

# NCGE news



Winter 2017 / Issue 48



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Supporting Adults with Dyslexia

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Euroguidance@25

# Leading and Shaping Guidance Practice



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NEWS

European Day of Languages Competition 2017



NCGE/Euroguidance was delighted to support the Léargas European Day of Languages competition. The European Day of Languages is an initiative by the European Commission to promote the learning of languages across the European Union.

The competition involved students filling out a Europass CV, with the help of their guidance counsellor and language teacher, for their dream job in a language they are studying in school. Teachers then chose one entry from each class to be submitted to the national competition.

Europass CV templates are available online in various languages and can be found through the link below.

[http://www.europass.ie/europass/euro\\_cv.html](http://www.europass.ie/europass/euro_cv.html)

The prize, co-funded by NCGE/Euroguidance and Léargas includes travel for a guidance counsellor, language teacher and a small group of students, to a maximum value of €150 for both the Junior and Senior Cycle winner.

The closing date for the Léargas Competition, supported by NCGE/Euroguidance was the 27th of October, 2017.

The competition offered an opportunity to familiarise students with the Europass CV, which is commonly used across Europe and to encourage students to consider learning and employment opportunities across The EU.

**WINNERS WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN JANUARY 2018 !**



2017 Time To Move Events: Supporting Mobility for Young People



NCGE/Euroguidance Ireland was delighted to have the opportunity to support the Eurodesk Time To Move (TTM) campaign, 1st – 31st October, 2017.

The Europe-wide campaign aims to inform young people (aged 18-30 years) and those who work with them about opportunities to work, study, train and volunteer in Europe, as well as providing useful local contacts in the area of Youth and European Information. This year's TTM was especially aimed at young people struggling to find their place in society and for whom partaking in a learning mobility project would be especially beneficial.

A number of very successful regional events were organised by regional youth organisations, supported by NCGE/Euroguidance and Léargas/Eurodesk.

These included:  
 Dublin-Blanchardstown - 3 October  
 Tipperary - 10 October  
 Letterkenny -19 October

Each event provided a unique opportunity for guidance counsellors and those working in the youth sector to network and share information at local level.

Attendees included Youth Information workers, post-primary guidance counsellors, PLC & FET Guidance, Training Centre Managers, Adult Education Guidance Counsellors and Guidance Information Officers, Intreo staff; Youthreach Advocates, Jobsclub Guidance Counsellors, Mediators and other organisations working with unemployed young people and early school leavers.

<http://timetomove.eurodesk.eu/>



Welcome...



This edition, in part, reflects the theme of 'Diversity' discussed at our recent National Forum on Guidance (18th October 2017).

The clients and students we work with in guidance present with a wide variety of needs from a wide range of diverse backgrounds.

This can provide challenges for guidance practitioners and managers to ensure that we meet these needs.

It is equally important that we are clear about the role of guidance, where we can help, and where other agencies with specific expertise can also provide advice and supports.

Listening and receiving feedback from our clients can help us to reflect on our guidance practice and to identify our own CPD needs as guidance practitioners.

In this regard, on behalf of all participants at the Forum I wish to extend my particular thanks to the contribution of Ahmed Mansour, for his insights and perspicacity.

We should not underestimate the importance of attendance at national, European and international conferences and events for guidance.

It is here, that we in the guidance community, learn from each other and continue to develop guidance policy and practice in a cooperative and coordinated manner.

Thank you for taking the time to download and read this issue, as ever we welcome all and any feedback you may have.

Is mise le meas,  
**Jennifer McKenzie**  
 Director



NEWS

Psychometric Testing

The Department of Education and Skills updated and circulated its Circular Letter (CL) on ‘assessment instruments approved for use for guidance and/ or learning support in post-primary schools’ in May 2017. The Circular letter highlights good practice for schools to follow in relation to the administration, scoring, interpretation and provision of feedback of test scores to students. The Circular Letter also includes a list of assessment instruments, including ability and achievement tests that are approved for use in guidance/learning support contexts. The CL can be accessed from [https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0035\\_2017.pdf](https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0035_2017.pdf)

The CL presents The Register of Psychometric Test Use: guidance counsellors, maintained by the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI) <https://www.psychologicalsociety.ie/>, as endorsing the professional competence of guidance counsellors in the administration of psychometric tests. Guidance counsellors interested in joining the Register can download an application form from the above link. This register is supported by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors and the Adult Education Guidance Association of Ireland (AEGAI).

Guidance counsellors interested in developing their practice in this area may find the following resources, published on the NCGE School Guidance Handbook useful:

**Best Practice, Ethical and Legal Considerations in Psychometric Testing for Guidance Counsellors**

<https://ncge.ie/school-guidance-handbook/best-practice-ethical-and-legal-considerations-psychometric-testing>

**Video Role Play: Provision of Feedback on Psychometric Testing Results**

<https://ncge.ie/school-guidance-handbook/video-role-play-provision-feedback-psychometric-test-results>

**Data Protection for the Guidance Counsellor: Complaint Data Management**

<https://ncge.ie/school-guidance-handbook/data-protection-guidance-counsellor-compliant-data-management>

**Data Protection Consent in the School Context: Issues to Plan for**

<https://ncge.ie/school-guidance-handbook/data-protection-consent-school-context-issues-plan>

**A Guide for Post-Primary Schools in Developing a Policy for the Use of Assessment Instruments (including tests and web-based resources)**

<https://ncge.ie/school-guidance-handbook/guide-post-primary-schools-developing-policy-use-assessment-instruments>

Guidance counsellors interested in participating in Continuing Professional Development on Psychometric Testing can contact NCGE.

New Websites and VLE

Over the course of 2017 NCGE / Euroguidance Ireland has been refreshing and consolidating its websites. These sites are now live and offer further quick and easy access to essential guidance information. This is part of NCGE’s ongoing efforts to enhance the quality and availability of resources to members of the guidance community, both at home and abroad. We encourage you to go to our sites and familiarise yourself with the new layouts and the additional information now provided. See [www.ncge.ie](http://www.ncge.ie) and [www.euroguidance.ie](http://www.euroguidance.ie)

**ncge.ie** has all of our resources accessible in one place, including our ‘School Guidance Handbook’ our ‘FET Guidance Handbook’ and our new look ‘Virtual Learning Environment’. Other additional features include a ‘Latest Posts’ section, our Twitter feed and an extended ‘Resources’ section.

**euroguidance.ie** continues to provide information on studying and training opportunities in Europe. This site is aimed both at Guidance Counsellors and students. It has a simple to navigate home page directing users to the information relevant to them.

NCGE is continuing to develop and improve our online presence. We will be updating and refreshing content on a regular basis as well as translating core information into Irish over the coming months.

If you have any questions or suggestions regarding any of NCGE’s online platforms, please e-mail [website@ncge.ie](mailto:website@ncge.ie)

Winners of the Euroguidance Ireland Facebook Competition

The draw to select the winners of the Euroguidance Ireland Facebook Competition was completed in October. There were 3 prizes - an Ipad and 2 x stylish luggage cases. Entrants had to complete a contest on the @euroguidanceireland Facebook Page. A large number of entries were received, thank you to all entrants. The lucky winners were Stuart Harford, Muriel McCauley and Pierce Parker. Stuart is pictured across receiving his prize from NCGE Director, Jennifer Mc Kenzie. Our Facebook Page is a great way to stay up to date with the Euroguidance Centre Ireland so like/follow us today @euroguidanceireland





# Guidance with young people from migrant backgrounds

## - an exploration of issues and challenges



**In this article Jessica Farnan, manager of the CDETБ Separated Children’s Service, outlines outcomes arising from The 110% project. This project arose from a 2016 Youth Employability Initiative funded through the Dormant Accounts Fund and supported through the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.**

110% aims to give a voice to young migrants to speak out about and highlight some of the issues and challenges they experience on their journeys towards employment.

Over a four month period a group of young people from a variety of migrant backgrounds undertook to document their experience in a creative way, which culminated in the production of a short video that is available at <https://separatedchildrensservice.wordpress.com/resources/>.

The CDTEB Separated Children’s Service and the 110% project team continue to aim to create awareness, stimulate and facilitate discussion and reflection in the youth, education and training sector on issues of concern to young people from migrant and minority ethnic backgrounds.

*‘When am I going to be allowed to reach my full potential?’*

*‘We have to work so much harder just to make up the difference in an unequal system.’*

These are two of many statements that emerged from a four month project the CDETБ Separated Children’s Service undertook with a group of young people from migrant backgrounds in 2016. We named it “The 110% project”.

The project was part of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs’ funded ‘Youth Employability Initiative’ and set out to explore the experience of young people from migrant backgrounds in and around employment. Immediate associations might be language barriers, legal status, finances and recognition of foreign qualifications. While these are very real concerns for many migrants, the young people identified cultural and societal issues that are more subtle and complex - and that have a significant impact on their daily lives.

In this article we set out to highlight some of the issues that characterise the lives of many young migrants. By doing so we hope that guidance counsellors may be better able to understand and guide migrant students through their realities, challenges and choices.



***‘Our communities build a huge pressure on us to be high achievers, but most of the time it feels like harsh encouragement.’***

Young people from migrant backgrounds – like anyone – are influenced by their families’, parents’ and communities’ experiences of education and employment.

This experience is often one of having to work extremely hard, taking on several jobs in order to make ends meet and working in low skilled jobs for which they are often over-qualified; in a global society that regularly portrays immigrants as ‘spongers’, ‘free-loaders’ - or worse.

Families frequently put pressure on the young people to be high achievers and to do better than their peers – academically, as well as professionally- so as to have a chance in life and to prove themselves in an unequal society.

The young people find themselves having to negotiate and balance their parents’ and communities’ expectations against their own aspirations. Navigating this relationship can make the young people anxious and put a huge strain on them. Contemplating or discussing alternative career options, fear of letting parents down, a sense of not being good enough are very real stress factors.

With so many angles to consider, guidance counsellors play a crucial role in supporting and guiding the young person through the maze of culturally influenced expectations and options.

***Often it is not what you know, but who you know.***

How many of us have landed our first job through the help of a friend of a friend, because of someone we knew who was able to introduce us to a potential employer?

Not having those connections, not having the right kind of social capital, is something that our young people identified as a very real hurdle.

Young migrants often live in tight-knit communities with very few bridges to other groups of society. When it comes to finding jobs, finding internships, placements, etc. young migrants are working off a very small pool of contacts and resources. Existing networks are limited to similar population groups with limited social capital themselves. They just don’t have the aunts or cousins who will ‘hook them up’. It has been our experience that again and again the young people return to us as a service provider looking

for support in finding internships for transition year, college, voluntary work experience etc.

It can be hugely beneficial for a young person to ‘piggy-back’ on the network, contacts and resources of professionals. Often it is just that first step, that first rung on the ladder that is required to bridge the ‘ethnic and cultural social capital divide.’

***‘Do you want to know our reality? Racism is our reality. So let’s just stop ignoring it.’***

Discrimination and Racism is the one theme that emerged from our project that affected all participants on an ongoing basis. It is possibly also the most emotional and difficult topic to talk about.

As one participant put it: ***‘Inequality can be an uncomfortable conversation, as talking about it involves acknowledging its existence.’***

The experience of racism and discrimination is not just one of individual, stand-alone incidences; but one that is intergenerational, layered and wide-spread. Implicit bias, prejudice and stereotyping affect the lives and opportunities of young people from minority ethnic backgrounds disproportionately. Structural discrimination, such as policies, practices and attitudes, generate additional barriers hindering equal access to resources and opportunities.

The young people told us about not getting jobs because there were assumptions made about their levels of English, about how their visible ‘foreignness’ would negatively affect customers, about their in-ability to ‘fit into organisational culture’.

The impact of all-pervasive racism on young people is severe. Internalisation, blame, low self-esteem and self-worth, frustration, hurt and anger all take their toll on a young person’s wellbeing and mental health: ***‘How much understanding, acceptance, patience and resilience do you expect from me?’***

So, why 110%? The additional 10% that is required to succeed, to reach full potential, to make up the difference. As one participant said:

***Why is my enough never enough? Why do I always have to prove myself? And why do I always have to work 110%?***



**The Author**

**Jessica Farnan** is the manager of the CDET B Separated Children’s Service. This is a Youth and Education Service for unaccompanied minors, and other young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds which offer a range of programmes that support young migrants in their transition and integration into school and life in Ireland.

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<https://separatedchildrensservice.wordpress.com/>





# NCGE National Forum on Guidance - October 2017



**The National Forum on Guidance (NFG) met on the 18th of October 2017 in The Clock Tower, Department of Education and Skills.**

**The theme of discussion was:  
Addressing the challenge of Diversity for Guidance  
'Not the new normal the now normal'**

This broad theme of discussion focussed on three 'key challenges' regarding access to and delivery of Guidance within what is broadly termed 'Diverse Groupings', i.e.

- Those faced by clients / students
- Those faced by guidance providers
- Those faced by NCGE in shaping policy / practice in the area and ensuring the adequate provision and communication of resources

Attendees included representatives from Post Primary Schools, PLCs / CFEs, Adult Guidance, Higher Education, Youthreach and VTOS, the Department of Education and Skills, ETBI, Community Training Centres, the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, LESN, Teachers Unions and SOLAS along with various agencies and private practitioners and companies.



*L to R: Jennifer McKenzie, Director NCGE, Donald Ewing (DAI), Michelle Kinsella (DAI), Sandra Healy (DCU), Jessica Farnon (CDETB), Ahmed Mansour (110% Project), Carol-Anne O'Brien (BeLonG To)*

The presentations below were followed with opportunities for questions and answers and an informal group discussion. Additional feedback was received via an online survey after the event.

**Diversity and Inclusion in Practice - from Education to the Workplace.**

**Sandra Healy**, Head of Diversity and Inclusion at Dublin City University

**'Issues and challenges on our journey through education towards employment'. The experience of young people from migrant and minority ethnic backgrounds.**

**Jessica Farnan**, Manager of the CDET B Separated Children's Service and Ahmed Mansour, The 110% Project.


**Dyslexia & Impacts**


**Michelle Kinsella**, Development and Support Officer (Adult Services) DAI and Donald Ewing, Head Psychologist at DAI.


**Supporting LGBTI+ Students**


**Carol-Anne O'Brien**, Director of Advocacy BeLonG To.


**SOME FORUM QUOTES**


 "We must realise that diversity comes in many ways and understand that there is further diversity within diversity"


 "There is no such thing as a one size fits all approach"

 "Simply being aware of the challenges that individuals may face can break down barriers on both sides"

 "I'm not racist but....I live in a society with prejudicial tendencies".

 "The challenge of diversity is continually changing and we have to continually evolve with it"

 "Guidance is as essential to you at 35 as it is at 15"

 "Diversity and inclusion is the no 1 topic on many companies agenda's at the moment".



The full Forum report, presentations, video excerpts and additional links are available at: [www.ncge.ie/national-forum-guidance](http://www.ncge.ie/national-forum-guidance)



For more information about the National Forum on Guidance, please contact NCGE directly. Ph.: 01 8690715 or e-mail: [guidanceforum@ncge.ie](mailto:guidanceforum@ncge.ie)





# 8th ICCDPP International Symposium 2017

## Career Development: At the Crossroads between Relevance and Impact



**The ICCDPP acts as a focal point for the development of career guidance and public policy across all countries. The purpose of the ICCDPP is to support governments to advance their policies in relation to education workforce development and social cohesion. The ICCDPP has representation from the OECD, EU Commission, World Bank and the European Training Foundation.**

ICCDPP was formed in 2004 and was initially supported with generous funding by the Irish Government and is currently under the Directorship of John McCarthy (former Director of NCGE). ICCDPP Symposium meetings are held biannually and are interactive working events with participants from all over the world. The purpose of the symposium is to engage with system level thinking about career guidance and the role it can play in contributing to wider government's policies. Further information on the ICCDPP is available on [www.iccdpp.org](http://www.iccdpp.org).

On behalf of the Department of Education and Skills (DES), Jennifer McKenzie (Director NCGE) and Paul King (Chair of the Management of Guidance Committee

NCGE) attended the ICCDPP Symposium in June 2017 as the representative country team for Ireland. The theme for the Symposium 2017 was Career Development: At the crossroads towards relevance and impact. The Ireland Country Paper was prepared by NCGE, with input from the DEASP representative on the NCGE Management of Guidance Committee.

Following 3 days of guest speakers, facilitated discussions and working groups, the ICCDPP published the Symposium Communique (which is available on <http://iccdpp.org>).

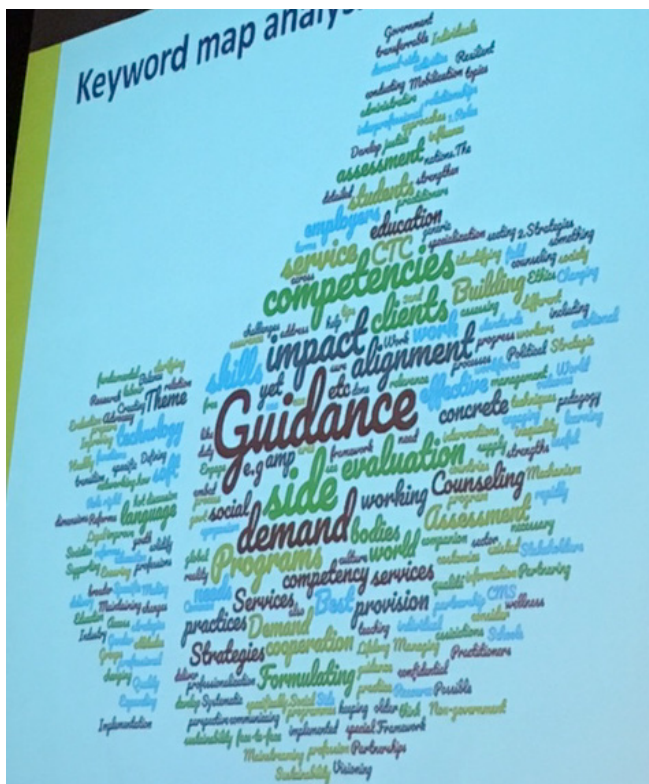


The 2017 Symposium centred on 4 themes:

1. How changes in work organisation are shaping career development systems
2. Ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of career development programmes
3. Making career practitioner training and practice relevant
4. Building career competencies and ensuring successful transitions

Workgroup discussions centred on these 4 themes resulting in 24 key recommendations for countries represented in The Communiqué. In the Irish context DES and NCGE are currently already addressing some of these key recommendations with the following examples:

- DES published the Programme Recognition Framework: Guidance Counselling, Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers, 2016. Available for download at: - <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/Programme-Recognition-Framework-Guidance-Counselling.pdf>



NCGE Director Jennifer Mc Kenzie and NCGE MGC Chair Paul King along with USA delegates; Spencer Niles, Scott Solberg and Brian Hutchison

- The publication and dissemination of NCGE: A Whole School Guidance Framework, provides a career learning development framework resource for post-primary schools [www.ncge.ie](http://www.ncge.ie)
- The National Forum on Guidance is convened by NCGE on 2 occasions annually and provides an opportunity for stakeholders to engage with guidance policy, practice and research
- The DES Review of Guidance (Action Plan for Education 2017) will inform the development of a guidance strategy for the education and skills sector



Furthermore, it was consistently highlighted at the Symposium that career development strategies need to be cognisant of the potential outcomes of career development and the demands of employers in order to ensure that guidance remains relevant and has an impact.

At the symposium, the OECD Head of the Directorate for Education and Skills, Ms Deborah Rosebear, indicated that it is timely for the OECD to consider a further Review of Career Guidance Policy since the original review was published in 2004.

As the 2017 ICCDPP Communiqué reflects international good practice. NCGE has made recommendations to The DES that this Communiqué would inform the DES 'Review of Guidance' and its outcomes.

# The Transition from Primary to Secondary



**“Primary schools provide the Education Passport” for children progressing to post primary schools. This information can help to inform the post-primary school of the child’s abilities and needs. The whole school guidance programme provides a framework which supports the transition period of the incoming first years’ into second level schools. The report below from the ESRI provides food for thought in planning the guidance supports for this transition period.**

## Does primary schooling make a difference?

The transition to second-level education is a major landmark in young people’s lives, as they adjust to new teachers, new school subjects and new friends. *Off to a Good Start? Primary School Experiences and the Transition to Second-Level Education*, by Emer Smyth, ESRI, looks at the way in which primary school experiences can provide a crucial foundation for a successful transition to second-level education. The findings are based on interviews conducted with young people when they were 9 and 13 years of age as well as interviews with their parents.

## Transition difficulties

According to their parents, most young people settle well into the new school but around a fifth are anxious about making new friends and miss their primary school friends. However, young people themselves become less confident about their own academic abilities as they move into second-level education and face new academic

demands. Girls experience greater transition difficulties than boys, mostly because they miss their primary school friends. Transition difficulties are greater among those from more disadvantaged backgrounds and among young people with special educational needs.

Children who were better at Maths at the age of 9 settle into second-level education more easily while those who disliked their primary teacher or school subjects become less confident over the transition period. Social relationships play a protective role over this period of change. Young people have fewer transition difficulties if they have more friends and if they have better communication with their parents. The quality of interaction with second-level teachers plays a crucial role: those who receive frequent praise or positive feedback from their teachers settle in better while those who are ‘given out to’ or reprimanded more often lose self-confidence in their ability to do schoolwork.



## Attitudes to school

Thirteen year olds are broadly positive about school - two-thirds of girls and over half of boys say that they like school 'very much' or 'quite a bit'. Young people with special educational needs have more negative attitudes to school than their peers. More negative attitudes to school are also found among those whose families have lower levels of education.

Primary school experiences set the tone for later experiences; young people who were already negative about school, their teachers and school subjects at the age of nine are more likely to be negative when they enter second-level education. Those with low reading test scores at nine are more negative about school at the age of 13. Having low Maths test scores and more negative attitudes to Maths at the age of 9 are found to be particularly important in shaping later engagement with the subject.

Second-level school experiences also significantly influence attitudes to school and school subjects. Relationships with teachers are crucial, with more negative attitudes to school and school subjects found among those who received more reprimands and less positive feedback from their second-level teachers. Finding second-level subjects, especially Maths and Irish, uninteresting and difficult also seems to fuel a negative attitude to school.

## Implications for policy

The study findings indicate the importance of providing an engaging primary school experience for all as a basis for later engagement. Early experience of Maths emerges as particularly important, pointing to the potential value in rethinking approaches to Maths teaching at primary level to enhance interest and skills. Social inequalities are evident in young people's experience of the transition process. While disadvantaged young people receive additional support in DEIS schools, the study finds that most students from disadvantaged backgrounds do not attend DEIS schools. The findings also point to challenges in ensuring the inclusion of young people with special educational needs in mainstream second-level schools. The study findings reinforce the case for junior cycle reform and for the use of a broader repertoire of teaching and assessment methods to engage young people. They also highlight the importance of underpinning such reform with a more positive school climate.

The report can be downloaded from: <https://www.esri.ie/publications/off-to-a-good-start-primary-school-experiences-and-the-transition-to-second-level-education/>



### The Author

**Emer Smyth** is a Research Professor and Head of the Social Research Division at the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI). She is joint research area coordinator for education. Her main research interests centre on education, school to work transitions, gender and comparative methodology.





POST-PRIMARY

# The development of evidence based practice in guidance services in schools



**FIRST SEMINAR:**  
 Dublin, Ireland:  
 September, 7th & 8th, 2017

**SECOND SEMINAR:**  
 Dublin, Ireland.  
 February, 22nd and 23rd, 2018

## Aim of the Thematic Seminars

NCGE hosted the first of two Erasmus+ funded Transnational Cooperation Activity (TCA) Thematic Seminars on the 7th and 8th September in Malahide, Co. Dublin to promote *the development of evidence based practice in guidance services in schools*. The seminar provided the opportunity for participants to learn from the experiences of others and to share their own practices in relation to evidence based practice in guidance services in schools. The seminar provided opportunities for group discussion, interaction and reflection.

The aim of the seminars is to develop a transnational resource to facilitate the development of evidence based guidance practice and the use of ICT in supporting school guidance quality assured practices. The development of the transnational resource will be informed by good practice.

## Participants

The seminars are aimed at policy makers (and support agencies), managers and practitioners who have a role in leading, managing, supporting and/or delivering guidance services in schools. The 47 participants included representatives from 13 EU/EEA countries, including Ireland. Representatives also included policy makers, managers of guidance services, guidance counsellors and course directors of guidance counselling programmes. Over the day and a half, participants shared and exchanged practice and explored the different perspectives of policy makers, managers, guidance counsellors, employers, parents and students when it came to data gathering.

Group discussion focused on the:

- different systems of guidance in the 13 countries and existing data gathering methodologies
- value and purpose of data gathering and evidence informed guidance practice
- data that may be gathered around inputs (resources and staffing), process (guidance learning experiences/activities) and outcomes (students' learning and progression) and how evidence may be generated from the data
- types of questions each stakeholder group would like addressed by a data gathering system
- different data gathering methodologies that are available

## Follow-on Thematic Seminar (February, 2018)

The participants will return to Dublin in February, 2018 to progress discussion further with the view to agreeing the types of questions that could be asked as part of a data gathering system and to make recommendations on how the data might be collected i.e. what online system would be useful.

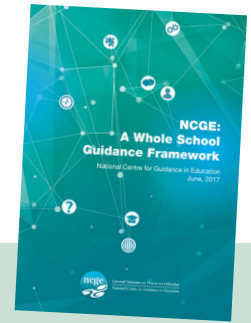
## Expected outcomes from the Thematic Seminars

It is envisaged that a resource will be developed as a result of discussions and knowledge sharing during the thematic seminars. This resource will:

- Identify data gathering tools and methodologies that can be used to inform evidence based practice in school guidance services
- Present a set of questions relating to data gathering on inputs, process and outputs
- Present a framework for how the data can be collected online

POST-PRIMARY

# NCGE: A Whole School Guidance Framework



L to R:  
 Linda Darbey, NCGE;  
 Jennifer Mc Kenzie, NCGE;  
 Beatrice Dooley, Vice President IGC;  
 Clive Byrne, Director NAPD;  
 Eamonn Moran, DES.

Post-primary schools across Ireland have received their copy of **NCGE: A Whole School Guidance Framework (2017)** which was launched by NCGE on the 6th September. The Framework is available to view and download from the NCGE website [www.ncge.ie](http://www.ncge.ie)



The Framework was developed by NCGE in collaboration with members of the NCGE convened post-primary guidance working group and was informed by frameworks/blueprints published internationally. The working group consists of representatives from the Department of Education and Skills (DES), the Directors of Studies in Guidance Counselling (DSGC), the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC), the National Association of Principals and Deputies (NAPD), the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS).

### The Framework

The Framework is intended to be a resource for schools to support the planning, design and delivery of the whole school guidance programme in line with the requirements of The Education Act (1998), that schools provide students with “access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices” (section 9c).

A continuum of support model for the school guidance programme, similar to the school support model of the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), is presented in the Framework – guidance for all, guidance for some and guidance for a few. The continuum comprises a whole school approach to guidance through guidance-related learning to individualised supports for students.

The Framework identifies three areas of learning to facilitate students’ development in eight areas of competence.

The areas of learning include: learning relating to oneself (personal/social development), educational opportunities (educational development) and career decision making (career development).

Areas of Learning	Areas of Competence
Developing Myself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing &amp; maintaining self-esteem &amp; a positive self-concept</li> <li>Interacting effectively with others (face-to-face &amp; online)</li> <li>Developing &amp; growing throughout life</li> </ul>
Developing My Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employing effective personal learning/exam strategies</li> <li>Making educational choices in line with career aspirations</li> </ul>
Developing My Career Path	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using career related information &amp; sources appropriately</li> <li>Understanding the world of work and life roles</li> <li>Managing career development &amp; decision making</li> </ul>

### Supports for schools implementing the Framework

NCGE will develop resources to support schools in implementing the Framework over the next few years. It is envisaged that these resources will centre on planning, designing and delivering whole school guidance programmes. NCGE intends to work with 15 schools in testing the Framework (specifically with Junior Cycle). Schools interested in participating in this piloting of the Framework should contact Luke Dunne in NCGE at [luke.dunne@ncge.ie](mailto:luke.dunne@ncge.ie).





# Focussing on talent and developing opportunities



**In this article Marjolein Büscher highlights some good practice ideas for guidance with people with disabilities. Handicap + studie supports colleges and universities in facilitating education for students with disabilities. The mission of 'handicap + studie' is to allow students with a disability to successfully participate along the higher education path of their choice.**

handicap  
studie +  
expertise  
centrum

The transition from education to the labour market is often difficult for students with a disability in higher education. These students with a disability have a higher unemployment rate and some even fail to find a suitable internship, leaving them without the means to fully complete their studies. There is a gap between higher education and the labour market, often the result of insufficient attention to transitioning students with a disability to the workplace. How can a career centre contribute to this process?

## 1. Before the start of the study programme

Even before entering the university it is important to focus on possible professions after graduating. Don't hesitate to have an open conversation with students with a disability about their ambitions, their programme of study and the future workplace. In this regard, it is important to focus on talents and possibilities and to be realistic.

## 2. During the study programme

During the study process, it is necessary to pay continuous attention to transition to the labour market. Find the right moments at the right time. For example by organising specific workshops or activities for students with a disability to improve their employability skills, potentially integrated to the study programme of the first year, and by taking into account students with a disability in the allocation of internships and by informing internship coordinators.

*Good practice: Each year, Radboud University Nijmegen organises a career week in which a workshop for students with a disability is a standard part of the program. They also organise a specific course for career counsellors about applying for a job with a disability and studying with a disability is integrated in their alumni monitor.*

<sup>1</sup> Based on Eurostat

### 3. Beyond the study programme

It is also essential to look beyond the study programme. For example, connect with employers who explicitly seek students with a disability. Stay in touch with the student after graduating too, even though the student may already have a job. New students can learn from their experience.

*Good practice: Fontys University of Applied Sciences started a pilot with job-coaches to support students with autism from their internship up to and including the start of their first job.*

By doing this the students were less likely to fall behind and they found a more suitable job. The pilot is conducted in cooperation with Eindhoven Municipality, jobcoaches from 'Autismepunt' and employers.

So how could a career centre contribute to this process? It is important to pay attention to transition to the labour market during all stages of the study process and to focus on talents and opportunities. By doing this more students with a disability will develop their employability skills and self-confidence, and employers will not miss talented students with a disability. Examples and good practices have shown that quick wins are possible.

In the coming year, 'handicap + studie' will start an extensive study to get to know more about the participation of students with a disability in the labour market; their experiences and barriers.



Cartoon 1: CEO, by Martin Reekers

Based on this study some specific interventions for higher education will be developed. 'Handicap + Studie' is willing to share the results next year.



#### The Author

**Marjolein Büscher-Touwen** is consultant at handicap + studie. She graduated as a communication scientist and worked at the central counselling department of the VU University Amsterdam for several years having different roles: disability advisor, career counselor and project manager. She also lived in Mozambique and was involved in projects of Handicap International and a local literacy organisation for children.

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Please contact us if you have any questions or ideas!





FURTHER EDUCATION & TRAINING

# FET Guidance Programme

The full development of the FET Information and Guidance Strategy is currently deferred until the completion and outcome of the DES 'Review of Guidance'. It is the continuing role of NCGE to inform the development of this strategy and to maintain the support and development of DES lifelong guidance policy in the Further Education and Training sector in general. This sector incorporates; PLCs, Adult Education, Community Education, Training Centres, Youth services, CTCs and Youthreach, Prison Services and more.

One method by which NCGE achieves this is through building relationships and developing an understanding of guidance provision across the FET sector. The recent appointment of the NCGE FET Guidance Coordinator (see NCGE News 47) has enabled NCGE to engage with these stakeholders alongside DES, SOLAS, ETBI and others.

In line with the above and NCGE's stated strategic objective to provide quality information, resources and materials to support guidance provision and practice, in this issue we have published 'A Day in the life of a Youthreach/CTC (Community Training Centre) Advocate.

In Youthreach, guidance is currently provided under the guidelines of the DES and the **Guidance, Counselling & Psychological Service**. The **Guidance Counselling & Psychological Fund** provides a means to increase the

capacity of Centres to be creative and flexible in their responses.

<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/Further-Education-and-Training/Guidance-Counselling-and-Psychological-Services-fund.pdf>



The overall role of the Youthreach / CTC Advocate is to support participants on the Youthreach / CTC programme in decision-making, referral, progression and placement. Advocates are also directly involved in organising work experience and monitoring students while on work experience.

One ETB states that the Advocate "offers pre-entry guidance and on-going one to one support for early school leavers as they progress from Youthreach to further education, training or employment"

## A Day in the Life of a CTC Advocate



**Anne Fitzpatrick is an Advocate for Early School Leavers who attend the Community Training Centre (CTC) in Newbridge, Co. Kildare (trading as the Youth Training and Development Centre). Anne also provides a service one half day a week to Learners attending Youthreach in Naas.**

*"I got kicked out of my house, can you help me?"; "I think I'd like to do childcare, what do I need to do?"; "I got the job"; "My girlfriend is pregnant"; "I didn't get my training allowance last week, why not?"; "I couldn't care less about getting a job"; "I don't have a problem with weed, Jacko does (not a real name), he's spending all his FÁS wages on it every week"; "Will you give me a reference for me court case next Thursday?"; "I loved the work placement, getting*

*to work with real cars was really great, the people were all real cool, I definitely want to be a mechanic"; "I walked out at 11 cos I just couldn't take it anymore, they were all looking down their noses at me"; "Anne, do you think you can help me sort out my tax, I got screwed last week in my pay?"; "My daughter is getting bullied in school and wants to leave"; "I'd love to do that beauty course but how will I get to the college, there are no buses where I live?"*

As an Advocate for Early School Leavers, any or all of the above are some examples of the questions that I get asked in any given week. Sometimes, I could get all of the above on the one day!

The role of the Advocacy Service within Youthreach is to provide clients, who are early school leavers, with a confidential, individual career path planning, guidance and counselling service, on a case load basis. Confidentiality and the interests of the clients must be paramount at all times.

No two days as an Advocate are ever the same. Some days, I absolutely love my job - the Learners are turning in on time and are calm, they are attending their work placements, they are actually interested in completing the application form for college, they are actually listening to me. Other days, I wonder what good I am doing at all for these young people, - one has dropped out of his work placement, another told the employer to stuff his job, another went back on the weed after being clean for 6 weeks. The challenges that face the client group I deal with, 16 – 21 year olds who left school before completing the Leaving Certificate are diverse and in some cases dire. Young people leave school for a myriad of reasons – bullying, can't cope, "school just not for me", learning difficulties, pregnancy, mental health issues, court, illegal drugs etc. For some, the desire to get a qualification and/or a job is non-existent. Basic skills like attendance and punctuality don't exist for some of them. Some of them excel when out of the formal education system and attending a Youthreach centre or a CTC and go on to complete the equivalent of a Leaving Certificate in the form of a QQI Level 4 and then progress to a 3rd level college. Some are motivated to complete their QQI level 3 and seek and obtain an apprenticeship.

Paperwork is sometimes far from easy – completing medical form applications; student card applications; SUSI forms, college applications, job seekers allowance applications – is both time consuming and hard for some Learners. They need the assistance of the Advocate. They may have moved house 5 or 6 times since birth so this poses lots of administration challenges for the various Departments and Intreo offices. For some, even keeping their birth certificate in a safe place is tough. Remembering where to find their PPS number doesn't compete with making sure that they constantly update their social media!

I meet with all the new Learners both in a group setting and on a one to one basis and explain the Advocacy service to them. After the first year on the programme, the Learners go on a two week work placement in an area in which they possess an interest. Work placements are key factors in helping the young people decide what area they would like to work in. Some Learners have never worked before so this first ever hands on experience of how the 'real world of work' functions is a great eye opener for them. Realising that their best friend named "Phone" cannot be used or looked at or held onto while in the work place is probably the greatest learning for them! Employers always say that showing up on time and being fit and willing to work are the only criteria they require. Learners can be apprehensive and unsure on the first day. I remember once a lovely young girl saying to me "but Anne what will I be able to talk about at the tea break, I don't use big words like big people do".

This is one of the many nuggets that I have uncovered from working with young people – they need to be constantly reassured that their voice is just as, if not more, important as that of Tutors, Teachers, Advocates, employers and all the people that work in service provision.

During the last six months of their time on the programme, I work intensively with the Learners regarding their progression path. That may involve looking and applying for work; getting an apprenticeship; applying for college; moving abroad; not doing anything; going onto a Post Leaving Certificate course. In addition, CV preparation and interview techniques are covered with all of the Learners. Attending Open Days in colleges is of interest to some Learners and again it is a great learning curve for them to travel to Dublin or Carlow or Portlaoise and push them out of their comfort zones.

For me the hardest part of my job is getting some of the Learners motivated. One of the best parts is when I am served by a former Learner who is pleasant, efficient and well dressed in her Dunnes Stores uniform saying "only for you guys in the CTC, I wouldn't be here".

My door is always open and I love when they wander in of their own volition and ask for help or advice. 17 years later, I still do my best to assist each and every Learner to make the first step on their path towards progression.

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It is part of the NCGE FET Guidance Coordinator role to promote understanding, cooperation, communication and collaboration within the range of remarkable guidance and support services available through FET. These include those who are managing the challenges and barriers to education and the opportunities available within education and training, alongside unemployment and underemployment. An integrated FET Information & Guidance Strategy should facilitate positive and productive engagement within FET, supporting learners to achieve skills and qualifications in useful, caring and meaningful ways.

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# The Autism Spectrum

Issues in providing Career Guidance in Post-Primary Schools to students on the Autistic Spectrum.



**In my time as a Guidance Counsellor, I have found that my cohort of pupils has widened considerably to cater for pupils who may have fallen outside of my remit in times past. I am now providing Guidance Counselling for pupils who fall outside of both my range of experience, and training, and if I were to be brutally honest, it can be extremely challenging. My ASD cohort is only one of these groups.**

Providing Guidance for pupils with ASD necessitates a degree of knowledge and understanding for where the pupil is at. For me at least, this had meant extensive personal research, huge collegiality within the school community, particularly with the SEN Team, and collegiality within the Guidance community. ASD is not called a “spectrum” for no reason, and it means that no two pupils with ASD present with the same set of parameters in terms of academics, emotions or ability to communicate their needs. There is a vast difference in providing support to a pupil who in the past would have been diagnosed with “Asperger’s”, to a pupil who has General Spectrum Autism. Both have vastly differing requirements from the Guidance Counsellor.

Some of my ASD cohort need careers advice, which can be relatively straightforward. Some need to know about accessing supports in college, whether it be about applying through DARE for college, or what will happen to them once they go to college as regards emotional, social or academic supports. Again, this

information is relatively straightforward, as the Access Offices in colleges are superb for supporting pupils during their transition to college. However, while these requests for guidance seem straightforward enough, very often my ASD pupils aren’t quite sure what exactly it is they need or want in terms of these supports. That’s where the collegiality with the SEN Dept. comes in, as well as fostering a good relationship with parents.

Where complications arise however, is when I have one of my ASD pupils referred to me for emotional or social support. If there is an ASD pupil in an emotional crisis in a class, then it is to me that they will be referred. While it can be challenging to make headway with any pupil in crisis, it can be made significantly more complicated when an ASD pupil is in crisis, as they may not have the emotional language to express how they feel, or to let me know what the nature of the issue is. My ASD cohort who also live with anxiety can find the school environment overwhelming. And, again, I often find myself at a loss, if the usual techniques of self-soothing or emotional self-regulation aren’t working.



I have found myself, on occasion, at a loss as to what exactly a particular ASD pupil needs from me, and am often vaguely dissatisfied with the level of service I feel I am providing for my ASD cohort of pupils. While I can be there for a pupil either in crisis, or in a careers capacity, and listen to their queries or issues, very often, I am operating in the dark in terms of best practice in providing adequate guidance to such pupils. Nowhere, either in my training as a Guidance Counsellor, nor in my further training as a Psychotherapist, did I learn how to provide a quality service to this group of pupils.

As a member of the IGC, I put out feelers through my local branch Whatsapp group. Was it just me who felt unequal to the task of providing appropriate guidance to the increasing numbers of pupils who present with ASD? The answer was a resounding “No”. It appeared then, that I was not alone in my dilemma.

The discussion was across a range of Guidance Counsellors with differing age profiles, teaching in different types of schools, and dealing with pupils presenting on different parts of the spectrum. The common thread, however, was the lack of training that we all felt we had received as both Teachers and then, as Guidance Counsellors, to equip us for the ever-changing educational landscape we are encountering.

While all Guidance Counsellors go into the profession with the fullest of intentions of providing as full a range of services as we can, it is becoming more and more evident to this Guidance Counsellor at least, that there are deficits in our skillset when it comes to giving students with ASD as much help as we could.

Schools have in recent times, quite rightly, become more inclusive environments for pupils across a wide range of physical, emotional, psychological and academic abilities, the training for teachers and Guidance Counsellors has sadly, not kept pace. The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network defines Career Management Skills as “...a set of competences (knowledge, skills, attitudes) that enables citizens at any age or stage of development to manage their learning and work life paths”. (ELGPN, 2015; pg. 13). It is surely ironic that a document which exists to promote the notion Lifelong Guidance, should highlight the skills deficit in the purveyors of such ideology.

The Education Act (1998) clearly outlines in Section 9(c), that “students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices” (Government of Ireland, 1998). The DES Programme Recognition Framework: Guidance Counselling (DES,

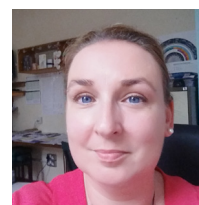
2016a; pg. 7) contends that as part of my remit as a Guidance Counsellor, that I should be “*providing individual and group counselling to facilitate personal and social, educational and career development and at moments of personal crisis*”.

I would contend however, that, despite being a trained Guidance Counsellor, who has the added bonus of having completed a Masters in Psychotherapy to assist me in my work; that I am still ill-equipped to help my students with ASD in any meaningful or concrete way. I simply don’t have the tools in my toolkit. How am I to provide all of these lofty ideals to any pupil with ASD who sits in front of me, when I’m not quite sure at any given time whether I’m giving this pupil guidance which is appropriate to their place on the spectrum?

While I heartily endorse the goals outlined in the Action Plan for Education 2017; particularly Goal 02: *Improve the Progress of Learners at risk of Educational Disadvantage or Learners with Special Educational Needs* (DES, 2017c); I wonder as a practicing Guidance Counsellor, whether I am equipped to really help my pupils with ASD?

As Guidance professionals, we are now in the midst of a time of huge educational reform. The Action Plan calls for us to be able to “*actively support and develop wellbeing initiatives to ensure that mental resilience and personal wellbeing are integral parts of the education and training system*” (DES, 2017c; pg. 13). But how on earth is the humble Guidance Counsellor trained in the days of yore supposed to accomplish this, when ASD was simply never mentioned anywhere in her training?

Within my own School Self Evaluation, I feel poorly enabled to do my job to best of my capacity. The School Self Evaluation (SSE) Guidelines 2016-2020 Post-Primary (DES, 2016d) encourages us all in the wider school community to critically appraise our practice in relation to learning, teaching and in the development of action plans to improve our practice. It is to this end, that I feel that a review of the way Guidance Counsellors are trained is long overdue, and furthermore, I would contend that National CPD on specific issues such as ASD is long overdue for Guidance Counsellors.



**The Author**

**Aisling Nolan** is a Guidance Counsellor working in St. Brigid’s Secondary School, Killarney, Co. Kerry.





RESEARCH

# Supporting Adults with Dyslexia



**In the first of two articles in this edition on the topic of Dyslexia, below is a summary report based on the findings of a PhD study which focused on the guidance counselling needs of adults with dyslexia within the Adult Educational Guidance Services (AEGS) in Ireland. Whilst a range of barriers and complex issues were identified in this study, this article focuses on what appeared to underpin such issues, namely the question of how we understand a hidden disability like dyslexia in the context of working with adults.**

## Methodology

This qualitatively-led sequential mixed methods study was conducted in two phases. First, the experiences and perceptions of AEGS guidance counsellors were gathered through an online questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics in 2012. In Phase 2, semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted with 14 dyslexic adults about their experiences in 2014, which was subject to thematic analysis. The findings were then synthesised and helped to provide a more comprehensive picture than a single method study would have.

PhD Supervisors for this study were Dr. Lucy Hearne and Dr. Barry Coughlan, both in University of Limerick.

“They seem to be trying to fix you instead of helping you to learn your own way”

The above is a quote from one of the adults with dyslexia that participated in this study, as he talked about his educational experiences. The quote illustrates an issue which seems to relate to a prevalent but misconceived notion that dyslexia is something that can be ‘fixed’ or ‘cured’ by more literacy training.

The findings of this study also suggest that adults with dyslexia are often referred or advised to attend general Adult Literacy Services to improve their literacy skills. Many of the adults in this study had repeatedly tried to improve their literacy skills in the past and either had limited progress or ‘failed’, so to suggest ‘more of the same’ is likely to be of limited value and may damage their

self-esteem. Additionally, previous research also indicates that the benefits of general literacy classes are often limited for adults with dyslexia (Elliott and Grigorenko 2014).

Could an underlying issue be how we think about dyslexia? If we would not advise a wheelchair user, for example, to practice walking as preparation for college, why would we advise someone with dyslexia to practice reading and spelling?

Essentially, what I am arguing, based on the findings of this study, is that we need to shift our mindsets, from trying to ‘cure’ individuals with dyslexia, to trying to ‘level the playing field’ by helping to identify and access reasonable accommodations and developing useful coping skills. However, I am not subscribing entirely to the so called ‘social model’ of disability, where the entire disability is placed outside the person. Instead, it seems more helpful to take an interactionist approach, where a disability is considered as the result of dynamic interactions between the person and his/her environment (Shakespeare 2006). The interactionist perspective known as the bio-psycho-social model is advocated by the World Health Organisation (WHO 2011). This model allows us to think, reflect on and plan for appropriate and useful interventions on three levels in a holistic and interactionist way.

Firstly, in relation to the ‘biological’ level, we may need to help the client explore how their literacy difficulties affect them and how they can overcome challenges, using technology and accessing reasonable accommodations, for example (Reid et al. 2013). As one of the adults in the study explained: “it’s not that I can’t read, I just need more time to read”.

Secondly, in relation to the ‘psychological’ level, research shows that stigma and negative educational experiences are common and often lead to high levels of anxiety and feelings of shame amongst adults with dyslexia (Riddell and Weedon 2014; Evans 2015). Therefore, we may need to be attentive to the possibility of adults with dyslexia having personal counselling needs, particularly if diagnosed as dyslexic in adulthood.

Thirdly, on a ‘social’ level, we need to recognise that it can be difficult to access learning support, sometimes due to both eligibility criteria and misunderstandings about the types of support dyslexic learners need and have a right to access (McGuckin et al. 2013). We should, therefore, promote self-disclosure in dyslexic learners and enable them to develop self-advocacy skills and self-determination so that they can challenge unfair structures and social barriers that they may face. Advocating on behalf of dyslexic learners can, of course, also be an important aspect of guidance counselling.

In this study, many of the AEGS guidance counsellors who responded to the online questionnaire in 2012 showed a high level of awareness of the various issues many adult learners with dyslexia face. For example, the social stigma attached to dyslexia and the financial barrier for them to access formal dyslexia assessment services in Ireland (Elftorp and Hearne 2014). Specifically, some highlighted the lack of appropriate referral services for adults with dyslexia and suggested that Adult Literacy Services sometimes were the only option available, particularly outside the Leinster region. This is an urgent issue which needs to be addressed at policy level as Adult Literacy Services are often unsuitable as referral destinations for adults with dyslexia. The findings from this study suggests that the learning progress for adults with dyslexia in such services is often limited and do not deal with the psychological and social aspects of dyslexia. Many adult learners with dyslexia would benefit more from help to access tools and accommodations which can compensate for their specific difficulties and help them to become more independent learners. Additionally, some may need emotional support and counselling to address potential negative experiences and self-perceptions.

A final point I would like to make is that it is important to remember that whilst dyslexia is hidden; so are talents, interests and skills. And just as the label ‘non-dyslexic’ does not tell us much about a person, neither does ‘dyslexic’.



**The Author**

**Petra Elftorp** is currently at the finishing stage of her PhD studies in University of Limerick. Petra is originally from Sweden and has a B.Ed with a Major in Career Counselling from Stockholm University.

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RESEARCH

# Link between Dyslexia and Drug Abuse (a call for research)



**In this second Dyslexia article, Sinéad McNerney a guidance provider in an FET setting, highlights personal and professional issues and questions with regard to offering support to learners with Dyslexia. Sinéad also calls for increased research into the potential link between dyslexia and drug abuse. This is of relevance in both the development of guidance policy and the practice of guidance delivery.**

“Thanks be to God Mammy.....at least now I know I’m not stupid”. These were the words of my thirteen year-old daughter Kate, following her diagnosis as being dyslexic.

The basis of this article is my experience, first and foremost, as a parent of a dyslexic daughter, and later my experience as an Adult Education Guidance Counsellor, and my work, particularly with recovering drug addicts.

School and homework were a battlefield for Kate. In the early years, not knowing she was dyslexic, it was extremely difficult. I dreaded her coming home from school, there was always an issue to be dealt with. Homework, later in the evening was torture, certainly for me. It was only when she was thirteen that I realised the torture I had put her through, and the torture she was experiencing by not being able to learn the same way as others. Kate was a bright child, always asking questions, wanting to learn and was extremely articulate from an early age. I often think this was the reason her dyslexia was not detected in National School. When Kate was initially assessed, she was operating from the 0.01 percentile and with one

simple intervention, a coloured overlay to read her work, she moved to the 68th percentile. Prior to this simple intervention, Kate had never known that there was a space between words. What a revelation!!!

Today, fifteen years on from her dyslexia diagnosis, I am very proud to say, she has been very successful in life. She has worked at management level in the Beauty and Hairdressing field, and she has recently, successfully completed her studies as an SNA (Special Needs Assistant). I doubt very much, if her studies will end here. She has a great love of learning, has terrific motivation and certainly will not let her dyslexia get in her way.

My own studies began in my late thirties, and through this, I realised my niche was to work as an Adult Education Guidance Counsellor. I successfully finished an M.Sc. in Education Guidance and Counselling in Trinity in 2006 and since then, I have been working with adults, helping them to find their niche, offering them inspiration and support in achieving their full potential. Part of my work every week is with adults in recovery from drug addiction.



RESEARCH: LINK BETWEEN DYSLEXIA AND DRUG ABUSE *continued*

From my experience, working with adults returning to education, I am very much aware of the barriers they face, but I am also very much aware, that they too may have a specific learning difficulty that may have gone unnoticed during their schooling, and that indeed, this may be one of the reasons that they dropped out of school at an early age.

Working with recovering drug addicts in Soilse (a rehabilitation/education programme - <http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/5/addiction/soilse/>), over the years, I have found that anywhere from between two and six out of a group of twelve have a learning difficulty. Their stories of school are horrific: put sitting at the back of the classroom and left to their own devices day after day; teachers telling them they “are good for nothing”, “lazy”, “stupid”, “thick”, “will never learn anything”, “will never amount to anything”. In my opinion, some research needs to be done to corroborate these numbers and to see if there is a relationship between dyslexia and drug addiction.

It wasn't until recently, when I attended a dyslexia awareness workshop, that I fully realised the frustration faced by people with dyslexia in the learning environment. Following fifteen minutes of exercises, I was becoming angry, frustrated and couldn't concentrate. I realised that it is no wonder that students/people with dyslexia “act out” in a learning environment or classroom.

It is my opinion that any person working with people in education, needs to attend a dyslexia awareness training workshop. It certainly opened my eyes!! Isn't it time we “took our heads out of the sand” and recognised the value of acknowledging dyslexia? Going back to my daughter's words at the beginning of this article, the relief she felt when she was diagnosed was palpable. Is it not better to have a diagnosis/label of dyslexia compared to being called “stupid”, “thick”, or “lazy”?

Career Paths for Dyslexia in Leixlip is the only programme in the country, that I am aware of, that works with dyslexic adults. This programme gives participants the strategies

they need to be successful in learning. Indeed, as an Adult Education Guidance Counsellor I have referred numerous people to this programme who have since gone on to study successfully at Further Education and Third Level education.

According to the Dyslexia Association of Ireland, we have nine hundred thousand (900,000) students in education and ten percent of these (90,000) are dyslexic. This number would fill Croke Park. What are we doing about this as a nation?

I took the 'scenic' route in education. My studies began in my late thirties and culminated in 2006 with an M.Sc. in Educational Guidance and Counselling. Since then, I have spent time working in Educational Guidance with Youthreach, Secondary School students, and adults. I currently work, part time, as an Adult Education Guidance Counsellor with City of Dublin Adult Education Guidance Service. Part of my work is in Soilse, a drug rehab/education programme in Dublin Inner City.

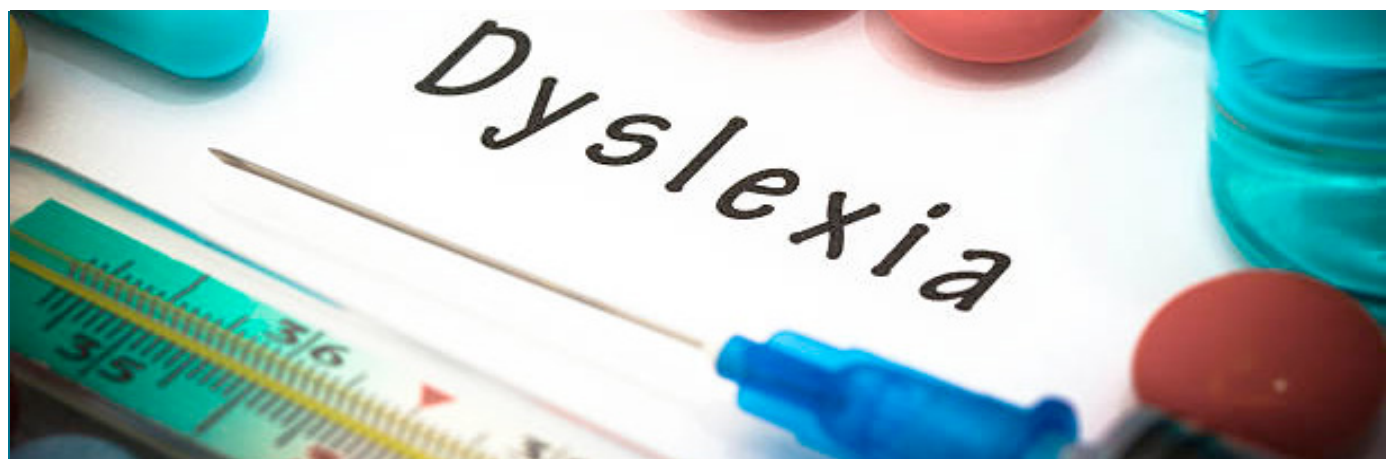
**In July 2017 Soilse and the Dyslexia Association of Ireland presented a conference entitled ‘Dyslexia and Drug Use: Hiding in Plain Sight’. At that conference Donald Ewing (DAI) presented research which suggests that ‘while Dyslexia could not be seen as ‘Causal’ it certainly deserves more research to establish the clear link – as seen by existing research into prison populations and drug rehabilitation centres.**

<https://ec.europa.eu/epale/en/content/dyslexia-and-drug-use-hiding-plain-sight>



**The Author**

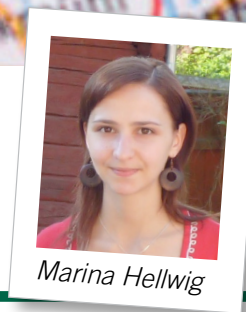
**Sinead McNerney**, Adult education guidance counsellor at CDETB  
[mcnerney.sinead@gmail.com](mailto:mcnerney.sinead@gmail.com)



# Guidance Counselling in Bavaria



**Marina Hellwig recently spent 4 weeks as an intern with NCGE. Marina is studying Guidance Counselling and Case Management at the University of Applied Labour Studies (HdBA) in Mannheim. In this article, Marina outlines guidance provision in second level education in Bavaria.**



## Guidance counselling in Bavarian secondary schools

In Bavaria, students on leaving primary education choose to enter either a vocational or academic pathway. Accordingly, students will attend one of three types of secondary school: Mittelschulen, Realschulen and Gymnasien.

The Mittelschule and Realschulen provide students with a vocational education; students who graduate from Realschulen generally enter more specialised vocations in, for example, banking and ICT.

The Gymnasium provides an academic curriculum and is the only school from which students can directly enroll for university courses.

Guidance counselling in Bavaria (as in the rest of Germany) concentrates on vocational and career guidance. The Federal Employment Agency of Germany is the main provider of guidance and as such provides guidance to second level schools. <https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/content/1463061695190>



Guidance includes the provision of general information about vocational choices and further education and training in form of group information events, brochures and online resources. One-to-one guidance meetings are available by appointment. Short appointments are occasionally offered directly in schools but in general, students must come to the employment agency for guidance meetings.

Students are assisted in identifying a suitable vocation and searching for vocational training. For this purpose the guidance counsellors use the largest German job and training online platform <https://jobboerse.arbeitsagentur.de> operated by the employment agency.



Additionally, young people can avail of a wide range of special programmes offered by the Federal Employment

Agency. These include practical orientation in different vocations, learning how to apply for training or for work and, importantly, programmes which support students to stay in school and complete their education.

Guidance counselling provision in schools is particularly targeted at those Mittelschulen where students have a poor history of integration into the labour market. Each school is assigned a guidance counsellor, who frequently attends the schools. In order to address the personal, social and psychological aspects of guidance, the counsellors in the Employment Agency cooperate with social workers and psychologists, to enable these young people finish school. The common goal is to provide these students with suitable training and jobs on leaving school.

There are also more specialised programmes offered by the employment agency in the schools to promote integration in the labour market. The programme “Bereb” for instance, can provide a student with a personal counsellor who will guide and assist the student during the last two years in school in order to ensure that the student gets a minimum award of the Mittelschulabschluss and finds a suitable apprenticeship. The programme may be extended to some months after the student has started his/her apprenticeship if it is considered necessary to prevent dropout.

However, while this system works well in preventing dropout in the Mittelschulen, a common criticism of guidance counselling in Realschulen and Gymnasien schools is that there is an over-emphasis on information with over 8000 different undergraduate courses and 300 apprenticeships to choose from.

The Federal Employment Agency however does have an excellent network of connections with employers which is essential in enabling students undertaking an apprenticeship to secure a work placement relevant to them.

EUROPE IN PRACTICE


# EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals



**For guidance services working with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers the new EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals is of great use.**

It is estimated that approximately 2.5 million refugees and asylum seekers entered Europe between 2015 and 2016.

While the initial focus centred on humanitarian aid, there is now growing recognition of the need to provide for economic integration, if these people are to have a sustainable future in Europe. More than four in five (83 %) of the first time asylum seekers in the EU-28 in 2016 were less than 35 years old (Eurostat 2016). The European Commission’s Action Plan on the Integration of Third-Country Nationals and the New Skills Agenda (2016) both reference participation in the labour market as critical to enabling financial independence, self-reliance and positive socialisation.

 [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/legal-migration/integration\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/legal-migration/integration_en)


The UNHCR recommends that refugees and asylum-seekers be allowed to actively participate in the labour market, following a period of no longer than 6 months in an EU country. <http://www.unhcr.org/463b462c4.pdf>

The process of labour market integration for third country nationals is often complicated by difficulties with qualification recognition leading to skills mismatches and under-employment. It is estimated that two-thirds of non-EU nationals who are highly skilled are either inactive, unemployed or they are over-qualified for the work they are doing (European Commission, 2016).

In response the European Commission has developed a number of tools to assist in the early identification of skills, qualifications and training needs.

The **EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals** launched by the European Commission in Brussels on 9-10 June, 2017, represents one of the most recent initiatives by the European Commission in assisting refugees and asylum seekers to systematically identify and document skills acquired through formal and informal learning.

The **EU Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals**, one of the ten Key Actions announced in the New Skills Agenda for Europe (2016), facilitates the early profiling of skills and identification of qualifications requiring validation.

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223&intPageId=5019&langId=en> 

It is intended for use by any service offering assistance to third country nationals, including national authorities, reception centres, employment services, education and training advisers, social services and NGOs.

The Skills Profile Tool is available in a number of languages, including all official EU and EEA languages, Arabic, Farsi, Pashto, Somali, Sorani and Tigrinya. The 6 non-EU languages reflect the countries of origin from which the EU received the largest number of asylum seekers in 2014 to 2016. A key strength of the tool is its capacity to display 2 languages at the same time on one screen, thereby reducing the language barrier for newly arrived refugees and migrants when working with a native adviser.

The tool complements other tools for skills transparency such as Europass and the European Qualifications Framework, which have both been revised under the New Skills Agenda to allow employers, education and training providers more readily compare national qualifications across the EU and internationally.



# European Lifelong Guidance Conference



**On September 27th and 28th, Estonia hosted the European Lifelong Guidance Conference as part of the Estonian Presidency of the European Council. Over 200 representatives from Member States attended.**



The main theme of the Conference focused on the changing role of lifelong guidance in a context of accelerated technological and socioeconomic change, looking at the future of European Co-operation in lifelong guidance and the innovative use of ICT. Those attending had the opportunity to consider improving the competences required for guidance practitioners in a complex labour market and amid rapid technological change; improving accountability and the evidence base for guidance policy and planning, and the importance of ICT based Tools and up to date labour market information for the support and delivery of quality guidance services.

The Conference Conclusions highlighted 6 key recommendations from 2 days of discussions and practice exchange.

## Recommendation 1

**National:** Revisit the goals and roles of national guidance forums/representative structures with the aim of improving and widening citizen access to services through greater service integration.

**EU:** Establish a working group/policy advisory body at EU level to monitor national progress in the development and implementation of a national, cross-sectoral, lifelong guidance strategy, to support bench learning, and to stimulate progress in concrete elements of national guidance systems

## Recommendation 2

**National:** Make lifelong guidance a function and task of temporary work agencies and other intermediary employment services.

**EU:** Support Member States at different levels of administration to provide services to users who are not covered by or who do not have access to standard provision and to engage stakeholders at local level.

### Recommendation 3

**National:** Development of a national mechanism to collect, maintain and disseminate reliable LMI of supply and demand in the labour market, using an individual portfolio approach in education, training and employment.

**EU:** Encourage the use of a portfolio strategy with a standardized approach to support the geographical, social, learning and work mobility of citizens.

### Recommendation 4

**National:** Make ICT, LMI, outreach, and multicultural competences an integral part of the initial and the continuing training of career practitioners.

**EU:** Update the European competence profiles of career practitioners based on research on new roles and tasks across sectors and support co-development of learning activities in line with revised profiles.

### Recommendation 5

**National:** Develop a national platform to enable the knowledge and innovation gained at national and international levels to be diffused to and to be accessible at local level.

**EU:** EU financed structured cooperation should be sustained and upgraded to a level in which countries can have access to detailed information on policy initiatives and practices, as well as technical support in assessing and enabling transferability.

### Recommendation 6

**National:** Develop national monitoring systems that respect local needs; introduce them gradually to give time for all stakeholders to get used to a new system

**EU:** Undertake an EU mapping exercise to discover existing data collection systems and tools for lifelong guidance and to share the results with all countries.

**EU:** Request the Commission to support and stimulate the development of national reporting and monitoring of lifelong guidance provision through structured EU cooperation, leading to the development of a European monitoring system.

For more, click below:

[http://www.innove.ee/UserFiles/Karj%C3%A4%C3%A4riteenused/EGW%202017/7th%20European%20conference%20on%20LLG%20policies\\_communique%20TALLINN\\_27-28\\_Sept\\_2017\\_Final%20endorsed.pdf](http://www.innove.ee/UserFiles/Karj%C3%A4%C3%A4riteenused/EGW%202017/7th%20European%20conference%20on%20LLG%20policies_communique%20TALLINN_27-28_Sept_2017_Final%20endorsed.pdf)



NCGE Delegates with Erik Haug (Norway) and Jaana Kettunen (Finland)



### CEDEFOP launches CareersNet

CEDEFOP also hosted the first meeting of the CareersNet network during this European Guidance Week. In Spring 2017, Cedefop Department for Learning and Employability issued a call for applications for one national expert from each country covered by the Cedefop database on lifelong guidance systems and practices. The role of the national experts, within this CareersNet Network, is to

- contribute to the development and update of a central repository of up-to-date information and evidence on the characteristics, outcomes and impacts on individual learning and employability of lifelong guidance and careers education systems and practices
- to generate insights on systems and practices coupled with structured peer learning; and
- to support the development of tools and methodologies which can help development in LLG and careers education

Following the application process, Jennifer McKenzie, NCGE Director was invited to participate as the expert for Ireland. Each country was also requested to involve a local / national reference group with the view to informing and supporting this work at national level.

For more information click below.

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/news-and-press/news/guidance-must-go-school-work-and-homes>



Some of the members of the new CareersNet





# Euro-Quest Resource for Transition Year



**NCGE/Euroguidance Ireland is developing a new classroom resource for Transition Years. The Euro-Quest resource contains ICT classroom-based materials and self-directed research assignments which encourage students to explore the possibility of studying/ training in another European country, either for the entire duration of their undergraduate degree/ training or as part of an Erasmus+ exchange. The resource encourages students to consider their own preparedness for a period of learning mobility and challenges initial preconceptions and expectations.**

The resource is a response to feedback from guidance counsellors, in particular those who completed the online NCGE/Euroguidance Ireland Mobility Guidance Counselling Module, indicating that there was a growing demand from students for information on studying in Europe. This growing demand may in part be attributable to Brexit. With the UK destined to leave the EU, uncertainty remains as to what implications this will have for Irish students choosing to study in Britain. While it appears at present that EU students entering courses in 2017/18 and 2018/19 will continue to enjoy the same privileges as UK students in terms of fees and finance, there is less clarity for those entering third level post 2019.

Meanwhile, many universities across Europe are offering a wide range of courses through English with modest fees.

Guidance counsellors, in feedback to NCGE/Euroguidance indicated a shortage of resources specifically for use with post-primary students. Guidance counsellors further highlighted the fact that researching options for study or training in Europe is complicated by the fact that there is no one comprehensive pan-European database of

course provision. While the Learning Opportunities and Qualifications in Europe Portal (PLOTEUS), funded by the European Commission, provides information on learning opportunities and qualifications in Europe, it is limited by the fact that not all European countries have a national database of course provision. NCGE/Euroguidance Ireland, with Dublin Institute of Technology, is working with European colleagues to find an IT solution which will allow for more efficient interlinking of multiple national data sources to PLOTEUS.

The NCGE/Euroguidance Euro-Quest modules have been specifically designed for Transition year where there is more flexibility in the curriculum and students have the time and space to explore career options. As one guidance counsellor stated in the evaluation of the Mobility Guidance Counselling Module, 'it would be more useful and beneficial at that stage when students are more open to other learning experiences rather than in Fifth and Sixth Year'.

It should be noted that Euro-quest can be adapted by the guidance counsellor for use with other cohorts. Schools may also choose to deliver the unit using a cross-curricular approach.



The resource contains 5 self-contained modules:

**Module 1** includes an overview of the European Union and explores what it means to be an EU citizen including various rights to live, study, train and travel in member states. It investigates the pros and cons of a period of mobility.

**Module 2** explores the opportunities for studying / training abroad, introduces information on Erasmus+, uses student blogs to consider others experiences of studying abroad and invites students to reflect on their own motivation for studying abroad.

**Module 3** is designed to enable students prepare for a period of learning mobility and examines the practicalities of living in a different culture, dealing with homesickness and making friends in the host country.

**Module 4** provides students with the skills to research study/ training options in Europe. The objective is not only to familiarise students with reliable data sources for searching courses in their chosen field, but also to provide students with the skills to process and evaluate information.

**Module 5** asks students to research options for studying abroad in their chosen field of interest and to prepare and deliver a presentation to their peers of their selected course.

The suggested final project involves students developing a website which collates learning from the unit. The form of the culminating project is at the discretion of the guidance counsellor.

NCGE/Euroguidance will begin a pilot of the Euro-Quest resource in early 2018.

NCGE/Euroguidance would like to thank those who have already expressed interest in being involved in the pilot phase and look forward to working with you.

If your school would like to participate in the pilot phase of the module, please contact NCGE/Euroguidance

Email; [euroguidance@ncge.ie](mailto:euroguidance@ncge.ie)



Telephone: 01 8823815

There are still a limited number of places available.

# Mobility Guidance Counselling



***'An excellent overview of a systematic approach to supporting a student before, during and after a foreign learning experience.'***

The CPD online Mobility Guidance Counselling module aims to provide guidance counsellors with the skills they need to support students in their quest to study, work or volunteer abroad

The module explores the process of mobility- preparation, induction and re-integration and contains resources that will assist the guidance counsellor in empowering students to make informed choices about learning mobility. The process is based on a model developed by Soren Kristensen PhD, an expert in Youth Mobility.

It includes information on the practical, linguistic, cultural and mental preparation students should undertake prior to going abroad. It addresses the issue of contracts between hosting and sending institutions, supports for students while abroad and underscores the importance of re-integration for students on their return home.

The module is divided into 4 parts, each taking approximately 45 minutes to complete and can be completed at the convenience of the individual guidance counsellor. The module is recognised for the purpose of CPD by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors and is delivered via the NCGE Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

The module may be of particular interest to guidance counsellors who encourage students to consider studying/training in Europe and indeed those interested in piloting the NCGE Euro-Quest resource. It is particularly useful for guidance counsellors who support students undertaking an Erasmus+ placement.

For more information on the online CPD Mobility Guidance Counselling Module please contact:


[euroguidance@ncge.ie](mailto:euroguidance@ncge.ie)




# From Erasmus to Erasmus+




**Erasmus+ brings people together**




**83% feel more European**  
HIGHER EDUCATION




**85% say they are more aware of common European values**  
EUROPEAN VOLUNTARY SERVICE





**94% have become more tolerant**  
YOUTH EXCHANGES



**88% of pupils increased their social skills**  
EUROPEAN SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Source: Agence Erasmus+ 2010, European Commission 2014 and 2015. © European Commission, 2017

**Back in 1987, a modest student mobility programme was launched in Europe... in the thirty years since, this has grown and evolved to enrich the lives of more than 9 million direct participants, not to mention the indirect effect it has had on so many others. Today, Erasmus+ is a wide-ranging programme that includes staff training and teaching activities, workplace traineeships, and cooperation projects between universities, research organisations, companies, NGOs, local and community organisations, regional and national authorities and other socio-economic actors – within Europe and beyond.**

Erasmus+ brings people from different backgrounds together and provides them with the competences needed to lead independent, fulfilling lives. Experiencing life in another European country opens the eyes of Erasmus+ participants: it provides them with a fresh look, new ideas and an eagerness to contribute to their communities. In fact, 88% of those who took part in European school partnerships say that they increased their social skills and four out of five participants in youth exchanges say they are more likely to participate in society.

Erasmus+ is managed in Ireland by two National Agencies. Léargas manages the programme in Adult Education, School Education, Vocational Education and Training, and Youthwork and Volunteering. The Higher Education Authority manages it at third level. If you'd like to find out more about opportunities for schools, adult ed organisations, Youthreach, CFEs and many more, contact Léargas via our website ([www.leargas.ie](http://www.leargas.ie)), Facebook (@Leargas.Ireland) or Twitter (@Leargas).



In 2014, St. Paul's Primary School (Portlaoise) undertook a year-long Erasmus+ project which fostered mobility amongst school pupils. The theme of the project was Inclusive Education; it aimed to educate staff and pupils, and develop an increased awareness of cultural diversity in the classroom to ensure equal opportunities for all. By working alongside schools in Latvia, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey, Kieran Brosnan, the project coordinator, was able to share experiences and ideas with peers throughout Europe and introduce new teaching and learning methods to his school. Concepts such as 'team teaching' are now used by Kieran and his colleagues, and their pupils are really benefiting from more diverse teaching styles and cooperative learning activities. St. Paul's Primary school now offers a more inclusive learning environment, and staff and pupils have recently received a national award for their participation in the campaign 'Show Racism the Red Card'. For more, see <http://www.leargas.ie/blog/whole-school-benefits-from-erasmus/>



# Euroguidance: 25 years supporting Learning Mobility in Europe



2017 marks the 25th anniversary of the establishment of Euroguidance. Founded in 1992 by the European Commission as a European network of 12 National Guidance Centres for the vocational training of young people and their preparation for working adult life, the Euroguidance Network today comprises 68 centres across 34 countries. The growth of the Network reflects the enlargement of the European Union and the inclusion of EEA Member States, Switzerland and the pre-accession countries.



Ireland was one of the original members of the Euroguidance Network. Today the Irish Euroguidance Centre is hosted by NCGE and is funded by the Department of Education and Skills and the European Commission under Erasmus+ funding (2014-2020).

Euroguidance national centres share 2 common objectives, namely:

- **to promote the European dimension in guidance**

Euroguidance promotes the European dimension in guidance through cooperation with different stakeholders in guidance and education and through the organisation of seminars, training and study visits for guidance counsellors across Europe. If you are one of the many guidance counsellors who participated in the Academia programme organised through NCGE/ Euroguidance you will be familiar with the peer learning achieved through a study visit abroad. Statistics collated in 2014 by the Euroguidance Network show

that seminars, conferences and meetings organised by Euroguidance reached some 84,000 participants across Europe since its foundation in 1992.

- **to provide quality information on lifelong guidance and mobility for learning purposes**

The Euroguidance website is a resource which provides reliable, impartial information on studying/training opportunities in Europe. The Learning Opportunities and Qualifications in Europe (PLOTEUS) platform <https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/>, currently under review, provides information on studying in various European member states.

The Network has produced over 200,000 copies of different printed materials with information on learning mobility, including the popular Insight and Highlights publications.

For more information, please see the newly updated Euroguidance Ireland website [www.euroguidance.ie](http://www.euroguidance.ie)

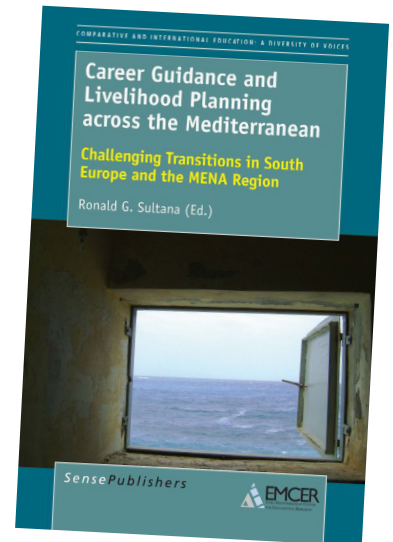




BOOK REVIEW

# Career Guidance and Livelihood Planning across the Mediterranean

by Ronald G. Sultana (Ed.)



This book is a collection of academic essays on the concept and influence of Career Guidance in the lives of those living in the Mediterranean region. Admittedly on first picking up this book Spain, France, and the Mezzogiorno in Italy were the first regions to enter my mind. My ignorance was highlighted when I realised that almost 20 countries span the coast of the Mediterranean; in such a vast area of study a multitude of cultures are brought together. Despite many differences with regard to society, religion and wealth, surprisingly so many of these countries share many of the same challenges; in particular, a soaring youth population, high unemployment amongst young graduates and a reluctance to enter the vocational education and training sector. These themes are recurrent throughout this anthology of studies. The impact of current Career Guidance practice is explored and the question is asked whether improved Career Guidance could have an influence on helping to resolve some of these societal issues?

The questionable relevance of Career Guidance stood out for me as an important theme in this study. Many of these essays mention how Career Guidance theory is based on western psychology, sociology and economy; making it alien to many Arab countries. The word 'Career' doesn't even have a direct translation in Arabic. The culture of some MENA countries holds very little room for individualism; a luxury required for career aspirations. Rather the culture is rooted in familial expectations and collective responsibility. Religion and gender also feature heavily in limiting career possibilities. As a practitioner in the field of Career Guidance, this book forced me to ponder the purpose 'Career Guidance' (as we know it) has in such a setting?

Most of the essays highlight a lack of investment in Career Guidance in the studied regions. The quality of training of practitioners is questioned and the limited implementation of Career Guidance is brought to light. This lack of guidance support is especially damaging in countries experiencing a 'youth bulge.' A soaring youth population coupled with a very high youth unemployment rate is a major problem in many of the studied countries. A mismatch of training and the needs of the jobs market are to blame for much of the youth unemployment as is the case in Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Egypt and Saudi Arabia where many highly educated youths have little prospects of work. The question lingers in the subtext whether greater investment in career guidance could have a more favourable affect on this situation?

This book does not make for light reading! It is a challenge to get through this tome but it does hold significance for Guidance Counsellors working in Ireland. I felt very enlightened reading about the Arab countries and I now have a greater understanding of why career prestige is so tied up in their culture. Through reading about other cultures and attitudes to work I have been forced to ponder the way I work with young people of non-Irish backgrounds forcing me to look at careers through an alternative lens.



## The Reviewer

**Onagh Carroll** works as a Guidance Counsellor in Castlknock Community College, Dublin 15. She also has her own private practice and publishes regular Career Guidance related articles on her blog, [www.careertrail.ie](http://www.careertrail.ie)

