

The Information, Guidance and Counselling System in Lithuania

Status of the country (PAC, Member state from the 1st May, 2004)
Lithuania

Brief description of how the information, guidance and counselling services are organised.
Ministers in charge / Umbrella organisations. Networks for different target groups

The main providers of the career guidance and counselling are subordinated to the *Ministry of Education and Science* and *Ministry of Social Security and Labour*. The tasks of these Ministries differ by target groups:

- The competence of the *Ministry of Education and Science* includes ensuring career guidance at general education and vocational schools.

In educational sector, guidance could be obtained outside of the school in such places as:

The Territorial Labour Market Training and Counselling Services (subordinated to Ministry of Social Security and Labour)

The Vocational guidance centre (subordinated to Ministry of Education and Science)

The Pedagogical-psychological services (subordinated to municipalities)

- The competence of the *Ministry of Social Security and Labour* includes organizing extra-curricular guidance for youth, their parents, teachers and other labour market participants: unemployed, the ones facing unemployment, employers, employees and vulnerable groups.

Two public institutions deal with employment, vocational training and career issues: *the Lithuanian Labour Exchange (LLE)* focusing on unemployment related issues and *the Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority (LLMTA)* with emphasis on psychological counselling and training.

There are some other institutions that provide career counselling:

- *Career centres at the biggest universities.* They provide such services: counselling for students who are making vocational choices, planning their careers; organizing further education and internship programs in the country and abroad; informing about situation in labour market, helping to organize the job search.
- *Private consulting organizations, of which presently there are around twenty.* These provide such services as searching and selecting qualified specialists, conducting personnel and management trainings, providing counselling on management issues, and so on.

Professional associations in the field

There are no professional associations in the field.

Evolution of the information, guidance and counselling services

Year 1931, when psycho technical researches as well as practical counselling activity were started in Kaunas Vytautas Magnus University, is considered as the beginning of vocational guidance and counselling in Lithuania. After Lithuania became a part of Soviet Union related activities were stopped because of all psycho technical researches and vocational counselling were forbidden in the country. In year 1958 compulsory VET for lagging pupil and so called industrial training were introduced. This led to the legalization of VET guidance and counselling activity. VET guidance units were functioning in each general secondary school.

The Vocational Career Guidance Centre of the Republic of Lithuania started its activity in 1960. The counselling units have been established in all vocational schools and colleges. The Centre of vocational training and counselling was founded in 1980. Its divisions were being established all over the country. System of vocational guidance and counselling has experienced great changes after Lithuania has regained its independence in 1990. At that time existing system was destroyed and a new one created.

Legal framework - Role and status of the guidance counsellors

Each general education school has a person (usually director or deputy director) responsible for career guidance, but their activity is not regulated by legal documents.

TLMTCS guidance counsellors provide career information and counselling to adults and extra-curricular counselling to schoolchildren. In addition, they visit Territorial Labour Exchanges and schools in rural areas. TLMTCS counsellors provide individual and group career guidance, counselling and information, etc.

Lithuanian Labour Exchange counsellors deal with unemployment issues and offer generic vocational information.

Communication between the practitioners

Usually, the counsellors in every network focus on their specific target groups; however the cooperation between counsellors of 2 main institutions especially is quite close due to the fact that LLMTA's counsellors-psychologists are invited to provided counselling sessions in LLE on a regular basis. Sometimes, some events (seminar, conferences) gather practitioners from all guidance sectors.

Qualification of the school counsellors

In schools, career guidance is generally provided by the TLMTCS counsellors – professionals with a degree in psychology, pedagogy, sociology or social work, and optional further qualifications (in-service training courses, master degree or doctoral studies) in the field; sometimes guidance is provided by class room teachers (with a degree in pedagogy).

Extension of the counselling services in your country

The Lithuanian Labour Exchange consists of *National* and 46 *Territorial Labour Exchanges*. These offer generic vocational information and clients who require more elaborate career guidance and counselling are directed to *Territorial Labour Market Training and Counselling Services*.

The Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority and its regional subdivisions including 6 *Territorial Labour Market Training and Counselling Services (TLMTCS)* and 14 *Labour Market Training Centres*. Territorial Services employ 35 counsellors who are graduates in psychology.

There is a network of Pedagogical-psychological centres with its main office and 38 local centres; however, they deal more with education related issues and less with career guidance.