be:

- accurate precise and correct,
- · complete in terms of coverage of sectors, regions, subjects,
- up to date information should include recent data, should be frequently updated,
- relevant to address the actual needs of a young person,
- reliable comes for reliable sources.

Methods

Material for individual career guiding sessions, such as: printed materials, digital material, Internet search.

Discussions and conversations, motivation speech by successful local businessperson, joint visits to local private companies.

Possible challenges and alternative interventions

Challenge: Young person might not be fully committed.

Intervention: Joint agreement with young person on these individual meetings sharing the aim of the meetings and schedule (online meetings possible).

Duration

1 hour per meeting.

Step 9: Mentorship and Tutoring to support learning process

Short description of step

At the beginning the young person can be assigned a mentor that will support the learning process of the young person through individual meetings (should the young person have learning difficulties). The counselor will create a core of students that are motivated to support possible early leavers.

The mentor will act as a positive role model, helping to overcome difficulties, manage their own learning and improve the learning outcomes. This should contribute towards preventing early school leaving. The mentor must avoid "patronizing" the young person. The mentor should create the right balance between supporting and challenging to move the young person forward.

The mentor / tutor should have the following characteristics:

- active listening,
- responding positively to students concerns and questions,
- use a range of questioning techniques,
- time to be able to focus on the young person during the meetings.

Methods

Joint Learning sessions, tutoring, discussions, joint reflections.

Possible challenges and alternative interventions

Challenge: The young person might not recognize the need for meeting with a mentor Intervention: The mentorship process might be included in the IDP

Duration

Depending on the content.

Step 10: Evaluation

Short description of step

The fundamental purpose of evaluation is to gather information. We consider this step of the model as a formative evaluation, so the goal is to evaluate an ongoing model and provide recommendations for improving it.

This step of the model is related to the effects of the implemented Face-to-Face Early Career Guidance - its goals and objectives.

The young person should clearly see if it was worth investing his/her time. In this phase participants should reflect and evaluate the whole process not only what they have learned, but also in this phase the participants should have a clear vision for their career pathway.

Methods

Group and individual sessions for reflection and evaluation of the process using different methods such as tests (pre- and post-tests), discussions, photo reflection and evaluation, etc.

Possible challenges and alternative interventions

Challenge: Lack of full commitment by youth.

Intervention: Create youth friendly, positive and informal environment.

Duration

Up to 4 hours



Project partners:













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