



Report on the International Conference Guide My W@y - a European Career Guidance Concept for International Youth Mobility on 07.07.16

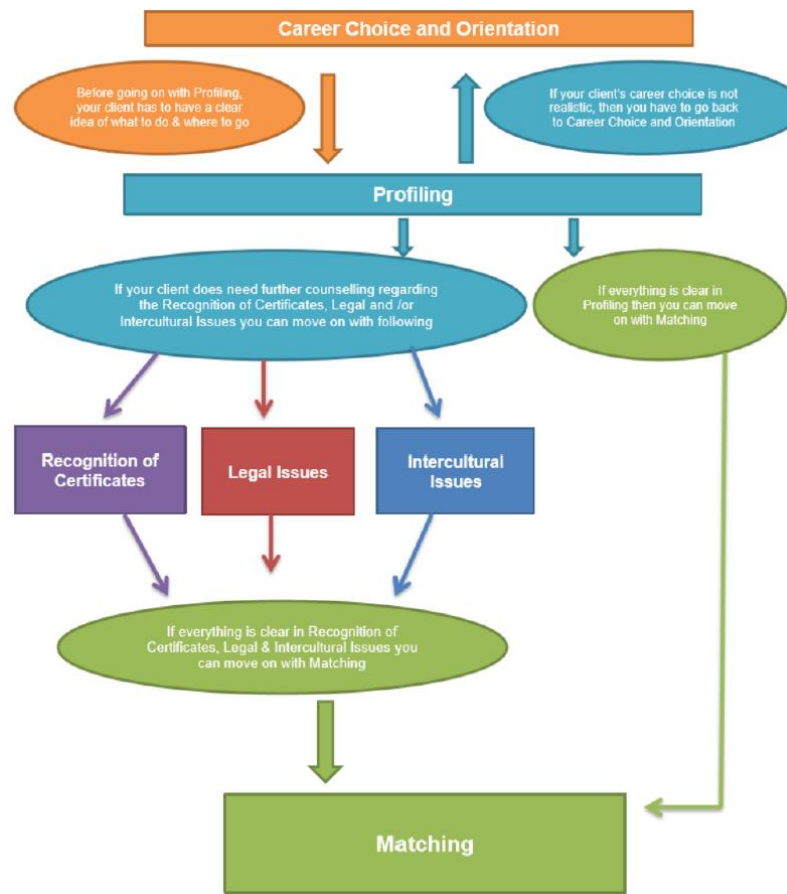


The International Conference Guide My W@y- A European Career Guidance Concept for International Youth Mobility took place on 07.07.16 at the University of Applied Labour Studies (HdBA) in Mannheim, Germany. The main aim of this conference had been to present the project and its outcomes and to disseminate them to a large audience. The conference started at 10.00 am and ended at 04.00 pm in the afternoon with a total of 84 participants. There had been eight employees from the HdBA, 15 project partners from Spain, Poland, Czech Republic, Lithuania and Germany and 61 external guests from Belgium, France, Germany, Estonia, Slovakia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia and Spain.

Introduction and Presentation of the Project and its Outputs - eGuidance Concept for International Youth Mobility

It started with a warmly welcome of the rector of the HdBA, Prof. Dr. Andreas Frey and a short introduction of the project leader Prof. Dr. Florian Kreutzer. Afterwards the project and its outputs were presented by the project leader and the project manager.

The first output, called the eGuidance Concept consists of six modules structured by five phases, which are three core phases (Situational Analysis, Target Definition and Implementation) and two framing phases (Opening and Ending). The six content modules are Career Choice and Orientation, Profiling, Recognition of Certificates, Legal Issues, Intercultural Issues and Matching.



The phase **Career Choice and Orientation** helps counsellors to find out the preferences and wishes of their clients and get a clear idea of what they want to do abroad and where they would like to go. **Profiling** is a general situation analysis where the counsellors should find out what questions have to be treated concerning the international mobility and focus on the competencies and the self-assessment of the client. If further guidance is needed in this field, a deepening into the Recognition of Certificates, Legal Issues and Intercultural Issues can be implemented.

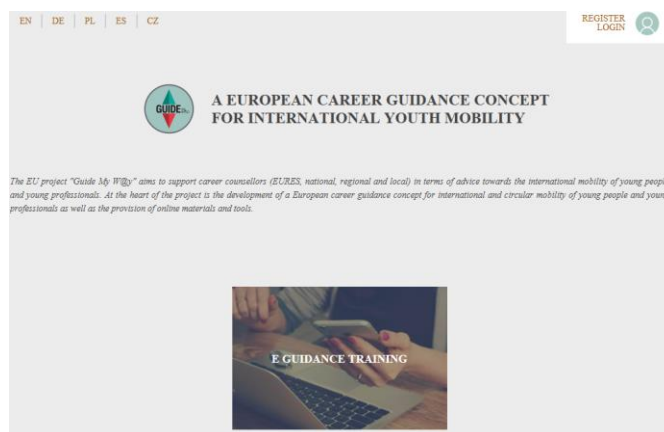
Recognition of Certificates refers to the transfer of qualifications and competencies as well as national procedures. **Legal Issues** deals with the residence status, social security, health insurance and knowing the different (legal) requirements. **Intercultural Issues** includes different cultural conditions, language, costs of living and leisure time. After these matters are treated, the topic of **Matching** can follow. The matching process is the vocational, academic or occupational placement with a focus on the application of the client and his/her return-option. It is furthermore the last step towards the international youth mobility.

The structure of a module had been shown through presenting the module of Profiling. It starts like every other module with an image, a brief summary, the learning aims, and the structure of the five phases on one page as well as a detailed explanation of the five phases.



Presentation of the Project and its Outputs – Interactive eLearning Internet Portal

After a short break the second output, the interactive E-Learning Internet Portal had been introduced. First of all the concept of eLearning had been explained and its benefits highlighted as well as the channels which are currently being used to disseminate this project and its outputs (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Xing, etc.).



The Internet Portal has been designed as an interactive e-Learning online portal for European vocational education and professional guidance counsellors. It is primarily focused on the process of counselling interviews in the field of international mobility of young people and young professionals.

It also offers a practical self-learning programme that demonstrates and provides resources on how to guide young people up to many animated and virtual exemplary dialogue sequences. This interactive, autodidactic learning programme aims at enabling guidance counsellors to acquire the most important features of the newly developed European Career Guidance Concept.

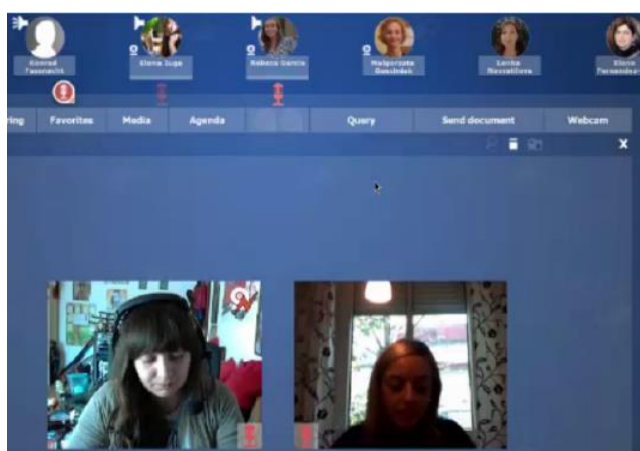
It had been highlighted that counsellors who go through this E-Guidance Training do not require prior knowledge. However, one can learn counselling through this training but it is nevertheless better to have a basic knowledge of counselling beforehand. This E-Guidance Training can be seen as an Add On to basic counselling. Furthermore, each counsellor would require their own time and flexibility to finalize the training successfully.

Future Vision – Virtual Counselling

After lunch the advanced training for counsellors and the concept of virtual counselling within a virtual classroom was presented. Virtual counselling is a tool that mostly is preferred when the issue distance occurs. In some European countries virtual counselling is widely spread and very common to use, such as in the Nordic Countries and the Netherlands for example, but others reported virtual counselling as something completely new.



Especially since young people spent a great amount of time virtually it is a new way to reach them. Virtual counselling is therefore an innovative and unique approach. It enables users to talk real-time with each other. A big advantage is that virtual counselling removes mobility and time constraints. There is the opportunity to use multiple technologies such as webinars, live streaming, etc. with asynchronous options as chat, message boards, etc. A platform which had been used by the project was *Open Meetings* (open source), but due to restrictions at the German Federal Employment Agency another additional virtual classroom had to be taken into account: *Vitero*, which could be used due to the support of the German Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport. To demonstrate the audience how a virtual classroom looks like, a real counselling example via *Vitero* was presented.



Moderated Discussion – Experiences and Sustainability of the Project

The International Conference ended with a moderated discussion where the counsellors and project partners could share their experiences with the audience. This way their point of view about the project's products was presented, how they had used the products of the project so far and also how they would use them in the future.

At this discussion took place

1. Małgorzata Gościńskiak – EURES adviser from Poland
2. Vida Drąsutė from KAUNAS University of Technology, Lithuania
3. Lenka Navrátilová EURES adviser from Czech Republic
4. Cristina Ceinos Sanz from University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain
5. Rebeca García Murias from University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain
6. Dr. Katja Bett, from Corporate Learning & Change GmbH, Germany

The moderation started with the question:

“What are your experiences within the project with the eGuidance Concept, the interactive E-Learning Internet Portal and the virtual counselling and how would you use it in the future?”



Here is a listing of the answers from the project partners:

Germany: I hope that the counsellors will continue with the advanced training on the eGuidance Concept and the concept of virtual counselling after the end of the project.

Lithuania: To my experience: We are using virtual counselling a lot in Lithuania. How do I use it in future or how do I make sure that it is used a lot? I will upload the link to the favourites of my kids' computers and also the students' ones. My opinion is that the portal is full of content, information, interaction and links to communicate with counsellors.

Poland: eCounselling is not widely spread in Poland, usually counsellors use face-to-face meetings with clients for career guidance. Of course people, especially young ones use temporary internet tools and social media. However in public institutions due to data protection procedures and internal regulations other communication tools except for phone or email are not very popular. For this reason EURES and career guidance counsellors usually use phone or email counselling. The eGuidance Concept however develops a clear path to show how to conduct simple eGuidance dialogues. It is simple due to 5 phases only. It is clear thanks to the repeatability of the phases within the content modules developed in the concept and also the concept of virtual counselling is a nice alternative.

Czech Republic: We only have experiences in virtual counselling only through emailing, but we have some issues like Poland with Skype, since it is restricted due to data protection but I personally think that the eGuidance Concept is a simple and practical tool and virtual counselling is a nice alternative and an add-on to face-to-face counselling.

Spain: The eGuidance Concept facilitates the guidance process for young people who are interested in going abroad for different reasons (educational, professional or labour). Therefore it includes a range of modules focused on guidance and which are clearly structured. It is a concept that eases the work of counsellors and supports the decision making of youth who need guidance. Since it is a model of virtual guidance it integrates the possibility of offering an e-learning initiative. For its proper use in the future it will be necessary to consider three important dimensions in an interrelated way:

- a. The use of virtual environments to establish spaces based on opportunities
- b. To assume a system on links and relationships between counsellors and young
- c. Changes in training and employment scenarios

The moderation continued with the following questions from the audience and replies from the project team:

Question: How do you distribute your project and its products?

Reply: Through conferences like this one and virtually. We hope that people who take part at a conference would disseminate the project as well, but we are using email and marketing



campaigns to make it more public. We use all the media tools we have, Facebook, YouTube, etc. and through conferences; of course we hope that the participants- you as well- will disseminate it further on.

Question: Are there already empirical results of feedback of clients (young people)?

Reply: This has to be done after the time of this project since we plan to insert an option of evaluation on the website as well.

Question: What is your scientific basis, I know you have BEKO, but what else did you use?

Reply: We did not only use BEKO as a basis and developed a practical concept out of it but we also used the results of the Delphi questionnaire, which we implemented into our eGuidance Concept. Through this we could respond to the needs of the counsellors. Additionally, we also had several workshops with our partners and EURES counsellors.

Question: How will you ensure that everyone can use these tools?

Reply: The eGuidance Concept is available in five languages on our website and it is free of charge. The interactive E-Learning Internet Portal is also available in five languages and is free of charge. Every counsellor in Europe can use this tool. However, at the Employment Agency, some restrictions take place when it comes to the usage of podcasts and videos as E-Learning tools.

When it comes to virtual counselling, the open source virtual classroom Open Meetings can be used in all countries, except for Germany. That is why we had to introduce an additional classroom, such as Vitero. Due to several restrictions of the Employment Agency, the topic of virtual counselling still has to be deeper introduced and made available not only for other European countries but also within the daily work life of interested counsellors at the Employment Agency.

Feedback from the audience

“It is frustrating that there are such good tools for virtual counselling. I put much time and effort in finding good tools, since I wanted to find a way to do virtual counselling. I’m disappointed that the Federal Agency keeps these amazing tools away from us. “

“The Federal Agency is aware of this problem and is going to change it within the Agenda 2020, but unfortunately they are not working as fast on it, as they should.”