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European Network to Support  
Guidance and Counselling

# Euroguidance Insight

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## Interview with Małgorzata Rosalska: “Diagnosis is an integral part of the counselling process.”



Phd. Małgorzata Rosalska is the author of the publication “Diagnostic Workshop of a Career Counsellor”. She is working as an educator, career counsellor and Associated Professor of Adult Education at the Department of Continuing Education and Vocational Guidance, Faculty of Educational Studies at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań/Poland. Rosalska specialises in career guidance and diagnostic methods in guidance institutions. She has participated in many research and training projects for educational institutions, non-profit organizations and employment.

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### What was the reason for your decision to use diagnostic tools in vocational guidance?

There were many reasons. I have been working with students for many years developing their diagnostic competence in vocational guidance. I have contact with career counsellors in comprehensive schools too. I also work with students from secondary schools. I have noticed that there is a huge demand for diagnostic tools. Both counsellors and their clients seek simple answers for “big” questions. They attach an enormous importance to the results of tests or questionnaires when preparing a career or educational plan. In my point of view it’s a situation for

concern. I want to know the reasons why they pay so much attention to the results of tests. I wondered about the real possibilities for diagnosis use throughout the counselling process.

### What should a counsellor consider when using diagnostic tools in schools?

It depends mainly on the student’s age, the situation and the counselling process. In my opinion it is most important for a young person to develop a reflection of his/her own resources and capabilities as well as his/her dreams and aspirations. If a student gets to know himself/herself better, it will be easier for him/her to decide what educational path to take.

### How long should a diagnosis in a counselling process last?

For me, diagnosis is an integral part of the counselling process. There are various styles of counselling work. In the beginning there should be diagnostic exercises, tests and so on. Based on the results of these tests, the counsellor should start his/her guidance service. I perceive diagnosis as a process of exploration and deepening information. It is a process of searching for information to help the student to understand his/her situation as well as a valuable aid for decision-making.

### What features should one develop to become a good diagnostician?

First of all, he/she should develop

reflection and cautiousness. These features allow him/her to concentrate on the students' real needs and to notice their expectations and, where appropriate, their concerns. Furthermore, it is important to care about the development of diagnostic techniques as well as to adhere to ethical standards and to constantly keep up with new developments.

**What is your favourite diagnostic tool or technique and why is it so?**

I always select diagnostic techniques according to the purpose pursued during a guidance process and to the client's feature with whom I work.

However, my experience shows that the most useful techniques impel students to demonstrate their perspective and their own way of perceiving and interpreting the tasks. I like to use art methods, the work on metaphors and discussion techniques. I often use behavioural techniques, which gives the client the opportunity to analyse real and not just declared student resources.

**Could you give some advice?**

I encourage counsellors not to perceive diagnosis as a main goal of advisory activity, but rather as a way to achieve it. The purpose of diagnosis

is always good, as is the development of our client. Therefore, the most important diagnostic question for me is to know the student's needs in order to wisely and responsibly plan his career or educational path. This perspective simplifies the selection of specific methods, techniques and tools.

*The interview was conducted by Anna Sowińska/ Euroguidance Poland (education sector) and Małgorzata Rosak (employment sector).*

## Guidance on the agenda in Sweden

**There are several measures in Sweden at the moment aimed at improving and developing educational and vocational guidance. New investments in guidance are made in the Swedish Budget Bill for 2013 and guidance in compulsory schools has become an area for inspection. Furthermore, new guidelines for the use of legislation are planned and a new guidance tool is being developed within the employment service.**

In the Swedish Budget Bill 2013 one can read that the rapid reforms of the education system create a need for special competence development activities to improve the quality of guidance. It is also said that information and guidance needs to be designed so that all students are able to make informed choices. This is of particular importance for students who have difficulties within the education system and who do not have parents who can help them. Therefore the Swedish Government proposes an allocation of SEK 10 million in 2013 (approx. 1.1 million EUR) for the training of guidance counsellors in the main. It is calculated that the same amount



Swedish team for guidance at the ELGPN meeting in Dublin in February 2013

will be available in 2014 and 2015. In addition, the Government proposes SEK 2 million in 2013 as well as in 2014 be spent on further training for guidance counsellors in upper secondary schools. This training would focus on how to solve the difficulties that young people with disabilities experience in the labour market.

The Swedish School Inspectorate is just finishing a review of guidance services in 34 compulsory schools in Sweden, with a focus on access and quality. The results will be published during 2013 and the review is

based on three questions:

- Do all students have access to continuous guidance of such quality that they can make informed and appropriate choices for continued education and careers?
- Does the principal provide guidelines and conditions for the guidance activities, so that they become the responsibility of the whole school?
- Do the municipalities take on the responsibility that guidance services in schools work in a satisfacto-

ry manner?

To meet the demand of fulfilling the need of guidance for students in all school forms, stated in the new school law adopted in 2010, the Swedish National Agency for Education is currently working on new general guidelines and comments on career education and guidance in schools. The guidelines will provide recommendations on how laws and regulations should be applied and promote a uniform use of the legislation. The aim is also to influ-

ence the development in a certain direction.

Also within the National Employment Service active measures are being taken to improve and implement guidance services in the Swedish employment offices and a new web-based tool for information about different professions and choice of occupation is currently being developed.

To conclude, guidance is currently on the national agenda and Sweden

is also taking the first steps towards collaboration between stakeholders in this area. To this end, a forum for national cooperation on educational and vocational guidance and school-working life was started last year. More information:

<http://www.government.se/sb/d/2798>

Nina Ahlroos/Euroguidance Sweden

## Update on the ELGPN Work Programme 2013-14

The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) is an alliance of European countries founded in 2007. It supports the development of lifelong guidance in both the education and the employment sectors. As a Member-State-driven network, it represents an innovative form of the Open Method of Co-ordination in the European Union (EU). The 2013-14 Work Programme is the fourth phase in the development of the ELGPN.



The ELGPN promotes co-operation between its 31 member countries in implementing the priorities identified in Europe 2020 strategies and the EU Resolutions on Lifelong Guidance (2004; 2008). The Network identifies lifelong guidance policy issues for which there are gaps in policy development and implementation at national level and which merit collaborative action at EU level within four priority areas of career management skills, access to lifelong guidance services, quality assurance and co-ordination & co-operation between the various national, regional and local stakeholders. In addition, ELGPN analyses EU policies from a lifelong guidance perspective.

During the 2011-12 Work Programme ELGPN members developed a Resource Kit for policy-makers on lifelong guidance policy development. The Resource Kit, published in October 2012, provides a focus for the current Work Programme as members adapt, field test, and apply it in their home countries. We encourage the Euroguidance centres to be in contact with their national ELGPN delegations to examine the feasibility of the Resource Kit in their national contexts and to make proposals for the improvement of this tool.

We also invite Euroguidance members to visit the ELGPN website ([www.elgpn.eu](http://www.elgpn.eu)) for more information on the Network and all the

ELGPN publications, as well as to join the active ELGPN LinkedIn group and mailing list. Links to the ELGPN LinkedIn group and the mailing list subscription service can also be found on the ELGPN website.

Outi Ruusuvirta/ ELGPN Co-ordination unit

## Strengthening guidance in turbulent times: rights and responsibilities

**What role does career guidance have at time of youth unemployment, and job insecurity throughout Europe? Professor Sultana devoted his speech to this topic on the European Presidency Conference that took place in October 2012 in Larnaca/Cyprus.**



We are living in turbulent, deeply troubled times. I will not rehearse the damning statistics that are every government's nightmare, and which are a blight on Europe. Nor do any of us need reminding that, for millions of young people in Europe who had believed in the gospel of lifelong learning, and invested their youth in education and training, the transition to economic independence and adulthood remains truncated, unfulfilled, unachievable. That nightmare is shared by those who do find employment, but in jobs that, far from being knowledge-rich, make little use of the skills and competences that have been patiently accumulated, often at great cost to themselves and their families. Many adults too share the precarity and insecurity that marks the life of so many other citizens, as industry seeks flexibility in order to remain competitive, giving short shrift to the conditions that Europe has struggled for centuries to achieve, conditions which set out to ensure that human dignity and a decent standard of living for all would not be sacrificed in the interests of capital.

### **What led to this situation?**

Governments across Europe have adopted varieties of economic neoliberalism, ranging from those that were prepared to allow the market to direct the fate of citizens, to those that experimented with 'Third Way', so-called 'inclusive liberalism', which strove to temper the impact of the market, while still

working within its logic. These different but ultimately closely linked versions of economic management strove to restore higher rates of profit through deregulation, privatization, and the dismantling of the public sector, reducing the barriers to global trade in ways that led to the export of jobs to cheaper labour markets, and to the disempowering of workers. Such choices also led to what turned out to be scandalous and disastrous de-regulation of financial markets, often thanks to collusions between the financial and political elites, resulting in the exposure of ordinary citizens to huge risks.

This imperative of "freedom" is lived as ambivalence, confusion, doubt, fear, failure and anxiety, as the individualized, competitive subjects of neoliberalism attempt to live out their freedoms in such a way as to maximize individual potential and thence their competitive advantage. In education as much as in the labour market, that self-centred individualism is promoted by an array of concepts and strategies to which career guidance is not a stranger: individual education plans, individualised programmes of study, personal action planning, personal life projects, individual learning accounts, individualised skills profiles, personalised life design...one and all transpose social upheavals to the level of the individual, ironically using the language of empowerment and of rights, forgetting that rights can only be sustained by, and in interdependence

with, communities.

### **Role of Career Guidance?**

What then, in this scenario, is, and should be, the role of career guidance? In this situation, is career guidance yet another frill, representing yet another cost to governments, or can one claim that it is a right, a service which citizens are entitled to, part of a safety net that supports them as they navigate stormy and troubled waters? Governments are quick to impose austerity on citizens, who have to pay for badly managed and badly imagined economies. To curtail, withdraw, or fail to offer support—one could argue—is nothing less an affront, adding insult to injury. In this scenario, should career guidance practitioners allow themselves to be absorbed by the dominant logic, the master discourse of our times that seeks to hold responsible individuals, by promoting career management skills as the ultimate solution, inadvertently implying that structural problems can be solved through the bravura of individuals? Or should career guidance be reimagined in ways that pay more than lip-service to collective forms of solidarity? How, if at all, can career guidance contribute to a socially just engagement with citizens in a context where social justice is increasingly absent, and where words like empowerment, social inclusion, and social cohesion have come to stand for the exact opposite of what they are meant to signify, given that they relate to a context which, by

context which, by definition, strives on exclusion?

These are difficult questions, and it would be dishonest and foolhardy of me to claim the moral high ground, as if I had a monopoly of wisdom and virtue. These are tough questions, which are not susceptible to recipe-type answers, but which require much soul-searching and deliberation as we critically revisit our policies and practices in our field and to make sense of complex reali-

ties that are not of our own making. But it is precisely by accepting to engage with these perplexing questions in ways that recognize their moral, ethical, and political nature, rather than their merely technical one, that we can claim that ours is a profession. Let us by all means strengthen career guidance, but let us do so by taking seriously the overall context we are operating in which might, despite all our good intentions, jeopardize our desire to

serve citizens not only effectively, but also honestly.

Prof. Ronald G. Sultana

Prof. Sultana is Director of the Euro-Mediterranean Centre for Educational Research at the University of Malta. The article is a summary of the speech held on the European Presidency Conference in October 2012 at Larnaka/Cyprus.

## National Career Counselling Award

**The National Career Counselling Award (NCCA) is an initiative running in several Euroguidance Centres to support the local guidance and counselling community. In the Czech Republic and Slovakia it was started in 2009 and 2013 is the fifth year of this initiative.**

The award has several goals. Firstly, it is a means of mapping career guidance and counselling services providers and individual achievements in this field. This is important especially in countries where the structure of guidance services is not clearly defined. Secondly, the NCCA helps to connect providers of career services across different sectors and enables them to learn from each other and/or establish further mutual cooperation. Moreover, it enables wider discussion on career guidance and counselling and spread awareness about this topic. Finally, the National Career Counselling Award supports providers of career guidance and counselling services, awards and honours them, provides publicity and offers several prizes (e.g., for winners in the Czech Republic participation at the study visit to Swedish institutions and organisations active in the career guidance and counselling area).

Since the beginning, there has been visible, ongoing development of the



NCCA. Within the Czech Republic the first year of the contest was focused on the detection of existing services provided by career counsellors. In 2010, the specific aspects of the guidance process were awarded. The contest in 2011 has reflected one of the key topics in present guidance : Career Management Skills.

The Slovak contest has a different history. In 2009, the contest focused on how secondary schools support the transition of their graduates from school to work through guidance and counselling activities in cooperation with public employment services. In 2010 the contest had no specific topic. Various career guidance and counselling services providers for school population and adults on the labour market (including employed people and the

disadvantaged) participated. The contest in 2011 was focused on how career guidance and counselling services are presented by their providers on the internet, including questions such as what the quality and attractiveness of information on these services is for Users.

Records from previous years of the contest provide a huge amount of information describing career guidance and counselling in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, e. g. presentation of services, methodology, ethics, measurement of impacts, etc. In 2011, a DVD with a presentations of tools and methods of awarded organisations in the Czech National Career Counselling Award was created. It shows a wide range of career counselling activities in the Czech Republic, such as services for students, parents after parental

leave, disadvantaged groups and employees.

The topic of the contest in 2012 in the Czech and Slovak Republics has been Career Management Skills and the Award was running under the motto *"I develop myself, thus I am."* Services and initiatives supporting development of career management skills have been assessed according to following aspects:

1. Description of the service/achievement,
2. Methodology of the service,
3. Supporting the development of career management skills,
4. Evaluation of services,
5. Qualification of providers,
6. Case study.

In 2012 the closer cooperation between Czech and Slovak EG centre began. Common history of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, similar cultural and social background, and, last but not least, the absence of a language barrier enabled the sharing of good practice between these two countries. In the end of the last year the common Compendium with contributions from both Czech and Slovak NCCA was published in printed and electronic form. Apart from this, a short booklet in English with contributions from Czech Republic, Slovakia and Bulgaria was prepared in cooperation with Bulgarian colleagues. The winning examples from all three countries may serve as an inspiration for other counsellors or

guidance practitioners.

The cooperation on the Contest (preparation or/and dissemination) has proved to be beneficial and it is welcomed by all involved parties. The possibilities for further cooperation are wide and include common compendiums, common international conference or common study visit for the winners of the National Career Counselling Award from all countries. It remains a question for the future whether more countries are going to be interested in the similar activity...

Kateřina Hařková/ Euroguidance Czech Republic;  
Stefan Grajcar/Euroguidance Slovakia

## Guidelines for the development of career counselling system in Poland

**The National Centre for Supporting Vocational and Continuing Education (NSVC) launched the Project "Developing the career counselling model and elaborating online system of educational and occupational information" on behalf of the Ministry of National Education in 2009. In 2011 NSVC undertook research on the results of the project entitled "Condition and Function of Career Counselling in the Selected Counties of Warmia and Mazury Voivodeship", which was part of the project mentioned initially.**

The survey was targeted at representatives on central and province level including institutions, employers, representatives of regional institutions, school directors, guidance counsellors, students and parents. The main focus of the project was to examine career counselling provisions in schools within the counties of Warmia and Mazury Voivodeship and to define the possibility of developing a career counselling system in Polish schools.

The report contains results of a survey related to the challenge of defining career counselling by the respondents. The following were inherent issues:

- the organisation of career counselling system at schools;
- problems of the career counselling system;
- activities of regional institutions in the area of career counselling.

Opinions were gathered from regional institution representatives, school directors, employment counsellors and students concerning the need and importance of career counselling. Opinions of graduates and parents were presented as well. Due to the presented survey results, (which included the opinions of all participants of the career counselling system) it was possible to create a complete image of career counselling in the surveyed province and to articulate problems and related difficulties.

According to the conducted analysis

of collected research material, the conclusions are as follows:

In mentioned voidships there is lack of a coordinated network of career counselling. Moreover in many districts were noticed some differences referred to this.

Some districts have developed a career counselling network (e.g Elblag) while in other districts counselling is accidentally provided by teachers in school. These actions are based on some kind of form of lessons or meeting with students.

The majority of investigated schools do not run their own career counselling system in-house. In addition, the majority of schools do not employ specialists of this area and do not have well-equipped classrooms for lessons conducted by such specialists. Only a minority of school students indicated conversation with the guidance counsellor as an important source of learning about schools and occupations. School students (and graduates) rarely take

part in lessons dedicated to career counselling. They stated that those lessons were not often organized. Decisions to choose a profession or further education are made without considering essentials and substantive arguments. Opinions of school colleagues and family take precedence. Needs of the regional labour market are not considered to be important factors when making those decisions. Research participants were convinced that a system of career counselling should be developed in the following years.

Full report is available only in Polish.

<http://www.koweziu.edu.pl/download.php?plik=Raport%20koncowy%20Stan%20i%20rola%20doradzwa%20zawodowego%20w%20wybranych%20powiatach%20wojew%C3%B3dzwa%20warmi%C5%84sko-mazurskiego.pdf>

Anna Dzedzic & Jerzy Bielecki/ EG Poland (education sector)

## **Short News**

### **New Handbook**

The Network for Innovation in Career Guidance & Counselling in Europe (NICE) published a handbook for academic training of career guidance and counselling professionals. The handbook offers scientifically based arguments for training career professionals in higher education institutions.

There are two different versions of the handbook (short and full version) which can be ordered in print from

[katsarov@ibw.uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:katsarov@ibw.uni-heidelberg.de)

or be downloaded here:

[http://www.nice-network.eu/newsdetails00.html?](http://www.nice-network.eu/newsdetails00.html?&cHash=c0e5b74eb3&tx_ttnews%5bbackPid%5d=145&tx_ttnews%5btt_news%5d=31)

[&cHash=c0e5b74eb3&tx\\_ttnews%5bbackPid%5d=145&tx\\_ttnews%5btt\\_news%5d=31.](http://www.nice-network.eu/newsdetails00.html?&cHash=c0e5b74eb3&tx_ttnews%5bbackPid%5d=145&tx_ttnews%5btt_news%5d=31)

The short version addresses a broader audience and comprises primarily central concepts (e.g. NICE core competences).

On top of this, the full version contains research which was undertaken in the network on the current structures, contents and approaches of career professionals in higher education in Europe. It also contains a chapter on innovative themes for academic training.

**NICE stands for "Network for Innovation in Career Guidance & Counselling in Europe and aims at contributing to the implementation of the European Lifelong Learning Programme. From 2009 to 2012 it was funded by the European Commission.**

### **Book on Career Guidance**

A new book on *Career Guidance in Communities* has been published in Denmark. There is an emerging interest for this item in Denmark – maybe also in other countries?

For more information see:

<http://en.unipress.dk/udgivelser/c/career-guidance-in-communities/>



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