Career guidance in higher education and employment offices: how to support learning and CMS development

Academia learning mobility 2021 in Estonia
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Foreword

After almost two years of living in a world where constant change and challenges have been a part of our daily and professional lives due to the worldwide pandemic, we would like to bring some fresh approaches and practical methods to your daily career guidance practice.

You are holding in your hands the Compendium of Practices from Academia learning mobility in Estonia, September 2021. We hosted seven career practitioners from four countries and the topic of the visit was “Career guidance in higher education and employment offices: how to support learning and CMS development”. Each of the career specialists was asked to present a method or an initiative from their practice. The practices and methods vary from one another as some are broader approaches to working and others are practical methods to use during one-to-one or group counselling sessions.

We hope they inspire you; feel free to put your own spin on them.

Margit Rammo and Anu Puulmann
Euroguidance Estonia
Academia in Estonia

Estonia has a long experience of hosting Academia learning mobility, but each year we push ourselves to find new themes and bring fresh angles to the programme that result in as much value for the participants as possible.

Since 1992, Euroguidance centres in various European countries have provided short-term learning mobilities for guidance professionals, the most substantial of which is Academia. To date, almost 2000 practitioners from all over Europe have taken part in study exchanges. Estonia joined the Academia network in 2000, and hundreds of practitioners and experts have since visited Estonia and approximately the same number of Estonian professionals have had the opportunity to gain experience and knowledge abroad.

In 2020, Estonia, like most others, was not able to host a physical visit for career guidance practitioners from Europe. Many European countries cancelled their Academia learning mobility events because of travel restrictions due to the pandemic. Estonian Academia hosts, however, took this as a positive challenge and created a two-phase e-Academia format. The format was a success and a learning opportunity for both the participants and the hosts. You can read more about our experience and find the practices collected in 2020 at the Compendium of practices: e-Academia learning mobility in Estonia. See also summary video ERASMUS+ enriching lives, opening minds! eAcademia’s story.

In 2021, we decided to merge the experiences of physical and virtual visits, so we had a virtual preparatory meeting before the actual visit and kept the fully online version as a back-up plan.
Today, one of the challenges which every guidance system faces is how to find innovative ways to support the transition and development of clients’ career management skills (CMS). During the four days, in cooperation with guidance professionals or practitioners and experts from Estonian universities, public employment offices and professional associations, Euroguidance Estonia introduced best practices in Estonia. The focus was on how to support the learning and development management skills (CMS) in higher education establishments and public employment services (PES). The main purpose was to encourage mutual exchange between participants from different countries, provide a learning mobility experience in a multicultural environment and produce international networking opportunities.

The aim of the learning mobility was to give professionals the possibility to reach the following learning outcomes:

- Receive an overview on lifelong guidance in Estonia
- Be able to understand the transition to and from higher education, including challenges
- Deepen knowledge of service provision by PES for various target groups
- Be able to understand learning in a multicultural environment
- Be able to practise professional language and participate in discussions
- Widen their professional network

Efficient and meaningful career guidance requires good networking and collaboration with several stakeholders. The same applies to the Academia exchanges: to be able to provide the best learning environment and insights, the programme was developed and implemented in close cooperation with Estonian hosts.

Academia in Estonia hosted seven career guidance practitioners from four countries, including Estonia. Three of the participants decided to come to Estonia physically even after attending e-Academia in 2020, which added value to the experience.

The learning mobility experience was organised jointly by Monika Sutrop from the Tallinn University of Technology Tал- Tech, Kristel-Lään Saarik from the University of Tartu, Kristina Orion and Marja Saarma from the Unemployment Insurance Fund and Margit Rammo and Anu Puulmann from the Euroguidance Estonia at the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Agency in The Education and Youth Board.
Activities

Pre-meeting
The pre-meeting took place in June 2021 with the aim of planning for the learning mobility and setting expectations so that all parties were able to get the fullest experience possible.

Learning mobility in Estonia

Day 1: Overview of lifelong guidance systems in Estonia and in higher education; getting to know each other; tour of Tallinn University of Technology TalTech and its Mektory Centre.

Day 2: Visit to the Unemployment Insurance Fund; guidance in employment sector, including labour market in Estonia, guidance services in EUIF and new ways of working in newly opened career centre; exchanging career guidance methods and tools (Germany, Denmark, Czech Republic and Estonia). Guided tour of the Career Centre.

Day 3: Job shadowing at various institutions and locations: University of Tartu in Tartu and the Unemployment Insurance Fund at Tallinn Career Centre.

Day 4: Exchanging good practices (Germany and Czech Republic), feedback and conclusions regarding the visit.

Outcomes
The participants self-assessed their knowledge at the start of the visit and at the end. The analysis of group results confirms an improvement in competencies across all learning outcomes.

![Figure 1. Comparison of learning outcomes: at the start and end of the visit](image)

The highly valued aspects of the visit were that the group was small which allowed to learn from one another by sharing methods and practices and possibility of actual job shadowing day of a local guidance professional. The participants enjoyed the new insights and inspiration and would have liked even longer programme to spend even more time together.
The Estonian guidance system can be characterised as flexible and open to change. In order to cope in these difficult times, digital services have played a crucial role; their use has increased exponentially and has helped maintain and develop the level of services.

The aim is to give an introduction on how career development is ensured by a lifelong guidance system in Estonia. We are convinced that the meaningful exchange of practices and policies and learning from one another across borders is the key to improving our community impact.

*Lifelong Guidance in Estonia 2022* gives you an overview of strategic views, guidance provisions, qualifications for professionals and many other relevant issues in Estonia.

For those who are aware of the main aspects of lifelong guidance in Estonia, we are delighted to bring attention to recent developments and we would like to highlight some of the latest initiatives.
Collection of guidance practices

New knowledge on modern practices is one of the main expectations of professionals who take part in Academia learning mobilities across Europe. To meet this need, Estonian hosts designed this year’s agenda accordingly and encouraged the exchange of practices among participants. During the learning mobility, all participants presented one practice and their favourite method or initiative. A guideline with suggested subtitles was produced to support the exchange:

The participants prepared a description (1-2 pages) of their method following the subtitles below:

- Name of method
- Aim
- Target group
- Equipment
- Process description
- Links for further information

Participants

The international Academia in Estonia 2021 group included seven participants from four European countries:

**Anne Grubb** – Career Counsellor from the Public Employment Service in Germany

**Jelena Bert** – Career Counsellor from the Public Employment Service in Estonia

**Jutta Gentsch** – Career Counsellor from the Public Employment Service in Germany

**Louise Rye-Romme** – Guidance Counsellor for SEN students from the Municipal Youth Effort Centre in Denmark

**Martina Milotová** – Career Practitioner at JCMM, providing the public with career development services activities in the South Moravian Region in Czech Republic

**Nicole Stutzmüller** – Career Counsellor from the Public Employment Service in Germany

**Tereza Musilová** – Career Practitioner at JCMM, providing the public with career development services activities in the South Moravian Region in Czech Republic
Blended approach in career counselling

Anne Grubb | anne.grubb@arbeitsagentur.de – Germany

Aim
To find the best form of counselling for your clients and their issues.
The outcome is higher target achievement, better customer satisfaction, sustainability and improved aftercare options.
The “Blended approach in career counselling” is adapted and developed from concepts in the social advice area.

Target group
All people who need help on their way between school and a career. Using blended counselling in career counselling, it is possible to consult more clients in a more efficient way.

Equipment
Laptops with Internet access, good rooms for counselling (in schools and back at work) and last but not least company guidelines which are open to the use of new technology and have a sensible privacy policy.

Process description
By knowing your clients and their needs, we are able to find the best form of counselling. A variety of counselling settings can be chosen depending on framework conditions, such as the complexity of the consulting content, the computer skills of the client or the geographical distance to our client.

This graphic (see below) shows many determining factors. Consultants may choose which asynchronous and synchronous blend of counselling best fits their clients.

A mix of method can be very beneficial. A typical consultation has several phases which often need various counselling blends. For example, to clarify the clients’ concerns, the first steps are often synchronous (face-to-face), thereafter asynchronous e-mail is sufficient.

Extending the consulting setting within digital media adds value for the client, for example the use of learning programmes or information systems within the boundary of blended counselling.

Blended counselling in career counselling is a box of magical combinations!
Figure 2. Determining factors for blended career counselling. A. Grubb
Reteaming

Tereza Musilová | tereza.musilova@jcmm.cz - Czech Republic

Aim

Reteaming is a general and widely used method consisting of twelve steps designed to help individuals as well as groups of people to change for the better by helping to set goals and develop the motivation and cooperation needed to achieve them.

Target group

Reteaming can be used according to the above definition when working with individuals and groups or teams. With the help of reteaming, teams can work on a common goal with the support of other team members, with the search for the most effective forms of cooperation and careful appreciation for the benefits of individual members. It is possible to work with groups of people from a variety of contexts using reteaming on the individual goals of individual participants with the support of others who help with ideas, observations and practical and concrete steps. For individual work, the support of the group or team must be replaced with careful work within the context – close people, co-workers, etc.

Equipment

Paper, pen, post-its, etc.

Process description

Twelve steps of Reteaming:

1. Describe your dream
2. Determine the goal
3. Examine the benefits of the goal
4. Get support
5. Take note of the progress that has been made so far
6. Imagine the next step
7. Evaluate what makes the goal challenging
8. Describe why a person can be trusted to achieve the goal
9. Make a public commitment
10. Prepare for possible obstacles
11. Monitor further progress
12. Celebrate success and thank everyone involved

Motivation

One of the central themes mentioned in the previous definition is motivation, which plays an important role in Reteaming. Experience shows that it is often

known what is desirable and “what should be”, the problem is mobilising energy to achieve the goal. In Reteaming, motivation is understood in a specific way. There are five simple rules for motivation, which, in our view, apply to any goal (from cleaning the house to driving a rocket for a month or running a company with thousands of employees):

1. You feel that the goal is yours – if the client has chosen the goal themselves, their motivation will be higher than if someone forces them to do something.

2. The goal has value for you – if the goal is important to the client and its achievement will be beneficial for them, motivation is higher.

3. You believe that the goal is achievable – an unrealistic goal reduces motivation.

4. You are experiencing some progress towards the goal – few people are enthusiastic about doing something for a long time that they are not doing well or where they are not seeing any progress.

5. You are ready to deal with possible obstacles – obstacles can significantly reduce motivation when they appear, especially in cases where a person is not ready for them at all.

Links for further information
Reteaming (in Czech):
dalet.cz/Clanky/Reteaming.pdf

Introduction of digital tools in the Tallinn Career Centre of the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund
The tetralemma – a tool for decision-making

Nicole Stutzmüller | nicole.stutzmueller@arbeitsagentur.de – Germany

Aim
To enable a decision between two options
The tool should lead the client away from the purely mental, rational level. A new weighing of advantages and disadvantages does not help anymore. Now it’s about the body feeling level: The client is made to feel in their body what is right for them. The body impulses experienced usually give extremely clear indications and lead to clear decisions.

Target group
One-to-one session

Occasions
All decision-making situations between two alternatives, if both have been reflected on in detail by the client

Equipment
Five large, round moderation cards of the same colour and a floor area of at least three by three metres.

Duration
Ten to twenty minutes excluding the preliminary discussion and evaluation.

Process description
With the tetralemma as a floor anchor exercise, the client receives immediate feedback on their somatic markers. Discomfort or tension indicate that an imagined situation is incompatible with the needs and motives of the client.

The options
The tetralemma is carried out as a set-up with ground anchors (moderation cards). Contrary to what the name suggests, the tetralemma is based on five options, which are interpreted and dealt with according to a fixed scheme.

- The first and second position “The One – The Other”
  This is the core alternative, i.e. the two poles between which the client commutes. It is very important that these two alternatives can be clearly identified so that the coach can identify them on the list.

- The third position “Both”
  This position generally causes immediate irritation: “How is that supposed to work, both?” Here, it is important to not allow any discussions before or during the constel-
lation. It’s purely about feeling, not thinking. If this turns out to be the position with the most positive feelings, you can clarify in the following coaching how “both” could work. If this position is perceived as positive, the client often has a rather spontaneous idea of how “both” could work. But they hadn’t even considered this option before.

- The fourth position “Neither”
  When this position is felt as positive, things get interesting. It can mean that the solution to the problem lies somewhere else or that the client does not want to make up their mind. That, too, is an option to be honoured.

- The fifth position “Neither this nor that”
  This position is a kind of wild card position. It also leads the client out of the decision-making space and into a very specific spatial sense and enables them to have a detached external position. Everything is, and should be, possible here. Sometimes the solution to a decision problem lies in an alternative. This may be something the client has not allowed themselves to think about, or they have not allowed their imagination to touch on the impossible. Here, they can, may and should do this. If this position is felt as positive, it becomes exciting in coaching.

Method
In the preparatory meeting, the counsellor should not discuss the topic in depth, but rather make quick suggestions, taking the whole into consideration in a constellation scenario.

Build the scenario. You need five large, round cards of the same colour, which you label as follows:

  The one; The other; Both; Neither of them; Neither this nor that

You place the cards crosswise on the floor, about a metre and a half away from one another. The fifth card (“Neither this nor that”) is laid out outside the cross at about a distance of one metre.

Warning: the scenario requires some space. Make sure that there is enough space around the cross so that your client does not feel constricted by furniture or walls.

If the client has gone through all positions, the tool is finished. You then ask them to leave the setting and sit down to evaluate it.

Evaluation options
If the client has described all body sensations, you as the counsellor did not miss how they experienced which positions. Nevertheless, a follow-up discussion is necessary in any case in order to reflect again on what has been experienced/felt.

Link for further information
Tetralemma (in German):
de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tetralemma_(Strukturaufstellung)
Aim
To find the client’s secret dreams and skills/competence mapping

Target group
This method is usually most popular with pupils, but it is also possible to use it with adults. It depends on each client. Suitable for both individuals and groups.

Equipment
A sheet of paper, crayons or markers

Process and comments
I usually include this technique in the competency mapping process. Usually, the contract is a choice of profession or high school with a client. It is very good for pupils because I know that the interview can be difficult for them, so it’s good to offer them some cards or creative activity. First you ask your client if they know how many lives a cat has? The correct answer is nine. Now your client has to imagine that they also have nine lives. Let’s try to imagine your nine lives. What will those lives be like? Imagine there is no limit. What would you prefer to do? What role do you want to have? Give the client a few minutes to imagine. The client can close their eyes.

Now, the client draws a 3x3 grid. In each window, the client draws one of their cat’s lives. The counsellor encourages the client when needed.

When they are finished, it is necessary to reflect on these lives. The counsellor can ask questions such as I see that you often draw yourself as a superhero, actor, leader, etc. Does this mean that you like to be the centre of attention? Do you know of a profession that corresponds to that? In which occupation could this be an advantage? How does this manifest itself in your present life? Do you have an example?

You will have a few more skills, character traits, competencies or dreams at the end of the interview. You can use these in the job matching in the next step of the counselling.

Link for further information
Nine lives of a cat (in Czech):
katalog.job-hub.cz/methods/4/Hra%209%20životů%20kočky“
Life space

Jelena Bert | jelena.bert@tootukassa.ee – Estonia
Method by Vance Peavy

Aim
To visualise a complex situation and spot patterns in elements of life space. Try to clarify and structure the problem or decision situation.

Target group
People who are ready for self-reflection. Suitable for clients in doubt and confusion. One-to-one or in small groups (5-6 people).

Equipment
Paper, pen, coloured pencils

Process description
The counsellor guides the individual or group with the following instructions: “Draw a large circle and place yourself somewhere in the enclosed space. This is your personal world.”

Then the guide asks questions, such as the following:

1. Some people imagine that they have several futures, others imagine only one. What do you imagine (dream about) as the future you would like to have?
2. Somewhere in your life space (or personal world), draw or write a little bit about your future or futures.
If you have more than one future in mind, which one seems most appealing to you?
3. Who are the important people in your life who might be able to help you make progress towards the future you are imagining? Place them somewhere inside the circle.
4. What are some important stepping stones towards your future? Place them inside the circle.
5. What do you think might prevent you from moving towards your future? Indicate this in your personal world.
6. What will your life look like if you reach the future you want? Can you indicate this in your life space?
7. Are there things you must do or learn if you are to move in the direction of your future? Indicate this in your life space.

Through life space mapping, the career counsellor is able to enter into the life space of the other and understand the meaningful life experiences and factors of the other’s personal world. It is a good opportunity to create fertile ground for further counselling.
Ability to draw is not important. It is possible to use geometric shapes, graphs, symbols, numbers and various kinds of forms, words and phrases. More suited to use with a repeated meeting with a client.

Links for further information

“To ask: What kind of career is best and possible for me is to ask: How should I live my life?”

(R. Vance Peavy, 2002)
Education plan

Louise Rye-Romme | lory@lolland.dk – Denmark

Aim

- Focus on your strengths, your needs and desires for the future and how to get there.

- A side effect is that the counsellor and student get to know each other if this is done 1:1.

- It is good to have a plan where goals are written down in order to keep the focus on the most important outcome in relation to education or work.

- A side effect is that you can have a good talk about motivation, thereby finding out what motivates the person in front of you.

Target Group

- All young people who leave primary school must have a plan for their further education.

- For young students who don’t start a youth education straight away, the Danish Municipal Youth Effort Centre will help the student fill this in and guide the student towards education or work. This also concerns persons up to 25 years old who haven’t completed a youth education or higher education.

The Education Plan is the tool that the Municipal Youth Effort Centre will use in cooperation with the student in order to collect all relevant information about the student so that the Youth Effort Centre (the counsellor) can help the student in the best way.

Equipment

Computer (it’s an online document that can be shared straight away with applied public institutions (FGU) or PES, if allowed by the student or their parents if they are under 18).

Under the question no. 3 you can also use paper and pen. Maybe some crayons if you want to draw the desired future separately with the student.
Process description

- Open the document and share it with the student. Most of the students can easily fill it in by themselves. They can log in to the site ung.unoung.dk where their information is shared and saved as required by the GDPR.

- Other students require 1:1, e.g. students with special needs. This will also allow you to get to know the student in front of you and vice versa.

On the right hand side of the document, you will find keywords that should help ask/answer the questions.

Links for further information
Lolland municipality youth guidance policy and guidelines (in Danish):
www.lolland.dk/document/99191aa7-88d4-476c-9bba-65812e055086
www.lolland.dk/borger/unge/har-du-brug-for-hjaelp

Education plan

1. Introduce yourself
   Tell a little about yourself; Who you are and what you like.
   What are you good at? What is more difficult for you?
   What are your interests and hobbies?

2. What do you think about school?
   Which subjects do you like? Homework, daily routine, other things.

3. Wishes for the future:
   How will your life look in 5 years? Or in 10 years?
   Which values are important for you?

4. Your housing situation and network

5. Other skills
   Driver licence, first aid diploma etc. Work and volunteer experience.

6. Any special needs

7. Educational or work-related desire going forward

Examples of the questions in the Educational plan
Self-marketing

Jutta Gentsch | jutta.gentsch@arbeitsagentur.de – Germany

Two-day webinar with a change of lectures and exercises

Aim
Reflecting the work of the participants on their CMS, soft skills, resources and experiences

Target group
Bachelor and Master’s students, young professionals, persons with an academic degree and a long professional experience with or without a job, persons who intend to change their profession/job.
Number of participants: 8-12

IT equipment
Skype for business, Power Point

Process Description
Before the workshop starts, the participants receive an e-mail with some preparation homework: a reflection on how everybody has mastered their way until now.

The main questions to be successful in the application process are:
• Who am I?
• What do I want?
• What are my abilities?
• How do I communicate this?

Day 1.
Exercise 1
The workshop starts and every participant introduces themselves to the group using the following points:
• Name
• Age
• Profession/Studies
• Give a compliment to yourself about an ability, a strength, your character...
• Tell the group about a strong passion you have?
• What is the greatest challenge you have overcome in your life?
• What is your commitment? What are the points you want to visit in this workshop?
Exercise 2

(30-40 mins – could be longer)
Two people share their reflection in a sharing group by telephone or in a break-out room.
They talk about their resources, their means, what they have learned in early childhood, kindergarten, school, their hobbies, activities, duties, families, relationships, friendships.
• How they grew up. Who was a helping hand that supported them?
• What has been the main challenge in their life?
• Have they experienced a crisis? How did they handle it and what could they learn from it?
• What are they proud of?
• Reflection in the group: How did you feel talking so much about you and your life?
• What did you experience through this?

Exercise 3

In small groups with a maximum of 4 participants, using the following guiding questions (15 mins):
• What are your former experiences with the application process?
• What was positive/negative?
• Which elements of an interview are you familiar with?
• What is good self-presentation?

Exercise 4

How can I support myself through self-coaching in an interview?
• Create your own affirmations in three short sentences
• Reflection in the group, feedback

Day 2

Exercise 5

Body to brain

Exercise 6

Explain your hard skills and competencies in such a simple way that a 6-year-old could understand.
Lecture on soft skills, competencies for the digital working world of the future and storytelling.

Exercise 7

Give a presentation of three of your soft skills
• Reflection on the past two days, the process, the newfound knowledge
Acknowledgements

We want to thank all the participants, partners and presenters who contributed to Estonian Academia in 2021. Thank you for being kind, patient, committed and supportive towards this common goal – a week full of real value for us all, which made this experience a breath of fresh air during these difficult times.

Dear participants, thank you for showing up with real enthusiasm, being ready to think along and enjoying all that the Estonian guidance community has to offer.

We are grateful to Tallinn University of Technology TalTech and extend a special thanks to Monika Sutrop for sharing career guidance services and practices in the university.

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Many thanks to the University of Tartu team, Kristel Lään-Saarik and Kadri Jurs, who shared their experiences and the practices of their counselling centre and welcomed four participants for an entire day job-shadowing.

Margit Rammo and Anu Puulmann
Euroguidance Estonia
You are welcome to visit Euroguidance.ee to access the e-publication!