



THE GUIDING SCHOOLS PROJECT

Guiding Schools is a project financed by the Erasmus plus (KA2) program and involves eight partners from seven European countries. The project works to define internationally and implement locally a quality framework for career guidance in secondary schools.

It will develop 4 outputs which will consist in digital tools to help schools improve their provision of career learning and guidance services.

The first product consists in a **quality framework for career learning at school**, based on the European approach of Career Management Skills.

The second is an **online self-assessment tool** to check, identify and address the gaps and improve the weakest areas of the career guidance system of each school. It will support schools to play an active role in the definition and the implementation of the main aspects of the quality framework.

The third is a new **e-learning platform** aimed at empowering the community of teachers, practitioners and school staff to implement the quality system and to support and help students in the complex task of career planning and development.

Finally, the fourth is an **integrated e-guidance platform**, to provide schools with an effective career guidance system powered through accessible digital tools, webinar and video interviews devices, video-tutorials, career software and career information resources.

The project sees the participation of the University of Bari and Centro Studi Pluriversum in Italy, University of Santiago de Compostela in Spain, GÖTEBORGS STAD, the Career Guidance Centre of the city of Göteborg in Sweden, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences in Norway, The Centre for Education and Development in Macedonia, The Square Dot team in Belgium and Deutscher Verband für Bildungs-und Berufsberatung e.V. in Germany.

WHERE DOES THE PROJECT COME FROM?

The Guiding Schools project arises from the great outcomes of a previous European KA2 project called MYFUTURE. In this project Prof. Ronald G. Sultana from the University of Malta, one of the leading experts on career guidance worldwide, was invited to create the Handbook “Enhancing the quality of career guidance in secondary schools” to help secondary schools improve quality of their career guidance services. The Handbook represents at the same time a clear and effective compendium of theoretical guidance and methodological resources for secondary schools and stakeholders involved in career guidance services (available on the [MYFUTURE](#) website). The document was presented in several international conferences and it obtained a considerable success for the interest that ministries and institutions from all over the world showed towards it (it is now available in 5 languages). The Guiding Schools project aims to move further on this valuable path in order to adapt the Handbook, and to pilot it into national contexts. In the next weeks, practitioners and experts from seven European countries (Belgium, Germany, Italy, Norway, Macedonia, Spain and Sweden) will be invited to take part in a participatory research to discuss how to improve quality of career guidance in secondary schools in their national contexts. We invite you to subscribe to the newsletter to be informed on the upcoming focus groups.



DEVELOPING QUALITY IN CAREER GUIDANCE

ERIK HAGASETH HAUG (PHD)

To develop systems for quality in career guidance is high on the agenda in European countries. In this short introduction, we will focus on main issues to pay attention to in such a development.

As a starting point, defining quality in career guidance would be useful.

DEFINING QUALITY IN CAREER GUIDANCE

The Oxford dictionary defines quality as “the standard of something as measured against other things of a similar kind; the degree of excellence of something”. Hooley and Rice (2018) describe quality assurance in career development as “a range of techniques that can be used to ensure consistency in the way that activities are approached.” As seen in the definitions, it is important to focus on (1) “what should be measured and how do we know that it is excellent?”, (2) “what should be done to meet the excellent outcome?”. This includes both how the service is organized and the concrete activities chosen to meet the expected outcomes. That said, it is important to be aware that expected outcomes, “what should be excellent”, may differ among different stakeholders. As stated by professor Sultana: “If you scratch below the surface, we discover that we have different views about what ‘quality’ really is. This is likely to depend on who we are, our social background, the evaluative criteria we use, past experiences, and so on. Most importantly, different people have different expectations and standards’ (Sultana, 2018, p. 8). Moreover, “How issues of quality are conceptualised and addressed in the field of career guidance varies across different countries and contexts for policy and practice” (Hooley & Rice, 2018).

A NEED FOR CONTEXT-RESONANT SYSTEM FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE

Following the argumentation, it is recommended to pay close attention to national, regional and even local contextual differences to ensure that the systems developed to assure quality fit the given context. This implies the need to focus on both measuring if we meet a given set of standards or recommendations, and at the same time we give attention to whether the chosen outcomes, activities and organization are relevant.



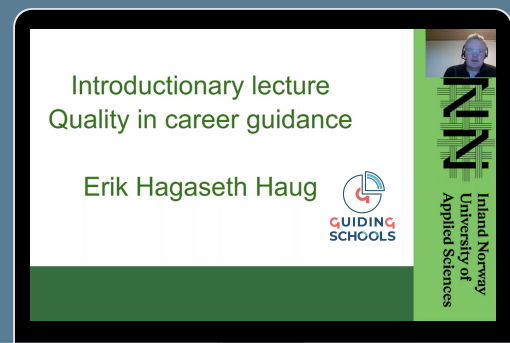
The model emphasizes an awareness of the need to ground career guidance approaches in the specificities of economic, social and cultural realities to secure that the action taken resonates with the specific issues in a given context. This implies that before a quality framework can be fully utilized, it has to be adjusted and customized according to the given contexts. It involves taking a quality system in a context perspective that considers complexity and avoids oversimplification of societal structures and mechanisms that potentially affect the usefulness of it. Building on Hooley (2019), this short introduction can be summarized as follows. A quality system cannot just be a framework that is written down (Hooley, 2019). If it is going to have an impact, both on an individual and societal level:

- it needs to be implemented and governed carefully,
- it needs to be built on lessons learnt from other countries and theoretical contributions on the complexity of quality as concept,
- it needs to be combined with a sustained awareness of the need to be context resonant for national, regional and local characteristics.



WATCH THE WEBINAR ON QUALITY IN CAREER GUIDANCE!

On the project Youtube channel, find the introductory lecture by Dr. Erik Hagaseth Haug on quality in career guidance: <https://youtu.be/Fr-jFFnnHOg>.





WHERE DOES GERMANY STAND REGARDING ASSURING QUALITY OF CAREER GUIDANCE SERVICES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS?

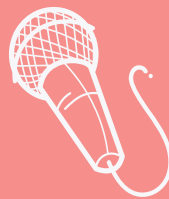
Career orientation at schools is the responsibility of the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs of the federal states, so that there are several specific guidelines on the objectives, scope and quality assurance activities within Career Orientation at schools. All concepts have the following two points in common: (1) through career guidance, students should acquire the competence to decide on their own responsibility For vocational training or study. A central concept is the expectation that these will also be successfully completed. An important aim is to avoid drop-outs from training and studies which are judged as deficits of career orientation. The theoretical basis for this is provided by the pedagogical concept of "career choice competence". (2) From policy's point of view, it is of fundamental importance that all young people enter a further step of education after their first school-leaving certificate, i. e. vocational education and training or higher education. Unemployment (NEET) is to be avoided at all costs. There are many initiatives and measures which focus on further qualifying those students that are underachieving and disadvantaged to enable them for the transition to the labour market (i.e. programmes: "education chains", "no graduation without connection"). In many cases, career guidance activities are therefore concentrated on the regional labour market and the regional structure of tertiary education institutions ("regional transition management").

Quality assurance is primarily located at school or regional level. The implementation of career guidance in schools is evaluated. However, the long-term effects of these activities cannot be measured directly. The vocational orientation programme of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) was evaluated in accompanying scientific research. Since it was aimed at pupils in the 7th-8th grade in the first phase, long-term effects cannot be noted here either. Empirical research on educational biographies and vocational transitions is gradually becoming established in Germany: on the one hand as dedicated educational research on career orientation and guidance and on the other hand in several long-term panel studies (NEPS, student survey of the DZHW)⁵, which allow conclusions to be drawn about the longer-term effects of career orientation activities and their institutional, familial and social contexts.

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