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ELGPN TOOLS

# Strengthening the Quality Assurance and Evidence-Base for Lifelong Guidance



EUROPEAN LIFELONG  
GUIDANCE POLICY  
NETWORK

# Strengthening the Quality Assurance and Evidence-base of Lifelong Guidance



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## Executive Summary

### Introduction

Across Europe, there is a new reality of transformative and emerging education, employment and enterprise policies linked to economic recovery and growth. There is also increasing evidence of various trends that are shaping the future of lifelong guidance, including jobs, skills and growth, with possible disruptions to these trends that could change the future of learning and work<sup>1</sup>. **The aim of ELGPN Tool No. 5 is to stimulate stakeholder discussion and action for the continuous improvement of lifelong guidance policies and practices, focusing on strengthening quality assurance and evidence-based policy systems development.**

The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) has a remit of assisting member countries and the European Commission in developing European co-operation on lifelong guidance in both education and employment sectors. Lifelong guid-

ance has been the subject of two Resolutions of the European Union (EU) Council in 2004<sup>2</sup> and 2008<sup>3</sup>. This is a cross-sectoral activity found in schools, colleges, vocational education and training (VET), adult education, higher education and public employment services (PES). It also supports unemployed workers and those in work, as well as those who are moving from country to country, or working towards retirement. Lifelong guidance therefore contributes to a wide range of different government policy aims covering interventions that help an individual to manage their progression in life, learning and work.

<sup>1</sup> Mc Kinsey Global Institute (2013) *Disruptive technologies: Advances that will transform life, business and the global economy*, May 2013 Visit: <http://visual.ly/mckinsey-global-institute-12-disruptive-technologies>

<sup>2</sup> European Commission (2004). Maastricht Communiqué on the Future Priorities of Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training (VET). (Review of the Copenhagen Declaration of 30 November 2002).

<sup>3</sup> European Commission (2008) *Council Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies*, Brussels: Council of the European Union 20th November 2008 Visit: [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/educ/104236.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/educ/104236.pdf)

## Effective quality-assurance and evidence-based policy systems

Investments made in lifelong guidance systems and services must demonstrate more clearly the added-value returns for individuals, communities and societies. The aim of an effective quality-assurance and evidence-based policy system is to improve efficiency in service provision, to increase financial accountability and to create transparency from the perspective of the citizen.

The ELGPN Quality Assurance and Evidence-Based Framework (2010-2015) offers a new pan-European mechanism that can be used by policy-makers and other interested parties to enhance quality and evidence-based approaches designed to extend the range and quality of evidence collected and utilised. Five key quality elements, criteria, indicators and examples of possible data have emerged from extensive ELGPN reviews of national, EU and international quality assurance and evidence-base frameworks,

including global professional standards (2010-2015). These key quality elements include: *Practitioner competence*; *Citizen/User involvement*; *Service provision and improvement*; *Cost benefits to governments*; and *Cost benefits to individuals*.

Each of the five elements should not be considered solely in isolation but should be taken as a group i.e. the whole is greater than the sum of the individual parts. By drawing upon these, it is possible to identify common language, to examine opportunities and challenges with a collective ambition for continuous improvement, in line with regional, national and European targets on education, employment, poverty and social exclusion.

## Strengthening Quality Assurance and the Evidence-Base

Table 1 below provides an overview of key questions designed to stimulate policy dialogue and to ensure

**Table 1.** Strengthening Quality Assurance and the Evidence-Base: key questions

Practitioner competence	Citizen/User involvement	Service provision and improvement	Cost benefits to governments	Cost benefits to individuals
What evidence is available on practitioner competences?	What strategies and approaches can be used to engage more citizens in lifelong guidance and in the shaping of guidance services?	What is needed to quality assure service provision and improvement?	What is the value-added proposition for Governments to invest in lifelong guidance?	What is the value-added proposition for individuals to invest in lifelong guidance?
What information is available on the qualifications and training of careers counsellors, guidance workers and/or work coaches?	What role should government and other key actors perform in relation to citizen/user involvement in lifelong guidance?	How can lifelong guidance services be improved and how can its impact be assessed?	How can impact assessment and cost benefits result in robust and useful quality-assurance and evidence-based policies and practices?	How can policy makers and organisations that employ career counsellors, work coaches and guidance workers best communicate the added-value benefits of lifelong guidance for individuals?
What more needs to be done to improve quality assurance and the evidence-base in the area of practitioner competence?	What more needs to be done to focus on citizen/user involvement in lifelong guidance?	What more needs to be done to improve lifelong guidance services for young people and adults?	What are the policy challenges and likely future demands requiring new forms of cost-benefit analysis?	What more needs to be done to develop and promote cost benefits and other added-value returns to individuals?

lifelong guidance is 'fit for purpose' and sustainable in the immediate, medium and longer-term. These are key questions are discussed more fully within the report, support by evidence of good and/or interesting practices from ELGPN members and partner organisations. They are designed to stimulate both dialogue and action.

### Practitioner competence

Evidence-based tools, in conjunction with professional judgement and scrutiny, are often used to inform policy and practice, including numbers and skill mix, that will ensure young people and adults have access to the right people, with the right skills, in the right place at the right time. There is evidence of practitioner competence featuring in legislation, licensing arrangements, quality standards, accreditation and/or registers of practitioners. Further examples are provided in the full report.

### Citizen/User involvement

The goal is to improve the experience for individuals, contribute to social justice, develop effective and efficient services and strengthen accountability. Diversity in communities and movement of people makes it a challenge to design inclusive, accessible and welcoming support structures for effective guidance interventions. Different approaches designed to address these issues are made available.

### Service provision and improvement

Service provision and improvement strategies draw together the three dimensions of face-to-face, contact

centres and distance approaches (internet, telephone, email). Alongside this procuring and providing career management skills (CMS), optimising the channel mix, skills profiling and effective matching are major policy imperatives. Access to quality-assured guidance is a public as well as a private good. Practical examples of new and emerging practices are discussed.

### Cost benefits to governments

As fiscal arrangements tighten, there will be even greater pressure from governments to justify expenditure on lifelong guidance services in relation to competing demands. There is an urgent imperative to make greater use of cost-benefit analysis/statistical modeling to help analyse the immediate, medium and long-term calculated savings to the public purse in the form of economic and/or social returns. New and innovative approaches to cost-benefit analysis are outlined in the report.

### Cost benefits individuals

New career development processes and interventions can smooth transitions that could otherwise be neglected or costly, such as school/college to work, switching jobs, or career changes including entry into active retirement. They can make learning provision more effective by ensuring that individuals are - and remain - motivated to learn because their chosen courses are firmly in line with their aspirations and personal development plans.

Finally, the evidence-base underpinning cost benefits to governments and individuals are both under-developed and merit further research.







## Introduction

The goal of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) is to assist Member States to develop policies, systems, and practices for lifelong guidance through European co-operation and mutual learning. Lifelong guidance has been the subject of two Resolutions of the European Union (EU) Council in 2004<sup>1</sup> and 2008<sup>2</sup>. The role and aims of the ELGPN were endorsed in the second European Union (EU) Council Resolution (2008). This defined lifelong guidance as:

*“a continuous process that enables citizens at any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions, and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which those capacities and competences are learned and/or used. Guidance covers a range of individual and collective activities relating to information-giving, counselling, competence assessment, support, and the teaching of decision-making and career management skills” (op.cit, p. 2)<sup>3</sup>.*

An effective lifelong guidance policy system enables:

*“citizens at any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which those capacities and competences are learned and/or used” (Council of the European Union, 2008)<sup>4</sup>.*

Lifelong guidance is a cross-sectoral activity found in schools, vocational education and training (VET), adult education, higher education, and public employment services (PES). It supports employed and unemployed workers, as well as those who are moving from country to country, or working towards retirement. It therefore contributes to a wide range of different policy aims covering interventions that help an individual to manage their progression in life, learning and work.

The Council Resolution (2008) confirmed the development of the quality assurance of guidance provision as one of four priorities for the implementation of an active guidance policy within national lifelong learning strategies. It also asked Member States and the Commission to consider whether more evidence-based policy should be developed at EU level. Investments made in lifelong guidance systems and services must demonstrate more clearly the added-value returns for individuals, communities and societies. The aims of a quality assurance system are to improve efficiency in service provision, to increase financial accountability and to create transparency from the perspective of the citizen.

In 2007 – 2012, the ELGPN together with representatives from the Commission, the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guid-

ance (IAEVG), the European Forum for Student Guidance (Fedora) (now merged with the European Association for International Education - EAIE), the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), the European Training Foundation (ETF), the European Parliament, the International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (ICCDPP), the Public Employment Services (PES) Network, the Euroguidance Network, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the European Youth Forum worked on key policy themes, including quality-assurance and evidence-based policy development in lifelong guidance. In 2010 ELGPN published a first Quality Assurance Framework<sup>5</sup>. This was further developed in the following years and a revised Quality Assurance and Evidence-base (QAE) Framework (2011-12) was published in the ELGPN Progress Report 2011-12<sup>6</sup>.

From 2013 - 2014, representatives from Hungary, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Luxembourg, Finland, France, Ireland, Slovenia, The Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Slovakia, Greece and Norway worked on the adaptation, field-testing and implementation of the ELGPN *Quality Assurance and Evidence-Base (QAE) Framework*, developed during previous ELGPN Work Programmes 2007-12. The work was further extended in 2014 -2015 through research, policy and practice contributions from all members of the ELGPN. See also: *ELGPN The Evidence-Base for Lifelong Guidance: A guide to key findings for effective policy and practice* (Hooley, 2014) and the *ELGPN Lifelong Guidance Policy Cycle* (p.24)<sup>7</sup>.

*The Guidelines for policies and systems development for lifelong guidance: A reference framework for the EU and the Commission (2015)*<sup>8</sup> provide specific EU guidelines on quality assurance, evidence, funding, practitioner training, and careers information for policies and systems for lifelong guidance in schools, vocational education and training (VET), higher education, adult education, public employment services (PES) and social inclusion. They should be read in conjunction with this QAE document. A new ELGPN Tool No. 4: *Designing and implementing policies related*

*to Career Management Skills (CMS)* (ELGPN, 2015) draws attention to the importance of a quality assurance and evidence base perspective in the teaching and learning of career management skills (CMS) and provides examples of good and interesting policies and practices in this regard.

**The aim of this ELGPN Tool No.5 is to stimulate stakeholder discussion and action for the continuous improvement of lifelong guidance policies and practices, focusing on strengthening quality assurance and evidence-based policy systems development.**

Data for this tool was collated from participating countries and EU partner organisations through:

- A series of consultations with 15 EU Member States to test, adapt, develop and implement the QAE Framework (2013-14). Further consultation, led by Ireland (IE) and Portugal (PT), included all ELGPN participants in 2014-2015.
- Two extensive rounds of data collection and face-to-face meetings on progress made in the application of the QAE Framework and draft Policy Dialogue Tool.
- Sectoral roundtable discussions during a plenary meeting held on 3 March 2015 in Riga, and subsequent feedback from participating countries and agencies.
- Reviews of publications on QAE policy issues and EU policy instruments such as the Council Resolutions and Recommendations.
- Knowledge gained from policy studies and reviews of lifelong guidance undertaken or commissioned by Cedefop, European Training Foundation and other international institutions.

There is a new reality of emerging education, employment and enterprise policies linked to recovery and growth. There is also increasing evidence of differing trends that are shaping the future of jobs, skills and growth, alongside possible disruptions to these trends that could change the future of learning and work<sup>9</sup>. Some of these new demands are provided below.

These may differ and change over time. For example:

- Technologies and disciplines will converge, giving rise to important innovations.
- Jobs and organisations will become increasingly fluid as people move from project to project.
- Demand from governments for individuals to take greater responsibility suggests the need for career management skills (CMS) including greater personal agility, resilience and the ability to adapt to and/or embrace change.
- New business and education eco-systems will emerge with co-partners and new forms of crowdsourcing.
- New forms of professional identity transformation and new career progression pathways are already emerging.

These emerging policies, trends and demands influence the environment in which lifelong guidance

policies and systems develop. What will success look like when it comes to effective quality assurance and evidence-based lifelong guidance policy and systems development in such an environment?

**The contents of this tool provide a starting point for the creation of a shared vision and action plan at an EU, Member State, regional and/or local level.**

## THE QAE FRAMEWORK

The QAE framework builds on earlier work on principles of guidance provision agreed by Member States in 2004-5 in *Improving lifelong guidance policies and systems: Using common European reference tools* (Cedefop 2005). The first drafts of the current framework were developed by ELGPN in 2009-12. Five key quality elements, criteria, indicators and examples of pos-



**Figure 1:** QAE Framework – Five Quality Elements

sible data emerged from extensive ELGPN reviews of national, EU and international quality assurance and evidence-base frameworks, including global professional standards. These key quality elements include:

- **Practitioner Competence**
- **Citizen/User Involvement**
- **Service Provision and Improvement**
- **Cost benefits to Governments**
- **Cost benefits Individuals.**

Each of the five elements should not be considered solely in isolation but should be taken as a group i.e. the whole is greater than the sum of the individual parts. By drawing upon these, it has been possible to identify common language and challenges as well as having a collective ambition for improvement of lifelong guidance policies and systems, in line with national and European 2020 targets on education, employment, poverty and social exclusion.

**How might this ELGPN Tool be used at national, regional, and local levels?**

- Stimulate policy dialogue at a national forum and for national development and dissemination plans.

- Inspire best practice to develop quality and evidence-based policy systems development and to measure performance.
- Reflect on criteria and indicators to make recommendations for improving current QAE arrangements.
- Focus on one or more quality and evidence-base theme.
- Develop and agree national criteria and indicators for key QAE elements.
- Collect evidence, evaluate outcomes and disseminate results to stakeholders.
- Host a quality and evidence-based policy seminar with key stakeholders.
- Draw upon key elements to inform new and evolving lifelong guidance study programmes e.g. Masters', Diploma and Certificate programmes.
- Compare the QAE Framework to the existing national system.
- Find out more about QAE developments in other countries.
- Use as a resource to get information, tools and new ideas.



## Practitioner competence

Practitioner competence as a means of assuring the quality of guidance provision was a key principle agreed by the Member States in 2005. Many organisations understand the positive impact that well-trained, suitably qualified and competent practitioners have on individuals' learning and work outcomes and on individuals' participation, performance and progression in learning and work and will make this part of their quality improvement strategy. Evidence-based tools, in conjunction with professional judgement and scrutiny, are used to inform organisation policy and practice requirements, including numbers and skill mix, that will ensure young people and adults have access to the right people, with the right skills, in the right place, and at the right time.

The Cedefop study of practitioner competences and qualification routes in Europe (2009)<sup>10</sup> makes explicit a definition of practitioner competence to include: (i) cognitive competence involving the use of theory and concepts, as well as informal tacit knowledge gained experientially; (ii) functional competence (skills or know-how), those things that a person should be able to do when they are functioning in a given area of work, learning or social activity; (iii) personal competence involving knowing how to conduct oneself in a specific situation; and (iv) ethical competence involving the possession of cer-

tain personal and professional values (p. 66). More generally, practitioner competence focuses on getting it right for more individuals to help them access and make good use of lifelong guidance provision.

There are at least five ways in which practitioner competences feature as part of quality assurance and evidence-based policies and practices in differing parts of Europe and further afield. These include features such as:

- **Legislation** e.g. Finland – qualification requirements of school guidance counsellors and vocational psychologists; Iceland – certification of the title “educational and vocational counsellor”; Poland – detailed minimum teacher-vocational counsellor qualifications; Slovakia – qualifications of career counsellors in the public employment services (PES); Switzerland – guidance professionals are obliged by law to inform their clients about career opportunities in the labour market and to point to current information about the career opportunities in the labour market on an internet platform<sup>11</sup>, and Austria – guidance and counselling embedded in all schools from the beginning of the lower secondary level<sup>12</sup>.
- **Licensing arrangements** e.g. Bulgaria – accreditation and licensing of activities in vocational

education and training (VET); Poland – the Ministry of Labour has a system of licenses for vocational counsellors employed in Labour Offices.

- **Quality Standards** e.g. Latvia has occupational standards for guidance counsellors; Portugal has specified higher education degree level standards and professional requirements, including techniques and strategies for diagnostic evaluation and guidance purposes; and The Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe (NICE) has supported the European higher education community to develop quality assurance and professionalism for the training of career guidance practitioners.
- **Accreditation** e.g. International Competencies for Educational and Vocational Guidance Practitioners (IAEVG): the EVGP Credential and accreditation of IAEVG approved courses and study programs<sup>13</sup>; The European Board of Certified Counsellors; the European Accreditation Scheme (EAS) for Careers Guidance Practitioners<sup>14</sup>; and the Quality Manual for Education and Vocational Counselling (MEVOC)<sup>15</sup>.
- **Register of Practitioners** e.g. Regulation by professional bodies linked to quality standards and licence or professional register developments such as those in Germany, the UK<sup>16</sup> and The Netherlands<sup>17</sup>.

The *ELGPN QAE Framework* (ELGPN 2012, pp.98) includes some examples of *criteria and indicators* as useful starting positions to inform quality assurance and evidence-based lifelong guidance policy and practice dialogue in differing sectors. They include :

**Criteria:**

- gathering intelligence on the evidence underpinning recognised qualifications and competences relevant to the careers sector;

- recruitment practices by service providers according to a recognised professional competence profile;
- engagement in continuing professional development (CPD); and/or
- membership of careers professional associations.

**Indicators:**

- qualification levels and career sector requirements;
- CPD hours undertaken in 1 year;
- numbers of qualified and unqualified practitioners in the careers sector workforce;
- days/hours per guidance practitioner spent in continuous further training and lifelong guidance activities;
- percentage signed up to a professional code of ethics; and/or
- membership of careers professional associations.

Examples of these and possible data sampling are provided within the *ELGPN Resource Kit – Annex D* (op.cit). These are designed to be customised and expanded in order to meet country specific needs.

Building upon this, policy-makers and other stakeholders are encouraged to reflect upon three key questions:

1. *What evidence is available on practitioner competences?*
2. *What information is available on the qualifications and training of careers counsellors, work coaches and guidance workers?*
3. *What more needs to be done to improve quality assurance and the evidence-base in the area of practitioner competences?*

## What evidence is available on practitioner competences?

A Leonardo Da Vinci report on transparent competences in Europe<sup>18</sup> highlights examples of countries that have put in place a **national system** driven by Government departments – these include the UK, Ireland, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Portugal. For countries operating a **federal system** of governance, the state or regional approach to competency development and management has been adopted in Germany, Italy and Belgium. Other countries such as France operate a more **sectoral approach** with the responsibility for indicators of competence led by vocational training organisations, sectoral collectors of a training levy or professional bodies. In Germany we find a mixture of federal and sectoral approaches depending on the different sectors – regional government is responsible for guidance in schools and higher education; the National Public Employment

Service is responsible for guidance in PES. In all of these countries, at an **organisational level** there are competency frameworks informing policies and practices in public, private and voluntary/community sectors.

A wide range of practitioner competence profiles and frameworks are available, as discussed below. The *ELGPN Concept Note 7*<sup>19</sup> outlines ways of addressing career guidance in teacher education and/or training. Some further selected examples include: -

- The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop, 2009) *‘Professionalising Career Guidance: practitioner competences and qualification routes in Europe’*. This report analysed the competencies, knowledge and qualifications acquired by career guidance practitioners through professional training available across Europe. It focused on pre-service, induction and continuing training, as well as preparation for the distinctive roles practitioners’ play in diverse work contexts, such as schools, employment services and higher education. Based on the analysis of existing competence frameworks, theoretical references and case-study analysis, the study developed a ‘Competence Framework for Career Guidance Practitioners’. The contents are divided into: foundation, client-interaction and supporting competencies. This study and the competence framework have provided continuous inspiration for policy and research in this area (e.g. European Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling framework and PES-to-PES Dialogue). The Cedefop framework was validated by national policy and practice representatives. Visit: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/5193>
- The PES-to-PES Dialogue, European Commission Mutual Learning Programme for Public Employment Services, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (July 2014) *European reference competence profile for PES and EURES counsellors*<sup>20</sup>. The content includes: Foundational competences (general practitioner values and skills); Client interaction competences (working with clients); and Supporting competencies (systems and technical competences). Visit: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=14100&langId=en>
- The European Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling (NICE), an academic network of 40 higher education institutions in 28 European countries (funded by the EC Lifelong Learning programme), has recently produced a detailed NICE Handbook (2014)<sup>21</sup>. This sets out a common understanding of the professional function and the central roles of career guidance and counselling professionals; a competence framework with a nucleus of core competences; a competence-based curriculum framework of learning outcomes relevant for the training of career guidance and counselling professionals; and a common theoretical



framework for the development of degree programmes in career guidance and counselling. Visit: [http://www.nice-network.eu/fileadmin/erasmus/inhalte/dokumente/NICE\\_Summit\\_Canterbury/NICE\\_Summit\\_Materials\\_Online-version.pdf](http://www.nice-network.eu/fileadmin/erasmus/inhalte/dokumente/NICE_Summit_Canterbury/NICE_Summit_Materials_Online-version.pdf)

- The International Competencies for Educational and Vocational Guidance Practitioners (IAEVG, 2003)<sup>22</sup> describes the competencies needed for people providing educational and vocational guidance services in different work settings in different countries and proposes recommendations for training programs. Visit: - <http://www.iaevg.org/IAEVG/index.cfm?lang=2>

Selected country specific examples of practitioner competence frameworks include:

- A Competency Framework for Guidance Practitioners' (National Guidance Forum, 2007). This was designed to influence the professional education and training of practitioners who provide guidance across the life cycle. Visit Ireland: <http://www.nationalguidanceforum.ie>
- A Continuing Training Framework for school psychologists' endorsed by the Directorate General of Education. This training programme is also formally recognised by the Order of Psychologists. Visit Portugal: [http://www.dge.mec.pt/data/dgicd/Educacao%20Especial/noticia\\_formacao\\_2014.docx](http://www.dge.mec.pt/data/dgicd/Educacao%20Especial/noticia_formacao_2014.docx).
- A set of cross-sectoral Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Guidance in Slovenia are formally endorsed by the National Co-ordination Group for Guidance responsible for dissemination across all sectors<sup>23</sup>. Visit Slovenia: [http://www.ess.gov.si/o\\_zrsz/projekti\\_zavoda/nkt/standardi\\_kakovosti](http://www.ess.gov.si/o_zrsz/projekti_zavoda/nkt/standardi_kakovosti)
- A competence profile for guidance practitioners, as part of the BeQu Concept for Guidance Quality, developed in the Open Process of Co-ordination for Quality Development. This was co-ordinated by the German National Guidance Forum in Education, Career and Employment in co-operation with the University of Heidelberg, funded by the Federal Ministry for Education and Research. Visit Germany: <http://www.beratungsqualitaet.net>
- An 'Occupational Profile of Career Guidance Counsellor' and module-based training framework published by the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) in Greece. Both will form the basis for the legal establishment of a system of accreditation for career guidance counsellors and a national professional register. Visit Greece<sup>24</sup>: <http://verkkolehdet.jamk.fi/elo/2014/05/05/professionalizing-and-upgrading-career-guidance-in-greece/> and [http://www.eoppep.gr/images/SYEP/eoppep\\_triptixo.pdf](http://www.eoppep.gr/images/SYEP/eoppep_triptixo.pdf)
- A Civil Service Human Resources: Civil Service Competency Framework (England and Wales, 2012-2017) sets out how practitioners and managers in public employment services will be assessed. Visit England and Wales: <http://resources.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Civil-Service-Competency-Framework-Jan2013.pdf>
- An ERASMUS funded project in Slovakia on the 'Development and Implementation of Common Bachelor's Degree Programme in the European Context (DICBDPEC)' focuses on post-graduate study for careers counsellors using information, communications technologies (ICT). The project sets out guidance requirements, underpinned by a competence framework, supported by learning outcomes. Visit Slovakia: <http://www.ies.stuba.sk/erasmus>

Other examples of good and/or interesting policies and practices include:

- The Netherlands has combined the *ELGPN QAE Framework* and NICE Handbook. A profile of different roles and levels of practitioner competence in Dutch secondary schools has

been created. Visit The Netherlands: [www.euro-guidance.nl](http://www.euro-guidance.nl)

- Norway has used the *ELGPN QAE Framework* and QAE Template to inform the development of a new Masters' programme in Guidance and Counselling. Visit Norway: <https://www.hbv.no/master-i-karriereveiledning/category9442.html> and <http://www.hil.no/studiekatalog/karriereveiledning2>
- Malta has set quality assurance indicators for all educators and these are audited both internally and externally. This approach to quality assurance and evidence-based practice is carried out in all schools. The assessment of career guidance takes place informally through regular feedback and evaluation exercises by the Department of Student Services and State Colleges. A new career guidance professional association has recently been established. Visit Malta: <http://www.mcga.org.mt>
- Further afield, countries such as Canada<sup>25</sup>, Australia<sup>26</sup> and the USA<sup>27</sup> have tried and tested practitioner competency frameworks.

Across Europe, professionals are working alongside many other intermediaries such as teachers, career coaches, mentors, careers advisers, enterprise advisers, employers/employees etc. in public, private and voluntary community sectors. There is no shortage of practitioner competence frameworks to draw upon for shared professional development. Yet, the enhancement of practitioner competences linked to teaching career management skills (CMS) for citizens remains under-developed, as discussed more fully in *Designing and implementing Career Management Skills (CMS)* (ELGPN, 2015).

There are also other policy and practice challenges, as identified for example in Denmark i.e. practitioner competences in the field of collective and group-based guidance need to be developed in response to new legislation in the field of lifelong guidance:

“New supplementary competences must be developed as part of an ongoing process involving researchers and practitioners. This requires new models/methodologies to supplement existing practice and an evidence-base for collective guidance activities in order to produce a relevant toolbox for practitioners” (ELGPN representative, Denmark, 2015).

A further challenge to be addressed is the extent to which practitioner competences are keeping up with digital advancements and labour market intelligence and information relevant to clients' needs. Also, further work is needed on evaluating the outcomes from different forms of guidance and counseling interventions to inform policy dialogue on the added-value contributions and cost-benefits of lifelong guidance.

### What information is available on the qualifications and training of careers counsellors, guidance workers and/or work coaches?

Across Europe, the range and depth of information available on the qualifications and training of careers counsellors, work coaches and guidance workers varies. The findings below build upon and extend Cedefop's earlier research findings (2009). Some examples include:

- Hungary has adopted, and further extended, a five-level model related to practitioner competences. It is also benchmarking Hungarian academic programmes to the NICE competence framework (NICE, 2015).
- Ireland, Germany and Lithuania have focused mainly on a sectoral approach. For example, guidance counsellors in the education sector in Ireland are required to hold a Department of Education and Skills' recognised University post-graduate qualification in guidance counselling. In 2014, the Department began the process of updating the course recognition framework on

the competences and qualifications required for employment in the education sector.

- In Germany the Federal Employment Agency, runs its own University of Applied Labour Studies (Hochschule der Bundesagentur für Arbeit, HdBA) with a three-year multi-disciplinary Bachelor programme for career counsellors and a forthcoming master's programme. These link theory to practice in the local Employment Agencies. In addition, there are numerous in-house training courses and further education for staff in local Agencies and Job Centres. In higher education, student counsellors, as a minimum, usually have a Master's degree in an academic subject. With the establishment of special municipal guidance services, the demand for professional training has increased.
- The Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science with the support of political advisers played a key role in developing a CMS-related policy. As a result of the co-operation of experts, researchers, practitioners and service providers, a set of CMS-related legal acts and methodology were developed, including a career education programme for Secondary and VET schools. The programme includes a matrix of career competences for practitioners.
- Estonia has developed several tools to assure quality in the education and labour sectors for career management skills (CMS) training, guidance service provision, practitioner competence and ethics. In 2006 and 2011, two major national studies were undertaken by INNOVE to build the evidence-base for enhanced practitioner competence. Visit Estonia: <http://www.innove.ee/en/lifelong-guidance/surveys>.
- The Netherlands' Ministry of Education has supported careers education and guidance projects in secondary education and vocational education and training (VET). A key element within these projects is the training of teachers to become career coaches.
- Austria has established a train the trainers'

course for career guidance co-ordinators in schools, to raise the profile and application of career management skills, embedding this within initial teacher training. The IBOBB concept paper states that teachers should be able to provide appropriate career and life choice advice to pupils<sup>28</sup>. Refer also to the *ELGPN Concept Note 7*.

- Greece has developed a National Quality Assurance System of Guidance Services and has implemented Sector Studies & Self-Evaluation Guidelines for guidance practitioners. A Greek Code of Ethics for Guidance Provision has been developed by EOPPEP. Several up-skilling activities targeted at Guidance Practitioners (seminars, publications, tools etc.) are also organised by EOPPEP on an annual basis.
- Public Employment Services across Europe have structured mechanisms in place to develop PES and EURES advisors' competences (op cit)<sup>29</sup>.

Clearly, practitioner competence is a topical issue.

This leads to the following question:

### **What more needs to be done to improve quality assurance and the evidence-base in the area of practitioner competences?**

The skills, training and dispositions of the practitioners who deliver lifelong guidance are critical to ensuring quality and extending the evidence-base for lifelong guidance. Having up-to-date knowledge of and expertise in education and labour markets are key competences - refer to: *ELGPN QAE Framework, p.101*<sup>30</sup>. At an EU level, there is scope to monitor such developments as part of policy strategies to improve learning, employment, and productivity outcomes for both young people and adults.

A recurring theme in the evidence-base is that 'the success of guidance processes is strongly influenced by the initial training, continuing professional development, competencies and personal capacities of the

professionals that deliver it'<sup>31</sup> The *ELGPN Evidence-Base Handbook* highlights implications for ensuring efficacy (Hooley, pp. 58 - 60). Ten evidence-based principles for the design of lifelong guidance services are outlined in section 7: Table 2 (ibid. p.56). Linked to this, good/interesting policies and practices usually incorporate some form of mentoring and/or peer-to-peer supervision/inter-vision<sup>32</sup>.

There are many practitioner frameworks and profiles available. These are voluntary in most countries and compulsory only in a few countries or sectors. The frameworks are context bound and apply to different guidance practitioner roles in different countries. The large variety of existing frameworks and profiles is quite confusing for policy makers and may prevent them from establishing appropriate policy measures. The simple five element QAE framework enables cross-referencing with other existing frameworks.

Examples of what more needs to be done are outlined more fully in the *ELGPN Resource Kit* (ELGPN, 2014) and *ELGPN The Evidence-Base for Lifelong Guidance: A guide to key findings for effective policy and practice* (Hooley, 2014). These include:

- The identification of policy levers to ensure practitioner competence and capability in particular the use of information, communications technologies (ICT) (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, p. 49).
- The need for guidance and counselling practitioners to demonstrate a level of proficiency in internet-based technologies to demonstrate credibility with individuals accessing their expertise. This has implications for embedding ICT skills and competencies as central in both initial, work-based, and off-the-job training<sup>33</sup>.
- The strategic role and responsibility of Governments in shaping (or reshaping) the structure, form and function of the lifelong guidance workforce (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, p. 50).
- The policy decisions needed to widen access to CMS provision and the staff training implications associated with this (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, p.23).
- The review of pedagogical/andragogical strategies and resources needed to facilitate and support career management competences and assessment (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, p. 23).
- The use of customer feedback, the observation of outcomes and practitioners' use of the wider evidence-base (*ELGPN Evidence-Base Handbook*, p. 58).
- The enhancement and support for more possibilities to use supervision, inter-vision and peer learning to reflect one's own professional behaviour (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, p.64).





## Citizen/user involvement

The involvement of citizens/users in the quality assurance of guidance provision was a key principle agreed by the Member States in 2005. This reflected public service reform across Europe<sup>34</sup> particularly focusing on improving both access to services and the quality of a citizen's experiences of such services. New and differing approaches are being used by governments to help increase individual responsibility, empower more individuals to make better choices and get better deals.<sup>35</sup> The ELGPN citizen/user approach recognises diversity and inclusivity, by engaging with a variety of people and groups within local communities and involving them in making decisions about the relevance and quality of lifelong guidance policies and practices. The goals are to improve the experience for individuals, contribute to social justice, develop effective and efficient services and strengthen accountability.

Citizen/user involvement focuses on the individual and his/her ease of access to relevant services and products, levels of satisfaction and participation in both planning and programming of activities and in evaluation of the service. The *ELGPN QAE Framework* (p.99 - 100)<sup>36</sup> includes examples

of *criteria and indicators* as useful starting points to inform quality assurance and evidence-based lifelong guidance policy and practice dialogue. They include:

### Criteria:

- ease of access to relevant services and products;
- client satisfaction with services provided;
- participation of users in planning and programming of service's activities and action plan, self and external evaluation of the service;
- learning and applying career management skills (CMS);
- quality management system(s), appropriate ICT tools and software;
- level of investment in labour market resources and staff training.

### Indicators:

- actual numbers of users accessing the services and their demographics;
- diversity and equality of provision;
- number of citizens from socially vulnerable groups visiting the career guidance services (people with disabilities, immigrants etc.).

- staff to client ratio;
- costs per intervention;
- measures of client satisfaction; percentage of user involvement in governance and planning.

Examples of these and possible data sampling are provided within the *ELGPN Resource Kit – Annex D*. These should be customised and expanded to meet country specific needs.

The *ELGPN Evidence-base Handbook* provides a useful starting point to broadly reflect on guidance and counseling policies and practices, in particular the extent to which citizen/user involvement is built into lifelong guidance programmes. It poses the question:

“Do lifelong guidance programmes make a difference to the careers of individuals? For example, can they increase individuals’ aspirations or their chances of progressing?” (p.13)

Europe is currently experiencing the twin processes of increased longevity and falling fertility (ELGPN, Resource Kit, 2012, p.50). Career management skills applied both in learning and work are highly relevant in this regard (See: *ELGPN Concept Note 3*)<sup>37</sup>. During the last 20 years the European landscape on vocational education and training has reinforced the importance of work-based learning, at least partly as a consequence of European policy initiatives (See: *ELGPN Concept Note 5, p.12*). How to engage citizens in apprenticeships, traineeships and other forms of work-based learning is a major policy imperative. Early School Leaving (ESL) and Youth Employment also present key policy challenges (See: *ELGPN Concept Notes 2,4 & 6*)<sup>38</sup>.

Those who design citizen/user involvement in the governance, planning and delivery of public sector services need to be clear about their intended objectives. Advocates of citizen/user involvement highlight three main objectives to:

- *improve the design and responsiveness of services:* to improve outcomes such as social inclusion, social mobility, equality, and/or service added-value and impact;
- *create links between communities and providers, and between different communities;* this builds social capital and improves social cohesion, i.e. it improves networks, understanding and participation;
- *increase the quality of user engagement and the legitimacy and accountability of institutions and partnerships;* this builds trust and encourages civic participation.

Barriers relating to culture, language, organisational structures, management, and a lack of information can make it difficult for individuals and/or groups to feel valued and effective. This is a major challenge for policy-makers, managers and practitioners: something they have to tackle and overcome. Mobility, migration, and changes in employment patterns mean that neighborhoods often contain varied demographic groups with different origins and interests. Diversity in communities and movement of people makes it a challenge to design inclusive, accessible and welcoming support structures for effective guidance interventions. It cannot be assumed that shared identities or interests mirror shared characteristics such as age, ethnicity and/or gender.

Several case studies within the *ELGPN European Resource Kit* (2014) demonstrate there is a growing trend towards a stronger personalisation of services, especially to cater for the information, counselling and learning needs of: more hard-to-reach groups, such as young people at risk (e.g. early school leavers); the long-term unemployed; older workers (50+); disabled people; and employees/workers in restructuring industries/companies, as well as ethnic and cultural minorities (ibid., p.46).

Policy-makers and other interested stakeholders are encouraged to reflect upon three key questions:

1. *What strategies and approaches can be used to engage more citizens in lifelong guidance and in the shaping of guidance services?*
2. *What role should government and other key actors perform in relation to citizen/user involvement in lifelong guidance?*
3. *What more needs to be done to focus on citizen/user involvement in lifelong guidance?*

### What strategies and approaches can be used to engage more citizens in lifelong guidance quality assurance and evidence collection?

Findings from the *ELGPN Early School Leaving* (Concept Note No. 6)<sup>39</sup> highlight over forty initiatives that seek to engage young people, parents, teachers, careers counsellors, work coaches and/or guidance workers in meaningful dialogue and action to address school dropout, interrupted learning and those not in education, employment and/or training (NEET). In addition:

- Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden have together focused on lifelong learning and adult guidance through a group of researchers investigating if and how adult users of guidance have an impact on the services provided, as well as comparing user involvement in adult guidance. This led to an evaluation of the learning outcomes of guidance for adults in the Nordic countries from those that seek guidance in adult learning centres. Suggestions on how to involve citizens in lifelong guidance are provided (*ELGPN Evidence Handbook*, p.28)<sup>40</sup>
- Ireland, through the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE), has systematically gathered intelligence on client feedback from a major Adult Educational Guidance Initiative. Visit: Ireland <http://www.ncge.ie/further-education/aegi-advisory-group/>
- Estonia, through INNOVE, has conducted an evaluation of Estonian Career Centres in 2011 and 2012, resulting in data collected from service users one month after they had interacted with the service. It found positive impacts from both individual and group counseling<sup>41</sup> INNOVE is using the *ELGPN QAE Framework* to focus specifically on citizen/user involvement. This will help inform future evaluations at a national and regional level, linking this into a national Concept Paper: 2014 - 2020. Visit Estonia: <http://www.innove.ee/en/lifelong-guidance>
- In Germany, 'IQ NETZWERK' provides guidance services for migrants proactively involving representatives in the planning and development of service provision and collaboration with community-based migrant organisations to facilitate improved access. Visit Germany: [http://www.netzwerk-iq.de/netzwerk-iq\\_start.html](http://www.netzwerk-iq.de/netzwerk-iq_start.html)
- Switzerland has established strong co-operation between parents and schools intensifying the contact and conversation with parents from migrant backgrounds. Visit Switzerland: [www.berufsberatung.ch](http://www.berufsberatung.ch)
- In Greece, the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) has an interactive internet-guidance portal (2012), comprising several tools that support the self-awareness, positive perception, e-portfolio development and career management skills of adolescents, and of adults. This also includes citizen involvement in quality assurance. Visit Greece: [www.eoppep.gr/teens](http://www.eoppep.gr/teens) The Lifelong Career Development Portal, includes self-evaluating Also, visit: <http://e-stadiodromia.eoppep.gr>
- Spain has developed a national strategy for Entrepreneurship and Youth Employment (2013-2016) to support dialogue with entrepreneurs and stimulate growth and job creation. Visit Spain: [www.sepe.es/contenidos/autonomos/index.html](http://www.sepe.es/contenidos/autonomos/index.html)



- In Austria the 'Education Counselling Austria' programme has 40 institutions reporting their counselling contacts to the *öibf*. Data is merged by the *öibf* into a meta-analysis documentation system to inform quarterly and annual reports on citizen/user feedback. Visit Austria: [http://erwachsenenbildung.at/downloads/service/BIB\\_Jahresauswertung\\_2013\\_Gesamt\\_27\\_8\\_2014\\_FINAL.pdf](http://erwachsenenbildung.at/downloads/service/BIB_Jahresauswertung_2013_Gesamt_27_8_2014_FINAL.pdf)

work programmes for all young people and adults

- **Make effective use of evidence-base data** for further investment in the development and improvement of lifelong guidance.

Building a quality-assured and evidence-based systems policy development approach in lifelong guidance should contribute further to policy dialogue between government and other key stakeholders.

### What role should government and other key actors perform in relation to citizen/user involvement in lifelong guidance?

Government support for citizen/user involvement in lifelong guidance quality assurance and evidence collection, including the application of career management skills (CMS), is embedded in differing policies and practices at all levels. *See: ELGPN CMS Framework.*<sup>42</sup> Major shifts are taking place e.g. moves away from major investments in central Government-led marketing and promotion campaigns; within some countries more devolved responsibilities given to local municipals, employer bodies and other key stakeholders. Therefore, the extent to which Government(s) and other key actors should share responsibility for some, or all of these activities below is contested territory:

- **Advertise and market** lifelong guidance provision
- **Provide incentives**, to help activate lifelong learning e.g. vouchers, new legislation
- **Involve representatives of citizens/users** in governance, planning, development and evaluation of services, programmes, projects and/or products
- **Promote and seek to embed career management skills (CMS)** within initial and continuing teacher training in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary levels
- **Intensify career dialogue** in learning and

This leads to the following question:

### What more needs to be done to focus on citizen/user involvement in lifelong guidance?

Lifelong guidance quality assurance and evidence collection is most effective where it recognises the diversity of individuals, involves them in service design and delivery and relates services to individual needs. The *ELGPN Evidence-Base Handbook (Hooley, 2014)* highlights that lifelong guidance needs to focus on the individual, be holistic and well-integrated into other support services (pp.56 & 57). Ten evidence-based principles for the design of lifelong guidance services are outlined in section 7: Table 2 (*ibid.*, p.56)<sup>43</sup>.

In Ireland, the National Guidance Forum (NGF) has focused on the voice of the user exploring ways of involving young people and incorporating their views and feedback in guidance service planning. Visit: <http://www.ncge.ie/about-us/national-forum-on-guidance-2013-14>

The Federal Employment Service in Germany has established nationwide a continuous customer complaint management system as well as annual customer satisfaction surveys to assess and improve service quality<sup>44</sup>.

Some further examples of what more needs to be done to focus on citizen/user involvement now and in the future include:

- The need for greater citizen awareness' raising of the added-benefits of investing in lifelong guidance<sup>45</sup>.
- Socially and culturally sensitive ways and means to reach out to people at risk and minority groups to include them in the use and benefit of guidance services and to strengthen their participation in designing and shaping guidance services according to their needs (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, 2012 p.37).
- Consumer awareness of quality-assured kite-marked provision, particularly in unregulated markets, to be assured of high-quality services and reassured that their individual needs and interests will not be exploited by 'rogue traders' (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, 2012 p.51).
- Making connections to the world of work and the involvement of employers and working people helps to inform programmes and inspire clients. (*ELGPN Evidence-base Handbook*, p.57).
- Career management skills information to be more readily available both online and offline for young people and adults
- More citizens to be involved in quality assurance and contributing to the evidence-base for lifelong guidance.
- Closer scrutiny of the dimensions of gender, ethnicity, disability and age respectively in order to capture more meaningful data and to find ways of engaging these individuals.





## Service provision and improvement

The need for guidance services to have a culture of continuous improvement was noted in the key principles of guidance provision agreed by the Member States in 2005. Access to quality-assured guidance is a public as well as a private good. Government is recognised as having an important role not only as a provider but also in stimulating the wider market in guidance and ensuring that it is quality assured. Every country is unique in their infrastructures and cultures for careers resources and service delivery. However, the eight key features of access (coherence and consistency, channelling, differentiation, penetration, targeting, marketing and co-creating) are a constant policy and implementation challenge for widening access for all (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, p.35).

The *ELGPN QAE Framework* (ibid. pp.100-101) includes examples of service improvement *criteria and indicators* as useful starting points to inform quality assurance and evidence-based lifelong guidance policy and practice dialogue.

### Criteria:

- learning and application of career management skills (CMS);

- quality management systems (QMS);
- appropriate and user friendly ICT tools and software;
- staff competence: up-to-date and impartial knowledge of, and expertise in, education and labour markets;
- coherence between different existing ICT tools and labour market information, resources and training; and
- profiling the characteristics of service user groups linked to policy target groups.

### Indicators:

- learning outcomes related to all aspects of CMS;
- evidence of Quality Management System (QMS) to an agreed national common standard;
- level of financial investment in ICT equipment and software;
- level of investment in independent and impartial labour market information<sup>46</sup> and training; and level of staff training.

Examples of these and possible data sampling are provided within the *ELGPN Resource Kit – Annex D*. They are designed to be customised and expanded in order to meet country specific needs.

Across Europe, lifelong guidance is a key component of lifelong learning strategies – nationally, regionally and locally, as well as at EU level (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, 2012 p. 65). Emerging policy objectives are constantly transforming the design, development and investment in lifelong guidance service provision for all young people and adults, including those with special educational needs (SEN), those in alternative provision and those in pupil referral units (PRUs) and those Not in Education, Employment and/or Training (NEETs). Key policy themes in lifelong guidance service provision include:

- Differentiated service delivery arrangements, including a rebalancing face-to-face, web-based and telephone helpline services.
- Pluralist education and employment services involving a public, private and voluntary sector mix has, in many cases, become a reality alongside quality-assured models and approaches. A plethora of new market players and cross-sector partnerships involving public, private and third sectors are impacting upon traditional services. This trend is not unique, with the OECD (2010)<sup>47</sup> reporting that many governments are increasingly using private and non-profit entities to provide goods and services to citizens.
- The financial solidarity on which publicly funded services are based, and the political consensus needed to sustain and improve lifelong guidance service provision.
- The role of national guidance forums for dialogue, consultation, policy and systems development (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, 2012 p. 66).

In the *ELGPN Resource Kit* (ELGPN, 2012) the purpose of quality assurance is described as follows: “The aims of a quality-assurance system and mechanism are to improve efficiency in service provision, to increase

*institutional financial accountability and to create transparency from the perspective of the citizen” (p.50)*. It is important to note that ‘even where guidance services are located *within* sectors (as they often are), they are concerned with helping individuals to move across sectors’ (p11).

Policy-makers and other interested stakeholders are encouraged to reflect upon three key questions:

1. *What is needed to quality assure service provision and improvement?*
2. *How can lifelong guidance services be improved? How should the impact of lifelong guidance policies be assessed?*
3. *What more needs to be done to improve lifelong guidance services for young people and adults?*

## What is needed to quality assure service provision and improvement?

Over the last decade those working in lifelong guidance have seen many changes in the way services are designed and delivered. These services continue to adapt and to respond to advances in technology and global developments impacting on individuals’ needs and expectations. Change and adaptation is an everyday occurrence in modern careers provision– without this, services would be failing. For example, a by-product of organisational restructuring in Public Employment Services (PES) is a change in how human resources are deployed to various roles. Whilst some Public Employment Services are witnessing decreased staff levels, around a quarter of Public Employment Services report increasing human resources involved in client facing roles which is part of the general reorientation of Public Employment Services focus toward service provision<sup>48</sup>.

The investment and impact on service provision and improvement strategies at a national, regional and/or local level are often exacerbated by shrinkages or stagnation in public sector resources. There is an urgent imperative in all countries to:

- Secure an appropriate balance between providing core services to all (avoiding 'marginalising the mainstream') and targeting intensive services to those who need them most<sup>49</sup>
- Improve knowledge and understanding of effective-quality-assurance systems and accountability frameworks<sup>50</sup>
- Involve more employers and working people, and provide active experiences of workplaces<sup>51</sup>
- Develop career management skills (CMS) frameworks, integrated within a core national curriculum designed to improve learner destinations and outcomes<sup>52</sup>
- Utilise new technologies to reach out to the masses, making use of local labour market intelligence (LMI) and offering more personalised careers services and products<sup>53</sup>
- Promote access, equity and quality standards embedded in public sector programmes, including outsourcing and other government contracting arrangements<sup>54</sup>

The OECD (2004)<sup>55</sup> suggests that allowing a diverse range of services to be provided throughout the lifespan within one organisational framework is potentially more cost-effective, avoiding unnecessary duplication of resources. Alongside this, 'consumer voices and trust in the quality of lifelong guidance services are vital for government investment now and in the future' (*ELGPN, Evidence-Base Handbook*, 2014, p.29)<sup>56</sup> Both of these approaches require a clear understanding of the evidence-base for lifelong guidance in order to ensure service design, delivery, and improvement of high-quality provision for both young people and adults.

Some models of strategies for strengthening service design, delivery, and improvement including good and/or interesting policies and practices are identified below:

- Finland has a strong track record in the professionalisation of a career development workforce. All comprehensive schools have at least

one full-time equivalent counsellor, who has normally five years' training as a teacher, plus teaching experience, followed by one-year specialists training<sup>57</sup>. Visit Finland: [http://cimo.fi/instancedata/prime\\_product\\_julkaisu/cimo/embeds/cimowwwstructure/26710\\_Lifelong\\_Guidance\\_in\\_Finland\\_booklet.pdf](http://cimo.fi/instancedata/prime_product_julkaisu/cimo/embeds/cimowwwstructure/26710_Lifelong_Guidance_in_Finland_booklet.pdf)

- Estonia has produced three quality manuals that contain ideas and resources on how to ensure the quality of careers education in schools, linking pedagogical principles to lifelong guidance, undertaking quality assessment reviews and understanding the management and delivery of careers services. Visit Estonia: <http://www.innove.ee/en>
- Sweden's National Agency for Education has produced guidelines on relevant national legal, statutory and non-statutory requirements. Visit Sweden: - [http://www.skolverket.se/om-skolverket/publikationer/visa-enskild-publikation?\\_xurl\\_=http%3A%2F%2Fwww5.skolverket.se%2Fwtpub%2Fws%2Fskolbok%2Fwtpubext%2Ftrycksak%2FRecord%3Fk%3D3143](http://www.skolverket.se/om-skolverket/publikationer/visa-enskild-publikation?_xurl_=http%3A%2F%2Fwww5.skolverket.se%2Fwtpub%2Fws%2Fskolbok%2Fwtpubext%2Ftrycksak%2FRecord%3Fk%3D3143)
- Germany has developed a quality concept for educational and vocational guidance in a bottom-up process organised by the National Guidance Forum that includes commonly accepted quality standards, a competence profile for guidance practitioners and a quality development framework to support guidance providers in their quality development both for professionals and the organisations they work in. Visit Germany: <http://www.beratungsqualitaet.net/startseite/index.html> - Also, a newly established Service Hotline for continuous education run by the Federal Ministry of Education is currently evaluated. Visit: <http://www.bmbf.de/de/derweiterbildungsratgeber.php>
- Ireland has developed a continuing professional development (CPD) programme for guidance counsellors and practitioners in schools and adult guidance services. In 2014, the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) car-

ried out a training needs analysis of guidance counsellors in schools. Guidelines for school and adult guidance provision are provided through specific web-based handbooks, supported by the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE). Visit Ireland: <http://www.ncge.ie>

- England has published a Business, Innovation & Skills commissioned report 'An evaluation of the effectiveness of the matrix standard'. Visit England: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/406654/bis-15-1-evaluation-of-the-effectiveness-of-the-matrix-standard.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/406654/bis-15-1-evaluation-of-the-effectiveness-of-the-matrix-standard.pdf)
- Greece has applied the QAE Framework and using this as an effective auditing tool to identify gaps in service provision and improvement that can be discussed and shared with various stakeholders at a national, regional and local level. Visit Greece: <http://www.eoppep.gr/index.php/el/work-guidance-and-consulting/eoppep-upgrade-actions/syep-quality>. Also the National Framework for Quality Assurance of Life Long Learning (P3) which incorporates several ELGPN QAE indicators will be legally established in 2015.
- The Netherlands has taken this quality element and used it to identify opportunities and challenges in service provision and improvement strategies working closely with Euroguidance. Visit The Netherlands: <http://www.euroguidance.nl>
- Portugal has a Work Plan for Guidance Services in Schools, approved by the Secretary of State, including activities to improve the quality of guidance interventions; training; and peer learning<sup>58</sup>. Visit Portugal: [http://www.dge.mec.pt/data/dgidc/Educacao%20Especial/noticia\\_formacao\\_2014.docx](http://www.dge.mec.pt/data/dgidc/Educacao%20Especial/noticia_formacao_2014.docx)
- Malta's Public Employment Service (PES) is working on two major exercises aimed specifically at increasing the quality of service provision. Visit Malta: [https://secure.etc.gov.mt/homedir/temp/ETC\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2014.pdf](https://secure.etc.gov.mt/homedir/temp/ETC_Annual_Report_2014.pdf).

Malta plans to launch a new policy on career exposure experiences organised for Year 10 students. It will issue guidelines for schools to ensure high-quality provision.

- Latvia has support for career education as one of six government priorities, which, in turn, is subject to inspection. Accreditation experts are trained to assess career education topics. School leaders are also trained to understand what is required of them. Visit Latvia: <http://ikvd.gov.lv/>
- France has adopted the awarding of a quality label 'guidance for all' (*orientation pour tous*) to organisations or agencies which are capable of providing individual counselling or have agreed to work as a co-ordinated network. Visit France: <http://www.orientation-pour-tous.fr/>
- Serbia has created a 'Programme and Methodology of Career Guidance and Counselling for Students in the Republic of Serbia', which represents the framework of standards for university career centers. Visit Serbia: <http://www.careers.ac.rs/documents-download/viewcategory/4-publications.html>.

Increasingly, issues like quality, impact, efficiency and cost effectiveness have become guiding principles for lifelong guidance service reform (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, pp.50-51).

### How can lifelong guidance service provision be improved? How can its impact be assessed?

Service provision and improvement strategies apply to the three channels of guidance service delivery: face-to-face, telephone, and virtual approaches such as email, online chat, social media. Alongside this, acquiring and teaching career management skills (CMS), optimising the channel mix, skills profiling, and effective matching are major policy imperatives. A service provider needs to understand the different

drivers, from the degree to which a service is standardised to the capability of an individual to self-serve. Quality assurance and evidence-based frameworks for service provision in practice are often not specific to guidance but are rather generic service oriented.

In many cases, the face-to-face channel remains a preferred option, especially if the presenting problem is complex, conditional or requires a confidential and empathic approach, particularly for vulnerable individuals. Online facilities with the option of telephone, email, web chat and/or crowdsourcing are rapidly expanding. Other key challenges to be met include: realizing the full potential of web 2.0 and 3.0; how quality-assured data is collected, what kinds of data collection are now needed how might the results be used to inform service design and improvement as part of evidence-based policies and practices (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, p.51); and the role of guidance provision in the validation of non-formal and informal learning (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, p.42)<sup>59</sup>.

Guidance services also perform their strategic role with respect to the design of work-based learning, as they do for other aspects of the labour market. In most cases there are no special lifelong guidance services that support only work-based learners, but European citizens can use general guidance services, whether run by educational providers (e.g. Poland), by vocational schools (e.g. Netherlands) or by the Public Employment Service (e.g. Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary)<sup>60</sup>.

Other key factors in service design and improvement include the:

- profile and characteristics of service user groups need to be clearly defined and linked to policy target groups;
- clarification of the most relevant and cost-effective guidance activities provided to clients/customers such as: job search, informing, advising, counselling, coaching, assessing, enabling, advocating, networking, feeding back, managing, innovating systems change, signposting, mentoring, sampling, following up and teach-

ing career decision-making and career management skills etc.

- use of alternative channels and assistance on how to use these linked to practitioner's initial training and ongoing continuing professional development (CPD); and
- a shift in organisational culture and individual mindsets, towards the ideal of the 'autonomous professional'.

The ELGPN has indicated that quality and evidence are, and should be, strongly complementary in the development and management of lifelong guidance (*ELGPN, The Evidence Base on Lifelong Guidance*, p.12). In this context, the *ELGPN QAE Framework* provides a clear way to be sure of the base-line quality of service provision. It provides a framework in which the *inputs* (resources, time, human capital) and the *take up* (breadth and depth of usage) of services can be effectively monitored, as discussed in the *ELGPN Evidence-Base Handbook*, p27 & pp. 66-71. How can this realistically be applied in service provision and improvement?

This leads to the following question:

### **What more needs to be done to improve lifelong guidance services for young people and adults?**

Having up-to-date knowledge of and expertise in, education and labour markets are key fundamentals to the success of inclusive service provision and improvement (*ELGPN QAE Framework*, p.70)<sup>61</sup> To improve access and address social equity, an important policy issue is 'to employ a systems approach in developing pro-active services, life-wide and in all sectors. These may include approaches such as 'reaching out rather than waiting for people to come, building a culture of learning...' (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, p.36). A recurring theme in the ELGPN evidence base is that the success of guidance processes is strongly influenced by the initial training, continuing pro-



fessional development, competencies and personal capacities of the professionals that deliver it.

Examples of what more needs to be done within and across sectors to support service provision and improvement are outlined in more detail in the *ELGPN Resource Kit* (ELGPN, 2012 - refer to QAE Framework, Annex D), *ELGPN Evidence-Base Handbook 'The Evidence-Base for Lifelong Guidance: A guide to key findings for effective policy and practice'* (Hooley, 2014) and in the *The Guidelines for policies and systems development for lifelong guidance: A reference framework for the EU and the Commission* (ELGPN, 2015) and other ELGPN Tools. They include:

- The aspiration for different providers to work together to offer CMS programmes more effectively, in ways that make the best use of

their specialized knowledge of the worlds of education, training and employment (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, pp.22-23)

- The challenge of how funding should be allocated between different delivery channels to meet the needs of different priority groups (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, p.36)
- The purpose of quality-assured data collection and how might the results be used to inform service design and delivery, as well as strategic evidence-based policies (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, p. 51)
- The adaptation and improvement of practitioners' competences and personal capacities to deliver effective lifelong guidance (*ELGPN Evidence-Base Handbook*, pp.57-58).



## Cost benefits to governments

Career guidance is 'an essential component of modern education and training systems to (re) orientate younger and older generations towards the acquisition of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. In the current context of high unemployment, guidance can help raise the awareness of people, whatever their age or qualifications, of learning opportunities that lead the development of new skills much needed in the labour market, or that increase self-employment and entrepreneurship' (*ELGPN Resource Kit, 2012, p. 7*).

Cost benefits to governments are highlighted in the *ELGPN QAE Framework* (p.102)<sup>62</sup> and include examples of service improvement *criteria and indicators* as useful starting positions to inform quality assurance and evidence-based lifelong guidance policy and practice dialogue.

### Criteria

- immediate, medium and long-term savings to governments from specific forms of interventions.

### Indicators

- percentage of users progressing into employ-

- ment, education, training, not in education, employment or training (NEET), including evidence of follow up;
- duration and rate of progression into learning and/or work;
- ratio of increased public revenues through successful educational and labour market integration (taxes, social security contributions etc.) to public costs of guidance provision;
- tracking the progress and outcomes of individual advisees to the next stage of career development<sup>63</sup>; and
- annual expenditure costs on national telephone helplines, web portals for careers services and face-to-face delivery of services, particularly to specific targeted groups.

Examples of these and possible data sampling are provided within the *ELGPN Resource Kit – Annex D*. These should be customised and expanded to meet country specific needs.

As fiscal arrangements tighten, there will be even greater pressure from governments to justify expenditure on lifelong guidance services in relation to competing demands. There is an urgent imperative to

make greater use of cost-benefit analysis/statistical modeling to help analyse the immediate, medium and long-term calculated savings to government in the form economic and/or social returns (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, p 50). A number of studies have explored the social and economic impacts of guidance. For example, Mayston (2002)<sup>64</sup> and Hughes (2004)<sup>65</sup> both highlight potential impacts on GDP, public spending on education, social exclusion, social security benefit, policing, tax revenue, health care, incapacity benefits, stress and supporting mobility (*ELGPN Evidence-Base Handbook*, pp.29-30).

The contemporary challenges for governments are: to widen access to lifelong guidance; to deliver services in far more flexible ways; and yet for these to be done in ways that limit the costs to government. Finding new ways of measuring and assessing the impact of interventions has also to be addressed. Research evidence suggests the added-value proposition for investment in lifelong guidance is specifically linked to the achievement of tangible improvements in:

- **educational outcomes**, e.g. increasing participation in education and training, or improving attainment rates;
- **economic and employment outcomes**, e.g. increasing salary, improving employee retention or increasing an individual's likelihood of finding work; and
- **social outcomes**, e.g. increasing social mobility, or reducing the likelihood of engaging in criminal activity or community capacity (*ELGPN Evidence-base Handbook*, 2014, p.16).

Governments expect those working in lifelong guidance to contribute and support the achievement of policy strategy and objectives such as: targeted reductions in those not in education, employment and/or training (NEET); increased participation in higher education and/or vocational education and training; and reduced dependency on welfare benefits.

Measuring impact of any public policy initiative is inherently problematic given the complexity of

human behaviour and the difficulty in teasing out the many influences and factors involved. Even when it is possible to find the evidence on lifelong guidance it can be difficult to interpret. Delivering set targets can sometimes have unintended, sometimes self-defeating or perverse consequences. Yet, immediate, intermediate and/or long-term cost-savings to the public purse taxpayer arising from specific forms of interventions will continue to be expected by Ministers and other policy-makers.

Policy-makers and other interested stakeholders are encouraged to reflect upon three key questions:

1. *What is the value-added proposition for governments to invest in lifelong guidance?*
2. *How can impact assessment and cost benefits result in robust and useful quality-assurance and evidence-based policies and practices?*
3. *What more needs to be done to develop and promote cost benefits and added-value returns to Governments?*

### What is the value-added proposition for Governments to invest in lifelong guidance?

The *ELGPN Resource Kit* (ELGPN, 2012) outlines six broad areas where lifelong guidance can assist policy-makers in addressing a range of policy goals: (i) Efficient investment in education and training; (ii) Labour Market efficiency; (iii) Lifelong learning; (iv) Social inclusion; (v) Social equity; and (vi) Economic development (pp. 9-10).

Most EU countries operate a three channel strategy – face-to-face, contact centres and the internet – to utilise all opportunities available and to signpost individuals towards the lowest cost channel, appropriate to their needs. In general, public, private and voluntary sector services are becoming more involved and sophisticated in their approach to data gathering on the cost and impact of differing forms of guidance interventions. It is noted that successful

channel optimisation should eventually pave the way for greater cross-departmental collaboration in the design, management and delivery of services.

The *ELGPN Evidence-Base Handbook* (2014)<sup>66</sup> highlights some research findings that suggest an economic value-added proposition for Governments, for example:

- **Germany** – A study of the municipal educational guidance service of Dresden sought to systematically map the cost-benefits (including capturing the economic outcomes in monetary terms) of its interventions<sup>67</sup>. The research included detailed observations of the service, with data-matching. The study found that guidance interventions had a clear positive effect and suggested some (not statistically significant) economic impacts (*op.cit.* pp. 30-31).
- **Croatia** – An evaluation of an internet-based system for self directed career planning explored the experiences of over 2,000 of the site's users. The analysis supported both the validity of online advice and cost benefit analysis (*op.cit.* p.27).
- **Utah** – The Vocational Rehabilitation (VP) program evaluation found that it had a positive impact on employment outcomes and the earnings of the clients served. The evaluation concluded that in addition to the private benefits of the programme, the state of Utah also benefitted from the increased earnings through additional tax revenue and a reduction in public benefits to participants (*op.cit.*p.44).
- **Canada** – The Future to Discover project examined the impact of a guidance intervention on 5,000+ students in New Brunswick and Manitoba. Findings indicate receiving a guidance intervention enhanced attainment and made some groups of students more likely to enrol in post-secondary education (*op.cit.* p.19).
- **England** – A recent large-scale longitudinal research undertaken in England suggests that guidance may offer at least part of the solu-

tion to higher education drop-out. In a study based on all UK university entrants in 2005/06, Mc Culloch found that both the amount of advice on higher education that an individual had received (from all sources) and their satisfaction with the career guidance that they had received were correlated with reduced likelihood of dropping out of education (*op.cit.* p.22).

The *ELGPN Evidence-Base Handbook* (2014) reports on a meta-analysis which drew together 47 studies that used controls and involved a total of 4,660 participants. Whiston *et al.* (1998) identified that across all of the studies, which sought to identify a diverse range of impacts, participants who had received a guidance intervention were more likely than those who had not to display an identifiable impact. They found impacts across all types of career interventions, but individual career counselling was the most effective for the client, whereas computer-based and classroom/group interventions were more cost-effective in terms of counsellor time. (*op.cit.* p.26).

Evidence and data are important policy-making tools. While career guidance has a strong research tradition the focus upon both outcomes and costs has been weak. To achieve better evidence on outcomes and costs, policy-makers in most countries need to set relevant key performance indicators and obtain improved data on lifelong guidance inputs and processes.

### How can impact assessment and cost benefits result in robust and useful quality-assurance and evidence-based policies and practices?

The purpose for gathering such data should be clear from the outset. There are at least three ways of working:

- supply evidence for policy-makers to consume;
- build a relationship model based on stake-

holder collaboration to identify important questions for policy;

- create a systems model with information, ideas and feedback flowing in multiple directions between policy-makers, providers, academics and professional bodies<sup>68</sup>.

Recent findings from EU Member States indicate:

- Sweden has identified its expenditure for life-long guidance. The Swedish Government has allocated approximately 4.0 million Euros from 2013 to 2016, mainly for the training of guidance counsellors and teachers. Visit: <http://www.skolverket.se/skolutveckling/studie-och-yrkesvagledning>
- The Netherlands has undertaken a cost benefit analysis of general education which contains some information on careers education and guidance. Visit The Netherlands: <http://www.onderwijsinontwikkeling.nl/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/LOB-kosten-en-opbrengsten-in-balans.pdf>. VET is a major priority for government with strong interest in added value returns linked to drop-out rates/NEETs. See also: [http://roa.sbe.maastrichtuniversity.nl/?page\\_id=789](http://roa.sbe.maastrichtuniversity.nl/?page_id=789)
- In the city of Berlin, the monitoring of career and educational guidance services funded by the state of Berlin was expanded to evaluate individual goals in order to enhance education and labour market responsiveness to individuals' needs. It intends to measure the results and effects of the guidance intervention using a specially developed IT portal to collect and analyse the data. Visit Germany: [www.bildungsberatung-berlin.de/nachbefragung/](http://www.bildungsberatung-berlin.de/nachbefragung/)
- In Serbia within a new National Youth Strategy 2015-2025, the Ministry of Youth and Sports has emphasised the importance of developing mechanisms for measuring the effects of various career guidance and counselling services on the employability of young people, including the effects on different categories of youth. With the

financial support of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Serbia has developed a methodology and indicators to measure the effects of career guidance and counselling on the employability of young people. Visit Serbia: [www.mos.gov.rs](http://www.mos.gov.rs)

Earlier findings in the *ELGPN Evidence-Base Handbook* (Hooley, p. 32) show the use of a statistical meta-analysis approach to explore the impact of career education interventions in schools and on student outcomes. The combined results of 12 studies, conducted between 1983 to 1996, used control groups for comparison that were published in refereed journals and had participants from grades K – 12. Their meta-analysis demonstrated that such interventions have a statistically verifiable impact on academic achievement. How might student outcomes data be further developed to demonstrate the cost benefits of lifelong guidance to policy-makers?

In the UK, lessons learned from destination data activities demonstrate clearly there is a cost to all data-collection processes: it is important that such costs are considered and weighed against possible efficacy benefits (*ELGPN Evidence-Base Handbook*, p.59).

### What are the policy challenges and likely future demands requiring new forms of cost-benefit analysis?

There is increasing pressure to legitimise public spending and to justify public services. Individual responsibility and greater accountability are both high on the political agenda. The process of cost-benefit analysis needs to be integrated with a performance/quality assurance system in order to steer and influence behavior, as well as for the purpose of resource allocation (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, p.50). New forms of cost-benefit analysis are emerging in the context of new sources of possible data, such as:

- Destination measures, outcomes and tracking systems

- NEET monitoring systems
- Payment by results<sup>69</sup>
- Balance scorecard approaches
- Control group studies
- Social Returns on Investment (SROI).

The general trend across Europe is for more quality-assurance and monitoring in publicly-financed lifelong guidance provision to ensure both safeguarding of individuals and social equity. A strong policy focus on strategies for addressing the economic and social costs associated with skills shortages, skills gaps and skills mismatch is evident (Europe 2020)<sup>70</sup> Youth unemployment remains stubbornly high (See: ELGPN Concept Notes 2, 4 & 6)<sup>71</sup>. Demographic change, income uncertainty, growing diversity and rising mobility of workers are bringing together different and sometimes conflicting cultures, religions, races and languages.

These lead to the following questions:

### **What more needs to be done to develop and promote cost benefits and added-value returns to Governments?**

Access to lifelong guidance services still needs to be sufficiently developed for a wide range of particular groups of citizens. An important policy issue is to employ a systems approach in developing proactive and high-impact services. [See: *ELGPN Evidence-Base Handbook* (2014) *Lifelong Guidance Policy Cycle*, pp.24-25]. A recurring theme in the evidence base for lifelong guidance is that 'the success of guidance processes is strongly influenced by the initial train-

ing, continuing professional development, competencies and personal capacities of the professionals that deliver it'<sup>72</sup>

Examples of what more needs to be done are outlined more fully in the *ELGPN Resource Kit* (2012) and *ELGPN Evidence-Base Handbook 'The Evidence-Base for Lifelong Guidance: A guide to key findings for effective policy and practice'*(2014), and in *The Guidelines for policies and systems development for lifelong guidance: A reference framework for the EU and the Commission* ( ELGPN, 2015) Some examples include:

- The need to improve access and address social equity issues within and outside of the workplace (*ELGPN Evidence-Base Handbook*, p.48).
- The importance of employing a systems approach in developing pro-active services, life-wide and in all sectors (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, p.36).
- The requirement to broaden the range and types of research studies in lifelong guidance to include cost-benefits to governments and individuals (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, p.52).
- A precept for success in terms of what policy-makers can do, given growing political pressures in favour of supporting the young unemployed – particularly 18-25 year olds – is to monitor effective programmes and use the information to improve the quality and impact of lifelong guidance, education and training programmes (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, p. 62).
- The focus on evidence-based learning and the effective use of ICT and labour market intelligence in reaching out to vulnerable individuals and community groups (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, p.63).





## Cost benefits to individuals

It is more important than ever that European and national citizens connect with the best possible learning and work opportunities. New career development processes and interventions can smooth transitions that could otherwise be neglected or costly, such as school/college to work, switching jobs, or career changes including entry into active retirement. They can make learning provision more effective by ensuring that individuals are - and remain - motivated to learn because their chosen courses are firmly in line with their aspirations and personal development plans.

Cost benefits to individuals are highlighted in the *ELGPN QAE Framework* (ELGPN, 2012, p. 103) and include examples of cost benefits' *criteria and indicators*. These criteria, indicators and examples of possible data can be used as useful starting positions to inform quality assurance and evidence-based lifelong guidance policy and practice dialogue:

### Criteria

- increase in household income

### Indicators

- reduced dependency on welfare benefits through employment and/or training; higher earnings/salary information captured by careers counsellors, work coaches and guidance workers.

Examples of these and possible data sampling are provided within the *ELGPN Resource Kit – Annex D*. They are designed to be customised and expanded in order to meet country specific needs.

As household budgets tighten across Europe, there will be even greater pressure on individuals and families to assess their willingness to take risks in education and work-related learning. Access to lifelong guidance services still needs to be sufficiently developed for a wide range of particular groups of citizens. The *ELGPN Resource Kit* (2012, p. 35) highlights the following groups: young people at risk of early school leaving<sup>73</sup>, vocational education training (VET) and tertiary students, employed adults and people with disabilities. More robust policy frameworks are needed to provide adequate services and to motivate and inspire individuals to make use of them at different stages in their life course (p.35).



Thinking from the perspective of the individual who may benefit from lifelong guidance:

- Who is she or he? What does s/he do and need?
- What are his/her social and economic circumstances?
- What are his/her learning and work aspirations and goals?
- How can lifelong guidance assist him/ her in achieving them?
- What problems does s/he need to solve?
- What improvements does s/he look for?
- What does s/he value?

In a lifelong guidance context, how does the service or product solve the problem or offer improvement, and what value and results does it offer to the individual? A major challenge for consumers/potential users of lifelong guidance services is knowing exactly why they should invest in education and training given the complexity and uncertainty of any guaranteed return(s). Both young people and 'adults are often not aware of the qualifications and opportunities available to them and may have a restricted view of their own skills and knowledge. The role of guidance provision is also pivotal in the process for validating non-formal and informal learning' (ELGPN Resource Kit, 2012, p.42).

The *ELGPN Evidence-Base Handbook* (2014) demonstrates that the impact of career guidance in schools is well-researched. Researchers have identified a range of impacts associated with school-based careers work. Guidance can: increase students' engagement and success in school; support their transition from school; and help them to establish successful lives and careers (p. 34). A key issue is how these (and other relevant findings) are communicated effectively to young people, parents, teachers, employers and policy-makers. There are at least nine other research study findings presented that focus specifically on the cost-benefits to individuals. They demonstrate, for example,

- schools with more fully implemented guidance programmes had students who were more likely to report that: they had earned higher grades; their education was preparing them for their future; their school made more career and college information available to them; and their school had a more positive climate (*op.cit.* 35); and
- career dialogue in schooling contributes to individuals' motivation, decision-making, career management skills and career outcomes (*op.cit.* 37);
- the quality of work experience is relevant for the vocational development of students (*op. cit.* 35);
- enhanced career management skills which lead to decreased adult depressive symptoms and intentions to retire early (*op.cit.* p.29); and
- a continual decrease in career indecision in the long-term, and some degree of stability with regards to clients' satisfaction with life (*op.cit.* p.29).

Policy-makers and other interested stakeholders are encouraged to reflect upon three key questions:

1. *What is the value-added proposition for individuals to invest in lifelong guidance?*
2. *How can policy makers and career guidance delivery organisations career counsellors, work coaches and guidance workers best communicate the added-value benefits of lifelong guidance for individuals?*
3. *What more needs to be done to develop and promote cost benefits and other added-value returns to individuals?*

### **What is the value-added proposition for individuals to invest in lifelong guidance?**

The *ELGPN Evidence-Base Handbook* (2014) indicates 'lifelong guidance is most effective where it connects meaningfully to the wider experience and life of the individuals who participate in it. In learning, this

includes building a meaningful connection to the curriculum; in work, to wider human resource management processes. However, the value of connecting an individual's context is broader than this, and may include a host of other contextual factors (community, family, hobbies and interests' (p. 57). It also highlights some further research findings that suggest an educational, social and/or economic value-added proposition for individuals, for example:

- In Germany, a research project of the University of Applied Labour Studies of the Federal Employment Agency (HdBA) examined the individual outcomes of vocational guidance for young people under 25 in Employment Agencies. The outcomes included: motivation, vocational self-assessment, information, decision-making and actions. The project aims to make the outcome of guidance visible to individuals, as well as to the practitioner and to lifelong guidance organisations. Visit Germany: <http://www.hdba.de/forschung/projekte/bet-u25/>
- In Portugal, a study examined how guidance impacted on students' engagement with school and their ability to engage in career exploration. The study examined students who had received guidance and those who had not using the Students' Engagement in School four-dimensional scale and the Career Exploration Scale. The study found guidance was positively correlated both with engagement with school and with career exploration (*ELGPN Evidence-Base Handbook*, p. 29).
- In Denmark, a qualitative research approach examined how guidance could support a group of factory workers who were being made redundant. The findings indicated the guidance worker needed to leave her/his guidance corner and actively engage with workers in their own spaces. This is highly relevant in the context of working with individuals to assess the benefits of career guidance for individuals (*ELGPN Evidence-Base Handbook*, p. 31).
- In Ireland, a mixed methods study of adult guidance services found that the overwhelming majority of clients reported benefits from engaging with the service.<sup>74</sup>
- In Scotland, a study of guidance for older people indicated that they appreciated how guidance helped them to manage uncertainty and change in the current employment climate. Levels of engagement in lifelong learning were variable and associated with background and prior educational ability. Career guidance supported social-equity goals in relation to lifelong learning and older people (*ELGPN Evidence-Base Handbook*, p. 51).
- In Germany, Austria, The Netherlands and Portugal schools work in collaboration with the Public Employment Service (PES) to support the career development of students (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, p. 38).
- In Serbia, during the school year 2013/2014, a peer review and evaluation of the lifelong guidance professional orientation services, identified examples of good practice including cost benefits to individuals in primary schools. Visit Serbia: <http://profesionalnaorijentacija.org/>.

The *ELGPN Resource Kit* (ELGPN, 2012) outlines six broad areas where lifelong guidance can assist **policy-makers** in addressing a range of policy goals: (i) efficient investment in education and training; (ii) labour market efficiency; (iii) lifelong learning; (iv) social inclusion; (v) social equity; and (vi) economic development (pp. 9-10). How can these be applied in the context of policy dialogue on cost-benefits for individuals?

**Governments expect** those working in lifelong guidance to contribute and support the achievement of policy strategy and objectives such as: targeted reductions in those not in education, employment and/or training (NEET); increased participation in higher education and/or vocational education and training; and reduced dependency on welfare benefits.

**Individuals** expect lifelong guidance to connect them meaningfully to relevant education and opportunities in the world of work.

These expectations lead to the following questions:

### **How can policy makers and organisations who employ career counsellors, work coaches and guidance workers best communicate the added-value benefits of lifelong guidance for individuals?**

In this context, it is often helpful to consider how organisations or people work closely to improve ways of engaging with individuals. This includes finding ways to collect more useful, better quality information. Steps need to be taken to ensure that 'citizens are able to decode the world around them, so that while they are critically aware of the economic constraints that limit their options and capacities, and do not assume that they are individually responsible for structural and systemic failures' (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, p. 23).

Research findings indicate that demand for careers support from a broad spectrum of individuals is on the increase, with the emergence of a plethora of new market players and cross-sector partnerships involving, public, private and third sectors<sup>75</sup>. With pressures on government expenditure, an ageing society, and the need to stimulate greater investments and added-value returns for participation in learning and work, fresh approaches are required, including a focus on cost benefits to individuals (*op. cit.*, p.50).

The *ELGPN Evidence-base Handbook* (2014) sets out a five level range of beneficiaries of guidance services – see Figure 2. It highlights "it is important to acknowledge impacts on family and various levels of community". It also demonstrates how a service which offers individual benefits can support wider community, organisational and societal goals. It is important to consider the desired beneficiaries both during service design and in the evaluation of services (p. 17).

Throughout Europe (and further afield) Web 2.0 and 3.0 developments, smartphones, and greater usage of 'mash ups' in personal and career information within and outside of education and employment sectors (such as labour market intelligence and information), are transforming teaching and learning of career management skills (CMS) in schools. Such skills (CMS) are applicable to differing contexts. Frequent changes in the economy and increasingly insecure employment contracts, reinforce the position that more individuals need to develop CMS, and to do so in a lifelong perspective. This requires both leadership and vision.

- Practitioners and managers must be guided by strong leadership that encourages them to learn new skills, including the skills of partnership and reporting back confidently to others on the added-value benefits of lifelong guidance (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, p. 53). The skills, training and disposition of the practitioners who deliver lifelong guidance are critical to its success.

### **What are the drivers likely to influence individuals in their career decision-making process?**

Some of the key drivers likely to influence individuals in their career decision-making process are linked closely to demographics, income uncertainty, growing diversity and rising mobility of workers. Each brings together different and sometimes conflicting cultures, religions, races and languages.

The *ELGPN Resource Kit* (2012) states 'it is often erroneously assumed that students following vocational courses have already made informed decisions about what careers they would like to pursue, and that they have developed CMS through their experience in formal apprenticeships, or through holiday and after school part-time employment' (p. 27). Both success and setbacks can be key drivers that

influence individuals in their career decision-making process.

The ELGPN Concept Notes (2014)<sup>76</sup> make explicit a range of key drivers that impact on individuals' educational outcomes, economic and employment outcomes and social outcomes (*op.cit.* p.7). These drivers vary considerably ranging from interventions designed to address problematic youth transitions, to a study in Portugal which highlighted the positive impacts that a guidance intervention can have on very high-skilled workers within universities – See *ELGPN Evidence-Base Handbook* (2014, p.49).

The general trend across Europe is for greater safeguarding of individuals and social equity in lifelong learning and guidance. A strong policy focus on strategies for addressing the economic and social costs associated with skills shortages, skills gaps and skills mismatch is evident (Europe 2020)<sup>77</sup> Youth unemployment remains stubbornly high and career decision-making may be constrained in this context by structural problems in the economy (See: ELGPN Concept Notes 2, 4 & 6)<sup>78</sup>.

These trends lead to the following question:

### **What more needs to be done to develop and promote cost benefits and other added-value returns to individuals?**

Access to lifelong guidance services still needs to be sufficiently developed for a wide range of groups of

citizens. The *ELGPN Evidence-Base Handbook* highlights implications for ensuring efficacy (Hooley, 2014, pp. 58 - 60). Ten evidence-based principles for the design of lifelong guidance services are outlined in section 7: Table 2 (*ibid.*, p.56).

Examples of what more needs to be done on developing and promoting cost benefits and other added returns to individuals are outlined below and more fully in the *ELGPN Resource Kit* (2012), *ELGPN Evidence-Base Handbook* (2014), and *The Guidelines for policies and systems development for lifelong guidance: A reference framework for the EU and the Commission* (ELGPN, 2015). They include:

- The need to improve access and address social equity issues within and outside of the workplace (*ELGPN Evidence-Base Handbook*, p.48).
- The focus on evidence-based learning and the effective use of ICT and labour market intelligence in reaching out to vulnerable individuals, families and community groups (*ELGPN Resource Kit*, p.63).
- The infusion of CMS throughout the curriculum, where policies and practices ensure individuals recognise the CMS input (including labour market and salary information) made in different subjects and they mobilise that learning in response to different life challenges (*op.cit.* 22).





## Conclusion

Systematic exchange and mutual learning on steps for policy, strategy development and implementation in quality assurance and evidence-based policy systems development are necessary as gaps in lifelong guidance provision still persist. Through mutual co-operation and support EU Member States and partner agencies have an exciting opportunity to focus on these five elements of the QAE Framework as anchor points for effective policy dialogue and transformation of lifelong guidance policies within and across differing sectors.

The ELGPN has produced this tool and other tools to inform and support policy-makers and other

stakeholders in their continuous efforts to develop lifelong guidance policies, systems, and practices. These other tools include *The Guidelines for policies and systems development for lifelong guidance: A reference framework for the EU and the Commission* (ELGPN, 2015), a Resource Kit, Glossary, EU Policy Briefings Concept Notes and a Research Paper.

It may be helpful to begin discussion in national and regional networks by identifying the key drivers and likely future demands that will require new approaches to lifelong guidance in a fast changing policy context.



## Endnotes

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- 12 Available at: <http://www.elgpn.eu/publications/browse-by-language/english/a-report-on-the-work-of-the-european-lifelong-guidance-policy-network-2011201312/> (pp. 85-87).
- 13 IAEVG (2014) *The Education and Vocational Guidance Practitioner Credential's Framework*. Available at: <http://www.cce-global.org/Downloads/EVGP/app-en.pdf>
- 14 Visit: [http://www.corep.it/eas/output/HB\\_cop\\_piu\\_interno\\_final.pdf](http://www.corep.it/eas/output/HB_cop_piu_interno_final.pdf)
- 15 The Quality Manual for Education and Vocational Counseling. Available at: [http://mevoc.net/EN/htm/fs\\_standards.htm](http://mevoc.net/EN/htm/fs_standards.htm)
- 16 UK Career Development Institute (CDI). Available at: <http://www.thecdi.net/Professional-Register>
- 17 Visit: <http://www.cminl.nl/index.php/en.html>
- 18 Visit: <http://www.menon.org>
- 19 ELGPN Concept Note No. 7. *Addressing career guidance in teacher education and/or training*. Available at: <http://www.elgpn.eu/publications>
- 20 op.cit
- 21 See also: [http://www.nice-network.eu/fileadmin/erasmus/inhalte/bilder/meine\\_Dateien/NICE\\_Handbook/NICE\\_Handbook\\_full\\_version\\_online.pdf](http://www.nice-network.eu/fileadmin/erasmus/inhalte/bilder/meine_Dateien/NICE_Handbook/NICE_Handbook_full_version_online.pdf)
- 22 See also: <http://www.iaevg.org/iaevg/nav.cfm?lang=2&menu=1&submenu=5>
- 23 The Slovenian expression for "Cross-sectoral Guidelines for quality in Lifelong Career Guidance" is "Medresorske smernice kakovosti vseživljenjske karierne orientacije" (click on this title to open the Guidelines - PDF document).
- 24 Greece is also participating in a Leonardo da Vinci TOI project INNO-CAREER to develop a training program on emerging skills for guidance practitioners. A new training course comprising six training modules (CMS, quality assurance, guidance for mobility, connection with labor market, APEL and guidance for immigrants) is currently being piloted in Greece, Italy, Czech Republic and Cyprus. Visit: [http://www.adam-europe.eu/adam/project/view.htm?prj=11732#.Vlq\\_t-KTvY](http://www.adam-europe.eu/adam/project/view.htm?prj=11732#.Vlq_t-KTvY)



- 25 The Canadian Standards & Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners (S&G0 define the competencies career development practitioners need in order to practice effectively and ethically. Visit: [www.ccca.org](http://www.ccca.org)
- 26 The Australian Blueprint for Career Development is a framework for designing, implementing and evaluating career development programs for young people and adults. Visit: [www.cica.org.au](http://www.cica.org.au)
- 27 The International Coach Federation (ICF) sets out eleven core coaching competencies, grouped into four clusters including: setting the foundation; co-creating the relationship; communicating effectively; and facilitating learning and results linked to accreditation. Visit: <http://www.coachfederation.org>
- 28 Krötzl Gerhard (2011) Grundsatzpapier Ausbau der Berufsorientierung und Bildungsberatung, bmukk
- 29 See also: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=964>
- 30 See criteria, indicators and possible data 3.4 in the *ELGPN Resource Kit*, p.70.
- 31 Soresi, S., Nota, L. & Lent, R.W. (2004) Relation of type and amount of training to career counseling self-efficacy in Italy. *Career Development Quarterly*, 52 (3): pp.194-201. Research findings suggest that well-trained career practitioners had greater confidence in their ability to conceptualise vocational problems, deal with career indecision concerns and provide educational counseling.
- 32 Intervention is a term used in some countries to describe peer supervision.
- 33 See: ELGPN QAE Framework: Practitioner Competence. 1.
- 34 <http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/topic/public-sector-reform-decentralisation>
- 35 <http://www.behaviouralinsights.co.uk/publications/better-choices-better-deals-behavioural-insights-team-paper>
- 36 See: *ELGPN Resource Kit*, p.98.
- 37 *ELGPN Concept Note 3* outlines factors in implementing policy successfully for career management skills. Visit: [http://www.elgpn.eu/publications/browse-by-language/english/Gravina\\_and\\_Lovsin\\_cms\\_concept\\_note\\_web.pdf/](http://www.elgpn.eu/publications/browse-by-language/english/Gravina_and_Lovsin_cms_concept_note_web.pdf/)
- 38 *ELGPN Concept Notes 2, 4 and 6* provide detail and analysis of EU trends. Available at: <http://www.elgpn.eu/publications>
- 39 See also: <http://www.elgpn.eu/publications/elgpn-concept-note-no.-6-early-school-leaving-and-lifelong-guidance>
- 40 Vilhjálmsdóttir, G., Dofradóttir, A.G. & Kjartansdóttir, G.B. (2011) *Voice of the Users – Promoting quality of guidance for adults in the Nordic countries*. Oriveden Kirjapaino, Finland: Nordic Network of Adult Learning.
- 41 Rammo, M. (2013) *How successful are career centres and schools in supporting Estonian young people taking steps in their career paths?* Poster presentation to the Euroguidance meeting, Dublin, 25-26 February 2013. Visit: <http://www.innove.ee/en/lifelong-guidance>
- 42 *ELGPN CMS Framework*. Available at: <http://www.elgpn.eu/publications>
- 43 See: <http://www.elgpn.eu/publications/browse-by-language/english/elgpn-tools-no-3.-the-evidence-base-on-lifelong-guidance/> - Ten evidence-based principles for the design of lifelong guidance services
- 44 Also, visit: [http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/apps/faces/home/search?ba.l=de&ba.q=Kundenbefragungen&\\_afLoop=133178296305539&\\_afWindowMode=0&\\_afWindowId=null#%40%3Fba.q%3DKundenbefragungen%26\\_afWindowId%3Dnull%26\\_afLoop%3D133178296305539%26ba.l%3Dde%26\\_afWindowMode%3D0%26\\_adf.ctrl-state%3Dnta9t5bmr\\_4](http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/apps/faces/home/search?ba.l=de&ba.q=Kundenbefragungen&_afLoop=133178296305539&_afWindowMode=0&_afWindowId=null#%40%3Fba.q%3DKundenbefragungen%26_afWindowId%3Dnull%26_afLoop%3D133178296305539%26ba.l%3Dde%26_afWindowMode%3D0%26_adf.ctrl-state%3Dnta9t5bmr_4)
- 45 See also: *ELGPN QAE Framework: Cost Benefits to Individuals and Cost Benefits to Governments*.
- 46 European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (2015). *Guidelines for Policies and Systems Development for Lifelong Guidance: A Reference Framework for the EU and for the Commission*. Guideline 6: Improving Careers Information. Jyväskylä: ELGPN.
- 47 OECD (2010) Public Governance Committee, Working Party of Senior Budget Officials: *Restoring Fiscal Stability – Lessons for the Public Sector*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- 48 [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/themes/24\\_public\\_employment\\_services\\_02.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/themes/24_public_employment_services_02.pdf)
- 49 See: *ELGPN Resource Kit*, (2012), p.52. Table 6.1. Quality Elements of a national lifelong guidance system and para.6.5.
- 50 See: *ELGPN Resource Kit* (2012), p. 49, para.6.2.
- 51 See: *ELGPN Evidence Base Handbook* (Hooley, 2014), p. 57, para. 7.1.1.
- 52 See: *ELGPN Resource Kit* (2012), pp.21 – 33.
- 53 See: *ELGPN Resource Kit*, (2012) Table 5.1 *Descriptors for key features of widening access*, pp.37-38.
- 54 See: *ELGPN Resource Kit* (2012) - Sections 5 & 6.
- 55 OECD (2004). *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap*, p.144. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
- 56 See ELGPN: Hooley, T. (2014), p.29 footnote 60.
- 57 CIMO (2012) *Guidance: Lifelong Guidance in Finland*. Available at: [http://cimo.fi/instancedata/prime\\_product\\_julkaisu/cimo/embeds/cimowwwstructure/26710\\_Lifelong\\_Guidance\\_in\\_Finland\\_booklet.pdf](http://cimo.fi/instancedata/prime_product_julkaisu/cimo/embeds/cimowwwstructure/26710_Lifelong_Guidance_in_Finland_booklet.pdf).
- 58 In the Rules of Portuguese SPE relating to guidance, released in May 2013. It structures guidance provision in SPE with reference to career management skills, defines the face to face and distance interventions, the principles that should govern the provision of these interventions, as well as the methods and techniques to be used. One of the objectives pursued by this Regulation is to improve the provision of guidance services.
- 59 ELGPN Case Study 5.8 provides a further elaboration – see example provided by Poland, p.43
- 60 ELGPN Concept Note 5 (2014) *Lifelong guidance and work-based learning practices*, p.23, para.56.
- 61 See criteria, indicators and possible data 3.4 in the *ELGPN Resource Kit*, p.70.
- 62 See: *ELGPN Resource Kit*, pp. 100-101.
- 63 There are examples of national tracking studies for students of compulsory education and VET. This, however, doesn't evaluate the quality of the CMS programmes offered nor their impact. If available it provides educa-

- tional institutions with valuable information on where and on which level of further/higher education students are and how their students are doing. Patterns may be identified where students meet challenges in further/higher education or in the workplace. So school management can decide on changing and adjusting the school programme (subject content, didactical approach) and/or the guidance offered (e.g. identify specific target groups, initiate other activities, enhance CMS development in certain areas).
- 64 Mayston, D. (2002). *Assessing the Benefits of Careers Guidance*. CeGS Occasional Paper, Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.
- 65 Hughes, D. (2004) *Investing in Career: Prosperity for citizens, windfalls for government*. Winchester: The Guidance Council
- 66 <http://www.elgpn.eu/publications/elgpn-tools-no.-3-the-evidence-base-on-lifelong-guidance>
- 67 <http://doku.iab.de/externe/2015/k150306303.pdf>
- 68 Best, A. and Holmes, B. (2010) Systems Thinking, Knowledge and Action: Towards Better Models and Methods. *Evidence and Policy*, 6, 145-159.
- 69 PBR is intended to improve service quality by offering higher payments for better performance; improve transparency on expenditure by specifying how much will be paid for different results; and ease pressure on public spending budgets by staggering payments over longer periods.
- 70 Visit: [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm)
- 71 Visit: <http://www.elgpn.eu/publications>
- 72 Soresi, S., Nota, L. & Lent, R.W. (2004) Relation of type and amount of training to career counseling self-efficacy in Italy. *Career Development Quarterly*, 52 (3): pp.194-201. Research findings suggest that well-trained career practitioner had greater confidence in their ability to conceptualise vocational problems, deal with career indecision concerns and provide educational counseling. In the ELGPN'
- 73 See: ELGPN Concept Note No. 6 'Early School Leaving and Lifelong Guidance'. Available at: <http://www.elgpn.eu/publications>
- 74 Hearne, L. (2014) *Opening a Door: Evaluating the benefits of guidance for the adult client*. Limerick University. See: ELGPN Evidence-Base Handbook, p.41.
- 75 [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/372570/integrating-new-technologies-into-careers-practice.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/372570/integrating-new-technologies-into-careers-practice.pdf)
- 76 Visit: <http://www.elgpn.eu/publications>
- 77 Visit: [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm)
- 78 Visit: <http://www.elgpn.eu/publications>



**EUROPEAN LIFELONG GUIDANCE POLICY NETWORK (ELGPN)** aims to assist the European Union Member States (and the neighbouring countries eligible for the Erasmus+ Programme) and the European Commission in developing European co-operation on lifelong guidance in both the education and the employment sectors. The purpose of the Network is to promote co-operation and systems development at member-country level in implementing the priorities identified in EU 2020 strategies and EU Resolutions on Lifelong Guidance (2004; 2008). The Network was established in 2007 by the Member States; the Commission has supported its activities under the Lifelong Learning Programme and the Erasmus+ Programme.

**THE AIM OF THIS TOOL** is to stimulate stakeholder discussion and action for the continuous improvement of lifelong guidance policies and practices, focusing on strengthening quality assurance and evidence-based policy and systems development.

The ELGPN represents a major development in support of national lifelong guidance policy development in Europe. It currently has 30 member countries (AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LV, LT, LU, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, and SK), with CH as an observer. The participating countries designate their representatives in the Network, and are encouraged to include both governmental and non-governmental representatives. As a Member-State-driven network, the ELGPN represents an innovative form of the Open Method of Co-ordination within the European Union (EU).

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