



GUIDANCE MATTERS

Winter 2018 / Issue 50 (formerly 'NCGE News')



INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE:

- Guidance in evolution
- Looking at Whole School Guidance in Junior Cycle
- Research
- National Forum on Guidance
- Supported Transition



An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills

And lots
more inside

CONTENTS



NEWS

News 3

FEATURE ARTICLE

Guidance in Evolution 6

GENERAL

NCGE: National Forum on Guidance 9

New supports to promote the teaching and learning of modern foreign languages 10

Using social media in a guidance context 12

POST-PRIMARY

Looking at Whole School Guidance in Junior Cycle 16

FURTHER EDUCATION & TRAINING

Time to Move 2018 20

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Supported Transition: Empowering students with Special Educational Needs to live self-determined lives in socially inclusive communities 22

RESEARCH

Enhancing Employability through Positive Interventions for improving Career potential (EEPIC) 24

Perceived challenges in implementing ICT in career services 28

EUROPE IN PRACTICE

A study on mobility 30

EUROGUIDANCE

An update from Euroguidance Ireland 36

'My dream job in...' winners 39



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NEWS



Welcome...

to the 50th edition of the NCGE Newsletter. NCGE has published the “NCGE News” magazine in printed format and more recently as an online e-zine since spring 1996. This month marks a very exciting time for NCGE as we relaunch our online e-zine as “Guidance Matters”. Together with the new “NCGE Bulletin” which we launched in September, NCGE aims to ensure that we keep our readers, clients and stakeholders up-to-date on all the activities of NCGE and on current policy and practice issues in the national, European and International arena of Lifelong Guidance.

In launching NCGE in June 1995, the then Minister for Education Niamh Breathnach stated that *“the Centre will act as a support agency to the Department, to schools and to guidance counsellors in the development of guidance services”* And so 23 years later, NCGE continues to support lifelong guidance in schools and in FET, linking with our colleagues in higher education and labour market guidance provision, supporting the Universities who provide training for guidance counsellors and encouraging the use of ICT in guidance nationally.

In preparing for this issue, I have had the pleasure of reading back and reviewing the articles and general content of the older editions of the NCGE News. Considering that the first edition was published 22 years ago, following the establishment of the NCGE in 1995 we have come a long way.

In those intervening 23 years, the world around us has changed dramatically. In Ireland, we have had 8 different governments, 5 different Taoisigh, and 11 different Ministers responsible for guidance in the education sector.

Now, in 2018, most households have access to the internet, we can video-chat with our family and friends across the world, we book holidays, apply for jobs and pay for items with our hand held mobile phones. We stay in touch through new forms of “social media” and our clients are more likely to “google” something rather than reach for an encyclopaedia to research a topic.

So it is time for NCGE also to change. In this first edition of Guidance Matters, we can re-cap on what has been achieved, re-introduce the concepts and policies of importance to guidance and re-launch our NCGE News in line with these changes. A limited edition printed copy of this issue will be distributed to all post-primary schools and to guidance counsellors working in other selected Irish educational settings in January 2019. We hope that you will stay on this lifelong guidance journey with us as we continue to document policies and practice in guidance in Ireland, across EU and internationally in our new format of “Guidance Matters”.

As always we welcome your feedback!

Is mise le meas,
Jennifer McKenzie
Director



NEWS

Online Euroguidance publications



Euroguidance 'Highlights' is the annual publication from the Euroguidance Network, detailing the activities of the Euroguidance Centres and Network during the year. Access the latest copy here <https://www.euroguidance.eu/resources/publications/euroguidance-highlights>. The 2017 issue includes information relating to work undertaken by the Euroguidance Centre Ireland (hosted by NCGE). Euroguidance Insight is a twice yearly newsletter, also from the Euroguidance Network and you can access the latest copies of this publication here <https://www.euroguidance.eu/resources/publications/insight-newsletter>.



Keeping you up to date



In September 2018 NCGE began sending the first of its monthly 'Bulletins'. This is our way of ensuring that all members of the guidance community are kept up to date, on a regular basis, with the collaborative work undertaken by NCGE across all areas of practice. As well as being sent directly to your e-mail, each of our monthly 'Bulletins' can also be viewed online at <https://www.ncge.ie/ncge/ncge-bulletin>.



Moving on from NCGE



Linda Darbey joined NCGE as a project officer in November 2000. 18 years and one month later we are bidding adieu to a colleague and friend who is moving on in her own career into the world of academia.

As noted in our feature article, there have been huge developments in guidance since 2000 so it would be impossible to sum up all of the work that Linda has completed in her time in NCGE. However, it is important that we acknowledge the contribution that Linda has made to the development of guidance policies and practice in Ireland and the EU in the course of her work here. Working on the national and international projects, which often required many late night or early morning online meetings with colleagues in Canada, New Zealand or Australia, her contributions to projects such as the National Guidance Forum; 2 DES and NCGE Reviews of Guidance in schools; developing the NCGE Virtual learning environment

(VLE) to support a forward thinking blended learning approach to CPD; developing the online School Guidance Handbook resources; co-ordinating European projects; contributing to ELGPN working groups on Career Management Skills and Guidelines for Policies and Systems Development ; co-ordinating the agreement between the Directors of Studies of Guidance Counselling and PSI and subsequently with IGC and AEGAI and supporting the DES in the development of the Programme Recognition Framework (2016) are just some of the ground breaking developments in guidance with Linda's work threaded throughout. Most notably, and indeed her major contribution to the development of quality guidance provision into the future, is the development, consultation on and publication of the NCGE Whole School Guidance Framework.

A valued member of our team, held in high esteem and widely respected by our colleagues nationally, across EU and internationally, Linda will be a huge loss to the guidance world. However as always in guidance, we support every individual to assess their skills, interests, abilities and ambitions and encourage them to follow their dreams.

On behalf of all the staff and management past and present, we wish Linda every success in her new position. Our loss is their gain.

Go n-éirí an bóthar léi agus do dté sí slán.

NEWS

PSI Register of Psychometric Test Use: Guidance Counsellors



A core element of the work of the guidance counsellor in supporting students / clients to identify their strengths is the administration of psychometric tests, such as ability, aptitude or career interest tests.

To ensure professional practice in the appropriate use and administration of tests and feedback to students / clients, guidance counsellors engage in continuous professional training in this area. Furthermore, to support good practice, the Department of Education and Skills publishes relevant circulars annually and NCGE provides updated guidelines, resources and CPD in this area.

The PSI Register of Psychometric Test Use: Guidance Counsellors endorses the professional competence of guidance counsellors in the administration of psychometric tests and supports the implementation of good practice in psychometric testing in educational settings such as in schools, FET and HE. The PSI Register, which is an Irish based Register, was developed in partnership with the Department of Education and Skills, The Directors of the Initial Education Programmes in Guidance Counselling, The Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC) and The Adult Educational Guidance Association, Ireland (AEGAI). The Register recognises the competence of guidance counsellors in administering, interpreting and providing feedback on a range of standardised ability and achievement tests.

Guidance counsellors signed up to the Register can expect support on the implementation of good practice in psychometric testing. This includes access to annual CPD in psychometric testing provided by PSI in association with NCGE who cover the costs (hence there is no fee for attendance) as part of the NCGE CPD programme.

More information on the Register is available from <https://www.ncge.ie/psi>

Additional Information / Resources

The Department of Education & Skills Circular Letter on Assessment Instruments approved for use in schools... can be accessed from https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0035_2017.pdf

NCGE Resources related to psychometric testing include:

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

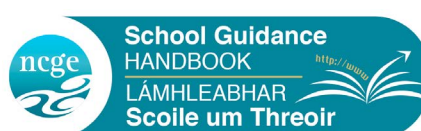
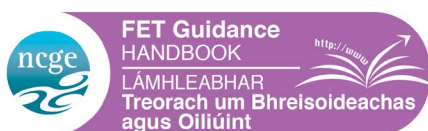
Guide on developing a school policy on assessment instruments - <https://www.ncge.ie/school-guidance-handbook/guide-post-primary-schools-developing-policy-use-assessment-instruments>

Data protection considerations - <https://www.ncge.ie/school-guidance-handbook/data-protection-guidance-counsellor-gdpr>

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



School and FET Guidance online 'Handbooks'

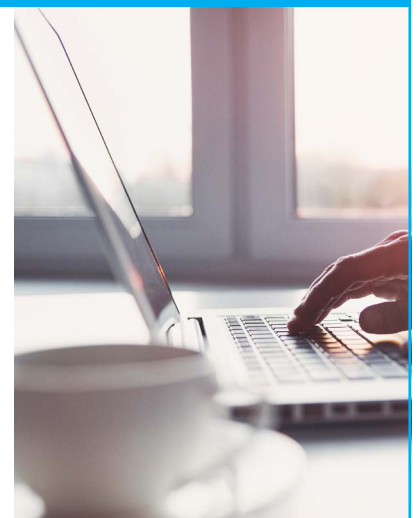


The School and FET Guidance Handbooks are dedicated online resources, supporting the development and delivery of school and FET guidance programmes. To access articles published since our last issue and to view recent webinar recordings go to

<https://www.ncge.ie/school-guidance-handbook>

and

<https://www.ncge.ie/FET-guidance-handbook>



Guidance in evolution

“The Only Thing That Is Constant Is Change” *Heraclitus*



In celebration of the 50th issue of this publication, NCGE Director Jennifer Mc Kenzie reflects on the constantly evolving guidance landscape.

Reviewing the themes and the articles in the NCGE News publication up to this point provides a real historical reference of the developments in guidance and the societal and educational contexts in which guidance services are offered. In the wider education and training sector in Ireland, the last 10 years in particular have seen the greatest change in the national structures; with the establishment of the Further Education and Training Authority SOLAS¹ the replacing by the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) of the Vocational Education Committees (VECs) and FÁS, and we have more varied management bodies managing

our primary and post primary school systems; for example Educate Together schools <https://www.educatetogether.ie/>. We have had an increase in immigrants to Ireland, whether as economic migrants or through the asylum seeking and /or refugee process, thus also changing the demographics of our population. Within social and cultural developments in Ireland, guidance counsellors have been to the fore in supporting the Marriage Equality debate and referendum and in supporting LGBTQ clients of guidance services achieve their full potential in society.



¹An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna, (Irish Further Education and Skills Service)



In Ireland, the National Guidance Forum (2004-2006) confirmed the national commitment to guidance provision with guidelines on quality assurance and competences of guidance practitioners and a nationally agreed definition of guidance to inform developments across the sectors.

'Guidance refers to the process of facilitating individuals or groups at any point throughout their lives to develop their capacity for the self-management of their personal, social, educational, training, occupational and life choices in order to grow towards their potential and thereby to contribute to the development of a better society'. https://www.ncge.ie/sites/default/files/nationalguidance/documents/NGF_Guidance_for_Life%20final.pdf

In parallel; lifelong guidance achieved prominence in the confirmation of 2 EU Council Resolutions on guidance in 2004 and 2008, thus confirming an EU wide definition of Lifelong Guidance.

'A continuous process that enables citizens at any age and at any point of their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which those capacities and competences are learned and/or used' [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42008X1213\(02\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42008X1213(02)&from=EN)



In turn, following these Resolutions, the EU Commission provided targeted supports to Member States to develop their own policies and systems in Lifelong guidance, with the funding and co-ordination of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN). <http://www.elgpn.eu/>

In the wider education sector, across the EU we have seen the introduction and acceptance of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), Europass tools to support mobility of learning and work opportunities and the continued co-operation of the Euroguidance Network across 64 centres in 32 countries to support mobility for learning opportunities for EU citizens

In Ireland we now have the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), and several national strategies to lead the developments in education and training and society as a whole (e.g. National Skills Strategy, Higher Education Strategy, and FET Strategy). These strategies have been developed to support the country out of the most serious economic crisis from 2008 where national unemployment levels have now reduced to approximately 5%, from a high of 15% in 2012. <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-wamii/womenandmeninireland2016/employment/>

Throughout the nearly 23 years since the first issue of 'NCGE News' guidance provision has responded to the needs of the students and clients whether in schools, adult education, further and higher education institutions and labour market / unemployment support services. It is remarkable in 2018 to consider that in 2000 the concept of "adult educational guidance" was introduced through 8 pilot projects, which expanded to 39 pilot projects and are now accepted as a mainstreamed FET based guidance service for adults working with over 50,000 beneficiaries nationally each year. Through the dedication of professional guidance staff, models of guidance have been developed for adults in basic education, literacy and ESOL (English for Speakers of other languages) programmes. In schools guidance, there have been several Departmental Circulars, documents and guidelines outlining good practice in guidance delivery in post-primary schools. Most recently the NCGE Whole School Guidance Framework <https://www.ncge.ie/school-guidance-handbook/ncge-whole-school-guidance-framework> promotes the guidance counsellor at the centre of the Whole School Guidance programme provision, networking and collaborating with all school staff to ensure the guidance needs of students are met.



In confirming the commitment of the Department of Education and Skills to the future delivery of quality guidance in schools, the Programme Recognition Framework <http://www.ncge.ie/ncge/programme-recognition-framework> outlines the minimum standard of training required for a guidance counsellor to work in the education and training sectors.

Amongst all of these changes, the developments in ICT have supported and challenged the provision of quality guidance services. Whether accessing information online or providing guidance through e-guidance services, ICT has made a huge contribution to the professional practice. Notably in the gathering of appropriate qualitative and quantitative data for guidance services, online and bespoke systems have supported the review, evaluation and planning of adult guidance services since 2008. In Edition 29 of NCGE News, https://www.ncge.ie/sites/default/files/ncge/uploads/NN_issue29-Summer08.pdf we remarked on how “innovative, valuable and useful” the developments in ICT were at that time and we asked “imagine where we will be in 2013”!

Which is exactly the point? Look where we are in 2018! Guidance services provide impartial information, careers education, development of career management skills, guidance counselling for personal reflection and development and genuine holistic supports for the clients / students. Provision of guidance necessitates a reflection

and consideration of the wider education, economic, social and cultural environments in which these services are placed. Whether there is an “upturn” or “downturn” in the economy, individuals require supports and the skills to make decisions about their education, career and life choices. Guidance provision has changed with society. We work with groups and with individuals in one-to-one guidance sessions, we collaborate with colleagues, we make referrals to relevant support agencies, we are accountable for the quality of our service to our clients, we keep up to date (or at least we try to) with ICT developments that will enhance our delivery, we ask clients / students for feedback, we attend CPD and we value supervision for our work. So as the world around us changes, so too might our mode of delivery. However, supporting the individual, at any age, to make sense of their situation, reflect on their interests, values and circumstance, develop their career management skills and to make the right decision (i.e. plans A, B and C) for them has not and cannot change as this at the core of our work in guidance. Indeed with the proliferation of information available to us at our finger tips and careers developing now that none of us had even dreamed of 20 years ago, guidance is more relevant now than ever before in this ever- changing world.

For our part, NCGE is energised and excited to continue to chart and document the course of guidance developments in the next 50 issues of Guidance Matters!



You can access the 'NCGE News' archive here: <https://www.ncge.ie/ncge/ncge-news-archive>. There you will find links to a number of previous issues of 'NCGE News'. Not every copy is uploaded at this time so if you see any old issues not listed that you may have stored somewhere, please let us know and we will arrange to have them collected, scanned and uploaded for everyone to read.



NCGE: National Forum on Guidance

November 2018



Twice a year, NCGE hosts the National Forum on Guidance (NFG). This provides an informal communication and co-operation facility for those involved in the provision of guidance and the development and support of guidance practitioners and services. Regular participants include organisations and individuals providing guidance in both the education and training and public employment sectors. Each forum is intended to both inspire further debate and to provide practical knowledge of relevant guidance experiences and provision.

AGENDA	
9.30 AM	REGISTRATION AND LIGHT BREAKFAST
10.00 AM	JENNIFER MCKENZIE - DIRECTOR NCGE Introduction and Welcome
10.10 AM	PROF. RONALD SULTANA "The right to guidance: a social justice challenge"
10.20 PM	BREAK
10.25 PM	ANDREW BROWNLEE "The role of guidance in developing effective learner pathways, into, within and from further education and training"
1.15 PM	JENNIFER MCKENZIE Concluding remarks
1.30 PM	CLOSE / LUNCH

Round table discussions / Q&A will follow post 10.25 AM and conclude at 1.00 PM. This will give participants the opportunity to build on and discuss their experience.

The second National Forum on Guidance for 2018 met on the 21st of November in the Clock Tower, Department of Education and Skills, Dublin. The overall theme of discussions was: '**Social Justice; the role of guidance in the support of active inclusion for all.**' Over 60 participants were in attendance, representing a broad spectrum of guidance provision including Further Education and Training, Post- Primary, Higher Education, State and independent agencies, representative organisations (in education), the Department of Education and Skills and private practice.

The key speakers were **Prof. Ronald Sultana**, Professor of Educational Sociology and Comparative Education at the University of Malta and **Andrew Brownlee**, Executive Director, Strategy and Knowledge, SOLAS (An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna)



Prof. Ronald Sultana

Andrew Brownlee

Prof. Ronald Sultana addressed the topic of "The right to guidance: a social justice challenge". He did so through an engaging and thought provoking presentation addressing some of the underlying concepts regarding the very nature of guidance provision.

Andrew Brownlee outlined "The role of guidance in developing effective learner pathways, into, within and from further education and training", with particular reference to ongoing strategic developments on behalf of SOLAS.

In addition to listening to the speakers there were also group discussions and Q&A; based on 'prompt' questions linked to the theme.

Feedback from all participants was positive with a number stating that they would like to have spent more time both discussing the issues raised and interacting with the speakers.

A more detailed report of discussions will be posted to the NCGE website soon; in the meantime you can access the programme and the full presentations from the day by going to:

<https://www.ncge.ie/national-forum-guidance>



GENERAL

New supports to promote the teaching and learning of modern foreign languages



Tionscnamh Teangacha Iar-bhunscoile



The Government of Ireland 'Languages Connect' awareness raising campaign was launched by the Department of Education and Skills in September 2018 as an integral part of the national foreign languages strategy. Modelled on Smart Futures, the STEM promotional campaign, the Languages Connect awareness raising initiative offers supports to the educational community to encourage the learning of foreign languages.

Recognising the role of the guidance counsellor in the context of whole school guidance provision, in supporting students to make the best subject choices and career planning decisions for them, and in line with Goal 3.A.1 of the implementation plan (awareness raising), NCGE is pleased to publish the article below compiled by Karen Ruddock, Director of the Post-Primary Languages Initiative (PPLI).

Goal 3: Increase awareness of the importance of language learning to encourage the wider use of foreign languages		
ACTION	TIMESCALE	LEAD
AWARENESS RAISING		
3.A.1 Carry out an awareness-raising campaign to highlight the importance of foreign languages – both for cultural and social awareness and for career opportunities, based on languages themselves or in combination with other disciplines, e.g. Engineering/German. The campaign should target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School principals, teachers, and guidance counsellors. • Parents and students. • Third level institutions. Seek to adopt a model similar to the existing “SmartFutures” brand and delivery models to promote priority skills required for enterprise which would include languages.	Q1 2018 onwards	PPLI with support from NCGE, Enterprise Agencies and Education Stakeholders

At this time of global change and a dramatically changing EU, the skill to communicate in languages other than our national languages is important. Learning a foreign language can transform any career, from finance, to beauty therapy, to engineering. Even a basic understanding of a language can open the door to promotions or international experience. In addition to employability gains, learning foreign languages has proven cognitive benefits and enables students and future workers to demonstrate greater intercultural competence.

According to a LinkedIn report (2016) (<https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/trends-and-research/2016/most-indemand-soft-skills>), the most in-demand soft skill by employers is communication, and in the top ten list of skills coveted by employers are those that are enhanced by language learning, such as critical thinking, interpersonal communication and adaptability.



Paul Mannion, Gaelic Football star and graduate of a degree in Commerce and Chinese, recently spoke of the life enriching aspects of being able to speak with people in

their own language "speaking in another person's native tongue, making them smile and laugh is something technology will never replace. It's that personal touch, like a hand written note that allows you to connect to people in a really special way".

The website www.languagesconnect.ie offers guidance on the reasons to learn languages with a focus on employability using foreign languages, including a range of career videos from a wide array of professions to demonstrate how crucial it is to engage with language learning. Included in this video series is an engineer, a chef, a singer, a spa manager, an entrepreneur, a Garda, diplomats and many other people working across a variety of sectors.

Languages Connect has developed specific resources for the career guidance department in schools. These are available on <https://languagesconnect.ie/education-zone/guidance-counsellors/>. One of the specific resources is an in class activity for senior level students in secondary schools. The aim of the task is for students to get a better understanding of the utility of foreign languages in the working world and why they should aspire to keep studying foreign languages. The learning outcomes were designed following the NCGE – A Whole School Guidance Framework <https://www.ncge.ie/school-guidance-handbook/ncge-whole-school-guidance-framework>.

Another is an online interactive activity which can be used in class or independently by students. The activity is also designed for senior cycle students and it will allow students to build their personal

Language Profile by reflecting on the place of languages in their life, in the workplace and in their future. The activity focuses on the skills acquired while learning a foreign language and highlights the relevance of these skills to any area of work but also focusses on the use of languages across a variety of specific sectors so that it is tailored to students' own areas of interest.

Languages Connect engages with schools and students in many different ways. In addition to providing online and paper-based publications to support guidance



Paul Mannion, Dublin GAA, at Zeminar

Niamh Cacciato, Solicitor, William Fry

professionals, teachers, school leaders, students, parents and employers, Languages Connect is present at events such as Higher Options and Zeminar, visits schools for career evenings, and organises a careers event targeted at transition year students called #ThinkLanguages. Languages Connect has supported the publication of a GradIreland publication with comprehensive advice relating to studying languages <https://languagesconnect.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/gradireland-Languages-2019-1.pdf>

Languages Connect is administered by the Post-Primary Languages Initiative of the Department of Education & Skills and collaborates closely with partners such as NCGE, enterprise agencies such as IDA, IBEC and Enterprise Ireland, and other Government Departments. Information is also available on www.careersportal.ie. Visit www.languagesconnect.ie, and follow on social media channels for more information.

Languages Connect awareness campaign:

<https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2018-press-releases/PR18-09-17.html>

Languages Connect implementation plan:

https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Curriculum-and-Syllabus/Foreign-Languages-Strategy/fls_languages_connect_implementation_plan.pdf



The Author

Karen Ruddock is Director of Post-Primary Languages Initiative (PPLI), lead partners in the implementation of Languages Connect, Ireland's strategy for Foreign Languages in Education. She began as a second level teacher in the sciences, did post-graduate studies in Applied Linguistics, EFL and Japanese language pedagogy, and taught these at second and third level. She also has experience in curriculum development, implementing digital technologies in the MFL classroom, and teacher training, and ran a consultancy for a number of years providing cross-cultural training, and language consulting. She has been with PPLI since April 2009.

The Post-Primary Languages Initiative (PPLI) is working to implement foreign languages strategy of the DES in Ireland, primarily in the context of post-primary schools. Languages Connect is a project of the PPLI and is a campaign to raise awareness of the value of teaching and learning foreign languages.

The human impact

Something that was made clear by the DCU Guidance Counselling (MSc) students in a social media usage survey they completed prior to our meeting was that a dichotomy has arisen. On the one hand social media use should and can make someone feel more socially connected, however it can also be that the opposite is the case. A March 2017 report (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/the-athletes-way/201703/social-media-exacerbates-perceived-social-isolation>) published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine found that research participants who used social media for more than two hours a day had twice the odds for reporting perceived social isolation than their peers who spent less than 30 minutes on social media each day. Sherry Turkle also argues in her book 'Alone Together' that " in a surprising twist, relentless connection leads to a new solitude (<http://alonetogetherbook.com/>).

It's noteworthy to point out however that in a classic chicken-or-the-egg scenario that reminds us that correlation does not mean causation, it was impossible for the researchers to identify if excessive social media use or perceived social isolation came first. It is clear however that social media has the potential to impact on a person at an emotional level. The way it does this is no different however in theory to the impact any personal commentary (positive and negative) would have emotionally, or the satisfaction or ingratiation gained from having one's personal feelings publicly validated, the difference however is the relative ease, regularity and virility of how this can now be done. The 'sharing' concept means that any piece of content embedded on a social media platform theoretically has limitless global reach (amongst social media users at least). An empirical example of this being Kaitlin Jenner's (don't worry if you don't know who this is) first Twitter post resulting in 1 million followers of her profile in just over 4 hours. The accompanying impact on self-value or validation therefore has been directly accentuated at an individual level. The students highlighted this in their discussions by referring to the FOMO concept (fear of missing out), an anxiety condition often aroused in individuals who on viewing a post on social media feel frustrated, essentially because they are limited to one place and time and cannot directly interact.

Using in a professional context

So, like all 'tools' and social media is just that, the end product or outcome (and the accompanying experience) derived by the use of that tool rests with the user. Whilst we must be cognisant of potential personal impacts, as professionals we should prioritise its use as a key way of engaging our audiences. Simply using social media however is not an end in itself that is why we should not start with the technology, but first focus on the message. Depending

on the goal, we should evaluate which processes and technologies or social media types are needed in order to achieve a goal efficiently and effectively - if at all. This brings me onto the core of my original presentation. As a guidance practitioner – **Why should you be interested in social media?**

- firstly, as per the first paragraph of this article, it is used; across all age ranges, by pupils, jobseekers, fellow professionals and peers and by employers and training providers
- it has the potential to promote professional networking and provide access to a larger body of professional contacts and knowledge via professional networks with like-minded people in your field across the globe, enabling you to share information and seek advice.
- it enables you to guide people to reliable sources of online information (and give them the learned skills to evaluate them)
- it empowers you to provide support in relation to wellbeing including helping individuals be safe online
- it facilitates self-promotion, your views and skills in real time to a wide range of people and interest groups.
- it can assist in becoming future oriented and proactive in terms of developing your knowledge base and trends in your field and positioning yourself to take advantage of future developments
- it can facilitate getting a deeper insight into occupational trends

It can also allow messages be targeted, made complimentary to traditional means of communication and integrated. There are two approaches that can be taken when considering your 'use' of social media; Active, where you are a content generator/consumer **and** Passive where you are a content consumer only. I will briefly outline the passive approach at the end of this article but given the context of my source presentation I will first focus on an active approach.

Before 'going online' or beginning your professional social media journey, I would recommend that you follow a few basic steps.

Step 1 - Define your audience

To whom do you wish to speak? Identify your target demographic, including:

- age
- gender
- occupation (if applicable)
- educational Level (or year group)
- location
- Other relevant insights



Step 2 - Define the purpose

What do you want to say, what do you want them to know, do or think as a result ... Is it to?

- persuade
- influence
- inform
- seek advice or answers
- listen
- learn
- publicise
- share opinions or resources

Step 3 - Plan / research

Having performed steps 1 and 2 next decide what the best platform is for you to communicate with your chosen audience. Is it text, voice, video, images, files, or a combination? Get well informed about the medium and its tools and protocols for effective use. If you wish to leverage an existing platform in your school, college, service or organisation liaise with the person who has administration access to the existing platform and request similar access and/or coordinate your posts. *A previous NCGE News article by Dave Kilmartin, head of Dublin Institute of Technology Career Development Centre provides a good description of the functionality and role of a number of platforms, a link to this is contained at the end of this piece*

Step 4 - Activation

If required - set up your (new) profile on the chosen channel(s), making reference to the 'set up guides' available from each provider. Many of these have top tips for initial activation. Profile images and headers / banners should contain relevant and engaging images and be sized according to the template the channel uses. Using your newly formed profile, follow peers, networks or interest groups who are online on the same platform. This will act like an alerts system ultimately for what is happening in your area of interest.

Step 5 - Content generation

Integrating steps 1, 2 and 3 for context and bearing in mind the limitations and structure of your chosen platform, decide on what you want to say and how best to say it. If you are authoring your own content don't try and say too much directly in the post. Good practice may be to consider a post as merely an advert for more detailed content populated elsewhere (with a link for example). Also bear in mind whether your goal is to have your content referenced or shared.

Other 'posting tips':

- keep posts relatively short.
- include a featured image where possible
- optimise posts to include target keywords (i.e. mention your subject !)

- make sure you have a call to action (what you want viewers to do; attend, read etc.)
- tag profiles who you think would be interested (using @ and also aligned # tags)
- integrate onto a complimentary website, for example that of your employer (a 'feed')

General tips

- once on social media keep communicating regularly
- make sure people know that you are there. Add your account addresses to your email signature for example and alert your audience by whatever other means you determine
- be sure to add information to your bio. People won't follow unless they know something about whom / what they are communicating with
- don't expect to be able to keep track of every message you receive or everyone you follow
- don't post for the sake of posting
- monitor and measure engagement using the tools provided on each platform; Insights, Google Analytics etc.
- Evaluate – report – redo
- Sign up to relevant newsletters and 'e-zines'; these will assist you in opinion forming and staying up to date on ongoing developments

Passive use / monitoring

If you are not planning on creating content but still want to access and be alerted to the content produced by others it is still necessary to activate a profile. You can then follow other users directly. You may then find yourself transitioning to becoming active over time as the benefits become clear and you wish to add and collaborate to online discussion(s).

Summary

Almost everyone has access to the Internet these days, and many participate in some form of social media. Social media is a means to an end, not an end in itself. It is in essence a modern tool for something humans have been doing for time immemorial. When you participate in social media as a guidance practitioner you have the opportunity to learn and impart valuable information to and from your target audience. Social media sites are designed to connect with other people, and it may be the case that your connections will make recommendations and provide content to their connections, that's the magic of social media.

It was not possible in this article to cover all of the topics floating in the concentric circles that orbit around the social media 'hub', so I encourage readers to take from it what they wish and do their own research in areas of particular interest to them.

Below are some additional resources that relate either to the content above or may make for additional interesting reading in the area.

Examples of other online tools / resources

Mail chimp - A 'social friendly' e-mail automation platform.
<https://mailchimp.com/>

Canva - A graphic-design tool website, with customisable templates for sizing everything from Social media images to profile pictures and banners.
<https://www.canva.com/>

Smart Insights - a publisher and learning platform that helps members to plan, manage and optimise their marketing using downloadable planning templates, guides and interactive learning tools.
<https://www.smartinsights.com/>

We are social - Up to date social media usage statistics
<https://wearesocial.com/uk/blog/2018/01/global-digital-report-2018>

Related articles from previous 'NCGE News' issues where we always include further links to other relevant articles / websites and research

All available via:

<https://www.ncge.ie/ncge/ncge-news-archive>

- [NCGE News Issue 41](#)
 - Using Facebook and Twitter for Guidance
 - Digital Literacy in Career Guidance
 - Supporting Students to Use Online Tools for Careers Research and Job Searching
- [NCGE News Issue 42](#)
 - Using Social Networks to Create a Professional Identity
- [NCGE News Issue 49](#)
 - An exploration of the Guidance Counsellor's perspective of smartphone usage amongst adolescents in post-primary Schools

Additional reading:

Career practitioners' conceptions of social media and competency for social media in career services.
Jaana Kettunen - Finnish Institute for Educational Research
<https://jyx.jyu.fi/bitstream/handle/123456789/55367/978-951-39-7160-1.pdf?>

The career counsellor's guide to social media
National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) (USA)

<http://www.naceweb.org/career-development/best-practices/the-career-counselors-guide-to-social-media/>

The Future of Guidance is happening on Facebook
Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science

<https://ufm.dk/en/education/internationalisation-and-cooperation/international-cooperation-on-guidance/euroguidance-denmark/publications-and-fact-sheets/the-future-of-guidance-is-happening-on-facebook/the-future-of-guidance-is-happening-on-facebook>

Practitioners' conceptions of ethical practice in social networking in career services
International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10775-018-9383-4>

Available related CPD:

Social Media and Webwise Teachers (online)
 PDST – Technology in Education

<https://www.pdsttechnologyineducation.ie/en/Training/Courses/Social-Media-and-Webwise-Teachers.html>



NCGE: A Whole School Guidance Framework (2017)

Pilot Project: Looking at Whole School Guidance in Junior Cycle

2018 Dissemination Conference



The NCGE: A Whole School Guidance Framework (2017) was published and distributed to all post-primary schools in September 2017. The aim of the Framework is to provide a resource for schools to support the planning, development and implementation of a Whole School Guidance Programme that meets students' guidance needs. NCGE is supporting schools in using the Framework by providing additional resources/tools that can be used to explore whole school guidance and to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

NCGE implemented a pilot project with schools nationwide from January – May, 2018 to test the implementation of the Framework in Junior Cycle. 16 schools, with representatives from school management and the guidance counsellor(s), signed up to participate in the pilot. Participating schools were geographically spread and represented small, medium and large schools; urban and rural schools, voluntary secondary, community and comprehensive and ETB schools. The schools formed a community of practice and began the process of exploring whole school guidance in junior cycle using the Framework and the resources. Schools were invited to identify the strengths of their practice and areas for improvement over the course of seven months. A blended methodology was employed to deliver the pilot – online preparation for

workshops through Moodle, two face-to-face workshops and one online meeting. Schools provided NCGE with detailed feedback on the pilot project and the resources being developed to support the Framework.

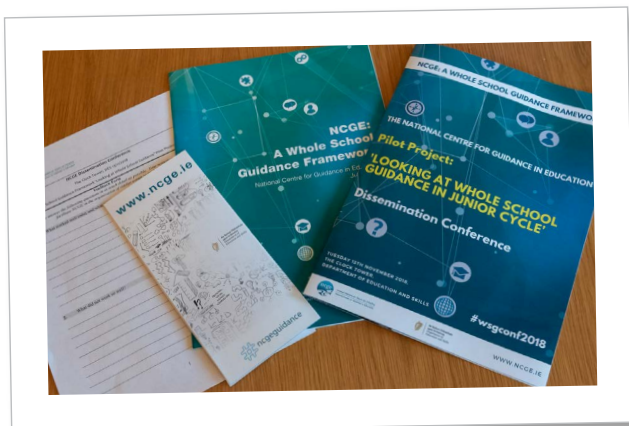
NCGE hosted a dissemination conference on Tuesday, 13th November in the Department of Education and Skills to present the outcomes of its pilot project on *Looking at Whole School Guidance in Junior Cycle*. The conference provided the 16 schools that had participated in the pilot project the opportunity to share their journey with the education partners (policy makers, school management organisations, the teaching unions, guidance counselling training providers and principals and guidance counsellors from schools). Four schools presented their experiences and showcased their work at the conference.



NCGE modified the resources based on the feedback received and these resources were launched at the conference. The resources, organised in three sections, are available from <https://www.ncge.ie/wsg/junior-cycle>. Each resource, offered in an interactive format, provides links to policy and practice guidelines, tools/checklists that can be used to explore whole school guidance and questionnaires that can be used directly with students. In addition, resources such as the subject choice and effective study resources are available from the School Guidance Handbook <https://www.ncge.ie/school-guidance-handbook/search>. These resources have been developed to support the implementation of a continuum of support model for guidance (guidance for all, guidance for some and guidance for a few) in schools.

NCGE will be publishing additional resources over the next few months to support schools in using the Framework and in implementing a continuum of support model for whole school guidance. NCGE also intends to offer CPD to interested schools on a regional basis.

Presentations from a number of the schools that presented their journey are available to download from <https://www.ncge.ie/wsgconf2018>. The schools included Tullamore College, Co. Offaly, Loreto College Foxrock, Co. Dublin, Pobalscoil na Tríonóide, Co. Cork and Scoil Muire agus Pádraig, Co. Mayo. Each school presented its journey highlighting learning, what worked well and did not work so well and plans for the future.



Participating Schools:

- Loreto College, Foxrock is an all-girls voluntary secondary school in south Dublin. The school has two Guidance Counsellors who also are teaching in addition to their role as Guidance Counsellor.
- Scoil Muire is a voluntary, co-educational, stand-alone secondary school in Swinford, Co. Mayo with a current enrolment of 325 students. This includes three non-verbal boys in its Autism Unit. It is also a DEIS school as Swinford is an area with significant levels of deprivation and disadvantage. The staff in Scoil Muire agus Pádraig embrace the challenge that this environment creates and take enormous pride in nurturing their students' talent, in working with such a well behaved group of young people who are achieving results which, for the most part, are significantly above the national average. It is a school where people strive to make DEIS a reality so that equality and opportunity are delivered to all.
- Tullamore College is a non-denominational, ETB DEIS school with 642 pupils. The school had one GC until last year, getting the second GC proved the impetus to join in this exciting programme.
- Pobalscoil na Tríonóide, is a co-educational community school in the coastal town of Youghal, East Cork. It is the sole provider of second level education in the town and also offers education through the medium of Irish in its Aonad Lán Gaelach. Pobalscoil na Tríonóide, opened in September 2006; an amalgamation of the three former 3 schools in Youghal, an ETB school, Loreto convent and CBS. 958 students are currently enrolled in the school and it is projected to grow to over 1100 in the next few years.

This accompanying article, written by Mr. Pat Dunne, Principal, Scoil Muire agus Pádraig, Swinford, Co. Mayo, (one of the presenting schools at the conference) describes the journey taken by this small rural DEIS school during the pilot and presents some of the rich work undertaken by first and second year students supported by school management and the guidance counsellor.

Scoil Muire agus Pádraig is a small, voluntary secondary co-educational school in Swinford in Co. Mayo. It's a DEIS school in an area where rural poverty can often be silent and hidden. The school values its DEIS status because it provides a powerful platform to make a real difference to the lives of its students and parents through the use of focused supports.



The extent of curricular change in Irish education demands an authentic response from every school. The Junior Cycle curriculum with new specifications, new language, new methodologies and new modes of assessment offers creative possibilities to staff as they work in a collaborative way to prepare the young students for a dynamic and complex world. While the restoration of resources to Guidance is welcome, the demands on the Guidance Counsellor are intense and profound. The Wellbeing Guidelines indicate that 'Wellbeing in school starts with the staff,' https://www.ncca.ie/media/2487/wellbeingguidelines_forjunior_cycle.pdf This is a simple but profound truth. It's embodied by the safety message on airlines for parents to put on their own oxygen mask in the event of an emergency before caring for their children. It may seem harsh but there's a definite logic to this advice. So it can be difficult for a school to know where to start given the scale of the change taking place. It's also important to mind people, including the Guidance Counsellor, in the midst of this intense daily activity in school.

The publication of the document, 'A Whole School Guidance Framework' by the NCGE in June 2017 was a key moment for schools. Guidance is an apex point in the whole school, one where students are nurtured and guided as they attempt to manage a range of challenges and achieve their true potential. It provided a coherent place to tease out how 'guidance is a whole school activity.' (https://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Archived-Circulars/cl0009_2012.pdf). It would also help a school to reflect on the efficacy of its guidance service and to help school managements to deepen their own understanding of the notion of guidance for all, guidance for some and guidance for a few which is represented powerfully in the 'Guidance Wheel', https://www.ncge.ie/sites/default/files/Framework_Guidance_POSTERS_P1ONLY.pdf. Therefore, Scoil Muire agus Pádraig

was delighted to join the NGCE pilot project from January to May 2018 following the publication of the Framework. It offered a precious space to reflect on the role of Guidance in the school. Focusing on Guidance provided an anchor for the entire school community to interpret and mediate the change taking place in the school's classrooms and corridors.

At a basic level, participating in the pilot project helped the staff to access expertise within the NCGE and provided opportunities for rich learning from the other fifteen schools. It also focused staff conversations by asking key questions about the nature of the service on offer to the young people. We know that Scoil Muire agus Pádraig is an exceptionally caring school. However, how can we make valid judgements about the quality of the service to the students? A decision to make provision for 400 hours of Wellbeing in 2017-2018 placed Guidance at the heart of each First year student's experience of the curriculum. So there was a deliberate attempt to build on and enhance the existing links between all aspects of school life including the teachers, Year Heads, Pastoral Care team, Guidance Counsellor, mentors and school management to ensure that the students could receive the best possible support.

A weekly meeting between the Guidance Counsellor and school management in addition to the normal Pastoral Care meeting made an enormous difference. It helped us all to deepen our knowledge. While staff were aware of the project, we did not have a major discussion with the teachers about their role in Guidance until we had clarified and deepened our own understanding of the rich possibilities within Guidance.

Meanwhile, the First year students seemed to be making a smooth transition to secondary school. Difficulties with lockers, journals and homework were receding as the Wellbeing classes began to work their magic. The PE classes, the SPHE, CSPE, guidance education and the 'Friends for Life Programme' (<https://www.nbss.ie/interventions-and-projects/wellbeing/friends-for-life>) all created a rich educational experience for the students. One evening three questionnaires entitled 'Developing myself,' 'Developing my learning' and 'Developing my career path' were e-mailed to the First year students without any notice. They were to be completed in the Guidance class the next day. A significant number of students completed them at



Siobhan Kenny
Guidance Counsellor

home shortly after they arrived and this reminded us of the power of ICT and the hunger among the students to reflect on the content of the questionnaires.

Part of the pilot project involved redrafting the questionnaires to simplify the language. Subsequently, every First year student created a PowerPoint presentation about a specific career. The students used a variety of guidance websites to source information and to structure it for the presentation. The students presented their work to the Guidance Counsellor, the Deputy Principal and Principal. This was a very exciting moment for all students as they took such pride in presenting their learning to staff and their fellow students.

It was important to maintain the momentum which had been created in 2017-2018. So in 2018-2019, the Second years developed a more ambitious learning experience. They decided to organise a careers fair using a 'speed dating' model. Ms Siobhan Kenny, the Guidance Counsellor, provided excellent support for the students. However, the students organised everything. They invited a range of people with very varied career paths and experience to share their knowledge. This included self-employed people, public sector employees and people working in multinationals.



They set up the gym and ensured that the event could go smoothly. The Second years invited the First year students to join them in small groups as they visited the different participants. During the next session, the Second years went around with the Sixth years. This was also very interesting as the nature and range of questions changed as the older students are beginning to formalise possible paths after they finish school next summer. Many teachers visited the event throughout the morning and they were very impressed with the fact that the Second year students had delivered such a compelling event. Many of the participants joined the teaching staff for lunch and this helped the school to build strong links with the community. It was also a small token to thank them for their generosity. Aspects of the event were recorded.

A selection of First and Second year students were interviewed on camera later by Ms Kenny. She explored their experience of the transition to Scoil Muire agus Pádraig and the impact of the Guidance programme on their lives. It's fair to say that Guidance is both physically



*Ms Louise Doherty,
Primary Teacher with students*



*Ms Lisa Mc Cauley,
Allergan representative with some
Sixth year students*

and symbolically at the heart of the school. This helps to raise its profile and ensure that the students can receive the best possible care. Viewing the recorded interviews also helped the staff to deepen their knowledge of the issues concerning the young people. The experience of the pilot project was shared at the NCGE Dissemination Conference which was held on Tuesday the 13th of November. This was a very powerful learning experience as schools could reflect on how the project had helped them to refine their practice.

As expected, every school's experience was unique and rich. Scoil Muire agus Pádraig's presentation concluded with two songs by two talented First year students singing Let It Be by the Beatles and The Call by Regina Spektor which was part of the soundtrack to the Chronicles of Narnia, Prince Caspian. The lyrics which reminded people to speak 'words of wisdom' and to 'pick a star on the dark horizon and follow the light' were extremely moving and capture a great deal of the essence of the guidance process. In a sense, Scoil Muire agus Pádraig is only at the start of its journey in relation to Guidance. However, the entire school community is very grateful for the opportunity to participate in the NCGE Pilot Project as the knowledge gained will be a powerful catalyst now and into the future for the students within its care. It helped all to see the Junior Cycle key skills in action in a very meaningful way. It reinforced the importance of trusting the students to scope out their own path with a wise Guidance Counsellor supporting and walking the path with them.

The next steps will enhance the existing high quality guidance service. Most students now refer themselves to the Guidance Counsellor and this is welcome as it indicates a greater level of self-awareness among the student body. We feel we now have a ripe moment to engage with an exceptionally busy staff to help them to reflect on their responsibilities in relation to Guidance. Work will also begin on the development of a mediation programme. This will give the students essential lifelong skills to manage their personal and working lives.

Thanks are due to the staff and students in Scoil Muire agus Pádraig with particular thanks due to the Second year students, Ms Siobhan Kenny, our Guidance Counsellor and Ms Ciara O'Shea, our Deputy Principal. It's also important to thank Ms Jennifer McKenzie, Director NCGE, Ms Linda Darbey, Guidance Programme Co-ordinator NCGE, Mr. Luke Dunne, Guidance Programme Administrator NCGE, Mr. David Cullen, Communications Officer NCGE, Mr. Paul Fields, Director of Schools, Laois Offaly Education and Training Board and Mr. Paul King, Chair, NCGE Guidance Committee.

TIME TO MOVE 2018



In line with the broad scope of guidance provision within FET, during the months of October and November 2018, the NCGE FET Guidance Programme and Euroguidance Ireland worked in cooperation with Eurodesk on the national 'Time To Move' campaign. This activity brought Guidance Counsellors, Youth Information Workers, CTC-Youthreach Advocates and other professionals working with young people at local/regional level together. It enabled and enhanced personal contacts and encouraged future cooperation at local level - for the benefit of young people. The events themselves explored the impact of a period of mobility (volunteering, education/ training, work) for personal and professional development. They also provided a forum for people to share inspirational testimonies and personal stories by returned volunteers, students who have studied in Europe and those who have worked abroad.

Time to Move 2018 (TTM '18) is a Eurodesk Europe-wide campaign aiming to inform young people 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'. In 2017, NCGE FET Guidance Programme Co-coordinator, Mary Stokes, got involved recognising the TTM campaign as an opportunity to bring guidance services and information providers together for networking, and to promote collaboration and communication across the emerging FET information & guidance service sector. The

success of the last year's TTM events (link 1) encouraged Eurodesk Ireland to seek NCGE FET Guidance and Euroguidance Ireland support again for 2018, and the TTM 18 campaign saw a number of successful regional events happening during October and November. <https://www.ncge.ie/TimeToMove-2018>



TTM '18 Sligo had well over 50 attendees, with speakers from the Eurodesk network, Léargas, NCGE and special guest Ruairí McKiernan (social campaigner, founder of Spunout.ie & member of the Council of State) who addressed the attendees.





The Leinster Regional 'Time to Move' was held in DDLETB Training Centre Tallaght, where a lively and purposeful information sharing and networking event was held. This was an excellent collaborative effort between Youth Information officer Susan Scott, Blanchardstown Librarian Siobhan Walshe, NCGE and Eurodesk. During the busy morning, Guidance Counsellors and Guidance Information Officers from Adult Services got to know and work with colleagues from Youth Information Services, INTREO Case Officers, Eurodesk and EuroDirect services. All participants engaged in facilitated workshops and heard presentations aimed at fostering collaboration and co-operation of local approaches that might move young people towards a more international opportunity.

Europe Direct Information Centre, Ballinasloe; Youth Work Ireland, Galway; Clare Youth Services supported by NCGE and Eurodesk came together to organize TTM 18 in Ballinasloe. The attendees were welcomed by Marian Harkin MEP who spoke eloquently about the importance and value of EU Mobility – both from her own experience and her extraordinary journey to MEP, but also in the wider socio political context in which we live. The event highlighted the opportunities for young people aged 18 -30 for working, studying or volunteering abroad. Speakers from Eurodesk Ireland, Léargas and NCGE were joined by past participants of mobility opportunities. This event was made special as, over a delicious buffet lunch, attendees took the opportunity to chat to the speakers and to check out the 'information marketplace'.

U.L. Associate Professor in Politics and Public Administration, Dr. Maura Adshead addressed the TTM 18 event in Co. Tipperary. Dr. Adshead gave a very human, entertaining and encouraging talk addressing the inherent value of travel and mobility – liberally sprinkling entertaining personal anecdotes through the more 'serious' considerations of mobility – and concluding that the benefits will always outweigh the challenges. Dr. Adshead was invited by Pauline Strappe (Youth Information, Participation & Eurodesk Youth Work Ireland – Tipperary) to speak to the gathering of guidance and information providers in the Ballykisteen Hotel; this TTM was a real networking success!



The final TTM 18 event was held in Killarney on November 27th, with a range of information and Guidance providers met and connected in the first TTM in the Kingdom! The event was informative and interesting, with plenty of conversation following more formal presentations.

The events were all very successful, as noted in some comments from evaluations received to date;

'Excellent event – we are all doing work with young people & very often not accessing right combinations of help for them. Networking groups like this would assist with this.'

'We definitely need more events such as this to meet together and discuss what we are all doing and how it links together!'

Time to Move European portal - <https://timetomove.eurodesk.eu/>

Eurodesk Ireland - <http://www.eurodesk.ie/>



Supported Transition: Empowering students with Special Educational Needs to live self-determined lives in socially inclusive communities



When we speak about whole school guidance in post primary schools we refer to the guidance needs of all the students in the school, 1st year to 6th year, and meeting their various personal, careers and educational needs and in particular those who experience extra challenges. In this article Des Henry, Careers & Employment Programme Coordinator, WALK, outlines an initiative currently under way that is engaging with students with intellectual disabilities.

All schools, including special schools, have a remit to provide Guidance Counselling as stated in Section 9 of the Education Act (Government of Ireland, 1998, revised 2017) which stipulates that schools must “ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices” and should formulate this in a school guidance plan. Unlike mainstream education where teachers are subject specialists and guidance counsellors provide guidance throughout the school, logistically, it is almost impossible to provide this model in special schools which are organized on a ‘one class one teacher’ structure. Young people with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) face discrete employment challenges in terms of educational qualification, pathways and choices, work experience, and independence skills. Consequently, it can be assumed that receiving guidance counselling to address such challenges in the senior years of formal education, is essential. There is “considerable evidence that the support provided by guidance counsellors was highly valued by students with SEN and regarded as pivotal in enabling them to make informed choices about post-school options” (Mc Guckin, Shevlin, Bell, and Devecchi, 2013, p. 6).

Students attending special schools are directed to the HSE Training and Occupational Support Service, a service provided to people with disabilities aged from 18

– 65 years. The service does not engage with students across the final two years of school – senior classes - other than to work with schools and school age teams to identify and plan for young people leaving school who require an adult HSE funded day service. This illustrates a very narrow perspective and indeed expectations of service providers and does not therefore represent an equivalent model of the school-based guidance provided in mainstream education.

Article 23 (i) of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that: “Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment”. In 2012, the European Social Fund in partnership with the Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection, funded a number of initiatives under the Disability Activation Project (DACT), with the remit:

“to provide people with disability with the appropriate progression, education and development opportunities to enhance their access to employment. The project will also be aimed at promoting and supporting, amongst employers, the recruitment and retention of people with disabilities”.

One of these initiatives, the WALK PEER (Providing Equal Employment Routes) programme, is a “supported transition” model developed to engage young



people with ID whilst they are in school, to support them to develop their career aspirations, explore mainstream opportunities, and implement ambitious transition plans. The model facilitates collaboration between the individual student, their families and teachers, and the wider society in further / higher education, employment, social services, and disability service provision, to maximise progression within mainstream society, thus avoiding lives in institutional day services. Interestingly a core element of the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for people with disabilities (2015) (<http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Comprehensive%20Employment%20Strategy%20for%20People%20with%20Disabilities%20-%20FINAL.pdf/Files/Comprehensive%20Employment%20Strategy%20for%20People%20with%20Disabilities%20-%20FINAL.pdf>) has identified the necessity for cross collaboration of key departmental personnel to effectively support young people with disabilities making the transitions from compulsory education to further/higher education, training and or employment. Indeed, it can be argued that the 'WALK PEER model clearly mirrors all of the strategic priorities and contains the essential components for this to be realised' (Scanlon & Doyle, 2018).

WALK PEER practices a cyclical “Explore, Experience, Evaluate” model of transition planning. Students are encouraged to explore their “dream job”, experience what it is like to work in that job and evaluate how they can plan a path to achieving their dream. It’s all about supporting the student to get information, make informed choices and doing the simple things well all the time.

A typical example of what a WALK PEER Careers & Employment Facilitator will experience is a student in a Special School, aged 16, who says they want to work in an office when they leave school, but do not know exactly what they would be doing in an office or what skills they may need to work in an office or what post-school course they would need to complete to get a job in an office. They just like the idea of the office environment and may know somebody (a parent of a relative) who works in an office. The WALK PEER model supports the student to;

- Explore the idea of working in an office for themselves
- Experience office work in one or more employment settings outside the school
- Evaluate what they then think about “working in an office” as a career choice.

If they are still happy with this career choice, they are then supported to;

- Explore how they will transition from school to getting a job in an office
- Experience what the transition options will look like – e.g. visit all post-school opportunities to gain the skills and competencies they will need to work in an office
- Evaluate all the information they have gathered to make informed choices for themselves.



If they then choose to take the mainstream path on leaving school, the WALK PEER Careers & Employment Facilitator continues to support the student to bridge the gap from school to mainstream Further Education, Training & Employment for a further three years, to sustainability.

The key elements to developing self-determination in transition planning are;

- Early Intervention – when is it appropriate to think about my career path?
- Person-Centred – what support do I need to make my own choices?
- Natural supports – who is best placed to support me at this time?
- Outcome Focused – what is the ultimate goal?
- Promote abilities & support needs!

Research has established how the concept of “Supported Transition” which is the central concept of the WALK PEER model broadened horizons and provided positive, concrete, and long-term outcomes for young people with an ID leaving special schools. The model demonstrated a strong correlation between support programmes and transition planning, which are critical if young people with ID, or indeed young people with disabilities, are to realise their goals and succeed. The research clearly demonstrated how these translate into their role in realization of goals and successes, and portrayed concrete examples of strategies and key people who have facilitated transition and transition planning (Scanlon & Doyle 2018) For a full overview please see the recently published DCU report on Progressing Accessible Supported Transitions to Employment at <http://walk.ie/perch/resources/admin/paste-report-final-oct-2018.pdf>



The Author

Des Henry is Careers & Employment Programme Coordinator in WALK, an organisation who are leaders in a movement for change, empowering people with disabilities to live self-determined lives in socially inclusive communities. www.walk.ie



RESEARCH

Enhancing Employability through Positive Interventions for improving Career potential (EEPIC)



We continue to receive examples of research from the guidance community and, as promoters of evidence-based practice, we continue to publish. In this article, Chartered Work & Organisational Psychologist, Dr Nuala Whelan, focusses on the effectiveness of Ireland's labour market policy on the well-being and employability of long-term unemployed job seekers. This stems from her doctoral research on this topic funded by the Irish Research Council and could inform the future development of guidance services for unemployed adults.

Having worked in the Local Employment Service for many years, I was often struck by the unrecognised and latent potential of people, and how it begins to emerge when they start a journey of career exploration or job seeking. Many practitioners talk about the subtle changes they see as clients learn more about who they are, what their strengths and capabilities may be, and what their labour market potential is. Not only do people display increased levels of hopefulness for the future and curiosity about where it will take them, but they also express feelings of improved well-being.

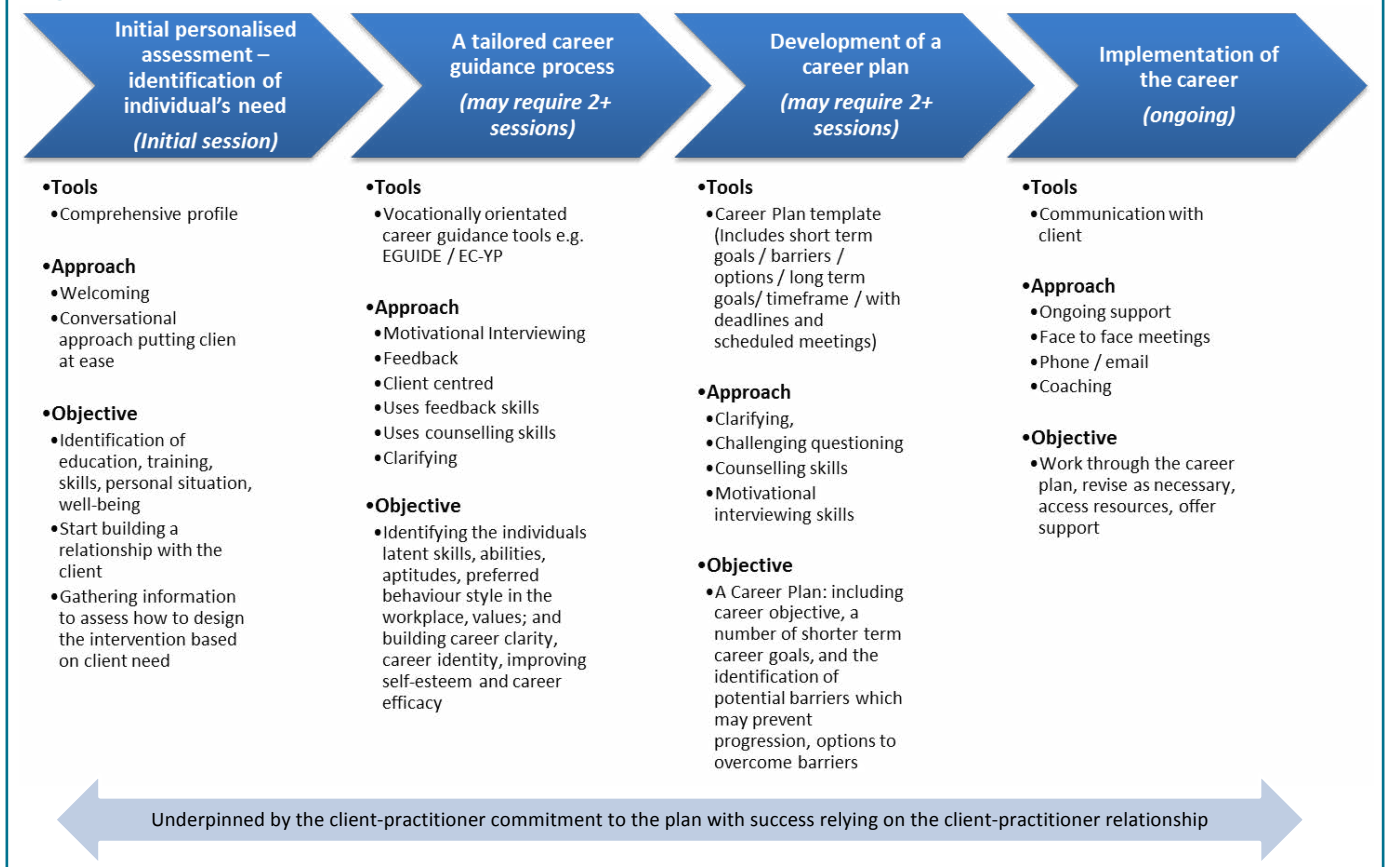
With this in mind I set out to investigate the impact of a career guidance focused employment support intervention, 'EEPIC' (see Fig.1) on key re-employment factors, such as well-being, career efficacy, and increased employability.

The Psychosocial Impact of Unemployment

It is widely acknowledged that at an individual level unemployment results in a loss of income and declining job-related skills and is often considered a stressful life event (Wanberg, Zhang, & Diehn, 2010), comparable with other traumatic events such as coping with divorce or the death of a spouse (Chen & Lim, 2012; Defrank

& Ivancevich, 1986). Indeed, a large body of research undertaken since the early 1980s has provided convincing evidence that psychological well-being and subsequent re-employment are both negatively affected by unemployment (e.g. Fryer & Payne, 1986; Jahoda, 1979, 1981; Murphy & Athanasou, 1999; Paul & Moser, 2009; Wanberg, 2012). A number of meta-analytic studies, which have synthesised much of the research in this area, provide robust evidence for the strong association between unemployment and lower levels of psychological well-being (e.g. McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki, 2005; Murphy & Athanasou, 1999; Paul & Moser, 2009). Their collective findings shed light on the causal nature of reduced well-being in the unemployed and the influence of moderating variables, such as age and gender, implying its individualised effects. In fact, Paul and Moser (2009) warned that unemployment poses a serious threat to public mental health and should not be underestimated when compared to other potential mental health risk factors. This is important as positive mental health has been found to contribute to overall well-being, enabling individuals to realise their abilities, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively, and make important contributions to their communities (WHO, 2012).

Fig 1.



Tackling unemployment through labour market policy

Unemployment continues to be a persistent global problem attracting considerable interest from governments, policy makers, researchers and practitioners. During the last three decades or so, there has been a significant shift in international labour market policy toward activation and active labour market policy to help the unemployed progress more quickly into employment. In Ireland, policy changes have been more recent, with the implementation of the Pathways to Work policy (PTWP; 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016-2020). Despite our current low unemployment rate in Ireland (5.3%, CSO, Oct 2018), long-term unemployment (LTU), youth unemployment and insecure work remain problematic and more work is needed to identify how best to intervene effectively and appropriately so as to support job seekers, particularly with regard to securing quality sustainable employment, and building a healthy and resilient workforce for the future.

Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMPs) are the most commonly used means of tackling unemployment and broadly aim to increase employability, support people to re-access the labour market, and reduce the risk of future unemployment (Coutts, Stuckler, & Cann, 2014). However, the ways in which these policies are designed and implemented can vary considerably across different jurisdictions. For example, Nordic countries have traditionally opted for models which aim to build

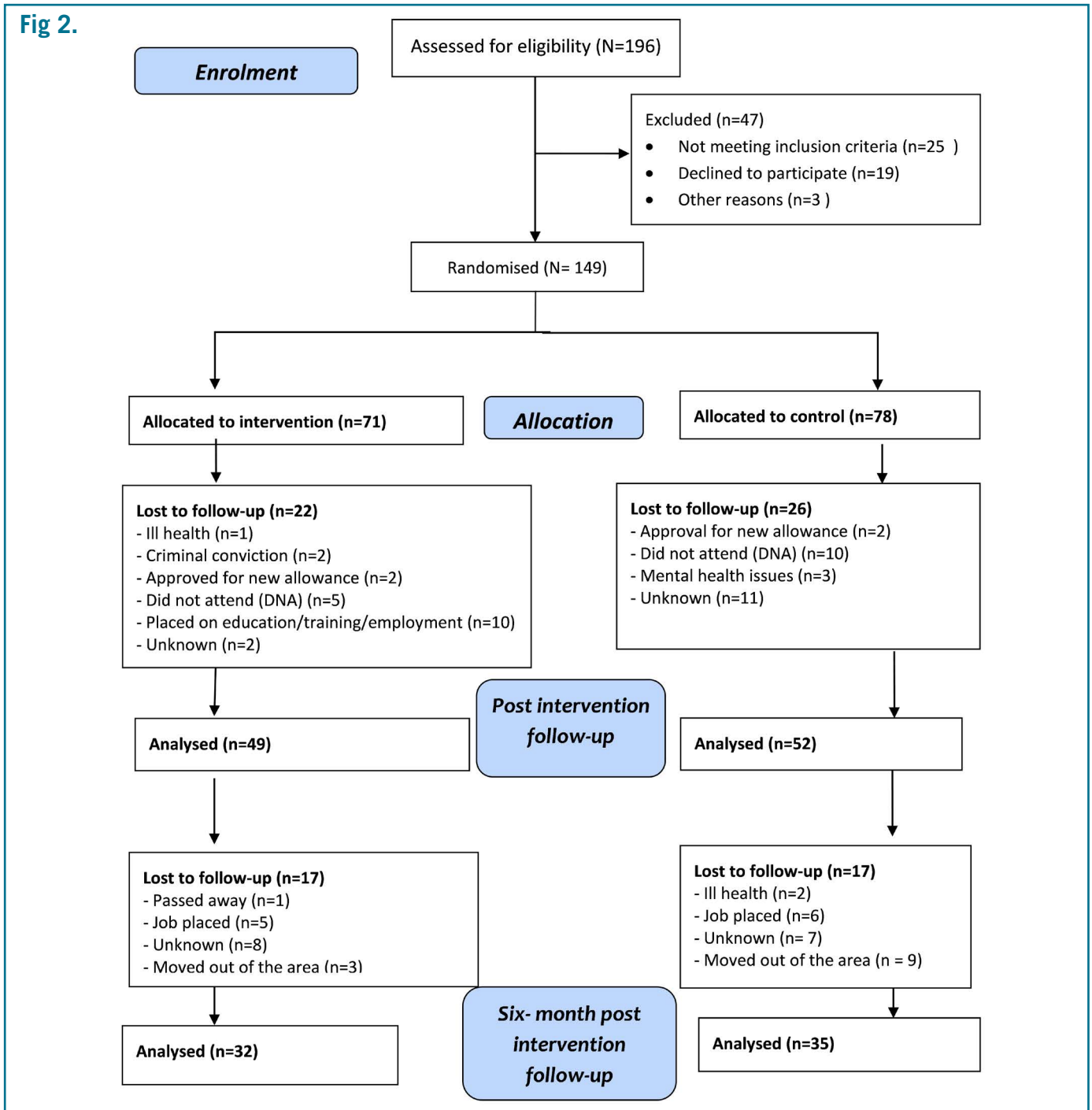
human capital whereas countries, such as the UK and the US use more direct 'work-first' approaches which require unemployed people to accept the first job offered regardless of its quality in terms of pay and conditions.

While PTWP has been critiqued as a work-first policy (Boland & Griffin, 2015), many have recognised its greater capacity for engagement with unemployed people (O'Connell, 2017) leading to what the OECD has described as a 'much improved labour market activation regime' (2015, p.16). Yet despite the widespread use of ALMPs, there have been very few evaluations; in particular, we know little about their impact on well-being and employability. In fact, their effectiveness tends to be measured specifically in terms of job placement or reductions in welfare dependency (Coutts et al., 2014).

The EEPIK Study

The EEPIK study sought to evaluate the PTWP in terms of key re-employment factors, including well-being, career efficacy, and increased employability. It took the form of a single-centre randomised controlled trial with a sample of LTU clients (N=149) randomly assigned into a high support intervention or the 'service as usual' control group (see Fig.2). Participants were followed up immediately post-intervention and six months later to assess changes in well-being and employability outcomes. While there were many findings from the study, three important findings for guidance and employment services emerged.

Fig 2.



- Baseline analysis of self-reported psychological well-being (GHQ-12) revealed that almost three-quarters (72%) of the entire sample scored at or above the clinical cut-off indicating a need for formal mental health intervention. This has important implications for employment services' initial engagement with job seekers.
- Findings suggest that both services led to improvements over time in well-being and employability, albeit with a number of more positive effects observed amongst male intervention participants in terms of hopefulness and career efficacy. Employability outcomes, assessed using self-reported measures of hopefulness, self-esteem, career efficacy, and perceived employability, all improved.

- Intervention participants were more likely to progress to education and training than job seeking when compared to control participants.

A subsequent implementation process evaluation highlighted the important role of the practitioner-client relationship, the informal service setting, and the skill sets of practitioners in improving outcomes.

This study is the first to examine the PTWP with regard to psychological well-being and employability outcomes for the unemployed. It provides support for detailing the 'how to' of implementation, emphasising the potential added value of well-designed interventions in terms of mental health and well-being outcomes, and career progression, not just for vulnerable job seekers but for all job seekers.

This research was carried out with the support of the Ballymun Job Centre and Maynooth University (Departments of Psychology and Sociology), and has been funded in part by the Irish Research Council through their Employment Based Postgraduate Programme.



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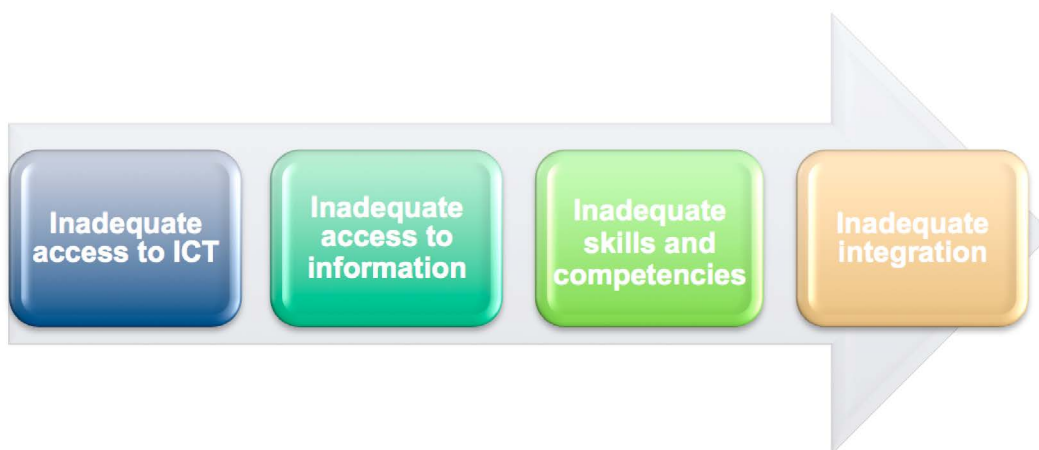
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Perceived challenges in implementing ICT in career services



Information and communication technology (ICT) has gradually gained a firm foothold within the field of guidance counselling. There is evidence of significant progress in integrating ICT into career services and related practices; however, the potential for further improvement persists. With the continuous proliferation of new technologies, improving the implementation of ICT in career services has become increasingly important. In this article Dr Jaana Kettunen outlines research from career development experts' perspectives; providing important insights into the perceived challenges involved in the implementation of ICT in career services.



Perceived challenges in implementing ICT in career services; four categories were identified, which can be considered on a continuum ranging from inadequate access to inadequate integration.

From inadequate access to inadequate integration

The first challenge regarding ICT implementation in career services was perceived as *inadequate access to ICT*. Without adequate infrastructure, it is impossible to fully capitalise on the rapidly expanding opportunities afforded by ICT. There is an acknowledged need for national guidelines and strategies from which to operate so as to secure funding to ensure that citizens have access to career services, including ICT-based services.

The second challenge in the implementation of ICT in career services was perceived as *inadequate access to information* and career-related content and materials. The development emphasis is on consistent career information, made available through modernised resources and services. However, even when the requisite infrastructure is available and individuals are able to access the technology, the cost of adequate bandwidth and relevant content, systems or services remains an important concern in some countries.

The third challenge in implementing ICT in career services was perceived as *inadequate staff skills and competencies*. The need for practices and training methods to improve the digital skills of citizens and career practitioners was highlighted. An individual's lack of general computer skills can constrain the implementation and everyday use of ICT. The successful integration of existing and emerging technologies in career services depends not only on the available skills or technical

facilities, but also on practitioners' willingness to accept the service delivery changes that new technologies may bring.

The fourth challenge in the implementation of ICT in career services was conceived as *inadequate integration*. The identified improvement need at the system level is a commitment to the sustainable development of ICT in the career services sector, including the development of plans and statements of cooperation and engagement that spell out joint responsibilities, objectives, agreed contributions or resources, and other aspects of the linked but distinct roles of the participating actors.

Implementation is an ongoing process

To improve ICT implementation in career development, existing barriers to implementing effective Internet-based guidance must be prioritised, addressed, and overcome at all career development levels. Implementation is an ongoing process; by better anticipating challenges before they occur, less time will be needed to resolve issues that could have been avoided. Ultimately, more effective implementation is seen to promote better use of higher-quality resources and services by citizens. It is interesting to note that although the four categories identified here relate to ICT, an adequate response to these implementation issues emphasises human rather than technological solutions.

Reference:

"Challenges in implementing ICT in career services: Perspectives from Career Development Experts" is openly available here: <https://rdcu.be/Ovho>



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A study on mobility

- Transnational Mobility in Initial Vocational Education and Training in Germany - 2017



Career guidance is sometimes characterised as a globally travelling idea. It exists in some form in most developed countries and many developing countries. Since the beginning of 2000, a series of initiatives have highlighted the need to develop effective systems for gathering data on the impact of career development/career guidance services in a number of respects, such as individual well-being, social inclusion, mobility, and economic development. A characteristic of these initiatives has been gathering and sharing of evidence between different countries. In this ‘Europe in Practice’ section we take a look at developments in mobility within VET in Germany which outlines the benefits of opportunities to learn and train in another country as part of VET programmes.

This article is kindly reproduced from the website of the German Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) with content compiled by Berthold Hübers Head of the Mobility and Internationalisation of Vocational Education and Training Team (BIBB) and Jan Kröll, Project Head and Partner of Uzbonn GmbH (Survey Centre Bonn)

The European Council defined a benchmark of 6% for VET mobility in Europe by 2020. The German Bundestag for its part set a national benchmark of 10% for VET mobility, also for 2020. The study presents the status quo of VET mobility in Germany in 2017. Whereas the European benchmark has almost been reached in Germany, the national target still requires additional efforts by all stakeholders.

Stays abroad within vocational education and training

Scope, benefits and support requirements

International requirements in the world of work are increasing in the wake of globalisation. Periods of time spent abroad are considered to offer a high degree of

potential in terms of imparting the necessary competencies in this regard. In light of this, the German Bundestag has set out the objective that, by 2020, at least ten per cent of all persons completing dual VET should have spent part of such training abroad. What is the current state of affairs, who finances mobility, and how is the benefit of such periods spent abroad evaluated? And what are the reasons stated by trainees, companies and schools not taking part in foreign stays? These questions are investigated on the basis of a representative survey, and conclusions are also drawn with regard to the endeavours being undertaken to increase the number and extent of stays abroad.

Significance of periods of time spent abroad

An explicit regulation relating to foreign stays in VET was included within the scope of the reform of the Berufsbildungsgesetz (BBiG) [Vocational Training Act] in 2005. This covered two aspects. The intention was to put existing practice on a secure legal footing whilst also sending out a signal that the duration and number of foreign stays should continue to be extended. Only two years after the new regulation had entered into force, the Innovation in Vocational Education and Training Working Group recommended that the amount of periods spent

abroad should be doubled by the year 2015 (cf. BMBF 2007, p. 24). After the Council of the European Union (2011) stipulated an EU benchmark of six per cent mobility by 2020, the German Bundestag went one stage further by setting the national benchmark at ten per cent by 2020 (cf. Deutscher Bundestag 2012).

Three years prior to the expiry of this time frame, the National Agency Education for Europe at BIBB (NA at BIBB) commissioned a study to identify the scope, characteristics and impact of transnational mobility and to determine the support required by stakeholders (cf. Information Box). The alignment of the study is comparable to its predecessor investigation (cf. FRIEDRICH/KÖRBEL 2011) in many respects.

Mobility Study

The reference group for the study consisted of trainees in Sector I “Vocational education and training” in the Integrated Training Reporting System (iABE), who in 2017 were in the final year of their vocational training. They were surveyed alongside the companies providing training and the schools during the period from April to mid-September 2017. The data presented was acquired via three nationwide target group specific Surveys:

- An online questionnaire of trainees in final classes (n = 5,394, of which 563 were mobile)
- An online questionnaire of vocational schools or of their directors (n = 137, of which 93 have trainees involved in mobility measures either currently or in the past)
- An online questionnaire of companies providing training or of training heads (n = 120, of which 37 have trainees involved in mobility measures either currently or in the past).

All target groups were contacted directly or indirectly via the vocational schools. Various causes (including a high degree of self-selection on the part of the vocational schools) mean that the proportion of trainees with foreign experience identified via the online questionnaire seems to be a significant overestimate.

Because of this, a method to extrapolate a fact-based, realistic and externally validatable mobility rate was designed in conjunction with the NA at BIBB. This extrapolation essentially combines the proportion of Erasmus+ funded trainees identified in the study with the actual number of trainees shown to have received financing in accordance with the NA at BIBB.

Although the distribution of the characteristic “federal state in which VET is being completed” was successfully identified via the sampling procedure alone, this deviated slightly from the known distribution of this characteristic in the statistical population. For this reason, specific adapted weightings were calculated for each federal state, and these were then used in the evaluation of the online questionnaire of trainees (cf. NA at BIBB 2018).

Inventory of mobility

The main objective of the study was to conduct an inventory of transnational mobility in initial VET in the Federal Republic of Germany. An extrapolation (cf. Information Box) conducted on the basis of the statistics collected within the study and using data available to the NA at BIBB produced the following results. 30,785 trainees completed one or more stays abroad during the course of their initial VET. In relative terms, this figure represents 5.3 per cent of persons completing VET in 2017, only just over halfway to achieving the benchmark stated for 2020.

The countries visited by the trainees’ were predominantly in Europe. The United Kingdom was the most popular destination by a considerable distance and accounted for almost one in four training-related stays abroad. The Netherlands and France, two western neighbours of Germany, followed some way behind. A total of 12.2 per cent of destination countries were outside the European Union. The favourite non-European destination was the USA, which attracted one sixth of visits.

With regard to the financing of stays abroad, the central role played by the EU education programme Erasmus+ for mobility in VET is revealed. Nearly one in two (48.6 %) of the trainees surveyed had received funding for at least one stay via the Erasmus+ programme. Around 40 per cent of the internationally mobile trainees had (also) used private means to finance their foreign stays. One third (33.7 %) had even had their costs (partially) covered by the respective company providing training.

More than 85 per cent of the periods spent abroad by trainees were of a duration of no more than one month. Duration of stay is connected with the way in which it is financed. Whereas privately or company-funded foreign stays frequently did not exceed a maximum period of one week, visits that enjoyed public financing tended to extend over significantly longer periods of between three weeks and three months. Within the scope of Erasmus+, for example, funding is only provided for foreign stays from a minimum duration of two weeks.

Subjective evaluation of the benefit of periods spent abroad

Trainees taking part in such international mobility measures stated that their most important motivational factor for participation in a stay abroad was the opportunity to pursue personal growth. The study confirms that this expectation was generally fulfilled.

The three survey groups of trainees, vocational schools and companies were surveyed at the same time on the dimensions of knowledge, skills, competencies and occupational opportunities.

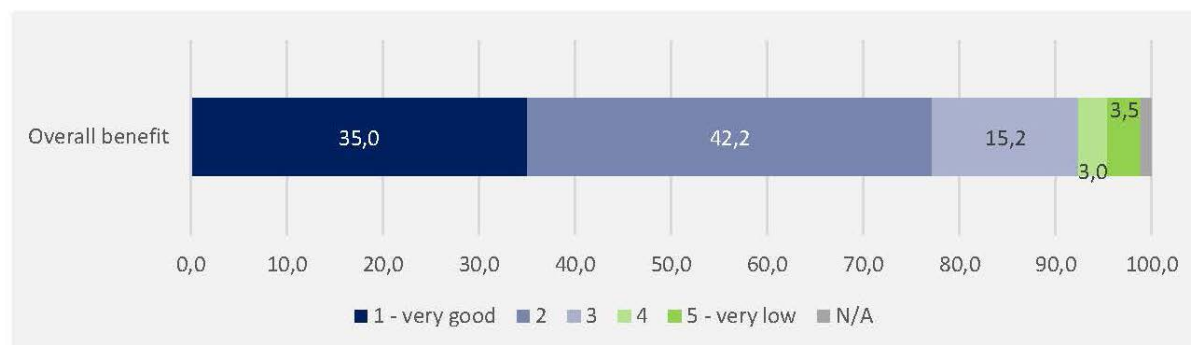
It is noticeable that the companies and schools evaluate the impacts in a similar way to the trainees. Consensus prevails between all participants in this regard. Nevertheless, one conspicuous aspect is that vocational schools consistently give the most positive assessment.

Respondents identify that the greatest development takes place in the areas of personal competencies and knowledge. Personal competencies, which the respondents believe are particularly fostered by a stay abroad, include competence, the willingness to assume responsibility, motivation and the ability to work autonomously. In respect of knowledge, a growth in language abilities and in familiarity with the country and its people was emphasised in particular. Occupational skills, such as cooperation with international teams and partners, were also improved in most cases, albeit not as consistently as the characteristics stated above when viewed in the round.

Apart from these individual characteristics, the young people were also asked to provide an overall assessment of the benefit of their period spent abroad. As Figure 1 shows, more than three quarters (77.2 %) believed that total benefits were high or even very high. Only a small number of trainees 6.5 % felt that their experiences had brought (very) little benefit.

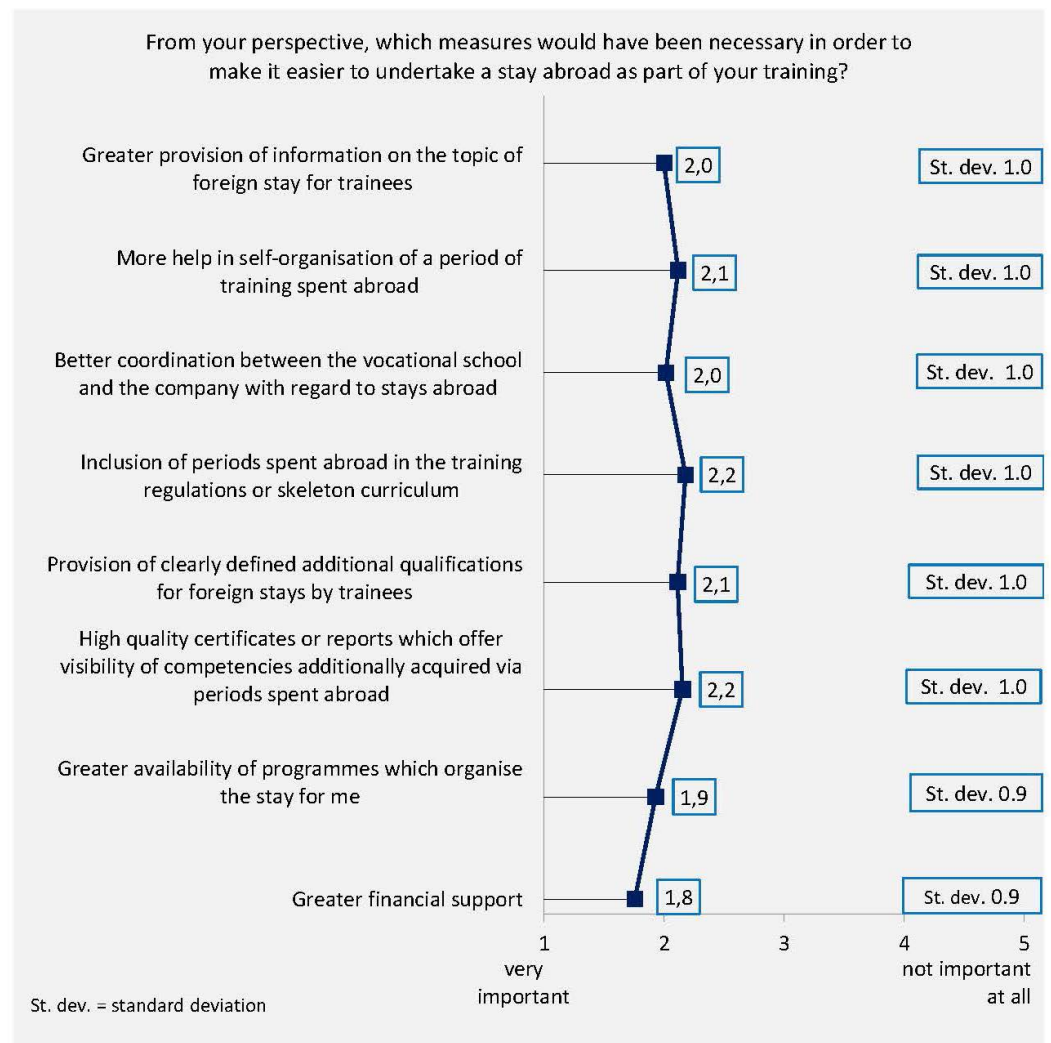
Benefits perceived are influenced by the nature of the foreign stay and by the sources of financing involved. On a scale from 1 (very high) to 5 (very low), practical placements, including placements combined with school attendance (as long as the former aspect predominates) are more likely to receive a positive assessment. The average value (AV) in such cases is between 1.7 and 1.8 (as opposed to an overall average value of 2.0). By way of contrast, measures which (primarily) involve school attendance and installation visits and trade fair participations are viewed as being slightly less useful (AV = 2.2). Involvement in financing by public funding programmes and foundations generally exerts a positive influence on perceived benefits. The sample size permits a particular consideration of the Erasmus+ programme to be undertaken. On average, the benefit delivered by periods spent abroad under the auspices of this funding programme receives a significantly higher evaluation than stays abroad not involving such a financing source (AV 1.7 as opposed to 2.2). Very short stays of periods up to and including three days (MW = 2.7) continue to be viewed as less useful than foreign stays of up to and including seven days. In turn, the latter are perceived as being less beneficial than longer trips of up to one month in duration (AV = 1.7, 1.8 and 1.9 respectively).

Figure 1: Overall benefit of a period spent abroad from the point of view of the trainees (proportions in per cent)



Support requirements and funding opportunities

Figure 2:
Support requirements
to make foreign stays
easier from the point
of view of the trainees
(average values)



Trainees, companies and schools never involved in mobility measures were also surveyed alongside stakeholders who have participated in international activities. The aim was that the former should evaluate the benefits of a period spent abroad even if they had not yet gathered any experience of their own in this regard. The trainees surveyed took a fundamentally positive view of mobility within the scope of training. Only six per cent of trainees not involved in mobility expected that such measures would bring no benefits. Slightly more than half (54.2 %) of companies not previously involved in mobility measures also expressed fundamental interest in realising stays abroad. The same view was articulated by just under two thirds (63.7 %) of schools which had thus far remained inactive in this respect. A fundamental interest in mobility thus exists amongst all stakeholders involved.

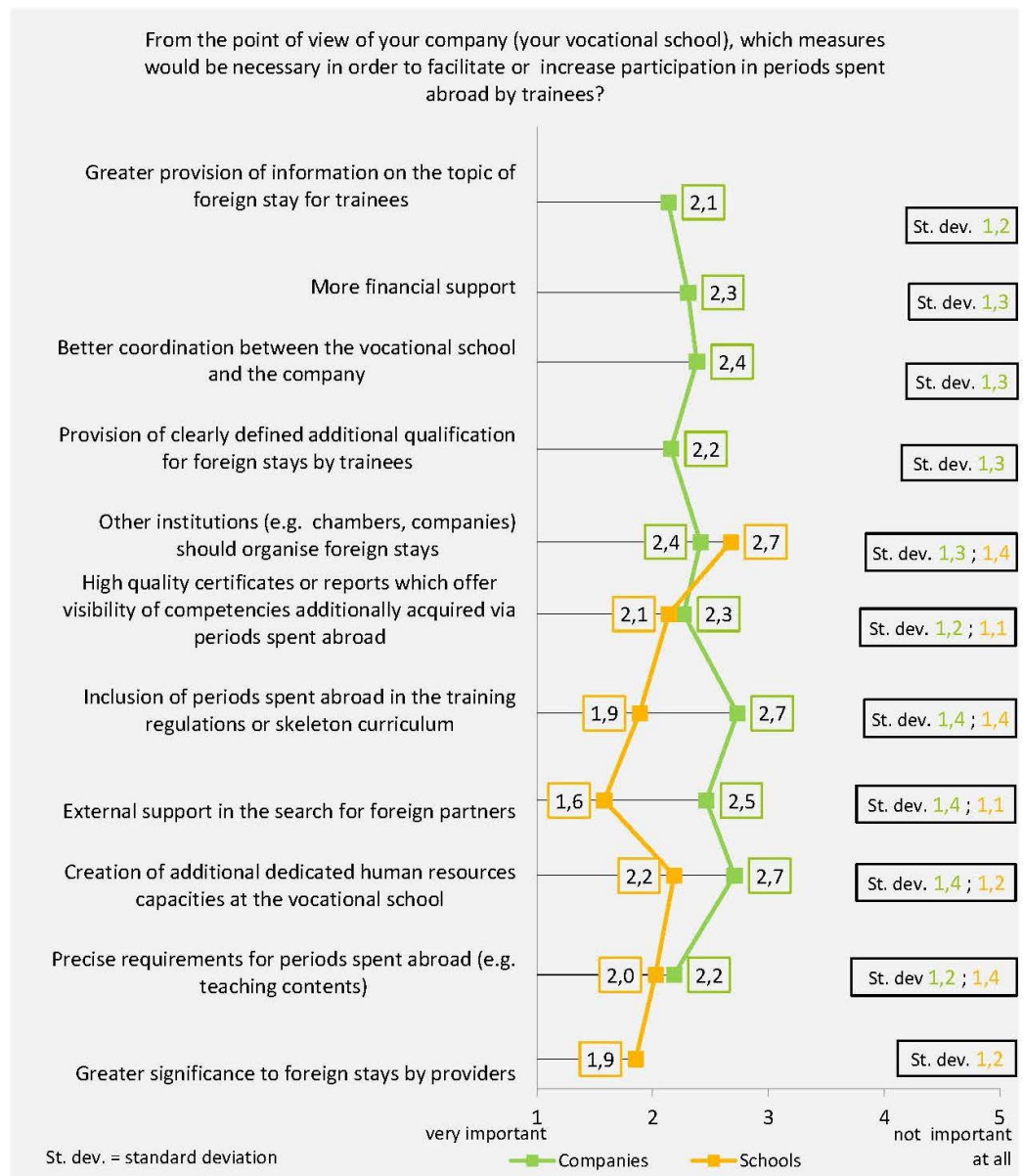
This means that potential to increase mobility rate is also in place and makes it all the more interesting to learn what has previously discouraged these groups from taking part in or supporting mobility periods abroad.

The main reason for the trainees was the feeling of being well qualified also without periods abroad (50.2) and for many trainees periods abroad within the scope of training were too expensive (49.7 %). There were also frequent complaints of a lack of support (40.2 %).

The study identified the support requirements for the three survey groups, and these are described below (cf. Figures 2 and 3). It is noticeable that all the support measures suggested in the questionnaire were considered to be important or even very important.

In line with the reasons for immobility stated above, trainees indicate that the most relevant factors are more financial support (AV = 1.8) and larger provision of programmes to organise mobility (AV = 1.9) (cf. Figure 2). They also wish to have more extensive information services and better coordination between the learning venues in respect of periods spent abroad (AV = 2.0 in each case). Trainees accord the lowest ranking, albeit still with an AV of 2.2, to the inclusion of periods spent abroad in training regulations or skeleton curricula and to the opportunity to acquire additional qualifications and high quality certificates.

Figure 3:
Support requirements to make foreign stays easier from the point of view of the vocational schools and companies (average values)



Despite the small sample size, the school directors and company representatives surveys provide valuable indications (cf. Figure 3). They cite a lack of financial support and inadequate communication of existing funding programmes as reasons why they have not thus far assisted their trainees to take part in foreign stays.

Companies view greater provision of information (AV = 2.1) and financial support (AV = 2.3) as suitable support measures that would facilitate periods spent abroad. In addition, the companies believe that provision of clearly defined additional qualifications (AV = 2.2) and appropriate certification or documentation of these additional qualifications (AV = 2.3) would be helpful.

They agree with the schools that the requirements made of periods spent abroad, in particular with regard to learning contents, should be precisely formulated (AV = 2.2 and 2.0 respectively). However, the most important aspect from the perspective of the vocational schools

is external support in the search for foreign partners (AV = 1.6). Further measures that the schools believe would be conducive are the inclusion of periods spent abroad in training regulations or skeleton curricula and the according of increased significance to foreign stays by providers (AV = 1.9 in each case). Vocational schools thus mainly perceive that stronger institutionalisation of periods spent abroad represents a suitable pathway for the fostering of such measures. Their views differ from those of the companies in this regard. Although the latter believe that inclusion of foreign stays in regulatory instruments is important, an average value of 2.7 indicates that they do not deem this to be quite as relevant.

Assessments are furthermore very close in respect of the high quality documentation of competencies acquired abroad in the form of certificates or reports (AV = 2.1). This is also something which is desired by the companies (see above) in order to structure participation in foreign stays by trainees in a more attractive manner.

Firmly establishing periods spent abroad as an option

The initial conclusion which may be drawn is that transnational mobility in VET has risen from three per cent to 5.3 per cent since the predecessor study published in 2011 (cf. FRIEDRICH/KÖRBEL 2011). Despite this positive development, particular endeavours will be necessary over the coming years in order to bring even more significant increases with a view to achieving the ten per cent objective. All survey groups are fundamentally open to periods spent abroad within the scope of training, and the attendant benefits are even recognised by those parties not active in such measures. For this reason, the focus does not need to be placed on promoting the benefits of foreign stays to the same extent as was necessary a few years ago. The outcomes of the study suggest that further measures aimed at reaching all participants should be developed. Four main areas can be identified on the basis of the support needs expressed by the respondents:

- More information
- Better financial support
- More practical assistance
- Firm establishment within training programmes.

The first three points relate to demands regarding the quantitative and qualitative development of existing instruments with which we are already familiar. Much is already being done within the various programmes and projects, but these efforts are obviously still insufficient.

The fourth aspect, which makes reference to the level of regulatory instruments, is a new element. Trainees and companies wish to have high quality certificates and clearly defined additional qualifications, and schools desire such components to be firmly established in the training regulations and skeleton curricula. Although the regulatory instruments afford the necessary leeway to plan periods spent abroad, this facility is not being used. There is, for example, no occupation in which nationally standardised learning outcomes which could be acquired within the scope of a foreign stay have been defined. Neither is there any occupation in which uniform additional qualifications have been created for trainees to choose from. Action therefore needs to be taken given the fact that over 30,000 stays abroad took place in 2017 and in light of the increase in such measures that is both foreseeable and desirable. Companies, schools and trainees all wish to avail themselves of this international option. It could be enshrined within the training regulations for the relevant occupations as a high quality and uniform standard via optional additional or elective qualifications. Companies which send their trainees abroad could make use of this opportunity. Those who have no need to do

so would not be impeded with regard to their capacity to provide training. The support requirements for trainees, companies and schools identified in the study indicate that such options could be used in the training regulations and that the organisation of periods spent abroad could be made easier. The outcome could be that the number, quality and visibility of foreign stays could be increased, thus enhancing the attractiveness of VET in overall Terms.

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Full study report:

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Additional useful link:

Mid-term Evaluation of Erasmus+ Programme 2014-2020 NATIONAL REPORT: IRELAND, 12 JUNE 2017 - http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/erasmusplus2/files/el_national_report/IE_National%20Report.pdf



An update from Euroguidance Ireland



NCGE hosts the Euroguidance Centre for Ireland, co-funded by the Department of Education and Skills and the European Commission. As part of the Euroguidance network, Euroguidance Ireland continues its efforts to promote educational mobility.

In this article, we outline the type of activities and work involved in representing Ireland in this important EU Commission funded programme. This is done through regular attendance and contributions to Euroguidance network meetings, the provision of the Mobility Guidance Counselling course for Irish guidance counsellors and the ongoing development of an innovative school based programme 'Euro-Quest'. Euroguidance Ireland also provides guidance support for Irish students in the European Schools and assists in promoting educational mobility at conferences and exhibitions in Ireland and abroad.

Euroguidance Ireland's attendance at Network meetings:

April 2018 - Bradford

A Euroguidance network meeting was held in Bradford, Leeds, UK on 17/18 April 2018, and was attended by NCGE Director, Jennifer McKenzie, Euroguidance Officer, Hazel Stanley and NCGE Communications Officer, David Cullen. You can find out more details in relation to this meeting in a previous 'NCGE News' article. <https://www.ncge.ie/sites/default/files/NN49-Euroguidance-Network%20meeting.pdf>

October 2018 - Reykjavik

The next Euroguidance meeting was held in Reykjavik, Iceland on the 16/17 October 2018. This was attended by Euroguidance Officer, Hazel Stanley and NCGE Communications Officer David Cullen. The establishment of a 'Steering' working group for the Network had been proposed in Bradford and a subsequent sub-group

meeting in Tallinn, the Reykjavik meeting focused on the progression of this 'Steering' group.

The existing Euroguidance working groups; Strategy and Quality, Communication and Promotion, Staff Development and Mobility focused on the strategic priorities of the Euroguidance network and issues such as the co-ordination of information on guidance related events and the dissemination of these via the Euroguidance Network website <https://www.euroguidance.eu/>. Developments to the *Learning Opportunities and Qualifications in Europe* portal (formerly known as Ploteus) <https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/> were also considered as were methods of increasing Euroguidance inputs into the European Commission's guidance related communications. Ways of disseminating good practice examples across Europe and the collection of resources on mobility for guidance professionals were similarly discussed.



November 2018 - European Mobility Conference, Cologne



A 'Learning by Leaving' conference (<https://learningbyleaving.eu/>), promoting mobility in education and employment across Europe, is held annually in a different European country. It is regularly attended by representatives from Euroguidance, Europass (<https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/>), EURES (<https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/homepage>) and Eurodesk (<https://eurodesk.eu/>).

This year it was held on 19/21 November 2018 in Cologne, Germany. 125 representatives from 23 EU countries participated with Euroguidance Officer, Hazel Stanley, attending from Ireland.

An update on the Europass Decision (<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1223&newsId=2638&furtherNews=yes>) was conveyed by William O'Keeffe, of the European Commission Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. Many examples of good practice were also shared through structured and informal meetings during the conference. It was an excellent opportunity for members of each of the services (Euroguidance, Europass,



EURES and Eurodesk) to synergise their common goals for the progression of European mobility. There was a formal exhibition of good practices on the final day, where each country showcased posters of current initiatives. Hazel Stanley presented a poster on the Euroguidance Ireland CPD module - 'Guidance Counselling for Mobility' (more details below)

Mobility Guidance Counselling (CPD):

<https://euroguidance.ie/cpd-mobility-guidance-counselling>

With a growing number of students going abroad to study, either as part of an Erasmus+ exchange or for the entire duration of their degree; in 2015 Euroguidance Ireland, with the support of Euroguidance Sweden and Soren Kristensen (an expert in Youth Mobility) designed a CPD module to support guidance counsellors in developing the skills they need to support students in their quest to study, work or volunteer abroad. The emphasis is on the **process** of mobility, the course explores how the guidance counsellor can support the student's through 3 phases of mobility - **preparation, induction** and **re-integration**.

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.

Nearly 100 Irish Guidance Counsellors have enrolled onto the course since its official launch in February 2016 and there has been an increased level of interest from other European Guidance practitioners.

The module is divided into 4 parts and may be completed at the convenience of the individual Guidance Counsellor. The module is free and available online, through NCGE's Virtual Learning Environment: <https://vle.ncge.ie/> and is recognised by the Institute of Guidance Counsellors for the purpose of CPD.

If you are an Irish qualified guidance counsellor you can enroll on the module by registering at <https://euroguidance.ie/cpd-mobility-guidance-counselling>.

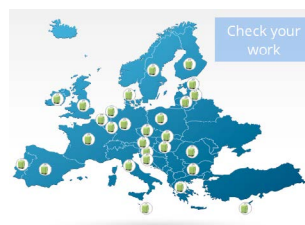


Euro-Quest update:

Euro-Quest is a programme designed to motivate and encourage Irish post-primary students to consider education and training opportunities across the EU. Euro-Quest has been developed for NCGE as response to guidance counsellors, who have completed the Mobility Guidance Counselling Module, who requested further resources to support their students' understanding of mobility.

Euro-Quest is an online course providing an overview of Europe, sample interviews with students who have studied abroad, and links to resources about studying in Europe. It is supported by a student workbook and a teachers' guidebook. In the context of a whole school guidance approach, Guidance Counsellors, Transition Year Co-ordinators and Transition Year teachers are encouraged to collaborate in its delivery together across a range of subjects including guidance - linked to the common theme of Europe.

Euro-Quest is currently being piloted in 16 post-primary schools across the country with the support of school principals; in counties Dublin, Kildare, Westmeath, Monaghan, Leitrim, Roscommon, Galway, Clare, Tipperary, Waterford and Laois. Euroguidance Ireland is in the process



of visiting the schools to offer support and advice and gain feedback on the delivery of the project. Parents and students were invited to give their consent to participate in this national pilot. Once the pilot is completed, evaluated, reviewed and revised as appropriate, NCGE plans to make Euro-Quest available as a resource of ALL schools from September 2019.

Further information is available on this link: <https://euroguidance.ie/euro-quest>



European School Guidance:

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) allocates funding to provide appropriate guidance for the children of Irish parents who are enrolled in the 13 European Schools in 6 European countries. This service is coordinated by NCGE/Euroguidance Ireland and is delivered by two qualified guidance counsellors contracted by NCGE. This guidance support is intended to supplement, but not replace, the guidance support already available to students in the European Schools and is directed specifically to the needs of Irish students who may be considering an application to Irish third-level institutions or apprenticeships and who have questions regarding general entry requirements, particular course requirements, application procedures and deadlines.

In November 2018 Irish guidance counsellors delivered guidance to the European Schools by visiting 8 schools in Brussels, Luxembourg, Germany and Italy and delivering guidance by Skype to the remaining 5. The guidance counsellors generally meet with each Year 7 (equivalent to 6th year) student individually, and, as appropriate, with groups from Years 4, 5 and 6. In some cases, the guidance counsellor also meets with the parents of Year 7 students if requested.

Further information is available on this link: <https://euroguidance.ie/european-school-information>



Conclusion:

In Autumn 2018 Euroguidance Ireland participated at a number of National events. In September we hosted a stand at the 3 day 'Higher Options' exhibition where educational agencies, colleges and universities offer information to students making course and future career choices. In November, Euroguidance Ireland hosted a stand at 'Zeminar', a social enterprise created to bring all those invested in the development and well-being of young people in Ireland to one place.

In both exhibitions, there was a strong interest from young people to integrate some form of educational experience abroad, whether as a short study exchange or a longer term in a European college or in an apprenticeship. This highlights that the interest in education mobility across Europe is on the increase and hence guidance counsellors in Ireland and across Europe require the knowledge and skills to support students on their mobility learning journey!



'My dream job in...' winners



In 2017 Euroguidance Ireland and Léargas held a school competition to celebrate the European Day of Languages (26 September 2017). The competition was entitled 'My Dream Job in...' (<https://euroguidance.ie/european-day-languages-competition-0>). We invited students, with the help of their language teacher and guidance counsellor, to apply for their dream job in a country where the language they are learning is spoken. Pupils composed a cover letter and Europass CV (<https://qhelp.qqi.ie/learners/europass/europass-curriculum-vitae-cv/>) in a language other than English, and their teachers selected one entry per class to submit. There were two prizes on offer, one for senior cycle and one for junior cycle.



The Senior Cycle winners were Gaelcholáiste Chiarraí in Tralee, Co. Kerry.

Transition Year student Ciarán O'Donnchú composed the winning application for his dream job as a journalist in France. Ciarán went above and beyond the competition brief by submitting two journalistic articles in French, impressing the judges with the sophistication and style of the French he used. As Senior Cycle winner, in May 2018, Ciarán was given the opportunity to explore his chosen career path during a visit to Paris. The trip was organised by Ciarán's French Teacher, Honor Nic Gloinn and Guidance Counsellor Eibhlín Ní Mhuirheartaigh with support from Euroguidance Ireland and our Euroguidance France colleague, Graziano Boscano. Ciarán and six of his classmates visited the offices of Le Monde newspaper, explored the culture, history and culinary delights of the city, and of course put their French language skills to good use!



Read more about Ciarán's experience in his own blog post here <https://www.leargas.ie/blog/edl-2017-winners/>.



The Junior Cycle winners were Tullamore College, Co. Offaly.

Second year student Mia O'Mahoney put together a Europass CV and also composed an essay on her dream job in her chosen language, which was German. On being chosen as the winning student she was given the opportunity to experience an aspect of her dream job in the medical field. In November 2018 two teachers and four other pupils accompanied her on her adventure to Cologne. This was facilitated by Andrea Kurze of the Faculty of Medicine in the University of Cologne. In Mia's words 'Cologne is a fantastic city filled with splendid architecture and scenic views. While I was there, I attended a genetics lecture in the University Hospital Cologne. Although I couldn't understand every detail of the lecture, I managed to get an overall feel for the topic and the university. I thoroughly enjoyed my experience in Cologne and treasured every moment. Exploring Cologne and the opportunities that can be availed of there has taught me many things and helped to guide me on my future career path as well as improving my German skills. In future I hope to return to Cologne and perhaps, someday fulfill my dream of having a profession in the medical field.' On behalf of Tullamore College; School Principal Edward McEvoy expressed his pride in Mia's achievements.



Euroguidance Ireland would also like to congratulate the winners for making so much of the opportunity they earned and we wish the winning students, their classmates and their teachers the very best with their future endeavours.



Lárionad Náisiúnta um Threoir san Oideachas
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