Quality Assurance in Youth Career Consultancy

Existing quality indicators in youth career consultancy

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- National Student Information and Career Center – Bulgaria
- Marie Curie Association – Bulgaria
- Fastrack to IT Ltd – Ireland
- Youth Career & Advising Center – Lithuania
- University of Prešov – Student Services Centre – Slovakia
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2007

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EXISTING QUALITY INDICATORS IN YOUTH CAREER CONSULTANCY

In the frame of Quality Assurance in Youth Career Consultancy (Leonardo Da Vinci pilot project: BG/06/B/F/PP-166013)

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2007
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1. Scope of the survey

1.1. Goal of the survey

The main aim of this survey is to identify and analyze the existing quality assurance systems procedures and indicators in youth career consultancy as substantial element of the quality assurance procedure in the field of youth career consultancy.

Also, by means of the survey we will determine the necessity, scale scope and capacity for establishing a Quality Assurance Framework (indicators and training materials for career consultants) for Youth Career Counseling. The QA Framework will be made up of the quality indicators and standards that provide agreed criteria and measures to assess whether quality is being achieved across all aspects of the youth guidance service. The framework can be used to help evaluate policy measures across a number of guidance service providers as well as within individual organisations.

1.2. Key areas of research

By means of the survey, project partnership concentrates on the following areas of research:

- Contemporary tendencies of quality assurance in the field of Youth career consultancy;
- Existing quality assurance procedures in the youth career consultancy in the 5 partner countries;
- Assess the effectiveness and or deficiencies in such quality assurance systems in the field of YCC;
- Needs in terms of quality assurance in the youth career guidance in 5 European countries;

1.3 Target Group

The survey in Bulgaria, Ireland, Lithuania, Slovakia and United Kingdom was carried out among:

- Youth consultants with low and middle level of specialization in the field of career development working in the youth centers;
- Youth career consultants working with young people with fewer opportunities;
- Instructional designers and trainers of trainers;
1.4. Participants

The survey is carried out in Bulgaria, Ireland, Lithuania, Slovakia and United Kingdom, with the participation of the project partners as follows:

- **In Bulgaria:**
  - Student Computer Art Society (SCAS);
  - Marie Curie Association (MCA);
  - National Student Information and Career Center (NSICCC);

- **In Ireland:**
  - Fastrack to Information Technologies Ltd (FIT)

- **In Lithuania:**
  - Youth Career and Advising Center (YC&AC)

- **In Slovakia:**
  - University of Presov (UP)

- **In United Kingdom:**
  - Plymouth City Council Youth Service (PCCYS)
2. Survey procedure

The survey was implemented on the basis of preliminary developed procedure plan: goals of survey – identification of target group – development of template questionnaire – distribution of questionnaire to target group /methods and scope/ – feedback /number of respondents/ – systematization and analysis of results – preparation and issue of the Existing quality indicators in Youth career consultancy survey.

2.1. Development of template questionnaire

Project partners developed the questionnaire template in compliance with the key aim of the survey. The first step was to write terms of reference, where the core questions for the survey were determined. Then partners had the opportunity to give opinion, remarks and proposals, on the basis of which the final version of the questionnaire was prepared. Then, it was translated in each partner language, so as to facilitate the distribution to target group representatives.

2.2. Distribution of questionnaires

All project partners were involved in the distribution of questionnaires as follows:

- **In Bulgaria:** 75 questionnaires distributed between the three Bulgarian partners:
  - Student Computer Art Society (SCAS)
  - Marie Curie Association (MCA)
  - National Student Information and Career Center (NSICC)

- **In Ireland:**
  - 50 questionnaires, distributed by Fastrack to Information Technologies Ltd (FIT)

- **In Lithuania:**
  - 50 questionnaires, distributed by Youth Career and Advising Center (YC&AC)

- **In Slovakia:**
  - 50 questionnaires, distributed by University of Presov (UP)

- **In United Kingdom:**
  - 50 questionnaires, distributed by Plymouth City Council Youth Service (PCCYS)

2.3. Feedback from target group

- **Total number of respondents:** 207

- **Distribution of respondents by countries** /Figure 1/:
  - **Bulgaria:** 74
To supplement the information gleaned from the questionnaire some informal interviews were undertaken with a small group of end-users to determine their views and ideas in developing a QA Framework for YCC.

Figure 1

2.4. Time frame:

The distribution of questionnaire and gathering the feedback for the survey commenced in January 2007 and was completed by February 2007

2.5. Methods:

• Methods of collecting information;

The questionnaires for the implementation of the survey were distributed by:
- Post to youth career centers, career guidance services working with youth, including youth with fewer opportunities;
- e-mail communication – sending the template questionnaire by e-mail and receiving the responses online;
- face-to-face meetings with target group;

• Method for analysis of information;

- Content analysis – on the basis of the “multiple choice” and open questions - description, analysis and synthesis of the results form the 22 questions in the questionnaire form.

2.6. Questionnaire form

The questionnaire form consists of 22 questions – a combination of 2 types of questions -
“multiple choice” and open questions. Here is the English version:

Survey on Quality Assurance in Youth Career Consultancy

1. The status of your organisation is:
   • State institution;
   • Non-governmental organisation;
   • Private organisation;
   • Other (please, specify): _________________________

2. To what types of clients are your services committed?
   (Please, tick all appropriate answers)
   • Secondary school students;
   • Vocational school students;
   • College students;
   • University students;
   • Young unemployed people;
   • Young people with fewer opportunities;
   • Other (please, specify): _________________________

3. Do methods and tools you use in your everyday counselling correspond to the needs of all the clients?
   • Yes, completely;
   • Yes, partially;
   • More correspond than do not;
   • More do not correspond than do;
   • Do not correspond at all
   • Other (please, indicate): _________________________

4. Is your workplace supplied with a sufficient offer of “hard and soft” means for counselling?
   • Yes, fully supplied;
   • Yes, partially;
   • Yes, but poorly;
   • No, not at all;
   • Other (please, indicate): _________________________

In case it is not fully supplied, please, indicate the essential demands: ____________________  
___________________________________________________________________________

5. What e-based information and consulting means do you use in your everyday counselling?
   (Please, tick all appropriate answers):
   • Interactive tests (please, indicate the most frequently used): ___________________  
   _____________________________________________________________________
• Databases (please, indicate the most frequently used): __________________________
• Information portals (please, indicate the most frequently used): __________________
• Virtual communication and counseling environments (please, indicate): __________
• Other (please, indicate): ____________________________

6. Do your work tools/materials and environment fit for counseling clients with special needs?

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes, completely</th>
<th>Yes, partially</th>
<th>More fit than do not</th>
<th>More do not fit than do</th>
<th>No, not at all</th>
<th>Other (please, indicate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work environment</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tools / Materials</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

7. What measurements should be implemented to better provide counseling to clients with special needs in your organisation / institution?
- Adjustment of premises;
- Employment of qualified specialists;
- Trainings on acquisition or improvement of fresh competences for working specialists’;
- Purchase of methodological materials and tools;
- Development and distribution of methodical materials within the institution;
- Other (please, indicate): ____________________________

8. Please, rate the preparation (readiness) of the staff to provide counseling services in your institution:
- Excellent;
- Good;
- Satisfactory;
- Insufficient;
- Poor;
- Other (please, indicate): ____________________________

9. What quality requirements should be applied and practiced among counseling professionals?
Please, enumerate:_________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

10. What methods of staff assessment are used in your organisation / institution?
- The organisation has a system for staff assessment;
- Staff competence is assessed by regular feedback from the clients;
- Existing quality indicators in youth career consultancy -

- Staff is assessed by the head of the institution;
- Employees execute self-evaluation;
- Staff competence is not assessed;
- Other (please, indicate): __________________________

11. What factors mostly influence the quality of counseling services?
(Please, rate by priority):
- State policy;
- Legal basis;
- Clients’ needs;
- Internal culture of the organisation;
- Competence of counseling staff;
- Social partnership;
- Permanent improvement of counseling services according to clients’ needs;
- Social environment;
- Economic situation;
- Changes in the labour market;
- Public opinion;
- Hard’ means for counseling;
- Soft’ means for counseling;
- Other (please, indicate): _________________________

12. Do your clients have an opportunity to evaluate the quality of your services?
- Yes, always;
- Yes, sometimes (please, indicate, how often): ______________________________
- No, never;
- Other (please, indicate): _________________________

13. How do your clients evaluate counseling services?
(Please, tick all appropriate answers):
- By periodical interviews;
- By periodical online surveys;
- By periodical e-mail surveys;
- By random clients’ opinion;
- Other (please, indicate): _________________________

14. What types of organisations/institutions you work with in partnership when providing counseling services?
(Please, list):_________________________________________ __________________
________________________________________________________________________

15. What help do you usually need from other organizations-social partners in providing counseling services for your clients?
(Please, indicate):_________________________________________ __________________
________________________________________________________________________
16. Does your organization/institution have any methodologies/mechanisms/tools for evaluation of the counseling services’ quality?
   • Yes;
   • Yes, some;
   • No;
   • Other (please, indicate): _________________________

In case you answer is positive, please, indicate the methods used for quality assurance: ____________________________

17. How often are the counseling services evaluated in your organisation / institution?
   • Yes, constantly;
   • Yes, sometimes (please, indicate how often): ______________________________
   ____________________________________________
   • No, never;
   • Other (please, indicate): _________________________

18. Do you have any standards for quality assurance of counseling services? (Please tick all appropriate answers):
   • Yes, national;
   • Yes, internal;
   • No;
   • Other (please, indicate): _________________________

19. Is there existing quality assurance framework in the field of career counseling? (Please, tick all appropriate answers):
   • Yes, national level;
   • Yes, regional level;
   • Yes, internal level;
   • No;
   • Other (please, specify): _________________________

20. What types of quality indicators do you apply in your everyday counseling?
   • Context indicators (related to environment, political/legal context);
   • Input indicators (Related to experience, resources, background knowledge)
   • Process indicators (focused on the consulting process)
   • Output indicators (targeting the concrete results attained)
   • Outcome indicators (related to long-term effects sought)
   • Other (please, specify): _________________________

21. On the basis of the reply from the previous answer, please give examples of the types of quality indicators you use (e.g. process indicator: regular assessment of young person’s progress): ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

22. Do you think the system of quality assurance in career counseling services is necessary?
- Existing quality indicators in youth career consultancy -

- Yes, national;
- Yes, internal;
- It should be the responsibility of every counseling professional;
- No;
- Other (please, indicate): _________________________
3. Contemporary tendencies of quality assurance in the field of Youth career consultancy in 5 European countries

3.1. State of youth career consultancy in the partner countries

- Type of organizations, providing consultancy and type of clients (Qs 1 and 2);

Bulgaria:

The services for information, guidance and counseling of young people in Bulgaria are mainly provided within the framework of the Employment Agency. Important steps were undertaken for its implementation with the establishment of the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, a specialized public body that has, as a goal, the accreditation of activities in the VET sector as well as the coordination of institutions and organisations related to VET, including guidance. According to this law, vocational guidance services should be delivered by Centers for Information and Career Guidance, whether these are run by the government, the private or the NGO sector.

The Employment Agency provides information, guidance and counseling services to young people through its territorial branches, the Labour Offices. In the context of the mediatory services for employment, unemployed people and job seekers of all ages are offered information on job vacancies in the local labour market, the requirements of employers and the characteristics of specific occupations, together with guidance and counseling on the opportunities for broadening their chances in the labour market through qualification and re-qualification courses.

Labour Offices have a number of units attached to them. Centers for Vocational Information function as specialized units delivering information, guidance and counseling services. These Centers target school students in the main, but many other clients have free access to the services provided, including parents, university students, and unemployed people, those in employment but seeking to change their jobs, employers, teachers and career guidance specialists. Client needs are addressed individually or in groups.

Regarding types of clients: the work of the career consultants in Bulgaria is not structured in profiles - on and the same consultant works with representatives of different target groups, for example he/she consults people with disabilities, disadvantaged people, current students or recently graduates and long-time unemployed;

Partners SCAS and NSICC have networks of student information centers. SCAS maintains youth centers in 7 towns and 9 Universities, the association is connected with the most important European youth information centers networks (Eurodesk, ERIYCA, etc.) and Balkan networks (SCAS is managing the Balkan Youth Information Centers Network). NSICC maintains close relations with a number of youth center all over Bulgaria, especially in Varna and Plovdiv.
Also, a network of 26 University career centers was established in the past 2 years. They provide career orientation; prepare students for the entire selection process.

Ireland:

In Ireland guidance services are offered through local employment centres which offer services to the unemployed/jobseekers, persons with disabilities and asylum seekers around the country. Vocational guidance and counseling in the labour market sector is funded by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment as a basic universal entitlement for the employed and unemployed, and for participants on supported employment schemes and on specific skills training courses.

At present Youth Career Counseling Services are in a developing phase in Ireland. Whatever the level of educational guidance available in a YCC centre, there can be no debate about the vital role of guidance in enabling YCC participants to achieve their potential through their return to learning.

In Ireland, the aims of Youth Career Counseling Services concentrate on:
- Support the individual to review all options and if appropriate, to identify learning / training objectives;
- Support the individual to manage her /his educational, vocational and personal development and interrelate these;
- Support the individual to cope with the vocational and personal implications of learning/ training;
- Provide continuity of support across modules and tutors / trainers;
- Support the individual in long term-planning.

There are over 30 Youth Information Centres (YICs) nationwide managed by a variety of youth organisations. YICs offer an information service on a wide number of issues including employment matters, local community services and education and training to young people.

Lithuania:

The formation and development of the career guidance system in Lithuania is under the responsibility of 2 executive authority institutions of the Republic of Lithuania: The Ministry of Education and Science and The Ministry of Social security and Labour. In 2003 these institutions approved a strategy of vocational guidance aimed at facilitating the development of the career guidance system and services.

Career guidance service providers in Lithuania are:
- Career Information Points (CIP) – Career Information Points provide vocational information services: information on issues of career choices, training and employment opportunities in the country and abroad and the situation within the labour market and
vocations. The services of CIPs are intended for learners at general education schools, their parents and teachers.

- Pedagogical-psychological services – Pedagogical-psychological services perform psychological and pedagogical assessments of the child, advice parents and teachers on issues related to learning, behaviour, emotions and communication problems of learners with special needs or psychological difficulties, and provide recommendations on their further development. The services are provided to learners, their parents and teachers.

- Career planning centre under the Lithuanian Youth technical Creativity Palace – the purpose of this center is to establish the background and organize vocational information and career planning activities within education institutions. The center is in charge of coordinating the activities of career information points and providing them with any required information and methodological material. The services are available to learners in general education schools and their parents, teachers, vocational advisors, social pedagogues, school psychologists, and to any other persons interested in vocational information and career planning.

- University career centers – such centers are generally represented by university subdivisions functioning independently and dealing with existing and future students' career planning, vocational choices and employment. Career center provide counseling to future students of universities on issues of vocational choices, provide information to students and graduates as well as Lithuanian and foreign companies on professional career, career planning, and human resources management, practical training and the employment of young specialists, watch graduates' career development and counsel on the job search strategy and tactics.

- The Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority – the priority customer groups for labour market training and counseling services of this organisation are the unemployed and senior-grade learners at general education schools. The work is also expended in the field of working with groups having special labour market needs – existing and former convicts, disabled, soldiers, long-term unemployed, immigrants. The organisation develops labour market integration, career planning, social adaptation and professional and personal growth programmes, adapts, standardizes and implements diagnostic methodologies. The organisation also provides online counseling services.

- The Lithuanian Labour Exchange – this institution has 46 territorial branches, which provide services of vocational information and employment counseling and mediation to job seekers and refer them to the territorial labour market training and counseling services for psychological counseling. There are 5 job center, 6 youth employment centers, 50 information and counseling centers and a vocational information center.

- Private institutions – Career guidance services can also be provided by private entities. At present, there are approx. 30 private counseling organisations, providing services in job search, also career guidance.
Slovakia:

With regard to the situation in Slovakia as far as the career counseling in general is concerned, the respondents addressed by our questionnaire were only counsellors working at secondary schools. These are secondary school teachers who are commissioned and trained to take care of students searching advice in connection with their future career.

There were only a few counseling centres staffed with one or two persons in the country dealing with public career counseling at regional level. All the respondents are working for state institutions (state schools) and they provide services to secondary comprehensive and vocational school students.

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family is responsible for employment policy. This policy is formulated in the National Employment Plan (NEP). The National Labour Office (NLO) is responsible for implementing employment policy. Providing appropriate career guidance and counseling at the desired level is still a difficult task for the NLO offices. The NLO has a clear vision for career guidance and counseling, under which a regional labour office must discuss the client's wishes using a “prospects indicator” developed for Slovakia.

United Kingdom:

One of the distinctive features of career guidance in the United Kingdom is the extensive and highly developed institutional framework: bodies for policy co-ordination, for standard setting and quality assurance, and for advocacy and representation. The institutional framework of career guidance in the United Kingdom involves:

- National Information Advice and Guidance Board
  The National Information Advice and Guidance Board ensure coherence in the planning of the career guidance services for young people. It is an important mechanism to ensure co-ordination of policy and provision both within and between the education and employment portfolios.

- The Institute of Career Guidance (ICG)
  The Institute of Career Guidance represents career guidance practitioners. It is the awarding body for the Qualification in Careers Guidance. The Institute accredits institutions to provide the Qualification, and as such has a quality assurance role within the overall United Kingdom career guidance system.

- The Guidance Council
  The Guidance Council represents the key organisations interested in the development of career guidance (including stakeholder organisations as well as associations of guidance practitioners). Its main activities include: policy development and advocacy on behalf of the career guidance field; the promotion of quality; and commissioning research that will have strategic and policy relevance.
• Adequacy of consulting services provision to clients with special needs/youth with fewer opportunities (Q 6):

In Bulgaria there is lack of differentiated bodies engaged in career consultancy of people with fewer opportunities. These services are mainly incorporated in the state labour offices.

Partner MCA got feedback from 14 career consultants working with people with fewer opportunities. The opinions are separated in two directions – approximately ½ of the consultants are convinced that their consultancy services respond well to the needs of their clients – the career consultancy environment is accessible and appropriate, the methods used are adequate and correct. However the other ½ consider that there is much to be desired of their work in order for it to be applicable to the needs of their clients. Those people believe that the accessibility of the working environment should be improved and additional qualification and new methods should be implemented in order to increase the quality of services, especially for people with fewer opportunities.

In Ireland No data

In Lithuania, only 29% of the respondents answer that the tools and material that they have partially fit the need of clients with special needs, as for almost 40% there is a lack of adequate tools to meet the needs of those clients.

The situation in Slovakia is similar to that in Lithuania, as more than half of respondents (52 %) do not have at their disposal appropriate tools in order to provide guidance service to youth with special needs.

In UK, most of respondents do not give answers whether work environment is appropriate for counseling youth with special needs, but those provided are positive (9 %). As for the tools and materials used in the counseling process, ¾ of the answers are that counseling tools used fit for guidance of youth with special needs.

• Use of e-based information and guidance tools in everyday work (Q 5):

Most of the respondents in Bulgaria use databases (52%) and information portals (32%) in their everyday work: Some examples provided are: www.zaplata.bg, www.jobtiger.bg, www.
Existing quality indicators in youth career consultancy

- Quality Assurance in Youth Career Consultancy Project

In Ireland, more than half of the respondents (58%) use online databases in their everyday counseling, 47% use information portals, 33% use interactive tests, mostly client self-assessment tests. The total percentage is over 100% because some respondents have provided more than one answer.

The respondents in Lithuania use a combination of e-based tools (that's why total percentage is over 100): mostly information portals (79%) and online databases (67%), but also interactive tests (43%) and virtual counseling environments (25%). Other counseling tools used are: psychological consultations, consultations from labour market exchange (8%).

The situation in Slovakia, on the basis of respondents is like that: 34% take advantage of information portals, 19% use virtual communication environments in their everyday work.

In the UK, 30% of consultants use information portals, 30% take advantage of online databases and only 10% use virtual counseling environment. The rest use other tools, stating that there are "poor IT resources" available.

- Methods and tools used, correspondence to the need of clients (Qs 3 and 4);

In Bulgaria, with respect to correspondence of methods and tools to the needs of clients, most respondents' answer that they fit partially (38%), 30% say that they more correspond than do not; as only 22% think they correspond completely to the needs of clients.

As refers to the question, exploring level of supply with sufficient hard and soft means of counseling, for 49% of respondents their workplace are partially supplied, 27% have poor supply and only 22% are fully supplied with technical means (hard indicators) and methodological tools and materials (soft indicators). Respondents believe that a quality assessment instrument should contain both quality and quantity indicators; some examples provided: technical base - PCs, online tests for self-assessment, cognitive tests.

The respondents in Ireland are divided between complete correspondence (42%) and opinion that tools and methods available more correspond than do not (38%) to clients’ needs. Half of all replies are in favour of sufficient supply with hard and soft indicators, the rest are split between partial or insufficient supply. No details provided.

Lithuanian respondents as a whole share the opinion that existing methods and tools correspond of to needs of clients (21% - completely; 52% - partially; 21% - more correspond than do not). However, with respect to supply with hard and soft means of counseling, 58%
state the supply is partial, less than 1/3 share the opinion that their workplace is fully supplies with technical and methodological tools for career guidance.

The situation in **Slovakia**: the responses to the question are slightly varied, but as a whole they indicate that existing tools and methods partially correspond to the needs of clients. The similar situation is reported as for the availability of hard and soft means of counseling at their work places. Certain difficulties are caused by a lack of computer technologies and restricted access to internet.

In **United Kingdom** almost all respondents share that the methods and tools used in their everyday counseling more or less correspond to needs of the clients (40% - partially correspond; 60% - more correspond than do not).

- **Cooperation with other organizations/ institutions in the provision of counseling service, as well as with social partners (Q 14 & Q 15):**

In **Bulgaria**, the cooperation with other organizations in the filed of career guidance is mainly related to acquisition or provision of tools for career guidance; proposals for improvement of the consulting process; there are established contacts between student career centers with state institutions – some departments of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, etc, Employment Agency offices, consulting companies; On the Job Market project; Job-search websites (e.g. www.jobtiger.bg, www.jobs.bg).

In **Ireland**, respondents share that their everyday work requires cooperation on different levels: with educational institutions, local employment centres, FAS (the training and employment authority, responsible for the provision of guidance services). Also, they cooperate with the Youth Information Centres (over 30 Youth Information Centres nationwide), that are managed by a variety of youth organisations. They offer an information service on a wide number of issues including employment matters, local community services and education and training to young people.

Among the institutions, that work in cooperation with career consultants in **Lithuania**, were mentioned labour exchange, vocational schools, employers, higher education institutions, non-governmental organizations.

Similar are responses, provided in **Slovakia**, where youth career consultants work in cooperation with local authorities, labour office, partner secondary schools.

In **United Kingdom**, respondents enumerated the following institutions/organizations as partners: Social services, Housing, health education, private sector organisations, voluntary organisations, careers advice and information centres, Drugs and alcohol agencies.
Types of youth career guidance providers in the partner countries – mostly state institutions, some private organizations also. There are networks of youth information centers, providing also guidance (Bulgaria, Ireland); Student career centers in Bulgaria, Career information points in Lithuania.

Types of clients: mostly young people up to 25 (students, recent graduates, unemployed youth), including youth with fewer opportunities (with disabilities, early school-leavers, etc).

Lack of differentiated bodies engaged in career consultancy of people with fewer opportunities. Insufficient tools/materials to meet the needs of these clients.

Use of e-based information and guidance tools: mostly online databases (51% of all respondents), information portals (42%) and interactive tools /mostly simple questionnaires/ - 25%. Virtual communication and counseling environments still not that popular (only 16%), though their advantages are recognized by respondents. Identified need of more online guidance tools.

Partial correspondence of existing guidance tools to clients’ needs – need of quality assessment instruments, containing both quality and quantity indicators;

Hard and soft means of counseling also partially correspond to needs of youth – need of methodological tools /soft means of counseling/, as well as equipment other technical resources (Bulgaria, Slovakia).

3.2. Existing quality assurance procedures in the youth career consultancy in the partner countries

- Quality indicators applied in the everyday counseling service (Qs 20 and 21);

Among the most used quality indicators in Bulgaria, according to respondents’ answers are: Outcome indicators (related to long-term effects sought) – 55 %; Process indicators (focused on the consulting process) – 32 %; Input indicators (engaging the resources used) – 26%. It turns out, that context indicators are underestimated – only 13 % of respondents take advantage of these indicators. The total percentage is over 100%, because each respondent provided more than one answer.

Some of the interviewed suggest the following quality indicators: finding long-time employment and adequate salary for the clients, self-assessment of the consultant, evaluation of the results achieved, keeping in touch with the clients, assessment of the clients’ activeness in the job search, evaluation of the advance of the young unemployed client, number of consulted clients, number of clients who find a job for concrete time period. The last mentioned indicator enables
the comparative analysis between similar annual periods based on those criteria. Especially for the clients with fewer opportunities additional criteria can be the regular tracking of the legal changes and structure of the labour market in Bulgaria, and work on the improvement of the self-presentation in front of potential employers, development of individual work plans for achievement of the final objective – finding a job.

Also, some other examples of used QI mentioned are: accessing the progress; monitoring system; follow-up assessment; meeting with HR managers from companies.

The situation in Ireland with respect to applied quality indicators is as follows: 75 % of respondents mention input indicators as used in their everyday work; the second most used type are the outcome indicators, followed by output indicators (63 %). 58% take advantage of context indicators. The total percentage exceeds 100%, because each respondent provided more than one answer.

Among some of the used indicators, respondents enumerated the importance of the following key elements: quality indicators that measure learners’ progress in the field of social skills such as self-confidence, as well as indicators pertaining to the extent of mutual understanding and cultural tolerance.

In Lithuania 71% of respondents use input indicators in their everyday work; 63% take advantage of the indicators of the process; third in importance are the output indicators – 50%. Least used are the context indicators – only 27%. The total percentage exceeds 100%, because each respondent provided more than one answer. With reference to used quality indicators, the following were mentioned: internal audit, surveys, evaluation of results, foreseen development of services, evaluation of staff, qualification, clients needs, individualization of services, assurance of continuation, systematization, experience, theoretical preparation, quality of methodical materials.

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:
- Accessibility – all inhabitants have to have equal opportunities to get services of career guidance, regardless of their place of living, social status, etc.
- Expedience – the services correspond to individual needs of inhabitants and society;
- Efficiency – change of the career guidance services, which is determined according to the changes in the labour market, are evaluated;
- Qualified professionals of career guidance – professionals, who have proper background and competence;
- Active dialogue with social partners – educational institutions, employers, labour exchange, trade unions, public authorities;
- Modern technical and methodical equipment – diversity of software, approved curriculum and methodical materials;
- Reliability of information – actual, right and reliable information about the educational opportunities and conditions and situations in the labour market.

With respect to usage of quality indicators in Slovakia, from the responses and personal...
discussions with the respondents it appears that question No. 20 concerning types of quality indicators was (for them) rather confusing. Most used are the indicators, related to the direct result (output indicators) – 31% of respondents stated they use such indicators in their everyday work. Again, most underestimated are the context indicators (5%).

The respondents did not understand properly the question related to QI and that is why they could not answer question No.21.

The respondents in UK identify as most used input (30%) and process indicators (30%). Only 10% are aware of advantages of the indicators, related to the context (e.g. political/legal framework, environment).

As examples of indicators use, respondents mentioned the following: recording sheets, regular assessment of progress, identification of positive outcomes, progress of the young person, reduction of adverse affects in relation to original issue with the individual issue, data management.

- Methodologies/mechanisms/tools for evaluation of quality of counseling services (Q 16);

In Bulgaria, almost 1/3 of respondents (30%) do not have any appropriate mechanisms/methodologies for carrying out evaluation of counseling service. Only 32% of the interviewed people declare that they have at their disposal QA mechanisms.

Some of the most used methodologies/mechanisms/instruments for evaluation of the counseling services’ quality are online self-assessment questionnaires, developed by foreign authors, state regulation mechanisms laid in the Bulgarian Employment Encouragement Act, technological requirements laid in the “Process model”. Another mechanism is regular feedback of the clients’ satisfaction and real positive results achieved, as well as using instruments as anonymous questionnaires filled in by both clients and staff.

Presently, Youth Career Counseling Services are in a developing phase in Ireland. That’s reason why only 37% of respondents declare they have tools for evaluating the quality of the counseling services they provide, 5% do not have any such tools.

Whatever the level of educational guidance available in a YCC centre, there can be no debate about the vital role of guidance in enabling YCC participants to achieve their potential through their return to learning.

Career guidance system is in the process of development in Lithuania. 44% of respondents share that they do not have any tools or methodologies to evaluate the quality of the counseling service. At the same time, only 5% have such mechanisms.

Methods used for quality assurance, mentioned by respondents: questionnaires, research,
presentation of results, approval of services, internal evaluation.

The situation in Slovakia in the area of youth counseling services is still not very well developed. That is why it should not be surprising that 98% of respondents do implement any methodologies for evaluation of quality of services or any other QA issues. No examples of quality assurance methods applied were provided by the interviewed persons.

Interesting is the situation in United Kingdom, where the proportion between availability and lack of QA mechanisms are equal (30%: 30%). UK is one of the first countries in Europe that introduced QA issues in guidance, including in youth services provision. Among the used tools, respondents enumerated the following: management information system, regular paper trails, and regular evaluation.

- Standards for QA of counseling services (Q 18):

Almost half of respondents from Bulgaria use internal quality assurance standards in the career guidance provision to young people – 46%. The percentage of those, applying national standards is 27%. At the same time, 37% do not have at their disposal any QA standards at all. However, the existing Quality Standards in Bulgaria are developed more at legislative level than at the level of practical implementation.

In Ireland replies are split between national (75%) and internal (54%) standards for QA of counseling. Total percentage exceeds 100%, because respondents provided more than one answer.

With regard to standards for quality assurance of counseling in Lithuania, more than 44% of respondents do not have any such criteria. Some consultants use internal standards (within the structure of their organizations) – 38%. Literally, no standards at national level exist. The latter are laid down in the Strategic Guidelines of Career Guidance in Lithuania – provision of qualitative services of career guidance for all inhabitants.

The situation in Slovakia in the area of counseling services in general is very unfavourable. In order to improve the standards in provided services it seems necessary for national, regional and local authorities to pay adequate attention to this area – only 7% of respondents share they apply national standards. Some of the replies register the usage of internal QA standards (37%). However, most respondents share that there are no existing standards to assure the quality of career guidance (56%).

In United Kingdom, 40% of respondents take advantage of national standards to assure the quality in the career guidance field. Though, more than 1/5 of them do not apply any standards.

Further Education National Training Organisation sets a standard, which encompasses: assessing learners’ needs; planning and preparing teaching and learning programs for groups and individuals; managing the learning process; providing learners with support; assessing the outcomes of learning and learner’s achievements.
• QA Framework in the field of career counseling /internal or external level – regional, national/ (Q 19);

In Bulgaria more than 1/3 of respondents (34%) declare that there are some mechanisms on national level (laid down in the legislation) that correspond to a framework, assuring the quality in the sector. Still, however, comprehensive national QA framework does not exist. Smaller group think that on internal organizational level some quality assurance frameworks exist (8%). The rest of respondents either do not think any framework exists or are not acquainted with the concept of QA framework and are not able to provide a competent answer.

The situation in Ireland is as follows: 63 % of respondents declare that there is QA framework on national level in their country, which they apply in their everyday work. Only 33 % rely on internal framework to assure the quality of the counseling service to young people. Presently, a new framework is under development. Key considerations under the new framework are to provide for a modular flexible system based on defined learning outcomes and to provide for the recognition of learning in all its contexts: knowledge, skills and competencies within a personal, civic, social and employment related perspective.

Half of the respondents from Lithuania think that there is an existing quality assurance framework on internal (organizational) level. Quite huge is the percentage of consultants whose opinion is that no framework exists, either on national, or on internal level (29 %). Presently, according to replies, no framework on national level exists. It is among the priorities of the national authorities in the country.

Almost 2/3 of respondents from Slovakia (61%) share that no quality assurance framework exist in their country, either on national, or on internal (organizational) level. 32% of the respondents declare the existence of internal framework to assure the quality in the field of career consulting of young people.

Interesting is the tendency in United Kingdom, where it turns out that QA frameworks on different levels exist: 40% - national quality assurance framework, 1/5 – QA framework at regional level, only 10% - internal framework to assure the quality of youth career guidance services. The Learning and Skills Council in UK has developed a national framework that concentrates on: quality of education and training and the standards achieved by learners; continuous improvement; quality of planning; financial viability and assurance.

• Frequency of internal evaluation of counseling services (Q 17);

In Bulgaria, most of the respondents shared that counseling service in their organization/ institution undergoes internal evaluation – either constantly (37%) or sometimes (41%). However, they are not homogeneous and most refer to simplified 6-month or annual evaluation
Respondents from Ireland are unambiguous – internal evaluation of the counseling process is very important and taken into account by the youth career guidance providers. All respondents, who answered to that question (88%), say that such evaluation is carried out either on permanent (52%) or on regular basis (48%).

Internal evaluation of the youth counseling service in Lithuania is more carried out sometimes, in some of the cases on regular basis (40% of replies) than permanently (27%). 21% of respondents share that their organization/institution does not carry out internal evaluation at all.

On the basis of respondents' replies, internal evaluation of counseling service in Slovakia is not popular – 71% never carry out such assessment. Only 29% are those, who take into account procedures for internal evaluation of the provided youth guidance services. And they carry it out constantly.

Quite different is the situation in United Kingdom, where 80% of respondents apply internal evaluation procedures with respect to youth career guidance provision either permanently (55%) or sometimes (25%). Only 1 of 5 counsellors does not carry out such evaluation.

- Staff assessment (Qs 8 and 10) with a view to:
  - preparation of counseling staff,
  - methods of staff assessment applied

The preparation of staff with respect to provision of guidance service to youth in Bulgaria is determined by respondents as generally good (54%). Almost 1 of 5 consultants shares that preparation is excellent (28%). Of course, some replies recognize the insufficient preliminary knowledge/training of career consultants (7%).

Quite positive step in direction of improving the capacities of career guidance staff is the introduction of a Master degree in career guidance (in the University of Russe).

Staff assessment is generally carried out on internal level (the organization/institution avails of methods/procedures to check the efficiency of their staff) – according to 45% of respondents. Also, quite popular is the assessment by the manager/head of the service/institution (in 35% of the cases). Last but not least, clients' assessment is also taken into account – 23% of respondents recognize that regular feedback from consulted youth is used to measure the outcome from the guidance service, respectively the competence of the career consultants.

In Ireland, almost all respondents assess the guidance staff preparation as either excellent (42%) or at good level (54%). This result should not be surprising taking into account the legislative and practical rules for implementing career guidance in the country. A number of institutions on national level, together with training organizations and youth career services, are engaged in the guidance process of youth.

Regarding methods of staff assessment, interesting tendency is the importance of clients' feedback – 54% of respondents share that consulted young people are regularly assessing the
guidance service, including the consultants. However, the most popular way of conducting such assessment is the organization's own procedure/mecanism (67%). The total percentage exceeds 100%, because some respondents provided more than one answer, which means that a combination of different methods of assessment of staff is used.

The prevailing opinion with respect to level of guidance staff preparation in Lithuania is good (60% of replies). 21% share that this readiness is satisfactory, though not fully sufficient. Only 6% rate the guidance staff competence as excellent.

With respect to types of staff assessment, quite interesting is the importance of self-assessment by the guidance practitioners – 56% of responses. The top-down assessment (carried out by the head of department/service/institution) is also applied quite often (54% of cases). Next method applied is the clients’ feedback - 38%. The total percentage exceeds 100%, because for some respondents assessment is a combination of different methods - self-assessment, internal (within the institution) and external assessment (by clients).

The role of counsellors is underestimated in Slovakia and it is perceived as marginal in social and educational policies. Preparation of counseling staff is deemed as insufficient by 56% of respondents. 39% assess staff competence as good or satisfactory. No excellent grade provided by respondents. As appears from the discussion with the respondents, the project like the present one may significantly contribute to creating positive public opinion and general support of career guidance.

Not surprisingly, as a follow up of the previous paragraph, the replies about methods of counseling staff assessment are quite negative – almost half of respondents (46%) share than no assessment is carried out at all. Self-assessment is the most popular methods used – 29% of cases. Opinion of clients is also taken into account, though quite small percentage – 15%.

Counseling staff in United Kingdom tends to be quite prepared to carry out such services: excellently prepared according to 20% of respondents, 75% grant good level of preparation. Career guidance is well developed service in the country, there are requirements for counseling staff, and different types of counseling staff are recognized and standardized.

Half of the respondents share that evaluation of guidance practitioners is done within the organization/institution by means of a system for staff assessment. The rest of the answers are split between self-assessment, client assessment and top-down assessment.

- Factors influencing the quality of counseling service (Q 11):

In Bulgaria, among the most important factors, influencing the quality of counseling service, are the competences of counseling staff (64%), clients' needs (49%), changes in the labour market (43%), the permanent improvement of services according to clients’ needs (39%), legislation and / policy in the field (36%). In Bulgaria the circumstances of the labour market differ with strong state regulation. Counseling services are mainly delivered by labour offices of State employment agencies. The private counseling is still in a process of development. Each respondent provided more than one answer.
Respondents in Ireland enumerated the following factors as most important: state policy (20%), clients’ needs (15%), internal culture of the organization (15%), competences of the counseling staff (15%), and social partnerships (15%). Total percentage is over 100%, because respondents provided more than one answer.

Most important factors that influence the guidance service in Lithuania, according to respondents, are: competence of counseling staff (23%), state policy in the field of youth (21%), the needs of the clients (13%), technical equipment (hard means of counseling) (6%). The rest of factors do not have such influence on the quality of the career guidance process.

In Slovakia, factors related to competence of counseling staff (59%) and clients’ needs (56%) are the ones that mostly influence the quality of the guidance process, together with labour market changes (59%). Important are also the state policy in the field (54%), as well as the legal basis

/law in the field of guidance provisions, requirements for VET providers, etc/- 44%. Hard and soft means of counseling are identified as factors whose significance is constantly growing.

Legislation (20%) and clients’ needs (20%) are the most significant factors that influence the quality counseling services in United Kingdom. Competence of counseling staff (15%), together with the state policy in the filed (15%) is identified as important factor. Interesting tendency is the significance of social partnership – 10%. Internal culture of the organization is also taken into account (10%).

• Clients’ involvement in the QA of counseling services (Q 13);

In Bulgaria, most of the answers disclose that clients’ opinion is important and taken into account, mostly by means of informal conversations (50% of replies), feedback or, in some cases, by filling in questionnaires (41%). The majority of respondents state that they are looking for feedback from their clients with respect to quality of services. Concerning those professionals, who are working with people with disabilities, they share not only in the questionnaires but in informal conversations too, that people with disabilities are not able to define exactly their specific needs as well as to provide correct feedback for the quality of the provided services.

Irish respondents identify random clients’ opinion as the most used method of client evaluation of the counseling process (71%). 29% carry out periodical interviews with clients in order to get feedback on the efficient service, including evaluation of the counseling staff. Periodical e-mail surveys are also used to identify how clients evaluate the counseling service (13%).

Clients’ evaluation of the counseling service in Lithuania in general is not structured or regular process. That’s why the most used method of clients’ evaluation is the random opinion (35% of replies). Periodical interviews are used in 15% of cases. E-mail feedback by clients is also among the mentioned types of client evaluation – in 6% of the cases.
Quite similar to Lithuania is the situation in Slovakia where random clients’ opinion turns to be the most applied method to evaluate the counseling service by consulted young people (71%). The rest of respondents mentioned periodical interviews (29%). Client feedback, gathered with the support of modern technologies and means of communication (online surveys, e-mail surveys) is not used by the interviewed consultants.

Almost 2/3 of the respondents from United Kingdom share that random opinion by clients is the most used method for clients’ evaluation of the counseling service. E-mail surveys or regular interviews with clients are not applied. 2 out of 5 respondents use other methods, namely questionnaires /feedback sheets/.

- Conclusions -

Not sufficient usage of quality indicators in youth career guidance in the partner countries. Most used are the process (during the counseling process) and output (related to the direct result of the consultancy process) indicators. Underestimated context indicators in all partner counties.

Mechanism for evaluation of quality in the guidance service: QA in the field of YCC is in process of development in the partner countries – not appropriate mechanisms, only some simple tools such as questionnaires, random feedback from clients. However, in Ireland and UK consultants avail of diverse tools, though not fully meeting the clients’ needs. Bulgaria, Lithuania and Slovakia still do not have such instruments.

Standards for QA in the YCC field: 39% of all respondents share that no standards exist. In Bulgaria, Lithuania and Slovakia some internal standards (at organizational level) are applied. National guidance standards are introduced in Ireland and UK, but not used by all respondents.

QA Framework in the field of YCC: Most respondents reply that QA framework in YCC exist neither on national, nor on regional or internal level (35%). In Ireland and UK there are national frameworks, in Bulgaria, Lithuania and Slovakia internal framework. There is need of establishing QA framework in the field of youth career consultancy.

Internal evaluation of the guidance service is not a permanent process, it is either carried out randomly, or on regular basis but with huge intervals (most often 6 months or annually). In some of the countries such evaluation is not carried out by most than 2/3 of cases (Slovakia).


Factors, influencing the quality of guidance service: most respondents consider competence of guidance staff, clients' needs and permanent improvement of counseling services.

Clients’ involvement in the QA of the guidance services: unfortunately, clients' assessment is neither structured, nor regular process in most of the cases. Advantages of modern technologies are still not fully used.
4. Identified needs in terms of quality assurance in the youth career guidance in the partner countries

4.1. Need of system for quality assurance in the youth career consultancy field (Q 22)

Respondents from all partner counties provided more than one answer to this question, that is system for QA in the youth career sector exists on different levels simultaneously (national, internal, personal) which are complementary to one another.

In almost all partner countries the majority of replies support the idea of establishment of quality assurance system at national level in the youth career consultancy sector: Bulgaria (65%), Ireland (83%), Lithuania (60%) and Slovakia (100%). Slovak respondents consider such system as vital for their work and expect improvement especially at national level.

The idea for QA system at institutional/organizational level is mostly supported by respondents from Ireland (71%), Lithuania (50%) and Bulgaria (44%). In Slovakia, as already mentioned, national system is a priority, as in UK internal system is just as important as the national one – 20% each.

QA system at personal level (that is each career counselor bears the responsibility to develop and implement such system) is also mentioned as important mostly for respondents from Ireland (54%), Bulgaria (46%), UK (40%), and Lithuania (38%).

Last but not least, all respondents are aware of the need of Quality Assurance system in the field of youth career consultancy, either on national, organizational or individual level.

4.2. Quality requirements to counseling staff (Q 9)

In Bulgaria, among the most common quality requirements that counseling staff should meet, the following are mentioned: permanent improvement of staff qualifications, better motivation, empathy and good communication skills – the last 2 requirements are very important when working with people with fewer opportunities.

Other requirement mentioned is the regular attestation of the staff competences. Also, qualities like responsibility, self-awareness, human approach; good theoretic and practical preparation of the consultant; professional treatment of the client and confidentiality were enumerated.

In Ireland, the following are mentioned as important requirements: provision of a coherent information base; initial consultations to help clarify clients’ needs; appropriate pathways and/
or referral; more specialized support and assessment; referral to psychological services where needed.

Some of the quality requirements, shared by respondents in Lithuania, are: communication skills, knowledge, will, specialized training courses, practical competencies, higher education on psychology, knowledge of foreign languages, knowledge on psychological aspects of vocational choice, personality assessment.

Slovak respondents mentioned better competencies and continuous training as important requirements. Also, responsibility, self-awareness, professional treatment of the client, human approach;

Some of the replies from UK respondents: “Standardization of paperwork to assess and record”, “Confidentiality and communication skills”, “Good effective training”. Competency-based qualifications, modular systems of training and an emphasis upon the accreditation of knowledge and skills gained through experience are among the mechanisms that are commonly used to, among other purposes.

4.3. Measures for improved counseling to youth with fewer opportunities (Q 7)

On the basis of results from all participating countries (Bulgaria, Ireland, Lithuania, Slovakia and UK), the following factors were identified as most necessary for provision of better counseling to clients with fewer opportunities:

- Trainings on acquisition and further development of competencies of consultants - 47 %;
- Adjustment of premises - 41%;
- Purchase of methodological materials and tools – 40%;
- Employment of qualified specialists – 38%;

Total percentage exceeds 100, because respondents provided more than one answer to the question.

The situation in each of the partner counties:

In Bulgaria: Adjustment of premises is quite important prerequisite for a better career guidance of youth with fewer opportunities (54%), followed by continuous training and skills improvement (41%), development of methodological tools within the organization (39%) and purchase of soft tools for counseling (38%).

In Ireland: Respondents identify the development and distribution of methodological materials within the organization as quite significant for improving the career counseling of youth with fewer opportunities (58%). Employment of qualified counselors and their competences development and improvement should not be underestimated (42% of the respondents).
In **Lithuania**: Most respondents identified the soft means of counseling (63%) and the adjustment of premises (65%) as key elements of a better guidance service to disadvantaged youth. Half of the respondents determine employed qualified specialists and continuous staff training also as important factors.

In **Slovakia**: Continuous training and skills improvement of counseling staff is important factor to assure better provision of guidance service to disadvantaged youth for 85% of respondents, 81% mention employment of qualified specialists, 42% recognize the significance of adjusted premises.

In **United Kingdom**: Respondents mention the following factors: Trainings on acquisition and further development of competencies of consultants; Adjustment of premises; Purchase of methodological materials and tools, and Employment of qualified specialists – 20% each. Development of soft means of counseling in the frame of the organization is underestimated.

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**System for QA in the youth career sector**: All respondents are aware of the need of Quality Assurance system in the field of youth career consultancy, either on national, organizational or individual level.

**Quality requirements to counseling staff**: permanent improvement of staff qualifications, better motivation, empathy and good communication skills, regular attestation of the staff competences, good theoretic and practical preparation of the consultant; professional treatment of the client and confidentiality; communication skills, knowledge, will, specialized training courses, practical competencies, higher education on psychology, knowledge of foreign languages, knowledge on psychological aspects of vocational choice, personality assessment; Standardization of paperwork to assess and record, confidentiality and communication skills.

**Measures for improved counseling to youth with fewer opportunities**: On the basis of results from all participating countries (Bulgaria, Ireland, Lithuania, Slovakia and UK), the following factors were identified as most necessary for provision of better counseling to clients with fewer opportunities: Trainings on acquisition and further development of competencies of consultants; Adjustment of premises; Purchase of methodological materials and tools and Employment of qualified specialists.
5. Conclusions from survey and expectations about improvement of the quality assurance in the youth career consultancy field

5.1. Identified needs from the survey conclusions

- Lack of differentiated bodies engaged in career consultancy of people with fewer opportunities. Insufficient tools/ materials to meet the needs of these clients.

- Identified need of more online guidance tools – presently, mostly used are online databases, information portals and interactive tools /mostly simple questionnaires. Virtual communication and counseling environments are still not that popular, though their advantaged are recognized by respondents.

- Partial correspondence of existing guidance tools to clients’ needs – need of quality assessment instruments, containing both quality and quantity indicators;

- Hard and soft means of counseling also partially correspond to needs of youth – need of methodological tools /soft means of counseling/, as well as equipment other technical resources (Bulgaria, Slovakia).

- Not sufficient usage of quality indicators in youth career guidance in the partner countries. Underestimated context indicators in all partner counties.

- Standards for QA in the YCC field: 39% of all respondents share that no standards exist. In Bulgaria, Lithuania and Slovakia some internal standards (at organizational level) are applied. National guidance standards are introduced in Ireland and UK, but not used by all respondents.

- There is need of establishing QA Framework in the field of YCC - Most respondents reply that it exist neither on national, nor on regional or internal level;

- Internal evaluation of the guidance service is not a permanent process, it is either carried out randomly, or on regular basis but with huge intervals (most often 6 months or annually);

- Clients’ involvement in the QA of the guidance services - neither structured, nor regular process in most of the cases. Advantages of modern technologies are still not fully used;

- All respondents are aware of the need of Quality Assurance system in the field of youth career consultancy, either on national, organizational or individual level;

- Factors identified as most necessary for provision of better counseling to clients with fewer opportunities: availability of methodological materials and tools and Employment of qualified specialists; training on acquisition and further development of competencies
5.2. Expectations from the QA in YCC project – development of QI, QM and QA Framework in YCC; VQAC, manuals for guidance staff

QA in YCC project will enhance the quality and competitiveness of youth career consultancy services by:

- A set of quality indicators of YCC and quality model (QM) of YCC with both respect of European perspective and specifics of the youth work;
- Proposing QA framework of YCC and mapping techniques of the QA for YCC with the other European frameworks and quality standards;
- A set of printed and online guidance materials (2 manuals) for the quality assurance aspects of the youth career consultancy;
- Identification of the critical areas in youth career guidance requiring introduction of QA approaches and providing them with training and assessment tools for QA, incorporating the achievements of different countries in and outside Europe;
- Improvement of youth career consultants, instructional/program designers and managers’ competences, in QA issues and providing them with tools for introducing QA instruments in their everyday work;
- Improving youth career centers capabilities for QA self-assessment and internal monitoring via producing online QA interactive materials;
- Enhancing the comparativeness of youth career services and preparing them for the challenges of global economy via working with young people with fewer opportunities via proposing specific QA indicators and training materials dedicated to counseling of young peoples with specific profiles;

5.3. Project influence and impact on the youth career consultancy sector;

The project will:
- Increase the capacity of international based and locally based VET stakeholders via providing them with free sets of project products;
- Increase the quality management and QA capabilities of youth career services (centers, networks) via providing online (VQAC) and printed materials (2 manuals);
• Empower the systematic approach and theoretical background of youth career consultants, managers of youth services and instructional designers of career training materials via promoting precise QI, QM and QF of YCC;

• Contribute to improving career consulting services for work with young people with fewer opportunities;

• Increase the resources and tools of quality assurance agencies and quality control bodies (state and regional ones) via defining QI, QM and QF of YCC and via set of online assessment tools;

• Increase the internal and external quality control and quality monitoring capacity of youth career services in Europe via providing a precise and comprehensive set of tools and materials for QA;

• Have multiplier effect via providing QA tools and methods for instructional designers of materials for youth career development; Most of them, acting as trainers of trainers will multiply the project achievements and products impact;

5.4. Survey contribution to the development/improvement of the concept of QA in the Youth Career Consultancy

**Existing quality indicators in youth career consultancy survey** and its conclusions disclosed quite important specifics and details related to the youth career guidance services in the partner countries:

• Need of quality assessment instruments, containing both quality and quantity indicators;

• Need of methodological tools /soft means of counseling/;

• Not sufficient usage of quality indicators in youth career guidance in the partner countries;

• Internal evaluation of the guidance service is not a permanent process, it is either carried out randomly, or on regular basis but with huge intervals (most often 6 months or annually);

• Insufficient involvement of clients in the QA of the guidance services;

• Identified need of online QA tools and instruments specially developed for the youth
career guidance sector;

Project partnership took into account all these findings and identified deficiency of the current youth career consultancy service in the partner countries for the development of the key project products: manuals for career consultants and the Virtual quality assurance center.
6. Questionnaires results in the partner countries

6.1. Bulgaria

**Status of organisation**: State institution – 63%; Non-governmental organisation – 23%; Private organisation – 14%;

**Types of clients /respondents provide more than one answer/**:
- Secondary school students – 12%;
- Vocational school students – 16%;
- College students – 14%;
- University students - 35%;
- **Young unemployed people** – 53%;
- Young people with fewer opportunities – 41%;
- Other - 19%;

Correspondence of used methods and tools to needs of clients:
- Yes, completely – 22%;
- Yes, partially – 39%;
- More correspond than do not – 31%;
- More do not correspond than do – 8%;

Is workplace supplied with a **sufficient offer** of “hard and soft” means of counseling?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes, completely</th>
<th>Yes, partially</th>
<th>More fit than do not</th>
<th>More don't fit than do</th>
<th>No, not at all</th>
<th>Other (please, indicate)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Work environment</td>
<td>16 %</td>
<td>32 %</td>
<td>27 %</td>
<td>16 %</td>
<td>5 %</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tools / Materials</td>
<td>8 %</td>
<td>28 %</td>
<td>38 %</td>
<td>14 %</td>
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Measures for a better provision of counseling service to clients with special needs / respondents provide more than one answer:

- **Adjustment of premises** – 74%;
- Employment of qualified specialists – 15%;
- Trainings on acquisition or improvement of fresh competences for working specialists’ – 41%;
- Purchase of methodological materials and tools – 38%;
- Development and distribution of methodical materials within the institution – 39%;

**Preparation (readiness) of the staff** to provide counseling services within the institution/percentage of replies: **Mainly good** - 56%; Excellent – 29%; Satisfactory – 8%; Insufficient – 7%;

**Quality requirements to be applied and practiced among counseling professionals** / recommendations by respondents:

- Permanent improvement of staff qualifications, better motivation, empathy and good communication skills;
- Regular attestation of the staff competences.
- Responsibility, self-awareness, human approach;
- Good theoretic and practical preparation of the consultant;
- Professional treatment of the client and confidentiality;

**Applied methods of staff assessment:**

- **The organisation has a system for staff assessment** – 40%;
- Staff competence is assessed by feedback from the clients – 21%;
- Staff is assessed by the head of the institution – 33%;
- Employees execute self-evaluation – 3%;
- Other – 3%;
Majority of clients evaluate the quality of career counseling services either always (54%) or sometimes (39%); clients’ evaluation not carried out in 3% of cases, 4% answer “other”.

**Types of clients’ evaluation** of counseling services:
- By periodical interviews – 31%;
- By periodical online surveys – 9%;
- By periodical e-mail surveys – 6%;
- **By random clients’ opinion** – 39%;
- Other: 15 %;

**Cooperation with other organizations in the filed of career guidance, relations with social partners:**
- related to acquisition or provision of tools for career guidance;
- proposals for improvement of the consulting process;
- established contacts between student career centers with state institutions, job search portals;
- contacts with National employment agency and its regional structures;

**Availability of methodologies/mechanisms/tools for evaluation of the counseling services’ quality** /92% of respondents answered to that question/.
- Yes – 36% ;
- Yes, some – 19%;
- No – 30%;
- Other – 7%;

**Methodologies/mechanisms/instruments for evaluation of the counseling services’ quality:**
- online self-assessment questionnaires, state regulation mechanisms, regular feedback of the clients’ satisfaction and real positive results achieved.

How often are the counseling services evaluated in the organisation/institution?
- **Yes, constantly** – 37%;
- **Yes, sometimes** – 41%;
- No, never – 7%;
- Other – 5%;

**Standards for quality assurance of counseling services** /more than one answer provided by some respondents/:
- Yes, national – 27%;
- Yes, internal – 46%;
- No – 37%;
Quality indicators applied in everyday counseling service by respondents:

Examples of used quality indicators: Assessing the progress; monitoring system; follow-up assessment; meeting with HR managers from companies

Need of quality assurance system in career counseling:
6.2. Ireland

**Status of organisation:** State institution – 38%; Non-governmental organisation – 37%; Private organisation – 25%;

**Types of clients** /respondents provide more than one answer/: 
- Secondary school students – 17%
- Vocational school students – 25%
- College students – 4%
- University students – 13%
- **Young unemployed people** – 58%
- Young people with fewer opportunities – 46%
- Other – 33%

Correspondence of used methods and tools to needs of clients:
- **Yes, completely** – 42%
- Yes, partially – 21%
- More correspond than do not – 37%

**Is workplace supplied with a sufficient offer of “hard and soft” means of counseling?**

**Types of E-based counseling means used**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Means Used</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interactive tools</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information portals</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Databases</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual counseling environment</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Measures for a better provision of counseling service to clients with special needs** /respondents provide more than one answer/: 
- Adjustment of premises – 29%
- Employment of qualified specialists – 33%
- Trainings on acquisition or improvement of fresh competences for working specialists’ – 42%
- Purchase of methodological materials and tools – 25%
- Development and distribution of methodical materials within the institution – 58%

**Preparation (readiness) of the staff** to provide counseling services within the institution/percentage of replies/: **Mainly good** – 54%; Excellent – 42%; Satisfactory – 4;

**Quality requirements to be applied and practiced among counseling professionals** /
recommendations by respondents:
- Provision of a coherent information base;
- Initial consultations to help clarify clients’ needs;
- Appropriate pathways and/or referral; more specialized support and assessment;
- Referral to psychological services where needed.

Applied methods of staff assessment /more than one method used by some respondents/:
- The organisation has a system for staff assessment – 67%;
- Staff competence is assessed by feedback from the clients – 54%;
- Staff is assessed by the head of the institution – 25%;

• Employees execute self-evaluation – 20%;

Majority of clients evaluate the quality of career counseling services either always (46%) or sometimes (42%); clients’ evaluation not carried out in 4% of cases, 4% answer “other” /4 % of respondents did not provide answers/.

Types of clients’ evaluation of counseling services /respondents provide more than one answer/:
- By periodical interviews – 29%;
- By periodical online surveys – 0%;
- By periodical e-mail surveys – 13%;
- By random clients’ opinion – 71%;
- Other – 21%;

Availability of methodologies /mechanisms/ tools for evaluation of the counseling services’ quality /92% of respondents answered to that question/:
- Yes – 38%;
- Yes, some – 50%;
- No – 4%;
How often are the counseling services evaluated in the organisation/institution/ 88% of respondents answered to this question?

- **Constantly** – 46%;
- **Sometimes** – 42%;

**Standards for quality assurance of counseling services** (more than one answer provided by some respondents):

- **National** – 75%;
- **Internal** – 54%;
- **No** – 13%;

**Quality indicators applied in everyday counseling service by respondents:**

**Need of quality assurance system in career counseling:**
6.3. Lithuania

**Status of organisation:** State institution – 77%; Non-governmental organisation – 15%; Private organisation – 8%;

**Types of clients** (respondents provide more than one answer):
- Secondary school students – 81%;
- Vocational school students – 31%;
- College students – 31%;
- University students – 33;
- Young unemployed people – 25%;
- Young people with fewer opportunities – 21%;
- Other – 6%;

Correspondence of used methods and tools to needs of clients:
- Yes, completely – 21%;
- *Yes, partially – 52%*;
- More correspond than do not – 21%;
- More do not correspond than do – 4%;
- Not at all – 2%;

Is workplace supplied with a **sufficient offer of “hard and soft” means of counseling?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of E-based counseling means used</th>
<th>Work tools/materials and environment fit for counseling clients with special needs?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Virtual environments 11%</td>
<td><strong>Work environment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information portals 35%</td>
<td>4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Databases 30%</td>
<td><strong>Tools / Materials</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Measures for a better provision of counseling service to clients with special needs / respondents provide more than one answer/:
  • **Adjustment of premises – 65%**;
  • Employment of qualified specialists – 50%;
  • Trainings on acquisition or improvement of fresh competences for working specialists’ – 50%;
  • Purchase of methodological materials and tools – 63%;
  • Development and distribution of methodical materials within the institution – 27%;

**Preparation (readiness) of the staff** to provide counseling services within the institution/ percentage of replies/: **Mainly good – 60%**; Excellent - 6%; Satisfactory – 21%; Insufficient – 6%; Poor – 2%;

**Quality requirements to be applied and practiced among counseling professionals** / recommendations by respondents/: Communication skills, knowledge, will, specialized training courses, practical competencies, higher education on psychology, knowledge of foreign languages, knowledge on psychological aspects of vocational choice, personality assessment.

**Applied methods of staff assessment** /more than one answer by respondents/:
  • The organisation has a system for staff assessment – 29%;
  • Staff competence is assessed by feedback from the clients – 38%;
  • Staff is assessed by the head of the institution – 54%;
  • **Employees execute self-evaluation – 56%**;
  • Not assessed – 13%;
  • Other – 6%;

**Most important factors that influence the guidance service**:
  • Competence of counseling staff (23%), state policy in the field of youth (21%),
  • The needs of the clients (13%),
  • Technical equipment (hard means of counseling) (6%).

Majority of clients **evaluate the quality of career counseling** services either always (50%) or sometimes (38%); clients’ evaluation not carried out in 6% of cases, 4% answer “other”.

**Types of clients’ evaluation** of counseling services/more than one answer by respondents/:
  • By periodical interviews – 50%;
  • By periodical online surveys – 6%;
  • By periodical e-mail surveys – 10%;
  • **By random clients’ opinion – 60%**;
  • Other: 4%;

**Cooperation with other organizations in the filed of career guidance, relations with social partners**: Labour exchange, vocational schools, employers, higher education institutions, non-governmental organizations.

**Availability of methodologies/mechanisms/tools for evaluation of the counseling services’ quality** /96% of respondents answered to that question/.
  • Yes – 10%;
- Existing quality indicators in youth career consultancy -

- Methodologies/mechanisms/instruments for evaluation of the counseling services' quality: questionnaires, research, presentation of results, approval of services, internal evaluation.

- How often are the counseling services evaluated in the organisation / institution? /90% of respondents answered to that question/. 
  - Yes, constantly – 27%;
  - Yes, sometimes – 40%;
  - No, never – 21%;
  - Other – 2%;

- Standards for quality assurance of counseling services /94% of respondents answered to that question/. Yes, national – 2%;
  - Yes, internal – 38%;
  - No – 44%;
  - Other – 10%;

- Is there existing quality assurance framework in the field of career counseling?

- Quality indicators applied in everyday counseling service by respondents:
Need of quality assurance system in career counseling:

- Yes, national: 41%
- Yes, internal: 33%
- Individual responsibility: 25%
- No: 0%
- Other: 1%
6.4. Slovakia

**Status of organisation:** State institution – 100%;

**Types of clients** /some respondents provide more than one answer/:
- Secondary school students – 29%;
- Vocational school students – 56%;
- College students – 12%;
- University students – 0%;
- Young unemployed people – 2%;
- Young people with fewer opportunities – 7%;
- Other – 0%;

Correspondence of used methods and tools to needs of clients:
- Yes, completely – 15%;
- Yes, partially – 20%;
- More correspond than do not – 17%;
- **More do not correspond than do** – 27%;
- Not at all – 22%;

Is workplace supplied with a **sufficient offer of “hard and soft” means of counseling?**

![Image](image_url)

Types of E-based counseling means used

![Image](image_url)

Work tools/materials and environment fit for counseling clients with special needs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes, completely</th>
<th>Yes, partially</th>
<th>More fit than do not</th>
<th>More don't fit than do</th>
<th>No, not at all</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work environment</td>
<td>2 %</td>
<td>29 %</td>
<td>12 %</td>
<td>27 %</td>
<td>34 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools / Materials</td>
<td>2 %</td>
<td>29 %</td>
<td>12 %</td>
<td>27 %</td>
<td>34 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Measures for a better provision of counseling service to clients with special needs / respondents provide more than one answer/:**
• Adjustment of premises – 41%;
• Employment of qualified specialists – 80%;
• Trainings on acquisition or improvement of fresh competences for working specialists’ – 85%;
• Purchase of methodological materials and tools – 37%;
• Development and distribution of methodical materials within the institution – 20%;

Preparation (readiness) of the staff to provide counseling services within the institution/percentage of replies/: Excellent – 0%; Good - 22%; Satisfactory – 17%; Insufficient – 56%; poor – 5%;

Quality requirements to be applied and practiced among counseling professionals /recommendations by respondents/:  
• Better competencies and continuous training of counseling staff;
• responsibility, self-awareness,
• professional treatment of the client, human approach;
• Permanent improvement of staff qualifications, better motivation, empathy and good communication skills;

Applied methods of staff assessment /respondents provide more than one answer/:  
• The organisation has a system for staff assessment – 0%;
• Staff competence is assessed by feedback from the clients – 0%;
• Staff is assessed by the head of the institution – 15%;
• Employees execute self-evaluation – 29%;
• Not assessed – 46%;
• Other – 2%;

Clients’ evaluation of the quality of career counseling services /only 68% of respondents answered to that question/:  
• Always - 7%;
• Sometimes -10%;
• never – 51%;

**Types of clients’ evaluation of counseling services:**
• By periodical interviews – 29%;
• By periodical online surveys – 0%;
• By periodical e-mail surveys – 0%;
• **By random clients’ opinion – 71%;**

Cooperation with other organizations in the filed of career guidance, relations with social partners:
• local authorities,
• labour office,

**Availability of methodologies/mechanisms/tools for evaluation of the counseling services’ quality** /92% of respondents answered to that question/:
• Yes – 2%;
• Yes, some – 0%;
• **No – 98%;**
• Other – 0%;

How often are the **counseling services evaluated in the organisation/institution**?
• Yes, constantly – 0%;
• Yes, sometimes – 34%;
• **No, never – 66%;**
• Other – 5%;

**Standards for quality assurance of counseling services:**
• Yes, national – 7%;
• Yes, internal – 37%;
• **No – 56%;**

**Is there existing quality assurance framework in the field of career counseling?**
Quality indicators applied in everyday counseling service by respondents:

Need of quality assurance system in career counseling:

It should be the responsibility of every counseling professional; 0%  
Yes, internal; 0%  
Yes, national; 100%
6.5. United Kingdom

**Status of organisation:** State institution – 25%; Non-governmental organisation – 20%; Private organisation – 25%; other – 30%;

**Types of clients:**
- Secondary school students – 5%;
- Vocational school students – 10%;
- College students – 5%;
- University students - 10;
- **Young unemployed people – 25%;**
- Young people with fewer opportunities – 15%;
- Other - 30%

Correspondence of used methods and tools to needs of clients:
- Yes, completely – 0%;
- Yes, partially – 40%;
- **More correspond than do not – 60%;**
- More do not correspond than do – 0%;

Is workplace supplied with a **sufficient offer of “hard and soft” means of counseling?**
- Yes, fully supplied – 0%;
- Yes, partially – 50%;
- Yes, but poorly -0;
- No, not at all – 0%;
- Other – 50% – /do not know/;

**Types of E-based counseling means used**

![Diagram showing types of counseling means used: Interactive tests - 0%, Databases - 0%, Information portals 30%, Virtual counseling environments 10%, Other 30%]
Work tools/materials and environment fit for counseling clients with special needs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes, completely</th>
<th>Yes, partially</th>
<th>More fit than do not</th>
<th>More don't fit than do</th>
<th>No, not at all</th>
<th>Other (please, indicate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work environment</td>
<td>20 %</td>
<td>40 %</td>
<td>20 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools / Materials</td>
<td>20 %</td>
<td>20 %</td>
<td>10 %</td>
<td>10 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Measures for a better provision of counseling service to clients with special needs:
- **Adjustment of premises** – 35%;
- Employment of qualified specialists – 15%;
- Trainings on acquisition or improvement of fresh competences for working specialists’ – 20%;
- Purchase of methodological materials and tools – 20%;
- Development and distribution of methodical materials within the institution – 10%;

**Preparation (readiness) of the staff** to provide counseling services within the institution / percentage of replies: **Mainly good** - 75%; **Excellent** – 20%; **Satisfactory** – 5%;

**Quality requirements to be applied and practiced among counseling professionals** / recommendations by respondents:
- "Standardization of paperwork to assess and record",
- "Confidentiality and communication skills",
- "Good effective training",
- Competency-based qualifications,

**Level of preparation of counseling staff**:
- Excellent – 50%;
- Good – 15%;
- Satisfactory – 10%;
- Insufficient – 5%;
- Poor – 105;
- Other – 10%;

**Applied methods of staff assessment**:
- **The organisation has a system for staff assessment** – 15%;
- Staff competence is assessed by feedback from the clients – 20%;
- Staff is assessed by the head of the institution – 20%;
- Employees execute self-evaluation – 10%;
- Not assessed – 15%;
- Other – 10%;

**Factors that mostly influence the quality of counseling services**:
Majority of clients evaluate the quality of career counseling services either always (40%) or sometimes (15%); clients’ evaluation not carried out in 5% of cases; 40% answer “other”.

Types of clients’ evaluation of counseling services:
- By random clients’ opinion – 60%;
- Other: 40%;

Cooperation with other organizations in the filed of career guidance, relations with social partners:
- Social services,
- Housing, health education,
- private sector organisations,
- voluntary organisations,
- careers advice and information centres,
- Drugs and alcohol agencies

Availability of methodologies/mechanisms/tools for evaluation of the counseling services’ quality /92% of respondents answered to that question/.  
- Yes – 30%;
- Yes, some – 30%;
- No – 30%;
- Other – 10%;

Methodologies/mechanisms/instruments for evaluation of the counseling services’ quality: Management information system, regular paper trails, regular evaluation.

How often are the counseling services evaluated in the organisation/institution?  
- Yes, constantly – 55%;
- Yes, sometimes – 25%;
- No, never – 15%;
- Other – 5%;
Standards for quality assurance of counseling services /more than one answer provided by some respondents/:  
- Yes, national – 45%;  
- Yes, internal – 20%;  
- No – 10%;  
- Other – 25%;

Is there existing quality assurance framework in the field of career counseling?

Quality indicators applied in everyday counseling service by respondents:

Need of quality assurance system in career counseling:
The project Quality Assurance in Youth Career Consultancy is implemented with the financial support of Leonardo da Vinci program of EC.

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Existing quality indicators in youth career consultancy

- Student Computer Art Society (SCAS) – Bulgaria / project coordinator
- National Student Information and Career Center – Bulgaria
- Marie Curie Association – Bulgaria
- Fastrack to IT Ltd – Ireland
- Youth Career & Advising Center – Lithuania
- University of Prešov – Student Services Centre – Slovakia
- Plymouth City Council Youth Service United Kingdom

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