

# QUALITY ASSURANCE IN YOUTH CAREER CONSULTANCY

## Manual

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In the frame of  
*Quality Assurance in Youth Career Consultancy*  
Project № BG/06/B/F/PP-166013

ISBN: 978-954-91507-8-0

2008

With the financial support  
of Leonardo da Vinci  
Programme of EC





# QUALITY ASSURANCE IN YOUTH CAREER CONSULTANCY

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QUALITY ASSURANCE  
IN YOUTH CAREER  
CONSULTANCY

Manual

2008

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## ABBREVIATIONS

*Here are some abbreviations you will find throughout this Manual.*

<b>ICT</b>	<b>I</b> nformation and <b>C</b> ommunication <b>T</b> echnology/ies
<b>IM</b>	<b>I</b> ndicators <b>M</b> odel
<b>QA</b>	<b>Q</b> uality <b>A</b> ssurance
<b>QAF</b>	<b>Q</b> uality <b>A</b> ssurance <b>F</b> ramework
<b>QI</b>	<b>Q</b> uality <b>I</b> ndicator(s)
<b>QM</b>	<b>Q</b> uality <b>M</b> odel
<b>VET</b>	<b>V</b> ocational <b>E</b> ducation and <b>T</b> raining
<b>YCC</b>	<b>Y</b> outh <b>C</b> areer <b>C</b> onsultancy
<b>YFO</b>	<b>Y</b> oung people with <b>F</b> ewer <b>O</b> pportunities

# INTRODUCTION

## *Tendencies in Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training*

Quality assurance issues are into the focus of Quality Assurance (QA) agencies and bodies both on international level and national levels in Europe. However, there are differences in Quality Indicators (QI) and their measurement within the different Vocational Education and Training (VET) systems.

### *The European perspective*

The European Commission, following The Council Resolution and Declaration of the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, has produced framework materials like “Fundamentals of a common quality assurance framework”.

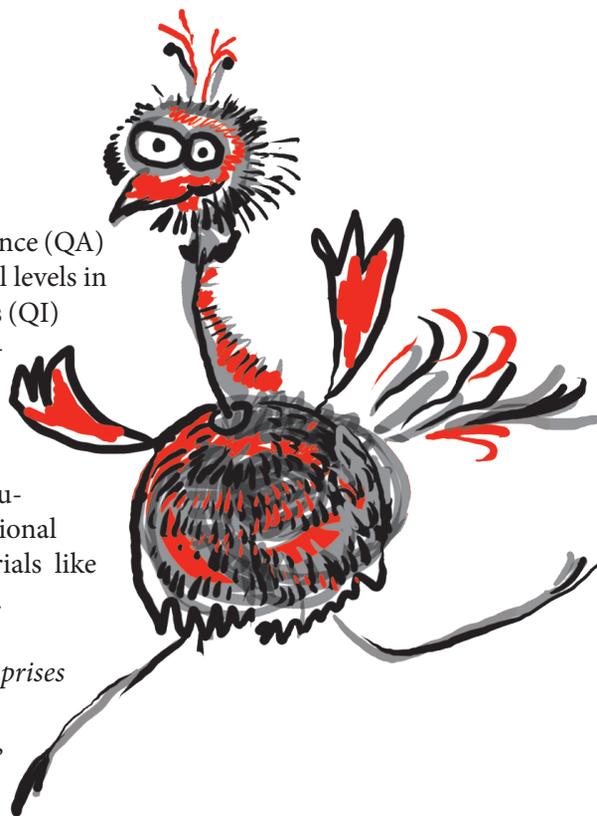
*The Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) comprises of the following key elements:*

- § a model, to facilitate planning, implementation, evaluation and review of systems at the appropriate levels in Member States;
- § a methodology for assessment and review of systems: the emphasis has been given to self assessment, combined with external evaluation;
- § a monitoring system: to be identified as appropriate at national or regional level, and possibly combined with voluntary peer review at European level;
- § a measurement tool: a set of reference indicators aiming at facilitating Member States to monitor and evaluate their own systems at national or regional levels;

The Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) constitutes a European reference framework to ensure and develop quality in Vocational Education and Training (VET), building on the key principles of the most relevant existing Quality Assurance models. It is an instrument that can support policy makers and practitioners to get a better insight of how the existing Quality Assurance models work, to identify areas of provision that need improvement, and take decisions on how to improve them based on common quantitative and qualitative references.

The CQAF can be applied at both the system and VET provider levels and can therefore be used to assess the effectiveness of VET. In total the benefits from the use of the CQAF are effectiveness, transparency and mutual trust in VET systems, within and across countries.

The European Centre for development of vocational training (CEDEFOP) is the institution that pays special attention to Quality Assurance in VET on European level.



They developed a special report “**Indicators for quality in VET. To enhance European cooperation**” (2007), focusing on the role of Quality Indicators in VET.

The study aims at developing suitable indicators to measure the quality of VET in relation to the following policy priorities set by Member States, the European Commission and the social partners: better employability of the labour force, better match between training supply and demand, better access to vocational training, in particular for vulnerable groups on the labour market. In the recent years there has been growing awareness of the importance of indicators for improving VET systems. Indicators for measuring quality are key instruments for guiding and improving the quality of education and vocational training and are necessary for the good governance of training systems and structures.

### *National approach to Quality Assurance in VET*

On national level, there is quite a significant difference in Quality Indicators of VET and Quality Assurance approaches. In some countries, Quality Indicators are mostly focusing on the administrative capacity of the services. In others we could see also such related to programmes and targets. In other countries, like UK and Ireland, the core elements of Quality Assurance (QA) are different forms of internal and external assessment. The Scottish Quality Management system, for example, is a highly evaluated system, and elements of it have been incorporated in the quality systems for VET in England, Poland, Ireland, and Australia.

The Scottish QA system has a very developed audit subsystem and well defined standards for QA. In The Netherlands as well, the strong external monitoring and control contributes the quality of VET.

Some Eastern European countries, like Bulgaria and Romania, still lack a developed Quality Assurance system in VET. The recent transformations of the labour market in this region have destroyed the old system of qualification standards and quality control and the new qualification system is still in a process of development. Eastern European countries are facing very dynamic development of career services and particularly youth career services.

UK is one of the countries with most developed youth services at all in Europe. In most towns there are a number of youth services like youth information centres, youth career centres, housing centres, health-care centres, drug prevention centres, and multicultural centres. In order to maintain the quality of services, the local authorities and national authorities are usually developing standards and instruments for assessment for those services. Some council authorities in UK have QA materials for the general youth work including some elements about QA in the youth career guidance. Moreover, some of the UK local authorities are trying to develop QI and frameworks for the general youth work and to develop standards and common/recognized curricula for the youth workers (the Cambridgeshire framework for QA, Barnsley QA framework, Plymouth City Council quality standards for youth work etc.).

In Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain and some other countries, there are just few materials about QA of youth work in the youth centres. So, in most of the European countries there is a lack of any QA resources related to YCC.

### ***Manual content, structure and users***

The manual consists of three parts: Part 1 is focusing on theory with the main concepts introduced, presenting the developed set of Quality Indicators (QA), Indicators Model (QM) and Quality Assurance Framework (QAF). Part 2 focuses on practical aspects of implementation of Quality Assurance within the institution. References and glossary of terms constitute Part 3.

This material has been developed for career services managers and consultants, youth workers and trainers. The manual could be also valuable for Quality Assurance bodies like Quality Assurance agencies and institutions in the field of career guidance and particularly in the youth career services.

The manual also pays special attention to Quality Assurance of the guidance services provision to **youth with fewer opportunities** /YFO/.

The beginners in Quality Assurance in youth career consultancy matters are encouraged to read very carefully both sections starting from the Quality Assurance terms and concepts which include a lot of definitions and clarifications of some important aspects of QA, like the aim of the quality, the stakeholders in the quality management process, the bases on which the Quality Indicators have been established, etc. The beginners could also start with the examples published in Part 2 of this manual or with the different cases presented in the QA workbook (published separately). The advanced users could find innovative and state-of-the-art developments concerning the Quality Indicators measurement, the structure of the indicators, Indicators Model and other important issues in QA process. They will also find some up-to-date concepts of QA framework.

The institutions and agencies can learn about the current tendencies and problems of QA in YCC and can use them as a basis for QA policies and practices development. Last but not least, the consultants and young people can learn from this material what the quality service should look like and what the expectations concerning the quality of guidance are.

### ***Young people with fewer opportunities***

#### **Definition<sup>1</sup>**

“Young people with fewer opportunities” (or “youth with fewer opportunities”<sup>2</sup>) are young people that are at a disadvantage compared to their peers because they face one or more of the situations and obstacles listed below.

<sup>1</sup> Salto - Youth resource center, <http://www.salto-youth.net/inclusiondefinition/>

<sup>2</sup> Within the current manual, for both terms “young people with fewer opportunities” and “youth with fewer opportunities” we use the abbreviation “YFO”

In certain contexts, these situations/obstacles prevent young people from having effective access to formal and non-formal education, career guidance and counselling, trans-national mobility and from participation, active citizenship, empowerment and inclusion in society at large. Those specific needs may be caused by social, economic and geographical obstacles, status of disability and health problems, educational difficulties and cultural differences.

#### **Social obstacles**

Young people facing discrimination (because of gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, etc.), young people with limited social skills or anti-social or risky sexual behaviours, young people in a precarious situation, (ex) offenders, (ex) drug addicts, young and/or single parents, orphans, young people from broken families, etc.

#### **Economic obstacles**

Young people with a low standard of living, low income, dependence on social welfare system, long-term unemployed youth, homeless young people, young people in debt or in financial problems, etc.

#### **Disability**

Young people with mental (intellectual, cognitive, learning), physical, sensory or other disabilities.

#### **Educational difficulties**

Young people with learning difficulties, early school-leavers and school drop-outs, lowly or non-qualified persons, young people who didn't find their way in the school system, young people with poor school performance because of a different cultural/linguistic background, etc.

#### **Cultural differences**

Young immigrants or refugees or descendants from immigrant or refugee families, young people belonging to a national or ethnic minority, young people with linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion problems, etc.

#### **Health problems**

Young people with chronic health problems, severe illnesses or psychiatric conditions, young people with mental health problems, etc.

#### **Geographical obstacles**

Young people from remote, rural or hilly areas, young people living on small islands or peripheral regions, young people from urban problem zones, young people from less serviced areas (limited public transport, poor facilities, abandoned villages...), etc.

# PART 1

FOCUSING ON THEORY

## CHAPTER 1



# INTRODUCTION TO QUALITY ASSURANCE

## KEYWORDS

Quality Assurance; Types of QA, Role of QA in YCC

## OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAPTER

The aim of the current chapter is to present the key issues related to Quality Assurance (QA) and its importance in the process of youth career consultancy. In order to clarify and explore its parameters, aims, types and role, it is useful to acquire some knowledge about the concept of quality and its aim.

The chapter introduces the idea of Quality Assurance (QA), on the basis of which the rest of the chapters in this theoretic part of the manual are developed. These are dedicated to Quality Model of youth career consultancy (YCC), Quality Assurance Framework and Quality Indicators (QI). By reading these one can obtain useful knowledge about the key aspects of the Quality Assurance process in the youth career guidance sector.

## INTRODUCTION

The Quality Assurance in Youth Career Consultancy /QA in YCC/ project has developed a unique Indicators Model (IM) in the field of youth career guidance, addressing the specific needs of the key stakeholders in the field of youth career consultancy. The model is based on the FIVE-step systematic approach to quality and identifies the key elements in the Quality Assurance process: context – input – process – output – outcome. Its aim is to improve the quality of the youth career services provision, as well as provide key stakeholders with innovative Quality Assurance tools and instruments (both paper-based and interactive, online-based).

The concept of quality and Quality Assurance is fundamental for understanding the QA in YCC project. So this chapter provides information on key issues related to it.

### *1.1. Importance and aims of quality*

The term **quality** is often used in a vague, blurred way. If someone speaks about working on quality, he or she may simply mean activities designed to improve the organisation and its services.

Quality is essentially about learning what you are doing well and what should be done in order to improve it. It also means finding out what you may need to change to make sure you meet the needs of your users. Quality is about knowing what you want to do and how to do it, learning from what you have done, using what you have learnt to develop your organisation and its services, as well as achieving what you have set out to do satisfying your stakeholders.

You are likely to find that your organisation has already developed some elements of a quality initiative. But what in fact is offered by a **'quality' approach** is a coherent framework considering the management and improvement of organisations – a sys-

tems view of the organisation. Good quality is a relative concept, dependant on the constant changes in the sector, in the society as well as in the needs and expectations of the young people.

The most important to remember is that **quality has aim which could be different for the different stakeholders** (key participants) in the process. For example, firstly from the manager's point of view, the quality could be related to service, everyday functioning and implementing of the regulations and standards in the guidance. Secondly, for the employer the quality could be related to the ability of the users to enter the labour market after receiving some career guidance, and thirdly for the young user the quality could mean access and adequate communication with the consultants. That is why it is important to explore and judge the aims of the quality **when planning the QA**.

## 1.2. Quality Assurance

### *What is Quality Assurance?*

**Quality Assurance (QA)** encompasses all actions taken to ensure that standards and procedures are adhered to and that delivered products or services meet the performance requirements. QA may also be interpreted as planned systematic activities necessary to ensure that a system conforms to established technical requirements. Last but not least, QA refers to policy, procedures, and systematic actions established in an organization for the purpose of providing and maintaining a specified degree of confidence.

Some experts in their documents are mentioning **quality monitoring** or **quality control**. In these cases, the focus is mostly on monitoring aspects and procedures to achieve the quality. **Each quality measure should lead to some procedures**. And these procedures should be monitored (controlled). Within the project Quality Assurance (QA) is a term used in a broader aspect. It doesn't relate only to the quality monitoring.

### *Types of Quality Assurance*

We can identify different types of Quality Assurance (QA). On the one hand, there is QA with a view to the process of youth career guidance. This means that you can assess the quality at each of the stages of the **process**: context – input /resources/ – process – output – outcome by means of the so-called process quality indicators.

On the other hand, you can evaluate the youth career services with respect to the **system**. In this case, you can use the so-called system Quality Indicators in order to explore to which extend these services can assure quality on management and policy level.

Last but not least, you can explore the Quality Assurance on the basis of the different stakeholders. There are some indicators specifically targeting the ca-



reer consultants/youth workers and others that explore and relate to the users of these career services.

In addition to the above mentioned **process level** and **system level** QA, we could see **external and internal QA procedures**. In some cases, the QA is implemented inside the organization and the body responsible for this is inside the organization. In other cases, the QA body is external, like QA agencies, institutions, etc. In an ideal case, it is good to have both mechanisms and to find the way to introduce and define both of them.

#### *Stakeholders in the Quality Assurance process*

There are different stakeholders in the QA process. Some of them are directly involved in the career guidance provision; others are responsible for the elaboration of tools for improvement of the service or are competent to take the steps of introducing the QA on internal (institutional) or external (regional, national) level.

So, the stakeholders of the QA process are:

- § youth policy makers;
- § youth centres managers;
- § youth leaders;
- § instructional designers;
- § youth consultants;
- § youth workers;
- § users of the services;

Details and description of the concrete role of each of these stakeholders are available in Chapter 1 of the Practical part of the manual.

### **1.3. The role of Quality Assurance in the process of youth career consultancy**

The primary goal of the Quality Assurance is to improve the quality of the service to young people. “Quality assurance has real merit because it forces institutions to evaluate their practices to see if they match their beliefs” (Thomas S, Muirhead D. 2000). QA is often perceived as an additional burden to an already heavy workload, which does not offer any direct benefit to tutors or learners.

Quality Assurance must be **objective, professional, credible, recognized, iterative and continuous**; and this requires a team approach with both client and consultant perspective and with expertise in evaluation, teaching and learning, and technology.

When starting some QA system, it is important to agree on **principles** on which the system will be based. Introducing the QA in the service could start with identification of the **quality areas**. It is important to agree in advance which areas need quality improvement and quality monitoring. It is also necessary to agree on the **level of improvement** (standards) you would like to keep or achieve. Another important thing to

do is to explore how the data/evidence for Quality Assurance could be collected. Data should be **measurable** or able to be converted to quantities. The QA system should allow processing of the data and formulating some decisions for **further actions** (aiming quality improvement). It should be clear what the **responsibilities** of different bodies or persons in the system are, for example the manager, the consultant, the Board etc. Of course, the clarification how to combine **internal QA measures** (self-assessment measures) with **external QA** (audits, external control) is also part of the QA system principles. These are some examples of the typical principles that every QA system is based on.

*The Quality Assurance process in the context of youth career guidance has some main aspects:*

1. To enable the managers of youth centres/career services to monitor and evaluate the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of services to young people.
2. To provide a mechanism for youth career consultants and those working in partnership with the youth service, to assess the quality of their interventions with young people.
3. To enable youth workers/ career consultants to monitor the impact of the services upon the lives of young people and identify areas for improvement.
4. To provide additional assistance to socialise young people with fewer opportunities and motivate them to participate in the labour market together with their peers.

*Some of the main consequences of introducing the QA in the youth career guidance are:*

1. The service will become more efficient and the users and stakeholders will be more satisfied.
2. The **recognition** of the service by the authorities and by the market players (like employers) will be higher.
3. The **comparativeness and sustainability** of the service will be also higher which is important in the era of global market; It is also important because of the great variety of other existent youth services.
4. The **cost/value parameter of the service** will be improved which will attract future supporters and sponsors and will lead to future development and enlargement of youth career guidance services.

# CHAPTER 2



# KEY ELEMENTS OF QA (QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK)

## KEYWORDS

Quality Assurance Framework, harmonization with existing frameworks

## OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAPTER

The aim of this chapter is to analyze the QA elements of the youth career consultancy process (QA framework) and their effectiveness in meeting the needs of the user. In addition, the chapter will explore the external factors influencing the QA.

## INTRODUCTION

The QA process is always influenced by a lot of external settings and processes. The current policy in the field, the society expectations, the legislation, the European tendencies and other factors are related to the establishment of any QA system. Some external processes, like regulations and directives, have stronger impact and are closely related to the format of the quality monitoring. Some of them, like family conditions, are likely to be far from career guidance but they also have quite an important influence.

## 2.1. *The young person in context*

Although the QA tasks are the main responsibility of managers and policy makers, **the users are the starting point in every quality related process.**

One of the important questions is **when the career guidance starts?** Does it start when choosing the type of a high school or a vocational school; does it start when entering the university or when kids and teens in a primary school are having study visits and work-based lessons? Does the career guidance start in the family, when parents are showing their children their own occupation and explaining them what they work?

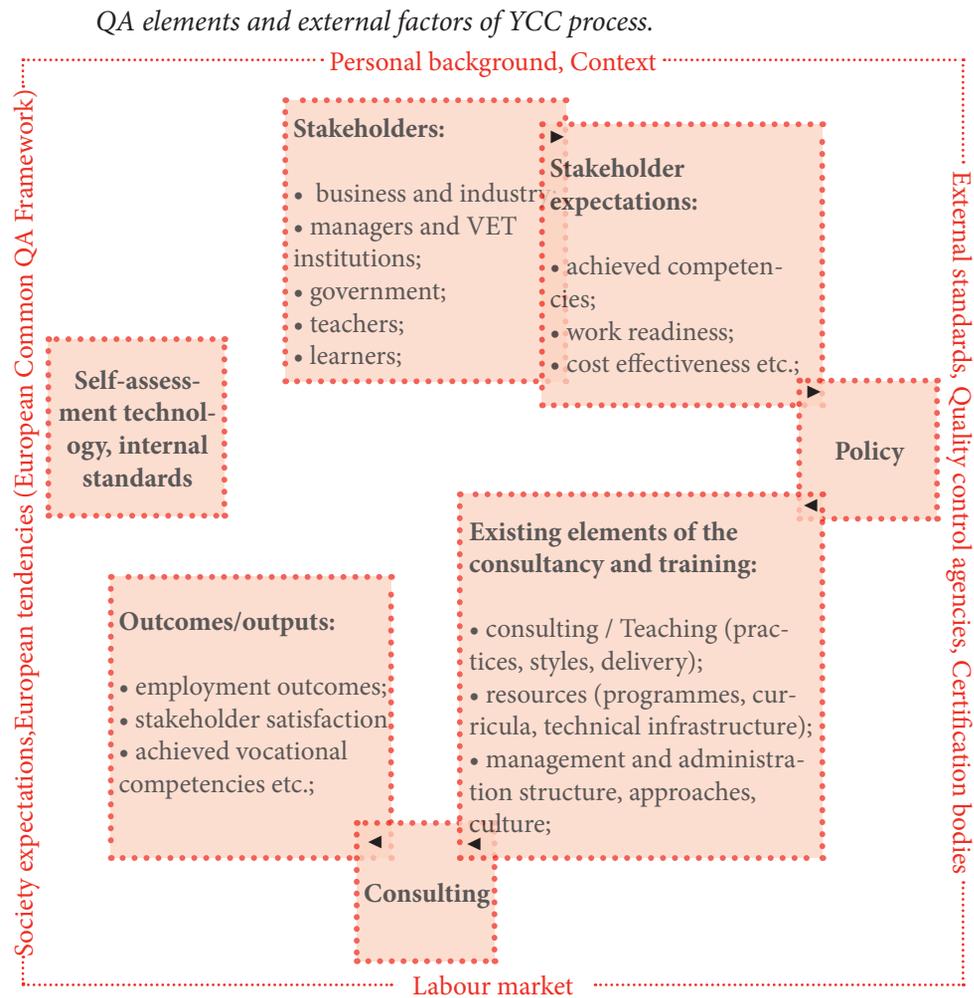
The age at which a young person is encouraged to begin thinking about career aspiration, may vary in different regions. This process usually involves the young person choosing from a set of academic options, which will provide him/her with a basis of learning in order to move towards the career chosen or alternatively provide the young person with a basis for a post 16 training or education. These options sit alongside mandatory subjects such as Maths, English, Science and Language.

As far as young people with fewer opportunities are concerned, career counselling involves not only choice from academic options but encouragement of the self-esteem of the client and objective awareness of their own potential. Career counselling for this target group (young people with fewer opportunities) is essential so that they receive the relevant guidance as to what academic courses or training to start with.



From this process one could assume that young people are starting from a similar point. However, there will be a range of external influences, which affects the young people and their decisions and so creates a wide range of starting points for young people. These influences are often out of the control of young people and may as a result require the intervention of a range of services/organisations to support both the individual and their family. This process of support will have to happen before the young person can even begin to consider entering into the YCC process.

The following figure (framework) illustrates the external factors and processes affecting the Quality Assurance of youth career consultancy.



## **2.2. Family and societal influence**

Through discussion and the continuing development of an effective working relationship with the young person, the counsellor will be able to gain a better understanding of the starting point for each young person entering the YCC process. **The framework**

therefore can be used as **a guide as to the best way of directing the young person towards an appropriate, achievable and realistic goal.**

The youth service, for example, aims to engage with the most disengaged/disaffected young people in society. This may include young people either excluded from school or those who for whatever reason have dropped out of the school system. Therefore a youth worker's **starting point may be to deal with the most basic needs** in his hierarchy of needs. Youth workers may have to begin by addressing issues of housing, sorting out benefits, supporting them through mental health issues, addressing immediate health needs or issues of personal safety and risky behaviour. The next stage may be working on developing self-esteem, motivation, etc. It is only when these issues are addressed that a young person may be ready to consider re-entering the system and therefore potentially entering the workforce.

Since the specific needs of the target group may vary (they may be caused by social economic, and geographical obstacles, there may be difference in the status of disability and health problems or cultural differences), it is the counsellors' responsibility to determine the specific needs of the clients and choose a starting point- different in each case.

Any young person entering the YCC process will experience certain influences upon their lives, some of which they will not be aware of. For example, a young man walking into the youth career consultancy office may not necessarily make the connection between his life chances and the global influences that have contributed to his status. In terms of the starting point for that individual, an assessment will need to occur to provide the counsellor with a benchmark in terms of experience, ability, aspiration, needs and wants. The counsellor will then need to develop a realistic career or work plan for the individual, which sets out a staged learning plan.

The more skilled and experienced young people, however, may simply require information about options available for them and will enter into those processes themselves. Whatever the starting point for the young person may be, the framework should highlight the Quality Indicators and their relevance to the YCC process. The definitions of a quality provision highlighted through this project will outline and emphasise good practice in career consultancy.

Supporting young people through these stages can be very time consuming and it may not clearly elucidate the core aims of the youth work process. Youth work is about informal education, moving young people through a process where they are more able to make informed choices on the issues affecting them and decisions they may have to take in life. The reality is that young people have to work in order to survive. It is their decision whether to go out of the system after being consulted. However, this will not put an end to the process and the individual is free to re-enter it at any time.

Considering the conclusions above, it is obvious that understanding of the framework is also related to the **motivation of the user** and his/her **abilities to enter the**

**career guidance process.** For example, in **Maslow's psychological theory**, introduced in his 1943 paper 'A Theory on Human Motivation' he supposed that humans need to meet basic needs before they can seek to satisfy successfully higher needs that occupy a set hierarchy. Therefore, as the needs in each section of the triangle are met we are able to move upwards towards self-actualisation.

### **2.3. Harmonization with existing frameworks**

The framework presented above is a general model which may appear in quite different formats in different countries. **In some cases the structure of the guidance process like "input-process-output" could be considered a framework.** For example, Connexions (UK) has a comprehensive electronic Management Information System (MIS), which requires evidence of context, input, process, output and outcome: the headings identified within our project Indicators Model. The European Commission has also published framework proposals based on the guidance process structure. But here we will consider the framework a set of external conditions and requirements influencing the YCC process.

Despite the different understanding of the YCC framework format, it is clear that the **career guidance needs to be synchronized with some external settings.** It is mainly the policy makers and management body who have to decide on the process of harmonization. Therefore, they have to choose the priority areas for harmonization. It is always a slow and difficult process, and that's why it needs a good understanding and professional approach.

**Unfortunately, there are no recipes.** For example, for some guidance centres the priority could be the harmonization with local employers' requirements, but for others this would be the harmonization with the European tendencies.

**The understanding of the framework contributes to the quality of the guidance process.** The area of YCC work cannot exist in a vacuum.

**One service cannot meet the diversity of needs** of young people but could be more likely to do it through cooperation with all organisations working with young people. For example, in UK, a recent government paper 'Every Child Matters' and the consequent requirement for development of Trusts in each community highlight the absolute necessity for cooperation if we want to respond effectively to the needs of young people. We have referred earlier to the ways in which Quality Assurance in YCC is evaluated in the UK. Standards for YCC are set nationally and monitoring responsibility is devolved to a local government department, which sits outside of local councils. This process ensures an objective evaluation of the work outside of the internal evaluation processes of YCC organisations (Connexions). In some countries, like Bulgaria and Slovakia, the framework is a directive of the government which is not obligatory. In these countries the organizations are using the framework as a reference for better service and future development.

# CHAPTER 3



# QUALITY MODEL: DIFFERENT APPROACHES AND PRINCIPLES

## KEYWORDS

Quality Model; Quality Assurance; Quality Standards; recent trends in QA

## OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAPTER

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a brief overview of some current practices and trends in Quality Assurance in selected European countries as well as in the USA and Canada. It also outlines lessons to be learned from this experience while specific attention is paid to the guidelines on quality standards used by OECD and in the UK.

## INTRODUCTION

Models applied to Quality Assurance in the area of career guidance in different countries reflect different traditions and environments. On the one hand, there are countries exploiting highly sophisticated systems for almost precise evaluation of counselling services and, on the other, countries in which career counselling was traditionally deemed as an integral part of educational activities and only recently special attention has been paid to this field.

Quality Model has different definitions and aspects. In most of the cases it is related to some existing standards but in some cases it is described as a part of a QA system. This part usually includes quality areas (spheres chosen for quality monitoring) and a structure of Quality Indicators.

On the following pages, attention will be paid to the systems developed by professional institutions and intended for general use.

## ***3.1. Trends in career guidance Quality Assurance in Europe***

In recent years, the European Commission and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) have focused on career guidance as a part of a life-long learning and economic and social development. They point out that creating smooth transitions from education to work is decisive for the national as well as for the global economy. In this context, quality issues in guidance come to the policy-making forefront.



The study of experience and practice mainly in the EU countries indicates certain trends. It seems that most of the existing guidelines or standards focusing on quality issues in career counselling are aimed at the following three target groups or areas:

- § consumer, i.e. the general public;
- § guidance of professionals and their competences;
- § quality of the information provided in careers guidance and counselling;

For example, Quality Assurance work in the UK includes some highly detailed quality standards which prescribed the *competences* of guidance practitioners in great detail (NACCEG Standards). In this case, the actual competencies and performance of guidance staff are seen as crucial in terms of quality in the counselling process. The focus is on how they actually perform, but not on how they are trained.

Other standards have focused on the quality of informational material or learning outcomes. But in general, distinction can be drawn between (1) standards related to inputs and processes versus standards related to outcomes; (2) standards derived from the viewpoint of the client/customer versus standards derived from the need for public accountability; (3) self-assessed standards versus external accreditation standards; and (4) general guidelines versus specific measurable standards (PLANT 2003).

From the point of view of the developers, some standards have been produced by a single counselling association, whereas other by national organizations or councils.

*As an example of a well-elaborated model of Quality Assurance, the Eurocounsel may be mentioned. The model is based on three basic concepts:*

- § access (clients targeted, physical/social/linguistic access);
- § process (objectives, organization, monitoring, time spent with clients, guidance interviews, information);
- § output (number of people taking up job/training/education, value for money);
- § the model is fairly straightforward but as some of the items are difficult to verify it continues to function as an administrative tool;

*A study on the quality of Danish career guidance lists a number of generic quality indicators, such as:*

- § client centeredness;
- § accessibility, transparency and coherence of the services;
- § well-trained guidance staff;
- § valid, precise and comprehensive career information;
- § referral to other guidance specialists;
- § follow-up;

This short list has recently been expanded, among others, by incorporating the Danish Ethical Guidelines for Educational and Vocational Guidance. These guidelines include such requirements as the need of counselling to be: impartial and independent, open, confidential, and correct.

In contrast to the Danish ethical guidelines, the Swedish ones are much more radical in societal terms. Swedish counsellors are guided to care for disadvantaged members of society and provide for “justice and equality”.

### **3.2. Trends in career guidance Quality Assurance in the USA and Canada**

As far as the quality of *information standards* is concerned, several sets of guidelines have been issued by the American National Career Development Association (NCDA), including:

- § guidelines for the preparation and evaluation of career and occupational information literature;
- § guidelines for the use of the internet for provision of career information and planning services;
- § guidelines for the preparation and evaluation of video career media;
- § career software review guidelines;

All these types of guidelines are mostly related to web-based guidance and to information qualities.

Highly detailed guidelines and standards on information related issues have also been designed in Canada. In addition, however, great attention is aimed at *guidance professionals* in the document entitled the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners. They cover major competences and areas of specialization in the form of specific needs required from the people working in career development, such as certain *attitudes* (insightful, honest, open-minded, result-oriented), *skills* (to be able to document client interactions and progress, collect, analyze and use information, etc.), *knowledge* (career development models and theories, components of the career planning process, etc.), or *ethical behaviour*.

### **3.3. Lessons to be learnt**

An overview of recent years practice in several countries indicates lessons to be learnt from this experience. Three key ones may be suggested, namely that:

1. A national Quality Assurance system is essential,
2. The balance between certainty and flexibility will have to be workable but will not be perfect.
3. Good guidance rests ultimately on a good professional (HAWTHORN).

*Based on the above, it may be generalized that quality is measured for a number of reasons, e.g.:*

- § political reasons (to justify the service);
  - § funding purposes (to show that the service is worthwhile);
  - § measure client progress (to assess implementation of planned objectives);
  - § record what is happening (monitoring);
  - § strategic planning (organizational development);
  - § practice and policy development (assessing good practice, bench marking)
- (WATT 1998);

Available research results indicate the main point of a framework used for assuring quality in career guidance and counselling:

**Appropriateness of guidance methods**

The guidance methods used should have a theoretical and/or scientific basis, relevant to the purpose for which they are used;

**Continuous improvement**

Guidance services should have a culture of continuous improvement involving regular citizen feedback and provide opportunities for staff for continuous training;

**Right of redress**

Clients should have an entitlement to complain through a formal procedure if they deem the guidance they have received to be unsatisfactory;

**Competent staff**

Staff providing guidance should have nationally accredited competencies to identify and address the client's needs (CAREER GUIDANCE 2004).

### ***3.4. Availability of guidelines on quality standards***

Only recently, the OECD launched a review of policies for career information, guidance and counselling services in which 37 countries were covered. The 10 features of lifelong guidance systems have been framed as criteria which policy-makers can use to examine the adequacy of their current guidance systems in lifelong terms, and to determine **priorities for action**. The 10 features are:

- ✂ transparency and ease of access over the lifespan, including a capacity to meet the needs of a diverse range of clients;
- ✂ attention to key transition points over the lifespan;
- ✂ flexibility and innovation in service delivery to reflect the differing needs and circumstances of diverse client groups;
- ✂ processes to stimulate individuals to engage in regular review and planning;
- ✂ access to individual guidance by appropriately qualified practitioners for those who need such help, at times when they need it;
- ✂ programmes for all young people to develop their career-management skills;
- ✂ opportunities to investigate and experience learning and work options before choosing them;
- ✂ access to service delivery that is independent of the interests of particular institutions or enterprises;
- ✂ access to comprehensive and integrated educational, occupational and labour market information;
- ✂ active involvement of relevant stakeholders;

(WATTS, SULTANA 2003)

An overview of the availability of quality standards in career counselling indicates that there is little regular and systematic evaluation of the quality of career guidance services in most countries. Standards for the quality of services do not exist at all or

are present only in some of the sectors. Where quality standards exist, they tend to be voluntary rather than mandatory. Inspection of services against these quality standards is the exception rather than the rule. Only occasionally do quality standards have checking procedures or sanctions attached to them.

### **3.5. Guidelines on quality in some European countries**

#### *The guidelines on quality standards in the UK*

One of the few countries where systematic attention to quality standards for career guidance delivery is devoted is the United Kingdom. In the absence of quality frameworks, there is an over-reliance on staff qualifications or professional codes of practice to assure quality. Frequently these cover only some forms of provision.

A set of standards was initially developed by the Guidance Council. The Matrix Quality Standard, as it is now known, covers five areas that directly concern the ways through which individuals are provided help (for example, how effectively they are provided help to explore options, to make choices, or to gain access to information) and five areas that concern the ways in which services are managed (for example, how well they make use of client feedback, or develop their staff's skills). Career guidance organisations wishing to be accredited against the Standard are assessed by an external body, currently the Guidance Accreditation Board. Organisations wishing to receive government funds for career guidance provision must possess such accreditation. The Standard can also be used for quality improvement, with the aid of consultants from the Guidance Council.

In general, career services in the UK, in order to meet the given requirements, must ensure the provision of readily accessible, well organised, accurate, unbiased, comprehensive and up-to-date careers and labour market information.

*As stated in official documents, the information must cover:*

- § the requirements and demands of the full range of occupations and the routes into these occupations;
- § the labour market and trends in supply and demand in each occupational sector;
- § general skill, qualification and other patterns and trends within the labour market, which are relevant to client decisions about learning and skill development;
- § how to find and keep a job;
- § specific education, training and employment opportunities, including:
  - § special provision for clients with special needs;
  - § information about students' achievements and destinations produced by colleges under section 50 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992;
  - § information about the full range of local training opportunities and about the careers to which they lead;
  - § self-employment - sources of funding and other information to enable individuals to take advantage of the education, training and employment opportunities available;
- § occupational information;

*Careers services must ensure that comprehensive occupational information is available on:*

- § the occupations available locally and nationally at the various entry levels within each occupational sector;
- § the requirements and demand of these occupations;
- § the alternative entry and qualification routes, including A/AS levels, GN-VQs, NVQs, Modern Apprenticeships and National Traineeships;
- § the opportunities for progression and recognised careers paths from the various entry levels;
- § the education and training requirements of occupations and the routes into such education and training, including college and university prospectuses;

*Careers services must ensure that they:*

- § have adequate and up-to-date regional, national and international labour market information so that client career decisions can be made in the knowledge of job opportunities and employment trends;
- § make this information available to clients and their parents/guardians and educational institutions in a form, which is easily understandable;

*Careers and other relevant information must:*

- § be accurate and up-to-date;
- § be balanced and free from bias;
- § seek to raise clients' expectations and aspirations whilst also being able to challenge unrealistic goals;
- § promote equality of opportunity by actively countering stereotyping in all its forms;

(OECD REVIEW)

### *Guidelines of career guidance in Lithuania*

Career guidance system is in the process of development in Lithuania. That's why Quality Assurance issues in career guidance are only in the strategic planning level. The Strategic Guidelines of Career Guidance in Lithuania indicate few basic indicators of Quality Assurance in career guidance. They are closely related to the strategic objectives for career guidance. These indicators are following:

1. *Accessibility* – all inhabitants have to have equal opportunities to get services of career guidance, regardless of their place of living, social status, etc.
2. *Expedience* – the services correspond to individual needs of inhabitants and society.
3. *Efficiency* – change of the career guidance services, which is determined according to the changes in the labour market, are evaluated.
4. *Qualified professionals of career guidance* – professionals, who have proper background and competence.
5. *Active dialogue with social partners* – educational institutions, employers, labour exchange, trade unions, public authorities.
6. *Modern technical and methodical equipment* – diversity of software, ap-

proved curriculum and methodical materials.

7. *Reliability of information* – actual, right and reliable information about the educational opportunities and conditions and situations in the labour market.

### *Quality in guidance in Ireland*

The National Guidance Forum /NGF/ of Ireland developed Quality Guidelines which would assist organisations and agencies, involved in provision of guidance related services, to improve the quality of service provided to clients. The Guidelines recognize that guidance services can be accessed at any stage of an individual's life and recommend that to ensure individuals are receiving a quality guidance service, it is imperative that such services are evaluated with overall responsibility assigned to the service provider.

The Guidelines present a framework for the development of guidance related services.

*There are eleven key areas of Quality Assurance:*

1. Accessibility.
2. Appropriateness.
3. Confidentiality within the law.
4. Equality of opportunity.
5. Impartiality.
6. Individual.
7. Ownership and Responsibility.
8. Integrated, quality standards of service.
9. Team Approach.
10. Transparency.
11. Complaints handling.

### *Bulgaria – vocational and occupational standards*

In some countries there are still some differences between the **vocational** and **occupational standards**. In some of the documents standardizing the vocational programmes, the list of professions or requirements related to those professions are not coherent to the list of requirements mentioned in the occupational standards. Even more, in some cases the list of professions is not tightly related to the occupational standards which bring some discrepancy and non-coherence in the chain: jobs description, occupational standards and vocational standards.

This discrepancy often occurs because of the lack of regular communication between the different bodies or institutions working on the elaboration of such standards. In some countries occupational standards are developed by agencies or directorates related to the ministries of labour while the vocational standards are often established by the structures of the ministries of education.

In Bulgaria, last few years, a number of actions have been implemented to overcome this discrepancy. The attempt to synchronize the list of jobs, occupational requirements and vocational requirements is related to enhancing the collaboration between the main stakeholders in the career development field – policy makers, employers, teachers and career consultants. This process, in Bulgaria, led to the establishment of so-called State Educational Requirements (standards) for acquiring qualifications, elaborated by the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET).

One modern tendency should be also mentioned. The big companies usually have their own qualification certification systems. They have list of qualifications and respective training programs and exams to prove the level. Sometimes, such companies require from their employees to complete a particular certification course in addition to the regular education in order to be able to take some job places. Having in mind that some of those companies are international leaders in some sectors their standards and certificates are quite valuable.

Last but not least, the companies are more flexible in terms of standards and certifications than the state institutions. The set of nowadays professions is very dynamic and sometimes the official lists and official vocational standards are not very close to the current market situation.

### ***3.6. Enhanced Quality Model applicable in counselling people with fewer opportunities***

QA in YCC project pays special attention to different aspects of the young people's backgrounds (e.g. policy, society expectations, economy, etc.) These issues, however, are not sufficient when a young person with fewer opportunities is involved in the counselling process. The following Quality Model (QM) is trying to take into consideration the specific needs of the disadvantaged and disabled young people and provide them with the relevant career counselling service.

The model, enhanced within QA in YCC project, consists of five elements based on the structure of the established Quality Indicators in youth career consultancy. They focus on the context in which service is delivered, human resources involved, the process of service provision, feedback of provided service, and effects of provided service. The sets of statements formulated under the five headings are meant as Quality Indicators to be responded by evaluators. A grading scale that may be applied to the checklist may consist of simple verbal expressions such as: yes, to some extent, no.

*Context in which the service is delivered*

*Especially for people with fewer opportunities, the following specific components should be incorporated in the context of delivering counselling services:*

1. Stick to national and European legislation, regarding mentioned group.
2. Counselling tailored to abiding human and civil rights of clients with fewer opportunities.
3. Maintaining of helpful contacts with relevant bodies/professionals closely working with people with fewer opportunities (resource tutors, personal/social assistants, mentors, therapists, etc.).
4. Providing specialised services, adjusted to the needs of people with fewer opportunities.
5. Maintaining of consultancy process in surrounding, adequately equipped with specialised facilities (clearly designated offices, wheelchair ramps and elevators, sound signalling, specialised software applications for people with disabilities, usage of informational materials, written in simplified and understandable language, etc.).

*Human resources involved*

*The staff counselling people with fewer opportunities should:*

1. Demonstrate empathy and responsiveness. For instance, career consultant can easily check these two skills by answering a short set of self-assessment questions, such as:
  - § “Upon contact with my client I create friendly environment”;
  - § “By asking about my client’s wishes and making suggestions I am also sensitive to wishes that he/she does not mention explicitly”;
  - § “I show empathy by providing feedback on how I understand my client”;
  - § “I react to my client’s wishes and needs”;
  - § “I stick to our agreements”.
2. Be adequately trained in exploitation of specialised equipment and facilities.
3. Use all available resources and channels for seeking suitable work-placement and permanent jobs for people with fewer opportunities.

*Clients with fewer opportunities should:*

1. Be advised of whom to contact for additional support (e.g. how to take part in vocational training courses and to participate in self-confidence raising trainings).
2. Be supported by the consultant in accessing, understanding and using information available through various resources relevant to their needs.
3. Be preliminarily informed about the specialised services they could use.
4. Be guaranteed that their confidentiality and intimacy is kept.

5. Be given the chance to regularly provide feed back for their satisfaction from counselling process.

6. Be predisposed to share their specific problems and barriers, caused by their social status.

#### *The process of service provision*

*The process of service provision for people with fewer opportunities includes:*

1. Preliminarily defined client's expectations, carefully considered in accordance with his/her abilities.

2. Formulation of achievable aims.

3. Identification of probable challenges, which could be faced by the client while searching for a job.

4. Counselling in a way, rising client's competitiveness on the open labour market.

5. Clear, accessible and up-to-date information about the new tendencies in the employment of people with fewer opportunities.

6. Regularly held case studies, describing the advance of the client and the level of his satisfaction from counselling services (case studies can be saved in the form of tape recordings or in a written form).

#### *Feedback of provided service*

In counselling people with fewer opportunities the reliability of services should be monitored by external observers – practitioners working with this target group.

#### *Effects of provided service*

*An effect sought within counselling people with fewer opportunities is:*

1. Raise of number of the consulted people with fewer opportunities.

2. Expansion of employability of clients with fewer opportunities after the end of the consultancy process.

3. Support of clients with fewer opportunities after being employed in order to ensure their job retention.

This is an attempt for an easy to understand and simple to apply model based on the active involvement of career consultants. The model is adapted in order to be applicable to the career counselling of people with fewer opportunities. An important moment in the Quality Model presented is the equality between the frame for consultancy of young people and the additional part for counselling people with fewer opportunities. The focus in the second part is set on the level of accessibility of counselling services and counselling adjusted to the specific needs of people from this target group.

When the career consultant offers his/her products or services to people with fewer opportunities, he/she should use his/her knowledge, skills and other resources in order to identify and satisfy the specific needs of his clients belonging to the mentioned target group.

Those specific needs can be caused by status of disability, minority origin, state of immigrant, being a single parent, being long-time unemployed (more than 12 months) and other social reasons. Therefore the first step, which should be taken by the career consultant in order to ensure qualitative consultancy process, must be a preliminary definition of the exact status of his/her client. The target group of people with fewer opportunities includes: people with disabilities<sup>3</sup> and disadvantaged people<sup>4</sup>.

### *Standards for people with fewer opportunities*

*Quality standards of the process of career counselling for people with fewer opportunities:*

1. Clearly defined goals and methods of counselling suitable for people with fewer opportunities.
2. Protection of the client's rights:
  - § working with clients and focusing on their abilities and personal advantages, not on the disadvantages;
  - § explicit evidence and documentation of the counselling process;
  - § claiming the quality and right implementation of the counselling methods, well accepted by people with fewer opportunities;
3. Personnel quality standards of the career counselling could be:
  - § staffing of the personnel providing career counselling,
  - § working conditions suitable for counselling people with fewer opportunities;
  - § permanent professional development of consultant aiming to guarantee the qualitative counselling of clients from the mentioned group;
4. Quality standards of the career counselling services oriented towards clients with fewer opportunities.
  - § accessible and appropriate place and time of the counselling;
  - § widely-spread information about possibilities to obtain career counselling;
  - § quality assurance of provided services;
  - § financial support of career counselling;

<sup>3</sup> According to the **medical model**: Disability is any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.

According to the **social model**: Disability is the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical and social barriers.

<sup>4</sup> This group includes people at a disadvantage: single parents, prisoners, drug addicts, minorities, long-term unemployed people, people with disabilities, etc.

# CHAPTER 4



# QUALITY INDICATORS OF YOUTH CAREER CONSULTANCY

## KEYWORDS

Quality Indicator, 5-step approach to quality, Indicators Model (IM), measurement of QI, source of evidence, evidence of indicator performance

## OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAPTER

The aim of this chapter is to give an overview of the set of Quality Indicators in youth career consultancy elaborated in the frame of the Quality Assurance in Youth Career Consultancy project. The chapter is dedicated to the role of Quality Indicators in the QA process, indicators identification and development and developed Indicators' model (IM) based on the 5-step systematic approach. It also presents some additional Quality Indicators directed to serve the needs of young people with fewer opportunities.

In addition, the chapter aims to introduce the issue of quality measurement, to present main principals and aspects, which are important for defining certain criteria and sources of evidence showing the performance of quality, as well as to suggest a measurement of Quality Indicators used in youth career consultancy.

## INTRODUCTION

The key element in the QA process of youth career consultancy is the developed set of Quality Indicators, based on the 5-step systematic approach to quality: CONTEXT-INPUT-PROCESS-OUTPUT-OUTCOME. That is why, on the following pages, we focus entirely on the Quality Indicators – from the theoretical point of view, for example their role in the QA process and the meaning of the 5-step approach to quality in the field of youth career guidance, to the practical aspects, such as some suggestions for setting measurement criteria.

## 4.1. Quality Indicators and their role in the Quality Assurance process

*“A quality indicator is a figure, which helps for the assessment of a quality characteristic or the achievement of quality objectives.”  
Van den Berghe 1997b*

Indicators are usually composite statistics with some reference points included. Quality Indicators can be defined as a specific class of indicators with strict requirements in terms of content and purpose (Van den Berghe 1997, 11-17):

Indicators are signs that are evidence of the presence or absence of particular qualities. While they may be qualitative or quantitative in form, it is the latter which are more generally applied in the reporting of system outcomes and outputs.

Quality Indicators have some **key characteristics**. At first place, they are developed in concert with, and responsive to feedback from stakeholders. Important feature of the Quality Indicators is that they **can be measured** – we can identify both qualitative and

quantitative dimensions. At the same time, they provide possibility for interpretation by stakeholders. Last but not least, Quality Indicators are bound by principles of equity and ethics.

If we define quality as meeting requirements, then there are specific indicators of quality. If the requirements are testable, then the success of meeting the requirements can be also tested. Thus, we can verify the quality repeatedly, by testing at intervals.

Requirements can describe the attributes of something, such as the extension and simple characteristics, as well as how it should function, behave, perform, respond, etc. These requirements can be determined in many different ways, but are usually logically derived from the purpose or function of the subject as well as from the design intentions: if a television set is designed to receive certain frequency ranges, then clearly part of the television's measure of quality is its ability to correctly fulfil this requirement.

The purpose of indicators is twofold: on one hand, these have to demonstrate accountability, and on the other, provide information to policy-makers to assist in policy formulation.

There are some **requirements** that QI should meet in order to attain their goals and be of use for the key stakeholders. Some of the most important of these requirements can be briefly stated as follows: feasible to measure at reasonable cost; policy-relevant; derived from framework; policy-friendly (timely, comprehensible and few in number); technically sound (valid and reliable).

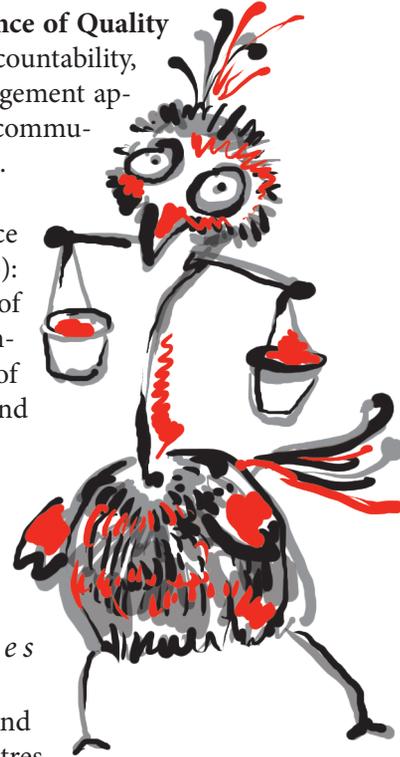
There are some factors that **contributed to enhancing the importance of Quality Indicators** in the recent years. Some of these are: demands for accountability, accompanying growth of public administration; rise of quality management approaches; globalization; increasing sophistication of information and communication technologies, enabling the collection and comparison of data.

At the end, we should mention that Quality Indicators will certainly face some challenges which have been described by Van den Berge (1997b): indicators are only a tool, not an end in them. The development of Quality Indicators for VET systems at international level remains limited owing to the difficulty of arriving at consensus about aspects of quality and the expense and amount of resources required to collect and process the necessary data.

#### **4.2. Why need of developing Quality Indicators of youth career consultancy?**

##### *Current state of guidance services provision*

Different types of youth guidance services, guidance professionals and youth centres like general purpose centres, student centres, career centres,



multicultural centres have different level experts working in the field of career development. But, having in mind the reality, most of nowadays experts in the youth career centres are general youth workers with some basic knowledge about consultancy and career development. So, the consultancy process in the youth centres obviously needs some measures in terms of provision of high-quality services that meet the needs of youth and correspond to the socio-economic and labour market realities. QA issues are of critical importance for the development of the youth career services in their region.

In most of the youth career services explored we have identified **a need for achieving competitive service** in relation to other services in Europe and in the world. **Moreover, in the global economy the level of competitiveness of the services is of critical importance.** During the last years, some European countries have initiated certain research projects and activities related to the Quality Assurance in the youth work. In England, a number of QA bodies and agencies are working on certain issues related to the QA process. In Scotland, QA institutions have developed quite comprehensive tools for QA associations as well as for the services providers. Things get even more blurred when consulting young people with fewer opportunities since the factors the counsellor has to reckon are numerous and rather complex. The specialist should take into consideration the age of the client, his or her personal background and specific needs. For an inexperienced consultant or for a person not especially trained to work with this target group it would be virtually impossible to evaluate the quality of services he or she provides.

Last but not least, **the European perspective outlines a need for harmonization and transparency** of career services. Some aspects of QA issues, like the development of recognized (frequent use) QI, standards, certifications and tools for assessment, could contribute to the harmonization and transparency needs.

*Who will benefit from the developed Quality Indicators?*

*The QA in YCC partnership identified the following target groups:*

- § youth consultants with low and middle level of specialization in the field of career development working in the youth centres;
- § youth workers who are facing career development consultancy in their everyday work;
- § instructional designers and trainers of trainers who are willing to develop or upgrade youth career development training material/course for youth centres or youth organizations;
- § managers of youth career services willing to introduce QA issues in their organizations at system level;
- § youth career consultants working with young people with fewer opportunities. Some of the proposed QA indicators and project materials will help them to improve their services;

### *How will Quality Indicators be used in the youth career consultancy process?*

The proposed set of Quality Indicators (QI) in YCC will be used in youth career centres and youth organizations, as well as by the assessing bodies inside and outside the organization. We propose a **unique set of indicators**, which is a combination of different types of indicators combining: “hard indicators” (closely related to the consultancy objectives, like level of successful job finding) and “soft indicators” (related to such background conditions like the atmosphere of the youth centre, confidence of the youngsters etc.); process-related (context, input, process, output, outcome indicators), administration and management indicators;

The Quality Indicators (QI) especially aimed at counselling young people with fewer opportunities together with the general ones will be used in youth career centres and youth organizations supporting disabled and disadvantaged young people. The same types of indicators, as those mentioned above, can be applied to the counselling of people with fewer opportunities. However, the context, process and output indicators are deemed the most important ones. In addition, in the frame of the QA in YCC project, several new indicators have been developed in order to assess the accessibility of the information, the premises used or the counsellor’s soft skills.

**All these Quality Indicators will enhance the quality management capacity of the partner countries VET systems.**

### ***4.3. The systematic approach to Quality***

#### *Why the systematic approach?*

**The Quality Assurance in Youth Career Consultancy** (QA in YCC) concept is based on the introduction of approaches that assure the quality of provision of youth career guidance services. The key role in this process is entitled to the so-called “Quality Indicators (QI)” that provide concrete quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the counselling service.

On the basis of desktop research of best practices as well as observations of the guidance process in youth services centres, and implemented survey in the partner countries<sup>5</sup> we discovered that to be meaningful, indicators have to be included in a systematic approach.

Quality Indicators should be related to certain objectives as well as to one another. In order to make the quality dynamics in a VET system more comprehensible, there must be a coherent framework for indicators, which reflects the objectives on the one hand, and the stages of activity and achievement (input, process, output, and outcome) on the other.

The systematic model provides a suitable base for the development of a coherent system of indicators for quality in youth career consultancy. The model encompasses the Quality Indicators organising them with a reference to the objectives pursued by YCC.

<sup>5</sup> EXISTING QUALITY INDICATORS IN YOUTH CAREER CONSULTANCY survey (2007), available at: [www.vqac.org](http://www.vqac.org)

Therefore if we want to achieve good quality in the field of counselling of people with fewer opportunities, new indicators have to be provided to answer the needs of this target group. These indicators, however, should be inserted in the same systematic model since they refer to the same stages of activity and achievement (input, process, output and outcome).

When we are considering Quality Indicators structure and the bases on which the indicators have been chosen we are usually speaking about indicators model (IM) or systematic approach.

### *Strengths of the systematic approach*

The **strengths of the systematic approach** that we identified in the research and observation process can be summarized as follows:

#### **1. The approach takes into consideration the significance of the context in the youth career consultancy process.**

On the basis of comprehensive exploration and research, we can conclude that there are several reasons for the increasing need of taking into account the contextual aspects.

Firstly, several parameters of the education and training system must be considered as contextual features, which can only be influenced and changed in the longer term (e.g., the educational attainment of the population, the basic structures of the education and training system regarding the distribution of qualifications and competences or the mechanisms of delivery, the distribution of initial and continuing education and training); Furthermore, the development of VET and its results is dependent on the broader social, economic, political and cultural development of society (e.g., social cohesiveness, the economic cycle, fiscal policy and public management approaches, demographic factors); Last but not least, there is interaction with other policy fields inside the education and training system (e.g. initial and continuing education).

The development of context indicators is an integral part of the systematic approach, where it may serve different purposes. Firstly, the contextual conditions for VET policy can be controlled so as to identify the societal background conditions that might – positively or negatively – affect the results. Secondly, the structural context factors of education and training systems can serve as measures for the initial conditions, in comparison to which the effects of new policy initiatives can be assessed. Thirdly, the interrelations of other policy fields with VET can help to identify the specific achievements of VET policy as compared to broader policies (e.g., labour market or innovation policy).

#### **2. The approach pays special attention to the input aspects of the career guidance process.**

In general, the available resource and preparation at the beginning of the consultancy process are quite underestimated. Concentrating on the outcomes, most of the models do not pay attention to the prerequisites for assuring the effective career consulting of youth.

**3. The approach reflects the specifics of the career consulting of youth with fewer opportunities.**

#### **4.4. Indicators Model**

QA in YCC partnership developed **Indicators Model (IM)** that reflects the specifics of the Quality Assurance process in the field of the youth career guidance. It is based on identification of key Quality Indicators, their combination and implementation.

The Indicators Model arranges Quality Indicators depending on the different approach to Quality Assurance in youth career guidance. We identified the following approaches:

##### *Indicators Model based on the 5-step systematic approach to quality*

QA in YCC partnership elaborated the main elements of the 5-step approach to quality, providing a set of Quality Indicators (QIs), applicable at each stage of the youth career consultancy process.

As this model is in the core of the QA in YCC concept about Quality Assurance, it is described in details in section 4.5 of the current chapter.

##### *Hard and soft Quality Indicators*

Depending whether Quality Indicators refer to direct tangible outcomes /e.g. people finding job/ or they refer to some intangible, but very important results /e.g. increased self-motivation/, we divide them into soft and hard indicators:

##### **Hard indicators**

These directly related to the quality objective; they are quantifiable and related to achievement of concrete result /e.g. number of employed youth, acquisition of formal competences/.

In the context of youth career guidance, identified hard indicators are: achievement of key competences demonstrated; rate of employed youth after being consulted by career consultant/ youth worker.

##### **Soft indicators**

They gather information about 'soft outcomes' /personal development and organizational skills of the client acquired/. These indicators refer to qualitative outcomes.

Soft indicators aim to understand the progress made towards employability. Soft outcomes might include achievements in terms of interpersonal skills, motivation and confidence, time keeping and reliability and other practical skills.

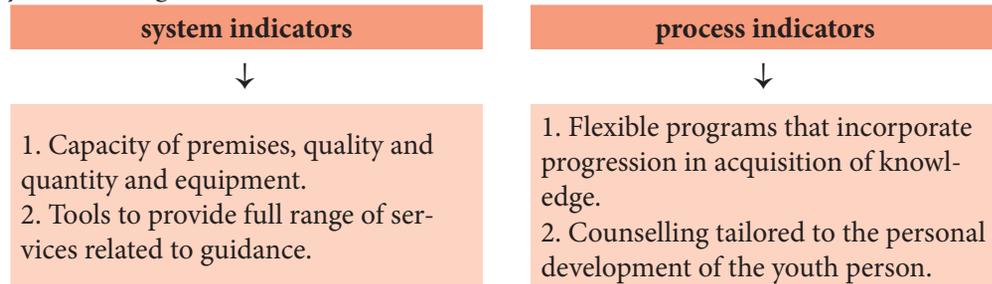
Soft indicators are important to use because they provide better picture of client progress in terms of increased employability. Also, employers value ‘soft’ skills, so ways of demonstrating achievement in these areas can be advantageous for clients.

In the context of youth career guidance, QA in YCC partnership identified soft indicators are: enhanced self-confidence, self-esteem and motivation of the client to enter labour market; improved level of performance in a range of main skills, including taking responsibility.

*Process and system Indicators Model*

QA in YCC partnership also takes into account the importance of Quality Assurance with a view to organizational aspects within the institution that provides career guidance. If it refers to administrative and financial management of the institution, we use the so-called “**system indicators**”. On the other hand, indicators that measure the ways in which program services are provided are called “**process indicators**”.

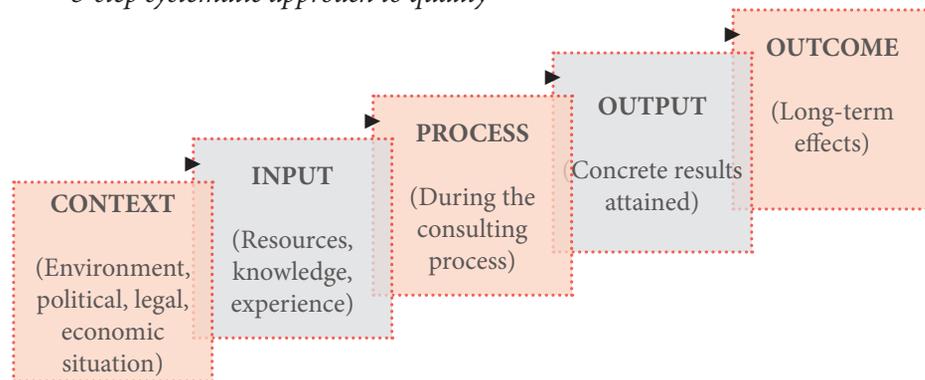
*Here are some examples of process and system indicators identified in the field of youth career guidance:*



**4.5. 5-step systematic approach to quality**

QA in YCC concept is based on the **5-step approach to quality**. It provides a set of Quality Indicators (QIs), applicable at each of the five stages of the youth career consultancy process.

*5-step systematic approach to quality*



*Specific considerations were taken into account while developing the set of indicators:*

- § **identification** of the need of QA in the field of youth career guidance on local, national and European level;

- § **awareness** of the current labour market tendencies on a national and European level;

- § **assessment** of the career guidance practitioners' needs for tools and instruments to assure the quality of the career guidance provision;

- § taking into account unexplored indicators in the existing national VET systems– so-called **context related indicators, soft-indicators** which proved very important in working with young people and especially with youngsters with fewer opportunities;

- § Quality Indicators specially addressing **career consultancy of young people with fewer opportunities**;

The developed **Indicators Model** of Youth career consultancy is based on the **5-step systematic approach**.

At each stage of the consulting process, QA in YCC partners identified the most important Quality Indicators. They were subject to discussions and clarification so as to meet the expected goals.

### *Quality Indicators Model for YCC*

#### *Indicators Model of youth career consultancy.*

CONTEXT	INPUT	PROCESS	OUTPUT	OUTCOME
Cooperation with: local community and parents; partner institutions; networks on national and European level	Appropriate competence of counselling staff- knowledge of: labour market, job profiles, employers' demands, specific school graduates' profiles	Flexible programmes that incorporate progression in acquisition of knowledge	Achievement of key competencies demonstrated	Rate of employed youth after being consulted by career consultant/ youth worker
Coordination/synchronization of national, local and organization internal policies	Key competencies available in the curricula and learning material	Counselling tailored to the personal development of the young person, moving them towards work readiness	Improved level of performance in a range of main skills, including taking responsibility	Quality of employment, retention of job opportunities improved

Continue from page 41.

CONTEXT	INPUT	PROCESS	OUTPUT	OUTCOME
Appropriate legislation and regulation in the field, easy to follow	Willingness of the young person to engage in career consulting process	Sound financial and administrative management of the counselling body	Enhanced self-confidence, self-esteem, motivation to enter labour market	Destination of trainees 6 months after career guidance
Capacity of premises, quality and quantity of equipment, tools to provide the full range of services related to career counselling	Development of quality management approaches	Implement quality management system in the career consultancy process	Acquisition of formal qualifications	Utilization of acquired skills / employer and employee point of view/
Consideration of local and cultural differences on the labour market and their influence on young people's decisions	Stimulation of clients to find their specific place on the labour market	Documentary evidence and recording of consulting process		Ongoing support of already hired young people
	Existence of mobile or e-consulting tools			

*Additional Quality Indicators applicable to consulting youth with fewer opportunities.*

CONTEXT (Environment, political, legal, economic situation)	INPUT (Resources, knowledge, experience)	PROCESS (During the consulting process)	OUTPUT (Concrete results attained)	OUTCOME (Long-term effects)
Adequate assessment of needs of vulnerable groups, e.g. existence of studies, statistics	Provision of specialized services, adjusted to the specific needs of people with fewer opportunities	Flexible programs that propose enhanced model for counselling of youth with fewer opportunities	Completion rate of youth with fewer opportunities	Provision of further more support of the already hired young people with fewer opportunities, enhancing their professional progress and career development
Expansion of the accessibility level of career consultancy services orientated towards people with fewer opportunities	Precise knowledge of different types of profiles of disadvantaged youth			
	Existence of special tools/ equipment for disabled			

*Step-by-step exploration of the 5-step Quality Indicators Model*

**STEP 1**

**CONTEXT indicators**

**Context indicators** describe the economic and social forces that influence the career consulting process but are beyond its direct control. These include enrolment, socio-economic status, country of birth and language background, categories of special needs, and student mobility. There are **different levels** of context indicators. Taking the example of the vulnerable groups, there are some very concrete indicators that could be measured without too much effort. However, the more general the formulation of the objectives ('influencing the economic growth rate' or 'reducing unemployment rates through VET', etc.), the greater is the need to assess the contextual factors relevant to the quality of VET.

We identified the **key context indicators** that have to be considered in the youth career consultancy process. The key elements that are not directly related to the guidance process but influence it, are:

§ **Cooperation with key stakeholders:** in order to be adequate and within the societal context, youth career consultants should maintain contacts with the local community and parents; coordinate efforts and exchange experience with partner institutions; communicate with networks on national and European levels;

§ **All-level policy coordination:** we identified the importance of synchronization of national, local and organization internal policies in the area of career guidance. The exploration of the best existing practices revealed that the greater the coordination on different level, the more coherent and effective the career service;

§ **Relevant legislation:** in spite of the coordination and cooperation mentioned above, the legislative framework is also important. It should meet and reflect the specifics of this realm, providing concrete normative basis. Of course, this legislation is different in the partner countries reflecting different VET realities, cultural backgrounds, and labour market specifics;

§ **Availability of technical and material resources:** premises, quality and quantity of equipment to provide the full range of services related to career counselling should not be underestimated;

§ **Consideration of local and cultural differences on the labour market and their influence on young people's decisions;**

§ **Adequate assessment of vulnerable groups, existence of studies, statistics:** there should be objective and adequate assessment backed with studies and relevant statistics because the complex nature of this target group requires special attention;

§ **Expansion of the accessibility of career consultancy services oriented towards people with fewer opportunities:** the initial stage of the consultancy process is a key moment for the stimulation of the motivation of the people with fewer opportunities. That's why it is important to provide accessibility with the proper equipment of the premises as well as easier access to information- by phone, on the internet etc;

## **STEP 2**

### **INPUT indicators**

As opposed to context indicator, which can only partly be influenced by the VET system, input covers factors that can be influenced directly by (at least some of) the actors in this field. Input factors do have a direct bearing on how the VET process or VET activities are carried out. Input indicators provide important information about the resources (financial, human, technical) used to improve the quality of youth career guidance service. For quality issues, it is important that input indicators also provide information about the different types of resources mobilized: different categories of personnel (teachers, trainers, managers); material and technical resources;

*The identified key input indicators refer to:*

§ **The counselling staff:** A career consultant should demonstrate appropriate competences and should be well-acquainted to and aware of the specific labour market and job profiles, employers' demands, school graduates' profiles;

At the same time, a consultant should be able to stimulate clients to find their own

place on the labour market.

§ ***The young person being consulted:*** The client is also an important part of this stage. The willingness of the young person to engage in the career consulting process is a key prerequisite. It is closely related to the awareness of the need for support;

§ ***The existing counselling tools:*** The most relevant methodological tools identified are: key competencies available in the curricula and learning material; development of quality management approaches; existence of mobile or e-consulting mechanisms;

§ ***Provision of specialised services adjusted towards the specific needs of people with fewer opportunities:*** these refer to the usage of an assistant or on-line counselling, e-learning directed to the specific target group;

§ ***Precise knowledge of different types of profiles of disadvantaged youth;***

§ ***Existence of special tools/ equipment for disabled people:*** as the needs of the target group are specific, it is essential that special tools be available when dealing with this particular target group;

### **STEP 3**

#### ***PROCESS indicators***

Process indicators are those that refer to the activities that transform inputs into outputs. They focus on depicting the process of career guidance and provide the so important input and knowledge about the utilization of the resources in order to improve the quality of career guidance.

This is the main stage of the whole process – the career guidance provision. The consultant and young person interact, meet and discuss certain topics. The consultant directs the process, applying the person-centred approach. The main **process indicators** that assure the quality are:

§ **Counselling** tailored to the **personal** development of the young person, moving them towards work **readiness**;

§ **Flexible programmes** that incorporate progression in acquisition of knowledge;

§ **Sound management of the institution** – Financial, administrative and technical; established Quality management system;

§ **Documentary evidence and recording of the consulting process;**

§ **Flexible programs that propose enhanced model for counselling of youth with fewer opportunities;**

### **STEP 4**

#### ***OUTPUT indicators***

Output indicators refer to the direct result of career guidance activities, and they can be influenced directly by the level of quality in the implementation of the input and process of career guidance. Thus, for instance, the acquisition of formal qualification or ICT skills by VET participants can be seen as a direct output of guidance activities, meaning that the output indicators measure the direct results of the career consultancy process. In recent times, the relationship between the VET system and the labour mar-

ket has become more and more important, which is also reflected in the importance of employability and the matching issue. As a result of these trends, both the output and outcome factors have lately received greater attention.

In order to carry out effective Quality Assurance strategy at this stage, the QA in YCC partners identified several key **output indicators**. As here we talk about the concrete results attained, the most important ones are related to the young person:

- § *Improved level of performance in a range of main skills, including taking responsibility;*
- § *Acquisition of formal qualifications;*
- § *Achievement of key competencies demonstrated;*
- § *Enhanced self-confidence, self-esteem and motivation to enter labour market;*
- § *Completion rate of youth with fewer opportunities;*

### **STEP 5**

#### **OUTCOME indicators**

While output is a direct result of the VET process, the outcome factors consist of results that are only partly and indirectly related to the VET system. The outcome of the VET system covers all the indirect and long-term effects of VET activities, which are also influenced by many other factors.

Although these factors have an influence on the outcome of VET activities, there is a causal relationship between the quality of VET and such outcomes. Because of this relationship it is important to take into account the outcome of VET using the appropriate indicators.

With regard to a lasting securing of the quality of the youth career consulting we concentrated on factors exploring both the change/development/progress of the individual and the situation on macro economic level. So, at this stage of the QA in YCC model we identified the following **output indicators**:

- § *Rate of employed youth after being consulted by career consultant/youth worker;*

Successful transition to employment after completing VET not only depends on the qualifications acquired but also on other factors, such as the general economic situation, or structural characteristics of the labour market.

- § *Quality of employment, retention of job opportunities improved;*
- § *Destination of trainees 6 months after career guidance;*
- § *Utilization of acquired skills (employer's and employee's point of view)*

The utilization of newly acquired competences in the workplace will not just depend on these competences but also on the conditions at the workplace, or on the main organizational strategies of firms to utilize and develop their human resources. Several recent approaches and analyses have shown these complex relationships.

- § *Ongoing support of already hired young people;*

§ *Provision of further more support of the already hired young people with fewer opportunities enhancing their professional progress and career development;*

Successful transition to employment after completing VET not only depends on the qualifications acquired but also on other factors, such as the general economic situation, or structural characteristics of the labour market.

#### **4.6. Measurement of Quality Indicators**

*„When you can measure what you are speaking about and express it in numbers, you know something about it“.*  
(Kelvin)

*„You cannot manage what you cannot measure“.*  
(Anon)

These are two often-quoted statements that demonstrate why measurement is so important. Yet it is surprising that organisations find measurement so difficult to manage.

There are some reasons for the need of measurement of quality in career guidance service provision. First, this has a political aspect, if we want to justify the provided service. Second, quality measurement should be implemented for service funding purposes. Measurement of quality can help and show the supporter, whether the service is worthwhile. Third, measurement of quality is important for the measurement of client's progress and assessing implementation of planned objectives. Four, measurement of quality is important in the field of monitoring the career guidance service provision. Five, measurement of quality can be useful in strategic planning and organizational development. And finally, measurement of quality in career guidance might help for assessing best practices and benchmarking.

##### *Measurement of quality*

*In the cycle of never-ending improvement, performance measurement of service provision plays an important role in:*

- § identifying and tracking progress against organisational goals;
- § identifying opportunities for improvement;
- § comparing performance with both internal and external standards;

Measurement is carried out to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of each process towards attaining its objectives. It should include the contribution of the quality management system (QMS) to the organisation's goals; this could be achieved by measuring the following:

- § policy definition completeness;
- § coverage of business;
- § reflection of policies;

- § deployment;
- § usage;
- § whether staff find the QMS helpful in their work;
- § speed of change of the QMS;
- § relevance of QMS architecture to the job in hand;

A form of scorecard deployed through the organisation down to individual objective level can be employed, and the setting of targets at all levels is vital.

Reviewing the performance of an organisation is also an important step when formulating the direction of the strategic activities. It is important to know where the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation lie, and as part of the 'Plan – Do – Check – Act' cycle, measurement plays a key role in quality and productivity improvement activities.

*The main reasons it is needed are:*

- § to ensure customer requirements **have** been met;
- § to be able to set sensible **objectives** and to comply with them;
- § to provide **standards** for establishing comparisons;
- § to provide **visibility** and a “scoreboard” for people to **monitor** their own performance level;
- § to highlight **quality problems** and determine areas for priority attention;
- § to provide **feedback** for driving the improvement effort;

A good performance measurement framework has to focus on the customer and measure the right things.

*Performance measures must be:*

- § meaningful, unambiguous and widely understood;
- § owned and managed by the teams within the organisation;
- § based on a high level of data integrity;
- § such that data collection is embedded within the normal procedures;
- § able to drive improvement;
- § linked to critical goals and key drivers of the organisation;

### *Measurement of quality in Career Guidance*

The issue of measuring the quality and impact of career guidance interventions is rather complex. Moreover, this is a human activity which is mostly subject to degrees of unpredictability and uncertainty, (particularly in relation to the individual values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours). That's why, unsurprisingly, the impact is difficult, if not sometimes impossible, to measure. When measuring the quality of guidance provision it is important to distinguish between activities performed, results and effects.

'**Activities performed**' are the specific activities which have been carried out – 'What have we done?': These may be personal guidance interviews, information events and meetings with collaborating partners. The activities performed and their measurements are vital prerequisites for creating results and effects thus completing the first step in the process.

The next step deals with the ‘**results**’ and answers the question ‘Are we doing what we said we would do?’ In short, this means assessing the activities performed and the immediate outcomes of these activities. Such outcomes can be, for instance, closer cooperation, an increased level of knowledge and established contact with more people belonging to the target groups. When considering the results, one of the things we need to do is to find an answer to the question whether or not the organisation is reaching out to the target groups it has defined for itself. What do the target groups think of the guidance activities? Have we succeeded in establishing the cooperation desired with the various partners? And how do the collaborating partners judge this cooperation?

The ‘**effects**’ are the final step in the process and concern the actual impact of the guidance services provided – ‘Are our efforts and activities working?’ It is important to stress the difference between effects and results. In fact, it may very well be – and it is by no means uncommon – that one’s efforts and projects yield good results, but only limited effects. They may, for instance, result in improved cooperation, or in guidance counsellors feeling that they have gained enhanced knowledge. But it is only when these have become widely established among guidance counsellors and translated into altered practices with respect to the target groups that we can start speaking of effects.

It is very important to name the sources of information, tools and methods which could be used for measurement of quality of career guidance services. Data sources that can shed light to measure indicators can be found in many places. They may be either quantitative, such as own registrations and key figures, or qualitative in nature, such as assessments, attitudes and experiences. Measurement of the quality can also be done by conducting surveys, holding interviews or organizing focus group meetings with the various target groups, for instance once or twice a year. Another possibility is to ask the participants a number of simple questions immediately after the guidance activities.

### *Measurement of quality in Youth Career Consultancy*

The tables given below introduce the evidence of performance and possible indicative sources of evidence that may help to measure the existent Quality Indicators used in youth career consultancy. The measurement table of Quality Indicators used in youth career consultancy is developed according to the following principles which are important in the Quality Assurance process:

- § involvement of citizens and users in quality evaluation process;
- § competence of practitioners;
- § service improvement, for which evaluation and monitoring systems/tools have to be developed;
- § coherence, which is important for evaluation of links between internal, local, regional and national guidance policies;
- § independent provision of career guidance services;

The proposed measurement table of Quality Indicators used in career consultancy refers to such basic evaluation criteria proving the quality of service provision:

- § context in which service is delivered;
- § human resources involved in the process of Quality Assurance;
- § evaluation of the process of service provision;
- § feedback from clients of provided service;
- § effects of provided service;

Main information sources provided for measurement of the indicators used for Quality Assurance in youth career consultancy are:

- § legislation, strategies, action or implementation plans;
- § research studies, surveys of the clients, employers, social partners;
- § official data on the situation in the labour market;
- § counsellor’s records, self-analysis;
- § clients’ feedback, opinions, reflections, attitudes and evaluation of the service;
- § counsellor’s portfolio;
- § numbers of premises, tools, methods equipment and other materials used in provision of career guidance service;

Typical guidance table about measurement of Quality Indicators could be the following:

Stage in the YCC process	Quality Indicators	Evidence of indicator performance	Indicative source of evidence (indicator variable )
Context			
Input			
Process			

More sample instruments are available in Part 2, Chapter 4 of the Manual, as well as in the QA Workbook (PDF version available at: [www.vqac.org](http://www.vqac.org)).

# PART 2

FOCUSING ON PRACTICE

## CHAPTER 1



# YOUR ROLE IN THE QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS

## KEYWORDS

Stakeholder, QA process, Youth career service

## OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAPTER

The main objective of this chapter is to present the different **stakeholders** in the **QA process**. Reading this chapter you will get an overview about how youth policy makers, youth centres managers, youth leaders, instructional designers, youth consultants, counsellors of disadvantaged and disabled people, youth workers and customers are engaged in the QA process. At the end of the chapter you should be familiar with the profile and possible engagements of different key players in the consultancy process. You will also realize some of the main responsibilities of stakeholders in QA on **system and process level**.

## INTRODUCTION

In the global market all the career guidance services should be compatible, dynamic and knowledge-based. They should provide a certain level of quality and should have clear view about the aims of that quality. Sometimes the aims of the quality are depending on the role you have in the QA process- whether you are trainer or employer, for example. That is why it is important to realize different roles in the guidance process and discuss their importance for the QA.

There are different types of youth services and institutions providing VET services. Depending on the service there are different players- policy makers, managers, youth leaders, instructional designers, specialized or general consultants, professional or volunteer youth workers, VET pedagogic consultants in schools etc. All these experts or beginners have some responsibility about the future of the guidance services.

Some of the stakeholders like policy makers, managers and leaders are responsible about the QA at system level and their role is of critical importance for the successful implementation of QA methods in the youth career guidance. Without a vision and policy in the field it will be difficult to imagine fast and successful implementation of QA approaches. At the same time all the other players in the YCC process have their own role in improving the quality. Without some knowledge about QA techniques the consultants and youth workers will be helpless to implement the QA instrument and to improve the QA methods in their practice.

### ***1.1. Different stakeholders in the youth career guidance process***

#### *Youth policy makers*

People who are engaged in the youth or educational ministries, state agencies or youth departments of municipalities are usually referred as youth policy makers. In some countries, there are special QA agencies in career guidance field, in some countries there are some departments of ministries or municipalities responsible for monitoring the quality. Some of those experts and politicians are responsible for the establishment and development of relevant QA system in the country or in the local area. Here are some practical examples of youth policy makers:

- Top level politician in the youth field like minister, secretary or senior officials (directors of departments, senior experts). For such policy makers one of the most important issues is to understand the need and importance of the QA and to encourage the development of QA practices. Also they should encourage the main stakeholders to participate directly in the QA process. Last but not least, using the policy instruments like the state and municipality budget and existing facilities they have to propose concrete state/municipality vision about the development of quality in the career guidance;

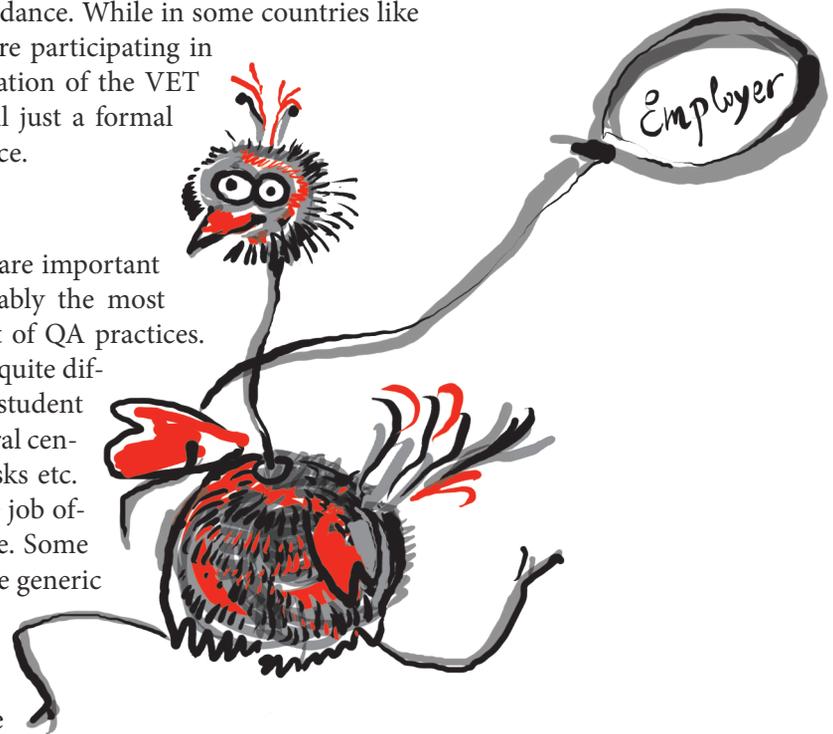
- Experts and junior officials in ministries and municipalities youth departments could execute a variety of actions related to improvement of the quality. They could propose to the senior officials some QA strategy and persuade them to support this strategy. They are also an important element in transmitting the state policy in some practical measures. Without a certain capacity and existence of qualified young experts in the state/municipality structures it will not be possible to implement properly even the best political vision. They are people who both feel the policy tendencies and the reality tendencies. They are responsible for the establishment of different external QA mechanisms applicable to career guidance services;

### *Employers*

Employers are playing crucial role in the QA practices. Their vision about the development of the career services and the vision about the state approach in this field determine the overall approach to QA. If employers are participating actively through different partnerships, committees and unions in the state policy, if the state delegates different task of the career guidance to them then the main quality aims are recognized by the employers and QA methods are considered valuable from them. This immediately increases the value of the career guidance. While in some countries like Germany and Ireland, for example, employers are participating in different levels of establishment and implementation of the VET policy, in some EU countries employers are still just a formal partner of the state concerning the career guidance.

### *Managers*

Managers of youth career services or structures are important stakeholder in the QA process. They are probably the most important factor for the successful development of QA practices. There is a variety of youth guidance centres with quite different structures. There are youth career centres, student career center, youth inclusion centres, multicultural centres, youth information centres, jobs finding desks etc. Some of them are simply job desks with concrete job offers, some of them are providing career guidance. Some of them are working with variety of youth and are generic services, some of them are working with specific target groups like disadvantaged youth, young people with disabilities, minorities, immigrants etc. When implementing some QA approach the



managers should know the details of their type of service and their target group. Managers should understand properly the role of the external and internal QA approaches. While external quality monitoring is sometimes out of their influence the internal quality monitoring is fully dependant of their knowledge and motivation. Managers are responsible for the implementation of the relevant QM and QI in their service.

#### *Youth leaders*

Youth leaders are sometimes executing the role of manager but they are quite different stakeholder. Youth leaders are usually either president/chairman/chairwomen of youth organization or young person leading young teams. Some youth NGOs have quite developed structures and provide guidance in some sectors. Also, there are so called sector-based NGOs who are joining young people with certain professional orientation and knowledge and willing to work in some sectors of economy. Some examples are the international organization of students in economics AIESEC, international organization of students in law ELSA etc. Such organizations sometimes provide career guidance or open some career guidance services. Last but not least youth leaders are initiators of new youth policies are one of the main facilitators of the senior officials to develop the youth work services;

#### *Instructional designers*

Instructional designers and training developers are important players in the QA process. The career guidance is often supported with relevant training. Most of the low qualified youngsters need additional training before entering the labour market. The quality of the training and its relevance to the customers needs determine the employment success and the career development. There are variety of career training activities offered by the centres and VET training organizations. In some EU countries the training activities in the career centres are developed with the help of the employers and thus rapidly increasing the employment chances of the trainees. When speaking about the quality of the career training we often refer to several key factors like correspondence with trainee needs, flexibility and openness of the courses, programmes relations with the real market, considering employers requirements, knowledge about new professions etc.

#### *Youth career consultants*

Youth career consultants are facing the everyday QA problems. Some of the youth career consultants are specialized consultants with university degree or some special knowledge in the field while others are just regular youth workers who are performing youth services. In some of the cases youth career consultants have low or middle level of expertise and need a lot of QA methods and knowledge. That is why the development of appropriate QI, QM and QF are important part of the service comparativeness and sometimes is crucial for its survival. Youth career consultants should discuss with their managers how to introduce the QA practices in their job. In most of cases they should receive some training in quality monitoring issues.

### *Youth workers*

Youth workers who are usually performing general youth work care about issues like youth inclusion, outsiders, minorities, development of outside-school skills like artistic ones, team working, scouting etc. Youth inclusion is closely related to employment abilities of youngsters. That is why youth workers often face the career guidance issues and support youngsters in their career development. Some of the youth workers are professional ones usually certified by some authorities, some of them could be volunteers or even peers. Because peer education is considered one of the most effective some of the youth workers are youngsters with some knowledge in the area.

### *Pedagogic consultants*

VET and pedagogic consultants in schools sometimes play considerable role in the QA of YCC. In the professional schools or sector-related schools there are consultants responsible for programmes relevancy to particular field and for teachers' qualifications. In some countries VET schools play an important role for youngster guidance and the links between those schools and the market determine the quality of training.

### *Users of youth career services*

Users of youth career services are also playing particular role in the QA process. There are different types of users of such services. Some of the users are qualified users like graduating students who need usually specific sector-based guidance, some of the users are low qualified youngsters who often need combination of guidance and training, some users are outsiders, minorities or disabled who need special support and special integration efforts. Via selecting the service, giving feedbacks and participating in the service the users are also influencing the quality process. Although sometimes they are passive participants in the QA their approach to the service and their sense about the effectiveness of the service influences the service future. In nowadays modern media there are a lot of ways to express an opinion and to criticize, like Blogs, discussion rooms, mailing list and in this way to encourage the development of quality of particular services.

In Chapter 1 of Part 1 the aims of the quality have been closely related to different stakeholders and their vision. The choice of quality areas is also quite dependant of the stakeholders' motivation to enhance the quality.

## **1.2. Exercise**

### *Case simulation and role game*

Here is some simulation exercise. The trainer could use it in a workshop. It is suitable for groups between 10 and 30 participants. The total duration of the workshop could be between 90 min and 120 min. The trainer divides the group in 3 small groups (each of them between 3 and 10 persons). The trainer gives one case to each group. You (as trainer) could spent 15 min to explain the trainees the aim of the workshop. Then you divide the trainees into 3 small groups and give them approx. 1 hour to explore the case and present a solution. After that 1 hour all groups join and shortly (10

min each) present their solutions. Each small group could nominate one reporter and could present the solution either on PPT or on flipchart paper.

↔ **Case 1**

Imagine you are manager of youth career guidance center in immigrants' area. You have 5 career consultants, 2 youth workers, 2 career trainers, 3 persons from administrative staff (accountant, assistance etc.). The center has 2 halls for visitors and some offices. You are situated in immigrants' area and your customers are young immigrants (16-30 years old) with some basic education and not very good language knowledge. You have to propose 3 Quality Indicators related to the organizational issues (system level) and 3 Quality Indicators related to the guidance process (process level). All the 6 QI should be measurable and there should be also some estimation about the satisfaction level. Discuss your role as a manager for the establishment and implementation of these QI. How you will involve the rest of the staff in your QA approach?

↔ **Case 2**

Imagine you are manager of youth career guidance service in the technical university. Your customers are graduating students in engineering sciences. You have staff of 4 people – manager, 2 consultants and 1 office assistant. The center has 1 hall for visitors and 1 office. You have to propose 3 Quality Indicators related to the organizational issues (system level) and 3 Quality Indicators related to the guidance process (process level). All the 6 QI should be measurable and there should be also some estimation about the satisfaction level. Discuss your role as a manager for the establishment and implementation of these QI. How you will involve the rest of the staff in your QA approach?

↔ **Case 3**

Imagine you are policy maker in some municipality, director of “youth and family department” and you are monitoring youth guidance service (youth career center) in your town. The other department of the municipality, educational one, has also some relations with the center, for example, approving its educational activities. The service/center is working in international projects in the sphere of youth guidance and vocational training (for example, in the frame of YOUTH programme or Leonardo da Vinci programme). The center has 1 manager and additional staff of 7 people (3 consultants, 2 assistants, 1 ICT technician, 1 accountant). You have to propose 5 indicators to measure the level and efficiency of the international work of the center. All the indicators should be measurable. Discuss your role and how you will collaborate with the other 2 stakeholders – the manager of the center and the director of the educational department of the municipality.

# CHAPTER 2



# HOW TO START THE QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS

## KEYWORDS

Quality areas, quality aim, responsible bodies/persons for quality monitoring

## OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter provides you step-by-step directions on how to initiate the Quality Assurance process in your organization. Special attention is paid to justification of the need of QA, as well as some key aspects as defining the areas of which will undergo Quality Assurance procedures.

## INTRODUCTION

In order to manage and implement the Quality Assurance procedures within your institution, you have to be able set the key parameters of the whole process. At this stage, you have to be able to answer the questions “**Why** we need to introduce QA? **What** will be the benefits?”, but also “**How** we should do that? As we mentioned before, quality have aim and this aim may vary depending of the point of view of different stakeholders in the process. Also, different stakeholders have to agree on the quality areas (the areas where the quality will be observed). Often, it is not possible or it is not necessary to monitor the quality in all the areas of your activities. So, the priority areas have to be defined.

## 2.1. Starting the Quality Assurance process

In order to introduce and develop Quality Assurance processes, there are some very important prerequisites. You have to be aware of them and be able to provide justified feedback/answer to each of them.

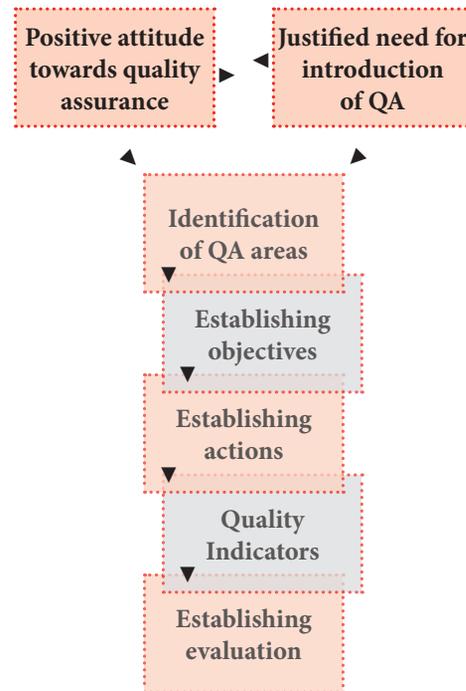
### NOTE: -----

You can use your own grading or marking system for expressing the relationship between the features of career counselling service and clients' needs.

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### Starting the QA process



#### **STEP 1**

#### ***Justified need for introduction of QA***

##### ***Actions:***

- Analyze the situation in your institution.
- Answer the question “What are the benefits from introduction of QA for the organization, staff, and users?”
- Talk with trustees and the management team about the organization’s situation:  
Are you going through major change?
  - Are there priorities or difficulties?
  - Is this a good time to begin a quality initiative?
- What will you need to do to make quality work?
- Consult with staff, volunteers and, where appropriate, service users.
- Agree the importance of quality, and what it means, with your funding institution.
- Agree the benefits you are looking for.

#### ***Positive attitude towards Quality Assurance***

##### ***Actions:***

- Do not be afraid of the new procedures/actions related to implementation of QA.
- Acquaint with best practices.
- QA should be introduced as a positive process which can enhance and improve the work and can be used to motivate staff. However, recognition that there must be a

balance between this positivity and the need to change the way in which your organisation may have worked has to happen.

## **STEP 2**

### *Identification of QA areas*

#### **Actions:**

- Specify in what areas you will implement QA:
  - management;
  - guidance process;
  - resources;
  - cooperation;
- It can be useful to research work previously carried out by similar organisations to gain an insight into custom and practice. The old saying “Don’t re-invent the wheel” goes a long way to supporting organisations learning from each other.

## **STEP 3**

### *Establishing objectives*

#### **Actions:**

- Set clear objectives of the QA process – they should be:
  - specific ;
  - measurable;
  - realistic;
- Identify the sub-objectives of each objective.
- Update regularly the implementation activities so as to correspond to the objectives set.

## **STEP 4**

### *Establishing actions*

#### **Actions:**

- Develop a plan of how to make quality improvements that you have identified.
  - Go back to this plan at agreed review dates to check if actions have been carried out.
- (more information can be found in the next chapter)*

## **STEP 5**

### *Setting Quality Indicators*

#### **Actions:**

- Please, read PART 1, Chapter 4 of the current Manual. It provides details on the set of indicators to be used at each phase of the youth career consultancy process.
- Identify those QI applicable to your case.

## **STEP 6**

### *Establish evaluation procedure*

#### **Actions:**

- How is the monitoring of QA implementation organized.

- Measure the progress.
- Adapt the action plan to results from regular monitoring.

Once you have finished the 6 steps, you can proceed with the next phase – management and organization of the QA process. Probably one of the most practical issues related to this next step is to clarify the QA system management and responsible bodies/persons. For example, QA system could be managed by the career service manager or by some specially invited external expert. Each quality area usually should have responsible person who will monitor and improve the quality.

## **2.2. Exercise**

### *Case simulation and role game*

The role game is designed to group of 20-30 persons. The duration of the game could be between 90 and 120 min. The game could have short plenary introduction (15 min) and then the tutor/moderator could assign a role to each participant in random way. There will be 3 roles prescribed and each of them could be printed on paper in 10 copies. All the participants with the same role will form a sub-group and will move in some separate place (3 separate places/rooms for discussions are needed). In these separate rooms they will discuss how to define the quality areas (duration approx. 60 min). In each sub-group should be a reporter, person who will summarize the discussion and will present the results (chosen quality areas).

Role 1. In your area you have a network of 3 youth career centers. One of them is located in big town (local capital), 2 of them are in small towns. The capital have very low level of unemployment (5%) but the small towns have quite big unemployment (20%). In the capital you have university and a number of VET schools and a lot of factories. In the small towns you have tourism, agriculture and small enterprises developed. You are policy maker, member of youth department of the capital municipality. The aims of the capital municipality are to have balanced possibilities in small and big towns, to prevent the demographic migration from the small towns. Also, the aim of the municipality is to support the university education and knowledge-based economy in the capital. You have to define the quality areas (needed improvement/development) of this network of 3 career centers.

Role 2. In your area you have a network of 3 youth career centers. One of them is located in big town (local capital), 2 of them are in small towns. The capital have very low level of unemployment (5%) but the small towns have quite big unemployment (20%). In the capital you have university and a number of VET schools and a lot of factories. In the small towns you have tourism, agriculture and small enterprises developed. You are employer and member of tourism chamber in one of those small towns. The aim of that tourism chamber is to support the VET in the tourism and to improve the qualification of the personnel. You are using the centers to have young employees when needed (for staff in hotels, restaurants, in tourism agencies etc.). You have to define the quality areas (needed improvement/development) of this network of 3 career centers.

Role 3. In your area you have a network of 3 youth career centers. One of them is located in big town (local capital), 2 of them are in small towns. The capital have very low level of unemployment (5%) but the small towns have quite big unemployment (20%). In the capital you have university and a number of VET schools and a lot of factories. In the small towns you have tourism, agriculture and small enterprises developed. You are young person looking for a job, just finished VET school in one of those small towns, 18 years old. You are very beginner and even don't know how to apply (how to search for a job, how write CV, how to go to interview etc.). You even don't know where you like to apply (in which sector you have capabilities to work). You are also thinking to move to the capital to study in university or to work. You are visiting one of those centers for advice. You have to define the quality areas (needed improvement/development) of one career guidance center in small town like yours.

After the discussion all the sub-groups join in the plenary and each reporter presents the results (chosen quality areas) for 5-10 minutes. Then the trainer could point out the differences in the choices and explain the quality aims problems in relation to different stakeholders' vision.

# CHAPTER 3



# HOW TO MANAGE AND ORGANIZE THE QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS

## KEYWORDS

Quality Assurance process, management of Quality Assurance process

## OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAPTER

The main aim of the current chapter is to introduce the main aspects concerning organisation and management of Quality Assurance process and give the reader some proposals for its effective management.

## INTRODUCTION

Processes are the fundamental building blocks of all organisations. They transform inputs, which can include actions, methods and operations, into outputs. They are the steps by which we add value, and it should be the aim of customer focused, total quality organisations, for these outputs to satisfy or exceed the needs and expectations of their customers.

**The Quality Assurance process** is a very important aspect in every organisation's life. For this reason effective management and organization of this process is an important issue. When you organize the QA process, make sure that it meets the following requirements:

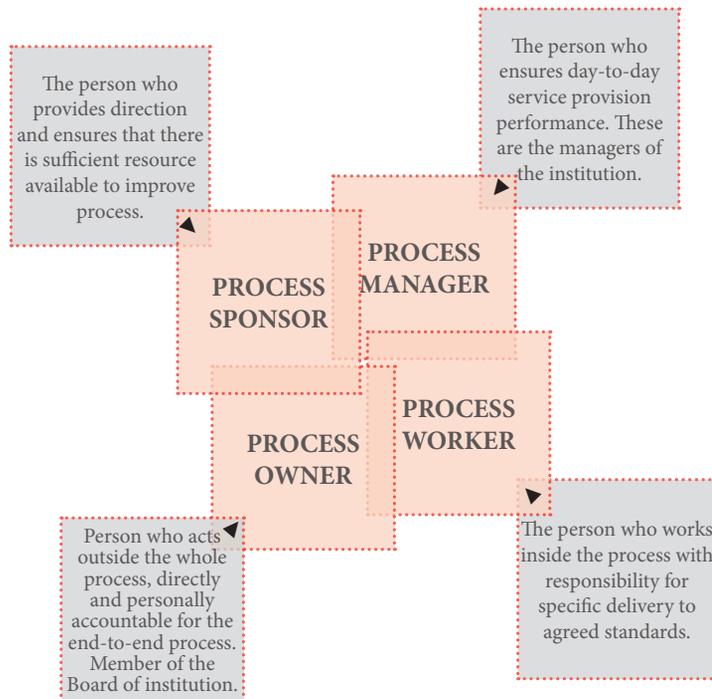
- § consultative: include advice, opinions and views;
- § negotiated: be implemented with the help of discussions, obstacles overcome and agreements reached;
- § appropriate: be suited to the subject;
- § client centered: be focused in the individual/client;
- § balanced: be unprejudiced and fair;
- § integrated: incorporate all other relevant elements, etc.;
- § incremental: reinforce what is current and allow for expansion;
- § developmental: help to identify development(s) needed for improvement of guidance provision;
- § qualitative & Quantitative: The process should facilitate continuous improvement in the quality and measurement of service;



## 3.1. Roles in the management process

Normally, **effective Quality Assurance process** management requires 4 key actors, which play the following roles.

*Key actors in the Quality Assurance management:*



**NOTE:** -----

It is recommendable that your institution avails of those 4 key actors. They provide for balanced and well-organized distribution of tasks and responsibilities in order to provide effective QA process. In some cases, one person could take the responsibilities of 2 actors (i.e. project owner and project sponsor).

-----

### **3.2. Key elements of quality management process**

*The key elements defined in the process are the following:*

**Purpose**

Shows the expectations of the process owners. The description of purpose should always begin with “Is to ...”.

**Scope**

Defines precisely where the process starts and ends, and what is specifically included and explicitly excluded.

**Inputs**

Things that are transformed by the process in to the end product or service required by the customer of the process. Inputs can be tangible.

### **Outputs**

Products or services and should conform to the specifications agreed in advance with the recipient, i.e, with the customer, internal or external.

### **Controls**

May be imposed either externally or internally, e.g, customer specifications, legislative requirements and copyright laws are all externally imposed, whereas internal quality checks and organisational procedures are derived from within the organisation.

### **Resources**

Things that a process must routinely have to be able to convert the inputs into outputs. Resources may be tangible.

### **NOTE:** -----

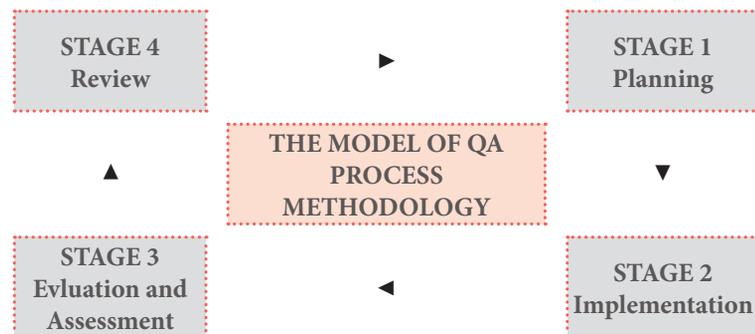
It is recommendable that you identify and write down the key elements in your case.

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## **3.3. The Model of Quality Assurance process**

Quality Assurance process includes 4 interrelated stages, which can be implemented following the foreseen methodology:

*The cycle of Quality Assurance process*



### **Stage 1 Planning**

#### **What is planning?**

Setting up of clear and measurable goals regarding policies, procedures, tasks, and human resources. It relates also to defining input and output standards linked with goals to support the design and implementation of the Quality Assurance.

Goals and objectives should be formulated in clearly understandable terms and as far as possible they should be combined with definitions of measurable indicators as this allows for checking the achievement of the planned objectives, in later stages. It is convenient to use SMART method for defining the goals:

- S – Specific;
- M – Measurable;
- A – Achievable;
- R – Reachable;
- T – Timing;

**For example** ♦ ♦ ♦

The purpose of the Quality Assurance in youth career consultancy is to increase a number of clients provided with career counselling services in 15%.

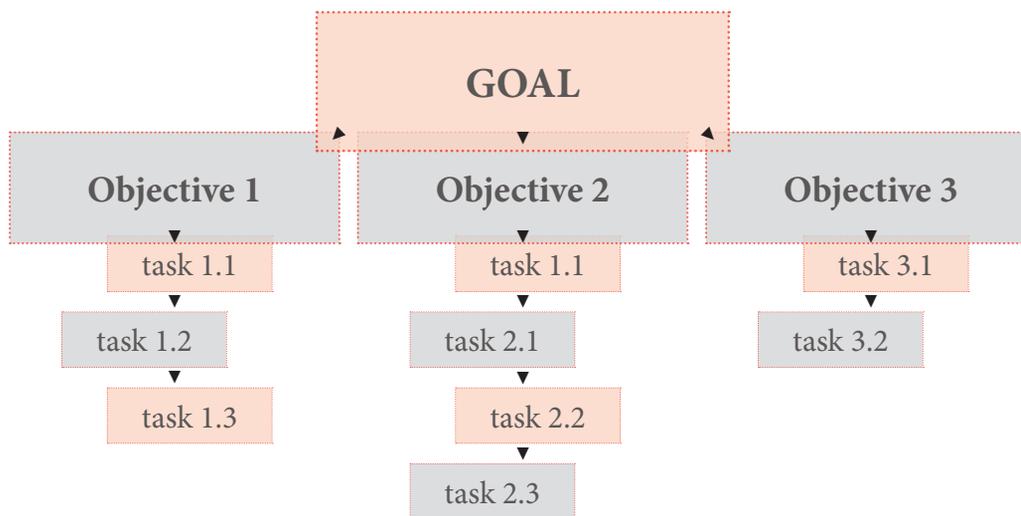


**Useful tips:**

- It is important to foresee what kinds of tasks should contribute to achievement of the defined goals and objectives.
- Work breakdown structure might be useful.
- The tasks should be as small and clear for their implementation, as it is needed for effective implementation of the whole Quality Assurance process.

The scheme given below provides with a sample work breakdown structure:

*Sample work breakdown structure.*



You can use the template table given below in order to plan and organize a sample Quality Assurance process plan. It includes main issues that have to be thought and defined in the planning process.

Sample Quality Assurance plan.

Quality indicators (what do we have to evaluate?)	Issues/ Questions to be answered (what is the evidence of the indicator performance?)	Con- straints (what do we have to evaluate?)	Evaluation proce- dures (measures)	Priority (high, me- dium, low)	Duration	Costs/ Resources

## Stage 2 Implementation

It is essential to establish key principles that underpin the implementation of the planned actions in order to ensure effectiveness in achieving the goals and objectives which have been planned. These principles have to be coherent with the goals that have been set.

Such coherence can be achieved in many ways, for example, through regulations, funding incentives, provision of guidelines on how to proceed at local level, building capacity of key actors on quality issues through training, combination of internal quality systems at provider level with external inspections, etc.

One of the main tasks to be done in the implementation of the Quality Assurance process stage is gathering information and data needed for the next steps of the quality assurance process.

### STEP 1

You should start from a clear description of the programme/service/, that is provided for the young people. Try to answer the following main questions:

- Who are the target audience of the service provision?
- What sorts of services are provided?
- What are the goals of the programme / service? How is their attainment measured?
- How many staff members are involved?
- What is the schedule of activities?
- How many sites are involved?

### STEP 2

Try to foresee the techniques or instruments for collection of the needed information, data and facts, as well as persons responsible for the collection of the concrete information, data or facts needed for evaluation of quality. You can use the following template:

*Information/data collection plan:*

Quality Indicator	Data collection procedure /technique/ instrument (sources of evidence)	Person(s) responsible for data collection	Date(s) of data collection and follow-up	Deadline for receipt of data
...				
...				
...				
...				

### STEP 3

#### **Evaluation and assessment**

This stage includes the following two elements:

**Evaluation**  
*of programme provision*  
by objectives including  
learner data

and

**Assessment**  
*achievement of*  
*outcomes at system and*  
*individual level*

Try to **identify strengths and weak points of the career guidance service provision**. It is also important to name **main factors** that influence the service provision either in positive or in negative way.

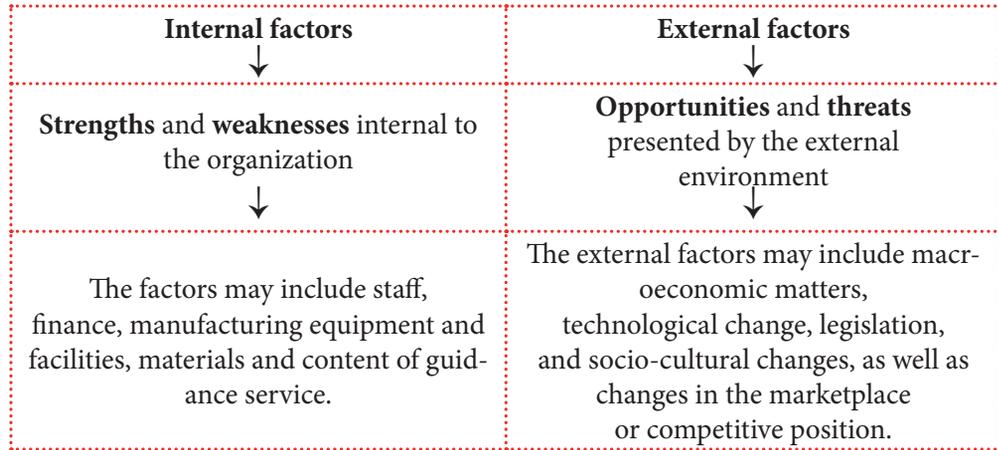
#### **NOTE:** -----

In general, the assessment and evaluation phase consists of two parts, i.e. processing of the collected information and data and the discussions on the results which have been achieved.

An important challenge is to avoid the collection of useless data.

#### **Methods for evaluation and assessment:**

One of the methods which might help to summarize such information and data is **SWOT analysis**. It groups key pieces of information into two main categories:



The results of SWOT analysis are often presented in the form of a matrix. It helps to find the relationship between internal and external factors and look for the ways to improve the service in the best way. The below given table provides with a sample SWOT matrix.

SWOT matrix example:

	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<p>Which <i>strengths</i> might help to employ existing <i>opportunities</i>?</p> <p>E.g., high competence of counseling staff might help to adjust innovative methodologies for career guidance service provision.</p>	<p>Which <i>opportunities</i> might help to avoid existing <i>weaknesses</i>?</p> <p>E.g., funding opportunities might avoid the problems of quantity of special ICT and mobile tools for career guidance service provision</p>
<b>Threats</b>	<p>Which <i>strengths</i> might help to avoid existing <i>threats</i>?</p> <p>E.g., financial capacity of the organisation might avoid the threat of decreasing of service provision because of decreased funding</p>	<p>What is the relationship between existing <i>weaknesses</i> and <i>threats</i>? What are the possibilities to neutralize them?</p> <p>E.g., there is a relationship between the low number of staff (weak pint) and a threat of decreased funding from outside. There is a possibility to neutralize this situation in the way of employing few managers for ensuring the external funding of the career guidance service provision.</p>

The SWOT analysis gives every organisation an opportunity to make decisions for the **improvement of career guidance service.**

The SWOT analysis can be helpful in the whole Quality assurance process. SWOT analysis also shows, whether the purpose of the Quality Assurance process was reached.

#### **STEP 4**

Quality Assurance and development is a continuous and systematic process. It must undergo constant review combining self-assessment with evaluation by an external body, processing feed-back and organising procedures for change.

This last stage of the cycle is quite often the weakest: i.e., revision of planning, fine-tuning of quality objectives and of quality management activities.

*Steps in the review process:*

**Step 1:**

Make publicly available the results of the quality assessment procedure.



**Step 2:**

Foster an open debate with the relevant stakeholders on the factors which might have contributed to certain results.



**Step 3:**

Draw certain decision for change and improvement of career guidance services.



**Step 4:**

Final decisions should be made after analysis and discussion of few alternatives/ways for the service improvement.

**NOTE:** -----

There should be certain criteria set, which should help to choose the best alternative for improvement of career guidance services.

The below given table provides with a sample tool for analysis of the alternatives. You can evaluate each criterion in 4 grades system, in which the meanings of the grades are following:

4 – Excellent

3 – Good

2 – Moderate

1 – Poor

Sample tool for evaluation of criteria:

Selection criteria	Alternatives of decisions for improvement of career counselling service		
	Criteria 1	Criteria 2	Criteria 3
Criteria 1			
Criteria 2			
Criteria 3			

### 3.4. The quality of Quality Assurance process

These are main questions that need to be answered to evaluate whether the ongoing Quality Assurance process is qualitative:

Key questions for ensuring the Quality Assurance process:

Stage of the QA process	Key questions
STAGE 1 PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> Are the defined goals/objectives clear and measurable? <input type="checkbox"/> What are the goals/objectives of your system/ institution in relation to career counselling service provision? <input type="checkbox"/> How will you assess the degree to which these goals/objectives are fulfilled? <input type="checkbox"/> Describe the procedure for the planning process within the quality approach in use.
STAGE 2 IMPLEMENTATION	<input type="checkbox"/> How do you implement a planned action? <input type="checkbox"/> Describe the key principles in the procedure of the implementation process.
STAGE 3 EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> Describe your evaluation and assessment process. <input type="checkbox"/> How do you ensure that your assessment and evaluation is relevant and systematic? <input type="checkbox"/> Which stakeholders participate in the assessment and evaluation process? <input type="checkbox"/> What roles do the different stakeholders play? <input type="checkbox"/> When do you monitor, assess and evaluate (frequency)?

## STAGE 4 REVIEW

- How do you organize feedback and procedures for change?
- How do you ensure systematic feedback?
- How do you make the feedback on quality career counselling transparent?
- How do you ensure that the results of the assessment/evaluation are being used?
- How do you relate goals/objectives to the assessment and evaluation?

### 3.5. Exercise

*Compare and analyze.*

The exercise is suitable for groups between 10 and 30 trainees, the duration could be approx 120 min. It needs access to Internet and the trainees could be divided in groups of 2 or 3 people. Each group should have computer connected to Internet. The aim is to search and find description of some QA system in educational institution (university or school), in youth center (youth information or career center) or in some VET organization. Before dividing the groups, in plenary, the trainer could show them one online example of QA system presentation. Then the task is to try to present the system in form of diagram and to explain the aims of that system, the organizational aspects of that QA system and the responsibilities (responsible persons/bodies) for the implementation. Each group could have 30 min to search and then 30 min to summarize the findings. Then all the groups could join the plenary and could present their case (let say, in 5 min.). Others could ask questions. At the end, the trainer could try to compare the cases and show some similarities and differences.

# CHAPTER 4



# HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE INDICATORS MODEL

*For counselling young people  
and young people with fewer opportunities*

## KEYWORDS

Implementation of the Indicators Model of youth career consultancy; measurement of quality of the youth career guidance services

## OBJECTIVES OF THE CHAPTER

The main aim of this chapter is to **give concrete directions for implementation of the Quality Model of YCC** by the key stakeholders – the career consultants/trainers and the managers the youth services/centres.

The first section is dedicated to the key requirements from the management and consultants' point of view. These are numbered, as there are separate sections for managers, on one hand, and consultants/trainers, on the other. Also, there are Quality Indicators targeting counselling of young people with fewer opportunities. Each of the Quality Indicators of YCC is reviewed and explained, following the order of the 5-step systematic approach: CONTEXT – INPUT – PROCESS – OUTPUT – OUTCOME levels of the youth career guidance process.

The second section provides examples for **measurement of quality of the youth career guidance services**. There are ready-to-use tables for measurement of Quality Indicators by grades or scores based on the aims of the evaluation - whether it refers to assessment of the system or the process.

## INTRODUCTION

In order to provide an efficient and high-quality guidance service, we propose an approach, where at each stage of the counselling process there are tips on the practical implementation of the QA process.

We identified requirements for both the career consultant and the manager that can be used on the step-by-step basis in the youth career consultancy. In the following pages we provide those **requirements for some of the Quality Indicators at each stage of the youth career consultancy process**:



## **4.1. Step-by-step implementation of Quality Assurance**

### Stage 1 Context Level

Indicator: **Cooperation with local community and parents, partner institutions, networks on national and European level.**

### Requirements from the management point of view:

#### Initially, the manager should:

☞ be able to clearly define their aim and take it into consideration during different kind of cooperation activities, as well as their quality measurement. For example, the aim of the cooperation with local schools could be to identify the students problems and to present them to the consultants;

☞ establish mechanisms to enable youth services to contact the local community and international networks/institutions and mechanisms to communicate with them;

☞ know the local community and clients' social life and social structure. Second, how to access the local and international structures should be clarified. And, last but not least, the communication strategy should be established;

#### It will may then also be useful to:

☞ measure the level of cooperation on local, national or international level. For example, if some managers enable consultants and workers to visit local social events, to contact local schools, municipalities or youth organizations, they will assist in developing cooperation with the local community. Appropriate staff in the youth services could also visit international institutions and conferences, as well as to study new and relevant international documents. In doing so they will have some background and a greater understanding about developing cooperative approaches on an international level. Sometimes, even visiting some youth exchange of an international vocational organization could give some sense about possible international collaboration;

### Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:

☞ consultants should be clear about aims of the cooperation;

☞ they should play an active role not only in implementing the managers' directions, but in proposing mechanisms to improve the cooperation on a local, national and international level;

☞ they should provide the managers with feedback about the cooperation development. For this purpose there should be mechanisms for regular contacts and discussions between them and the manager;

Indicator: **Coordination/synchronization of national, local and organization internal policies.**

### Requirements from the management point of view:

☞ it is vital that the manager is well acquainted with the national policy in the field of career guidance;

☞ the manager should elaborate and introduce internal organizational policies that correspond to the national and/or regional trends. However, it should reflect the specifics of the organizations, i.e. target group profile, regional specifics of the labour market, etc.;

#### **Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:**

##### **Career consultants should:**

- § apply the developed internal policies strategy;
- § propose to their managers potential changes/ modifications, drawn from the direct work with the client;

Indicator: **Appropriate legislation and regulation in the field, easy to follow.**

#### **Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:**

- § the legislative framework is quite important. It should meet and reflect the specifics of this field, providing concrete legal basis and the manager should be well acquainted with it. Of course, it varies in the partner countries, reflecting different VET realities, cultural background, labour market specifics;

#### **Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:**

- § source up-to-date and accurate labour market information on a local, national and international basis;
- § critically evaluate and interpret labour market statistics;

Indicator: **Capacity of premises, quality and quantity of equipment and tools to provide the full range of services related to career counselling.**

#### **Requirements from the management point of view:**

- § financial provision for resources including the purchase of technical equipment;
- § select appropriate premises and equip them;
- § methodological and technical tools to support the guidance process;

#### **Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:**

- § be able to choose from the available tools/instruments the appropriate one/s/ for a concrete client;
- § provide for friendly environment (including re-arrangement of the premises, etc) in order to predispose the client;
- § regularly update the knowledge about the existing career guidance tools;

Indicator: **Consideration of local and cultural differences in the labour market and their influence on young people's decisions.**

**Requirements from the management point of view:**

- § be aware of the specifics of the local and regional labour market;
- § have contacts with the potential employers of the young people being consulted;

**Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:**

- § be well acquainted with the cultural specifics of the different groups of clients on local and regional level;
- § have knowledge about the specifics of the local labour market – profile of most spread companies, types of prevailing industries, requirements to potential employees;
- § have knowledge about the psychological characteristics of clients with different background – ethnic, religious, etc.;

Indicator: **Adequate assessment of needs of vulnerable groups, e.g. existence of studies, statistics.**

**Requirements from the management point of view:**

- § make financial provision to enable consultants to gather up-to-date information – statistics, studies, specialized literature – about counselling of vulnerable groups;
- § provide for consultation with an expert on vulnerable groups /in case of a need/;

**Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:**

- § have knowledge about types of vulnerable groups and their specific needs;
- § update regularly the knowledge about needs of the specific vulnerable groups based on available studies, statistics;
- § hold client-oriented studies and surveys on client's feedback (need-analysis reports, case studies with representatives from the target groups, face-to-face interviews, etc.);
- § apply the person-centred approach, based on the specific background of the person;

Indicator: Expansion of the accessibility of career consultancy services oriented towards young people with fewer opportunities.

**Requirements from the management point of view:**

- ☞ enhance the physical accessibility of office structures by for instance considering such aspects as geographical situation, offices situated on the first floor, presence of wheelchair ramps, etc., when moving to new offices;
- ☞ create internet platforms, leaflets, consultations on the phone, or other means destined to enhance the informational accessibility of career consultancy services;

**Requirements from the management point of view:**

- ☞ enhance the physical accessibility of office structures by for instance considering such aspects as geographical situation, offices situated on the first floor, presence of wheelchair ramps, etc., when moving to new offices;
- ☞ create internet platforms, leaflets, consultations on the phone, or other means destined to enhance the informational accessibility of career consultancy services;

**Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:**

- ☞ enhance the accessibility of approaches, methods and materials used during counselling process (simplified language, clear and large-printed design, etc.);
- ☞ take continuing education linked to empathy-building and non-verbal communication for better dealing and informing young people with fewer opportunities;
- ☞ regularly update knowledge regarding the newest facilities for the access of young people with fewer opportunities;
- ☞ be able to make use of the existing equipment according to the needs of the target group;

Further and more complete information on accessibility regarding young people with fewer opportunities will be provided after the presentation of the requirements concerning the 5 stages of the career counselling process.

**Stage 2  
Input Level**

Indicator: Appropriate competence of counselling staff - aware of: labour market and job profiles, employers' demands, specific school graduates' profiles.

**Requirements from the management point of view:**

Managers should provide their staff with updated information sources, specialized literature, tools and instruments so that be able to keep pace with the current tendencies.

At the same time, managers themselves should keep themselves informed and competent regarding the tendencies in the labour market, the changing and emerging new jobs, and the needs of the employers.

**Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:**

**It will may then also be useful to:**

- ☞ plan, design, implement and evaluate lifelong vocational/career development programmes and interventions that support career self- management;
- ☞ assist individuals in identifying their vocational/career development needs;
- ☞ empower individuals to set realistic goals, employ effective strategies and manage change and transition;
- ☞ assist individuals in developing vocational/career development plans and in identifying labour market opportunities;
- ☞ use vocational/career development resources and techniques as appropriate to prepare individuals for the labour market;
- ☞ deliver vocational/career planning services in a range of policy and operational contexts;
- ☞ collaborate and cooperate with recruitment agencies, employer organisations and other stakeholders to maximize the benefits of the guidance programme/service;
- ☞ refer individuals to appropriate resources and support within the community;

Indicator: **Willingness of the young person to engage in career consulting process.**

**Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:**

- ☞ to encourage the willingness of the young person to engage in career consulting process;
- ☞ to identify /on the basis of the person-centered approach/ key competences of the young person and select the appropriate strategy to motivate him/her;
- ☞ to identify the areas, where the young person needs special support;

Indicator: **Development of quality management approaches.**

**Requirements from the management point of view:**

**The development of quality management approaches is quite an important task for the manager of the organization. Key requirements are to:**

- ☞ elaborate the organization's quality management strategy, reflecting the specifics of the institution and the services provided;
- ☞ introduce the strategy to the counselling staff and discuss it with them in terms of applicability;

**Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:**

- ☞ elaborate self-assessment tools/instruments to check the Quality Assurance of the provided guidance service to the young person;
- ☞ follow the organizations' quality management strategy;

Indicator: **Stimulation of clients to find their specific place on the labour market.**

**Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:**

- ✎ assist individuals to understand the nature and value of qualifications from educational and training organisations and where they fit in the national and international qualifications frameworks;
- ✎ select and use appropriate careers information databases and assessment tools to assist individuals in their career development;
- ✎ help individuals understand and apply labour market information to achieve their career objectives;
- ✎ assist individuals to identify labour market opportunities by using local and national media, state and private recruitment mechanisms, online resources, networking;

Indicator: **Existence of mobile or e-consulting mechanisms.**

**Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:**

- ✎ have updated information on the existing counselling tools, based on ICT and modern technology – on national or even international level (which might be an advantage);
- ✎ read regularly articles and postings in specialized web-fora, blogs sited, dedicated to mobile or e-consulting services to young people;

Indicator: **Provision of specialized services, adjusted towards the specific needs of young people with fewer opportunities.**

**Requirements from the management point of view:**

- ✎ be informed on the latest tendencies of specialized services adjusted towards the specific needs of young people with fewer opportunities;
- ✎ finance specialized services, adjusted towards the specific needs of young people with fewer opportunities;

**Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:**

- ✎ follow continuing education or get informed by other means to best reply the specific needs of young people with fewer opportunities;
- ✎ to be able to choose the most useful and appropriate service regarding the needs of young people with fewer opportunities;
- ✎ provide constant feed-back to managers from clients about the usefulness of the specialized services;

Indicator: **Precise knowledge of different types of profiles of disadvantaged youth.**

**Requirements from the management point of view:**

- ☞ each consultant should follow continuing education in order for them to be aware of the different types of profiles of young people with fewer opportunities;
- ☞ provide the staff with updated information on resources, statistics, studies, surveys, etc. on the division of the different profiles of the target group;
- ☞ share best practices with other groups and managers;

**Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:**

- ☞ the consultants should start their work on the basis of good understanding of the different profiles of the young people with fewer opportunities;
- ☞ follow continuing education to be aware of the different types of profiles of young people with fewer opportunities (and to be able to handle them efficiently);
- ☞ share best practice and experiences regarding young people with fewer opportunities with other groups;

In Switzerland, each professional guidance counsellor (or career counsellor) attached to the Swiss Federation of Psychologists (<http://www.psychologie.ch>) is asked each three years to follow a minimum of 240 hours of continuing education linked to his professional acts.

For Swedish careers guidance professionals it is a “moral obligation to care for disadvantaged members of society” and to “actively advance justice and equality”. In these terms a highly proactive professional role is linked with the quality of guidance (Sveriges Vägledarförening, 1996).

Indicator: **Existence of special tools/equipment for disabled.**

**Requirements from the management point of view:**

- ☞ provide financial assistance to furnish the office with such tools and equipment;
- ☞ if the office's access requires climbing stairs, a wheelchair ramp could be built (or if the office is not on the first floor, you could consider including a lift or stair lift);
- ☞ provide specialized software applications for people with different kinds of disabilities (a possibility would be to create a web-portal with e-counselling facilities regarding specific needs of young people with fewer opportunities);
- ☞ be aware of the latest technologies and tools available in the career guidance counselling services that could be applied to young people with fewer opportunities;

**Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:**

- ☞ get up-to-date information and training on the tools' latest development and on how to use such tools and equipment;
- ☞ be able to match the tools used in the process with the specific needs of young people with fewer opportunities and provide adequate help with pertinent tools and/or equipment;

In Switzerland, e-counselling facilities exist in the counselling offices, offering aptitude, interest and competencies tests online or on intranet. Most of the time, these software or sites are adaptable to some specific needs of young people with fewer opportunities, namely the possibility of bigger scripture and language choice.

### Stage 3 Process Level

Indicator: **Counselling tailored to the personal development of the young person, moving them towards work readiness.**

#### Requirements from the management point of view:

- § support consultant in terms of need of specialized literature, tools and instruments, specialized staff in terms of work with young individuals;

#### Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:

- § consultants should always focus on the individual needs and interests of the young person, apply the person-centered approach;
- § apply user-friendly approach, be able to identify the mood of the client, predispose him/her to embark on the consulting process;
- § be confidential and this should be made clear to the clients;
- § try to get client's feedback and evaluation of the counselling service;

Indicator: **Documentary evidence and recording of consulting process.**

#### Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:

- § develop and implement system for documenting and recording the consulting process based on using different types of templates to assess the progress of the consulting in terms of quality of service and in terms of meeting the specific needs of the client;
- § make sure that the content of tools appropriate to the evaluation and recording of counselling process;
- § exchange opinion and information with colleagues from other institutions on existing documentary and recording tools and instruments in order to constantly improve the service;

Indicator: **Implement quality management system within the career consultancy process.**

#### Requirements from the management point of view:

- § implement an internal Quality Assurance policy (evaluating the main criteria and system of Quality Assurance within the organization);
- § plan for the implementation of the quality management system in career guidance;

**Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:**

- ☞ be able to justify the implementation of quality management through records and documentation;
- ☞ provide records or reports from the implementation process;
- ☞ have the required competence and qualification to implement the counselling process;

Indicator: Flexible programs that propose enhanced model for counselling youth with fewer opportunities.

**Requirements from the management point of view:**

- ☞ give more freedom to the counsellor when working with young people with fewer opportunities to apply flexible programs;
- ☞ assist by providing feed-back from other managers on their experience with flexible programs;
- ☞ share best practice regarding those special programs;

**Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:**

- ☞ specialized knowledge on behaviour and different approaches regarding young people with fewer opportunities, namely taking continuing education linked to empathy-building and non-verbal communication;
- ☞ enhance self-confidence and empowerment (use of inner resources);
- ☞ be well-informed about the possibilities of using different combinations of programs;
- ☞ choose the combination or variation that best suits the needs of young people with fewer opportunities;
- ☞ apply these flexible programs on individual basis taking the needs of the client as a starting point in the counselling process;

More useful tools and instruments for QA implementation are available in the **QA Workbook. QA tools and case studies for youth career consultancy** (online version available at: [www.vqac.org](http://www.vqac.org)).

**Stage 4  
Output Level**

Indicator: Improved level of performance in a range of main skills, including taking responsibility.

**Requirements from the management point of view:**

- ☞ provide consultants with specialist tools or methods to evidence client's progress;

#### Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:

- ☞ at the end of the guidance process, check the progress of the client by his/her feedback to tasks similar to those at the initial phase of the process. Compare them and measure the progress;
- ☞ record client's achievements;
- ☞ try to get feedback from employers where the clients were employed;

Indicator: **Enhanced self-confidence, self-esteem, motivation to enter labour market.**

#### Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:

- ☞ evaluate the progress of the client by:
  - feedback from him/her by a list of questions, dedicated to personal skills and competences;
  - his/her willingness to initiate concrete actions towards entering the labour market;
  - concrete actions towards entering the labour market /writing CV, motivation letter, applying for concrete job/;

Indicator: **Completion rate of youth with fewer opportunities.**

#### Requirements from the management point of view:

- ☞ initiating surveys, reports, statistics on the completion rate of young people with fewer opportunities, and provide their staff with summaries of the already existing reports;
- ☞ spread information on the benefits of the counselling process (internet, leaflets, etc.);
- ☞ providing mechanisms of constant feed-back from clients having taken part in the process;
- ☞ networking with the local and national authorities to emphasize the importance of follow-up and social and professional integration of young people with fewer opportunities;

#### Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:

- ☞ on-going discussion on the improvement of the client during the process, e.g. how they see their improvement, are their expectations answered, etc.;
- ☞ encouragement and self-confidence by the consultant, regularly pointing out the benefits and the advance the client has made;
- ☞ set principles and provide the client with information on how the process is advancing, what stage they have reached and what is to be accomplished, so the client is aware of the distance travelled;

## Stage 5 Outcome Level

Indicator: **Utilization of acquired skills (employer and employee point of view).**

### Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:

- § try to get feedback from employees - their satisfaction on receiving career counselling services;
- § maintain contacts with employers of the former clients, explore their opinion on the newly recruited employees;
- § observe the professional development of the former clients;

Indicator: **Rate of employed young people after being consulted by career consultant/ youth worker.**

### Requirements from the management point of view:

- § facilitate the contact with employers of former clients;

### Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:

- § try to maintain contact with the clients – via e-mail, blogs, forums, or even additional consultations;
- § keep a record on the development of each client:
  - whether they managed to get a job or not;
  - is it a temporary or long-term?
  - are they satisfied;
  - why some of them did not manage to get a job – try to involve them again in additional guidance activities or training;

Indicator: **Provision of further more support of already hired young people with fewer opportunities.**

### Requirements from the management point of view:

- § provide the consultants with mechanisms for on-going further support;
- § maintaining contacts with a network of employers for provision of information from former clients;
- § initiate surveys and statistics on the situation of former clients;

### Requirements from the consultants and trainers point of view:

- ☞ provide support for work-placement adaptation, e.g. being sure the client has a positive self-presentation;
- ☞ promote help and guidance of young people with fewer opportunities in the labour market;
- ☞ show concern about the further development of the client aiming at long-lasting effects from the provided service, e.g. keep written records of the development of the clients and their achievements including not only the immediate effects but the long-term ones as well;

## **4.2. Possible ways for measurement of Quality Indicators**

There might be various ways and possibilities to measure the performance of Quality Indicators in youth career consultancy. It depends on ourselves, what kind of measurement systems we're going to choose.

### *Measurement of Quality Indicators in grades*

One of the ways to measure the performance of defined Quality Indicators in youth career consultancy is measurement of each in grades. There can be various grading scales that might be used for evaluation of performance of each indicator indicated in youth career consultancy. When analyzing each Quality Indicator and its performance, proposals of criteria for evaluation of each source of evidence have to be developed. It is proposed to develop such criteria by each organization which uses the current model.

One of the possibilities for measurement of the performance of each Quality Indicator is a usage 5-grade scale for evaluation of each indicator. Proposal for interpretation of each range is:

- 5 – performance of the indicator is excellent;
- 4 – performance of the indicator is good;
- 3 – performance of the indicator is middling;
- 2 – performance of the indicator is bad;
- 1 – performance of the indicator is very bad;

Another grading possibility which is quite often used in Lithuanian practice is measurement of the Quality Indicators according 0-2 grades scale. The interpretation of grades is as follows:

- 0 – inadequate to the evidence of indicator performance;
- 1 – partly adequate to the evidence of indicator performance;
- 2 – Fully adequate to the evidence of indicator performance;

One more possibility for measurement used in Irish practice of Quality Assurance in career guidance is marking each indicator in letters. The interpretation of each letter might be the following:

- A – yes, the performance indicator is whenever appropriate;
- B – sometimes it is appropriate, so it needs some attention;
- C – the performance is not always appropriate, but it is a priority for development;
- D – the performance of indicator is inappropriate, it needs more attention;
- E – the performance of indicator is not applicable;

*Sample of measurement of Quality Indicators in grades:*

Stage in the YCC process	Quality Indicators	Evidence of indicator performance	Indicative source of evidence (indicator variable )
Context			

Sample tools for measurement of Quality Indicators in grades are available in the QA Workbook,

*Measurement of Quality Indicators in scores*

The quality of the career guidance service provision can also be measured using scores system. It is beneficial when the main goal of the QA process is to evaluate the performance of quality of service provision, as well as evaluate the whole system.

The measurement of quality using scoring system lets the stakeholders of the QA process set the priorities in the whole model of Quality Indicators. The priorities are set in the way of giving different number of scores for each indicator thus showing its importance in the whole QA process.

One of the possibilities in using the scoring system in the measurement of performance process is to use 100-scores scale. The amount of scores in such scale lets the evaluator give an appropriate amount of scores for each Quality Indicator.

The table below provides a sample tool for measurement of quality using scoring system. It let evaluate each indicator in the given sum of scores. The scores are given ac-

ording to the analysis of the given sources proving the performance of the concrete Quality Indicators.

*Sample of measurement of Quality Indicators using scoring system.*

Quality Indicators	Maximum score	Actual score	Source of evidence
—			—
—			—

Sample tools for measurement of Quality Indicators in scores are available in the QA Workbook.

*Evidence of Quality Indicators performance and QI variables in youth career consultancy*

In order to measure the Quality Indicators performance, it is necessary to have clarified two very important characteristics – Evidence of Indicator performance and Indicators variable /the indicative source of evidence/.

The following table provides these two categories for each of the Quality Indicators in youth career consultancy.

A separate table is developed for QI applicable to youth with fewer opportunities /YFO/. It reflects the specific needs of the target group and follows the table below:

Evidence of Quality Indicators performance and QI variables in youth career consultancy:

Stage in the process	Quality Indicators	Evidence of indicator performance	Indicative source of evidence (indicator variable )
Context	<p>Cooperation with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ local community and parents;</li> <li>☞ partner institutions;</li> <li>☞ networks on national and European level;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Does the existing cooperation meet the existing needs?</li> <li>☞ Is the cooperation well developed?</li> <li>☞ Is the cooperation well planned and organized?</li> <li>☞ Is the cooperation adequate to the organization's strategy?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ strategy or action plan for cooperation with mentioned target groups;</li> <li>☞ number and content of cooperation/partnership agreements developed;</li> <li>☞ number of partnerships with the mentioned target groups in local, national, international projects, programmes and other activities developed;</li> </ul>
	<p>Coordination/synchronization of national, local and organization internal policies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Does the service meet the requirements and the main aspects of national, regional and internal policies?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ analysis of the developed internal quality assurance policy;</li> <li>☞ analysis of the local policy on quality assurance in career guidance;</li> <li>☞ analysis of the national policy on quality assurance in career guidance;</li> <li>☞ analysis of the EU policy and guidelines on quality assurance in career guidance;</li> </ul>
	<p>Appropriate legislation and regulation in the field, easy to follow.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Is the legislation and regulation easily adjusted to everyday service provision?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ counsellor's experience on using the adopted national, regional, local legislation in practice (proved by counsellor's self analysis and reflections);</li> <li>☞ research studies on implementation of national, regional or local policies in the field of career guidance;</li> </ul>
	<p>Capacity of premises, quality and quantity of equipment and tools to provide the full range of services related to career counselling.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Does the capacity of premises meet the needs of counselling service provision?</li> <li>☞ Does the quality and quantity of equipment and tools meet the needs of counselling service provision?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ number of premises used for provision of guidance services;</li> <li>☞ number of computers used for provision of guidance services;</li> <li>☞ number and content of counselling methodologies used for provision of guidance services;</li> <li>☞ number and content of tools used for provision of guidance services;</li> </ul>
	<p>Consideration of local and cultural differences in the labour market and their influence on young people's decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Do the local and cultural differences influence young people's career decisions?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ official data regarding the situation on the labour market;</li> <li>☞ surveys of young people;</li> <li>☞ surveys of employers;</li> </ul>

Input	<p>Appropriate competence of counselling staff – aware of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ labour market and job profiles;</li> <li>☞ employers’ demands;</li> <li>☞ specific school graduates’ profiles;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Does the counselling staff meet the basic requirements for service provision?</li> <li>☞ Does the competence of counselling staff meet the needs for a counselling service provision?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Counsellor’s portfolio: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ counsellor’s resume;</li> <li>◦ documents proving formal qualification of counselling staff;</li> <li>◦ documents showing improvement of qualification of counselling staff;</li> <li>◦ evaluation of the staff, done by the respective people within the organisation;</li> <li>◦ copies of counselling tools, methodologies, etc. developed by the counsellor for counselling purposes;</li> <li>◦ self-analysis and reflections of the counselling staff;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<p>Key competencies available in the curricula and learning material.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Do the competencies available in the curricula and learning materials meet the needs of labour market and the of the whole society?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ evaluation of the curricula and learning materials used in the counselling process;</li> <li>☞ checking whether key competencies in the curricula match to the needs of the labour market;</li> <li>☞ client’s attitudes on the key competencies available in the proposed curricula and learning materials;</li> <li>☞ attitudes of social partners to the key competencies available in the proposed curricula and learning materials;</li> </ul>
	<p>Willingness of the young person to engage in career consulting process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Are young people strongly motivated to engage in the career counselling process?</li> <li>☞ Do the counselling services meet the expectations of young people?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ research/surveys of needs, expectations and motivations of young people;</li> <li>☞ records of counsellors from the counselling sessions;</li> </ul>
	<p>Development of quality management approaches.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Do the quality assurance approaches meet the existing needs?</li> <li>☞ Are the quality assurance approaches used in counselling service provision?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ quality management frameworks, instruments or systems developed (content and usage in everyday work);</li> </ul>
	<p>Stimulation of clients to find there specific place on the labour market.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Are the clients motivated to find their own place on the labour market?</li> <li>☞ Do the counselling methods and tools meet the needs and expectations of clients?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ counsellor’s records on the counselling process and client’s motivation to enter the labour market;</li> <li>☞ evaluation of the methodology and materials used in the counselling process;</li> <li>☞ special tools and methods for development of client’s entrepreneurship skills used in the counselling process;</li> </ul>
	<p>Existence of mobile or e-consulting mechanisms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Does the number of mobile or e-consulting mechanisms meet the needs of the counselling service provision?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ number and content of ICT tools for career development of one’s own;</li> <li>☞ number and content of e-counselling services within the organisation;</li> <li>☞ number and content of career development educational programmes based on e-learning;</li> </ul>

<b>Process</b>	Flexible programmes that incorporate progression in acquisition of knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Do the programme evaluation methods allow the evaluation of a person's progress after the programme?</li> <li>☞ Are the client and the counsellor able to work with the programme in a flexible way?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ number and content of tools or methods for evaluation of person's progress in the implementation of the counselling programmes;</li> <li>☞ counsellor's experience in working with the programme (proved with the help of counsellor's portfolio);</li> <li>☞ client's view on the flexibility of the programme;</li> </ul>
	Counselling tailored to the personal development of the young person, moving them towards work readiness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Are the clients ready for working after the counselling service?</li> <li>☞ Is the content of counselling sessions tailored to the personal development?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ number of clients who received counselling service during a certain period;</li> <li>☞ content of the counselling sessions;</li> <li>☞ counsellor's experience and self-analysis (proved with the help of counsellor's portfolio);</li> <li>☞ client's feedback and evaluation of the counselling service;</li> </ul>
	Sound financial and administrative management of the counselling body.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Does the organization have a capacity to manage the career counselling service provision?</li> <li>☞ Does the organization have a capacity to ensure the financing of the counselling service provision?</li> <li>☞ Does the financial and administrative management of the organization meet the needs of the clients?</li> <li>☞ Does the financial and administrative management of the organization meet the needs of counselling staff?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ internal regulations of the organization;</li> <li>☞ strategy of the organization in the field of provision of career counselling services;</li> <li>☞ documents proving financial capacity of the organization;</li> <li>☞ competence and qualification of the administrative staff of the organization;</li> </ul>
	Implement quality management system in the career consultancy process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Is the quality management being implemented during career counselling process?</li> <li>☞ Is the implementation of quality management justified through records and documentation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ internal quality assurance policy (evaluating the main criteria and system of quality assurance within the organization);</li> <li>☞ plan of the implementation of the quality management system in career guidance;</li> <li>☞ records or reports from the implementation process;</li> <li>☞ competence and qualification of implementing staff;</li> </ul>
	Documentary evidence and recording of consulting process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Is the number of tools appropriate for evaluation and recording of the counselling process?</li> <li>☞ Is the content of tools appropriate for the evaluation and recording of the counselling process?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ number and content of tools and methods used for evaluation and recording of the counselling process;</li> </ul>

<b>Output</b>	Achievement of key competencies demonstrated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Does the counselling service help clients to achieve the key competencies?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ counsellor's records about client's achievements;</li> <li>☞ client's self-analysis on his/her achievements;</li> <li>☞ feedback from employers (where the clients were employed);</li> </ul>
	Improved level of performance in a range of main skills, including taking responsibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Does the counselling service help clients to improve the performance of main skills?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ specialised tools or methods proving client's progress;</li> <li>☞ client's feedback;</li> <li>☞ counsellor's records on client's achievements;</li> <li>☞ feedback from employers (where the clients were employed);</li> </ul>
	Enhanced self-confidence, self-esteem and motivation to enter labour market.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Does the counselling service help clients to enhance self-confidence, self-esteem and motivation of entering the labour market?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ client's feedback;</li> <li>☞ counsellor's records on client's achievements and progress;</li> </ul>
	Acquisition of formal qualifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Does counselling help clients to acquire formal qualifications?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ documents proving the acquisition of formal qualifications;</li> </ul>

<b>Outcome</b>	Rate of employed youth after being consulted by career consultant/youth worker.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Does counselling service help clients in being employed?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ surveys of clients;</li> <li>☞ official data from the labour market agencies;</li> <li>☞ research and studies on clients' employment and their satisfaction after getting career counselling services;</li> <li>☞ clients' feedback;</li> </ul>
	Quality of employment, retention of job opportunities improved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Does counselling service help clients to be successful at work?</li> <li>☞ Does counselling service improve client's job opportunities?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ surveys of clients;</li> <li>☞ official data from the labour market agencies;</li> <li>☞ research and studies on clients' employment and their satisfaction after getting career counselling services;</li> <li>☞ clients' feedback;</li> </ul>
	Destination of trainees 6 months after career guidance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Does the counselling service meet the needs of clients?</li> <li>☞ Does the counselling service meet the needs of the labour market?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ surveys of clients;</li> <li>☞ official data from the labour market agencies;</li> <li>☞ research and studies on clients' employment and their satisfaction after getting career counselling services;</li> <li>☞ clients' feedback;</li> </ul>
	Utilization of acquired skills/employer and employee point of view.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Do the acquired skills meet the employer's needs?</li> <li>☞ Are the acquired skills appropriate to the present situation on the labour market?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ surveys and feedback of employers;</li> <li>☞ research and studies on clients' employment and their satisfaction after getting career counselling services;</li> <li>☞ surveys of employers;</li> </ul>
	Ongoing support of already hired young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Does the support meet the needs of young people?</li> <li>☞ Is the support appropriate to the present economical and social situation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ surveys and feedback of employees;</li> <li>☞ surveys of employers;</li> </ul>
	Evaluation of local and national labour market to ensure the career consultancy content is relative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ Does the career counselling service meet the needs of the labour market?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☞ official data regarding the situation on the labour market;</li> <li>☞ surveys of present employees (former clients of the career counselors);</li> <li>☞ research and studies on clients' employment and their satisfaction after getting career counselling services;</li> <li>☞ surveys of the employers;</li> </ul>

Measurement of Quality Indicators for young people with fewer opportunities

Stage in the process	Quality Indicators	Evidence of indicator performance	Indicative source of evidence (indicator variable)
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ adequate assessment of vulnerable groups( e.g. existence of studies, statistics;</li> <li>§ expansion of the accessibility of career consultancy services oriented towards people with fewer opportunities;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Does the existing assessment of the vulnerable groups reflect their specific characteristics?</li> <li>§ Does the equipment of the premises or the counselling centres meet the needs of young people with fewer opportunities?</li> <li>§ Are the information materials accessible to people with fewer opportunities?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ quality assessment especially adapted for people with fewer opportunities;</li> <li>§ needs analysis report, statistics etc.;</li> <li>§ existence and number of premises properly equipped to accept young disabled people;</li> <li>§ a number of options of getting information about the counselling services available;</li> <li>§ various types of information materials adjusted to the specific needs of the clients;</li> <li>§ feedback from the client;</li> </ul>
Input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ provision of specialized services adjusted to the specific needs of people with fewer opportunities;</li> <li>§ precise knowledge of different types of profiles of disadvantaged youth;</li> <li>§ existence of special tools and equipment for disabled;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Are the specialized services applied by the counsellor relevant to the goals of the provided service?</li> <li>§ Is the counsellor well-trained to meet the expectations of the clients (disabled or disadvantaged young people)?</li> <li>§ Do the tools and equipment used in the process answer the needs of the disadvantaged)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ surveys on the specialized services used in career consultancy for youth with fewer opportunities;</li> <li>§ a number of specialized services tailored to the needs of the vulnerable groups;</li> <li>§ documents showing improvement of qualifications relevant to the needs of the client;</li> <li>§ portfolio reflecting the special services provided.</li> <li>§ copies of counselling tools and methodology specially directed or adapted to the needs of the target group;</li> <li>§ self-assessment of the counsellor;</li> </ul>
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ flexible programs that propose enhanced model for counselling of youth with fewer opportunities;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Are the programs adaptable to the type of disadvantage or disability of the person being counselled?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ number of possibilities of changing the program without affecting the expected results;</li> <li>§ feedback from the client;</li> <li>§ counsellor's experience in the process of working with flexible programs;</li> </ul>
Output	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ completion rate of youth with fewer opportunities;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ How many youngsters benefit from the counselling process?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ client, s feedback;</li> <li>§ counsellor's records on client, s achievements at the end of the process;</li> <li>§ statistics on the number of clients from the target group being consulted;</li> </ul>
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ provision of further more support of already hired young people with fewer opportunities, enhancing their professional progress and career development;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Are the already hired young people with fewer opportunities backed-up in order for them to keep their position and for further professional development at their company?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ counsellor, s records on client, s progress expanding over a longer period of time;</li> <li>§ feedback from employers;</li> <li>§ client, s feedback;</li> <li>§ surveys on present employees (former clients);</li> </ul>

### 4.3. Tools for implementation of the Quality Assurance process

In this section, we provide a few sample tools that would support and facilitate the Quality assurance implementation in the field of youth career services provision. QA in YCC partnership developed a number of such instruments. Some of them are paper-based as the samples below. The others are web-based interactive tools – multimedia tests and game-based tools that can be accessed on the Virtual Quality Assurance Center (VQAC), available at: [www.vqac.org](http://www.vqac.org)

Here are 2 example tools. More such instruments are published in a separate document - **QA Workbook. QA tools and case studies for youth career consultancy**, available as e-book on the: [www.vqac.org](http://www.vqac.org)

#### Stakeholder analysis of your organization

**Aim of the tool:**

The main aim of the tool is provide you with a list of all stakeholders engaged in the QA process within your organization, as well as their responsibilities and interests. This tool will facilitate the implementation of the QA in the career guidance service and will clarify the tasks and responsibilities.

**Who can use the tool:**

Both consultant and manager.

**How to use the tool:**

First, list all the stakeholders engaged in QA within your organization; Second, indicate their interest – whether it is high or low; Third, indicate whether their power to influence your organization is high or low; in the fourth column you can include any comments you have about the nature of these stakeholders.

*Sample tool for stakeholder analysis within the organization:*

Stakeholder	Interest	Power	Comments

*☺ Sample tool for evaluation of career counselling service features and their adequacy to clients' needs*

**Aim of the tool:**

You can use this tool to check to what extent your service corresponds to the needs of the client.

**Who can use the tool:**

Youth career consultants.

**How to use the tool:**

List all features of your counselling service provision, as well as the defined clients' needs in the field of career counselling. Mark in signs given below, whether the relationship between certain features and clients' needs is strong, moderate or weak.

*Symbols for marking:*

- ☐ the relationship is strong
- △ the relationship is moderate
- the relationship is weak

*Sample tool for evaluation of career counselling service features and their adequacy to clients' needs:*

Clients' needs	Service features			
	feature 1	feature 2	feature 3	feature 4
need 1				
need 2				
need 3				

**NOTE:** -----

You can use your own grading or marking system for expressing the relationship between the features of career counselling service and clients' needs.

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#### 4.4. Exercise

*Analyze and discuss.*

This exercise is appropriate for a group of 15-20 participants that can be split into 3 or 4 working groups of 5 persons. Get acquainted with the best practice on quality assurance implementation below. It describes the quality assurance system, developed by the UK government body OFSTED.

Then, download the framework, available at [www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk) and discuss it in small

groups. Participants should make reference to their own experience and compare it with your organization practices. Each group should come out with a list of useful and expedient extracts from the framework that can be used in their own work. Discuss the list in plenary and elaborate a common document with recommendations for improvement of the participants' work in their organizations with a view to Quality Assurance implementation.

The Quality Standards Framework has been developed as a response to professionals working with young people in the area of Information, Advice and Guidance within Careers Consultancy. Research has been carried out in different areas, which has culminated in the formation of a framework and toolkit to implement quality standards within a Youth Careers Consultancy process.

The quality standards framework and toolkit will ensure that everyone involved in the stakeholder continuum has an awareness of the level of service and expectations upon them. It will make sure everyone involved has a clear structure within which to work and in the delivery of quality services to young people. The framework and toolkit have been developed to give users and practitioners' confidence and guidance to create a service that can meet rigorous quality standards.

Ofsted is the government body within the United Kingdom that inspects the quality standards of various educational bodies within the country. This process involves various stages from self-assessment tools to a full inspection process with various targets and indicators that they are expecting the body to have met. A grading system is used to measure the standard of the work reviewed. A report is published with this grade and a set of recommendations to be implemented before the next return inspection. This method helps organisations to understand the expectations upon them to deliver a quality service to young people. Connexions, the youth careers service for the UK is regularly inspected by Ofsted on top of their in house quality standards processes. Recently the UK quality standards framework for Youth Careers has been reviewed and updated to ensure that young people can expect the best from the services that they access. A copy of this framework can be viewed on the following website ([www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk)).

# PART 3

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## GLOSSARY

Evaluation and assessment	A stage in the QA process, consisting of processing of the collected information and data, taking into account the objectives, and measurement of the outcomes of what has been previously planned.
Evidence of indicator performance	A statement or question showing more concrete meaning of defined quality indicators.
Implementation	The actual carrying out of the quality assurance plan. The gathering of evidence is a fundamental part of this stage.
Indicators Model	Structure and implementation of quality indicators, defining groups of indicators depending on some important criteria.
Performance measures	Quantitative and qualitative measurements used to illustrate the operation of defined quality indicators.
Planning	The stage for identifying and scheduling the tasks needed for the successful implementation of the quality assurance process.
Quality Assurance	Encompasses all procedures, systematic activities and policy taken within an organization to ensure that: 1. Delivered products or services meet the performance requirements, according to some specific standards and procedures. 2. A system conforms to established technical requirements. 3. Specific degree of confidence is provided and maintained.
Quality Assurance Framework	A set of external conditions and requirements influencing the youth career consultancy process.
Quality assurance process	A cycle which includes 4 interrelated stages: planning of quality assurance system/approach, implementation, evaluation and assessment, review.
Quality Indicator	'A figure, which is helpful for the assessment of a quality characteristic or the achievement of quality objectives' (Van den Berghe 1997b).

Quality management	Control of activities which aims at the establishment of a structured and well-defined QA process .
Quality objectives	The definition of quality according to the different key stakeholders, often related to “effectiveness” of the service, to achieving some community goals.
Review	A stage for discussion of results of the quality assurance process, which usually finishes with making decisions concerning the improvement of career guidance provision.
SMART	A method for defining goals and objectives of quality assurance process: S – Specific; M – Measurable; A – Achievable; R – Reachable; T – Timing;
Source of evidence	A piece of information or data, proving the performance of defined quality indicators.
Stakeholder	An important “player” in a process, an important participant in some stages of the service (for example, employers, consultants, trainers etc.)
SWOT analysis	A tool for evaluation of internal and external factors of career guidance service provision. It includes the evaluation of strengths and weaknesses of the service provision, opportunities and threats coming from outside for the service provision.
Work breakdown structure	A method for converting goals of quality assurance process into work and tasks to be done.
Young people with fewer Opportunities (YFO)	Young people that are at a disadvantage compared to their peers because they face certain specific situations or obstacles.
5-step approach to quality	A set of quality indicators (QIs), applicable to each stage of the youth career guidance process, as follows: Context-input-process-output-outcome.

# QUALITY ASSURANCE IN YOUTH CAREER CONSULTANCY

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*Special thanks to:*

**Quality Assurance in Youth Career Consultancy** partner organizations:

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  - Marie Curie Association – *Bulgaria*
  - Fastrack to IT Ltd – *Ireland*
- Youth Career & Advising Center – *Lithuania*
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