

**Leonardo Project
Transnational Vocational Counselling**

**VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE
IN HUNGARY**

Szeged, July 2002

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Preface

A basic condition of building and maintaining the developed market economy is constantly adjusting people to the ever changing economic and social demands. As a consequence, we might repeatedly need to modify profession during our active life, which is possible only through vocational retraining and further education.

A condition of a successful change of profession and retraining is choosing the future direction and study contents according to the existing competence and personal skills. Young people and adults must find profession, concrete vocational training, school- or extra school training, before changing their path of life. In the developed societies, vocational counsellors, teachers help to develop ideas for careers to plan and redirect those who wish to change professional futures (career guidance).

After the political changes in Hungary, career guidance started developing significantly. Naturally, at the beginning, it was combined with the active employment and training policy of the labour market organization. Shortly after, it has been introduced into the school-system, parallel with research and development work in higher education. Vocational and career guidance has become a profession.

In the government program „At the doorstep of the Millennium” it is a significant aim, that the school and career should be chosen according to the characteristics of the age-group, without the obligation of having to choose too early. In 2001, an action program on the development of the career guidance was accepted by the Ministry of Education. The program has been carried out with the cooperation of the labour market organization and harmonized with the aims of the National Employment Action Plan. A large PHARE-program on the development of career choice and professional correction of young people in the three most underdeveloped regions will be carried out. The program aims at the elaboration of concrete methodological materials and the training of able specialists.

The study work has been prepared to aid further work, concerning

- the draft of the theoretical bases of career guidance,
- the information on the directive frames of the vocational orientation,
- the information on the main institutions and activity forms,
- the summary of the relevant law,
- suggestions for the most important directions of development.

1. The theoretical bases of the career guidance

1.1. Psychological basis, theories

The vocational orientation and harmonized with this, the real career choice and any vocational correction are always complex. This appears generally through concrete inquiry, then through the following decision making process and the series of actions. The base of this is given, on

the one hand, by the person's interests, skills and values and, on the other hand, by making these attractive to the labour market: prestige of the professions, employment opportunities and salaries in different jobs. The process of the career choice always means a compromise between external and internal effects.

The basic question about the direction of career orientation is, that concerning the demands of the society, how it can be influenced from theoretical and practical aspects. Various theories are existing in the topic.

- In a theoretical model, the career choice is systemized according to age groups and the continuing change in personality. The theory is carried out by D.E. Super, American researcher, who outlined a 5 period model, using the development models of other researchers. According to Super, the career has the following phases:
 - > phase of growth (from birth to the age of 14). Main characteristics are: the development of self-analysis and forming the first ideas of careers and professions;
 - > phase of discovery (age of 15 – 24). Main characteristics are: the „self-trying”, the self-knowledge, self-control through gaining the first learning and work experiences;
 - > phase of standing (age of 25 – 44). Finding a permanent activity according to personality (profession, workplace), including workplace changes as well;
 - > phase of keeping (age of 45 – 64). Continuation of the vocational direction (work) and a permanent position with new proper assignments;
 - > phase of decadence (from the age of 65). Decrease of activity at work, paralleled with developing new roles (first as a selective, then as an „observing” participant).

Super accepts, that within the abovementioned ideas, there are a number of concrete careers, such as;

- > only for men (e.g. permanent, non-permanent, extreme, etc.)
- > only for women (e.g. house-wife, house-work oriented, with interruptions, permanent like men, etc.)

The development model is important, as it covers those parts of the person's life, according to which we are consciously able to shape our useful activities for society. At the same time, concerning the characteristics of the model, real expectations of the society can be described and it can even give some help to follow these characteristics if needed.

- In another model, the person's career is defined as a series of roles (combination), according to the categories in the social – psychological role definition. The extension and duration of roles, and perhaps the person's whole life, are determined by age, personality and the social position (including activities and work). In the 80s, a life-role model with nine phases was carried out by Super. The roles of life in the model are: child, student, leisure time activities, citizen, worker, spouse, spouse-supporter, parent and retired person. These roles can be played parallel, the most variable is the adult age.

The life-role model is important as it shows the self-definition of the personality, according to which we consciously define and undertake our role in the society and integrate into the society.

- The third model is pedagogy – psychology. Starting from the practical aspect of pedagogy, the model shows the factors of successful professional orientation, in which the categories of interests and abilities are preferred. In this respect, the following rules are emphasized:
 - > Interest is an emotional expression of the personality. This takes subjects, people and ideas out of the society and adds personal values. This can be a spontaneous interest, but also an intentional focussing of attention. The interest is affected by curiosity and desire.
The interest becomes permanent if one can benefit from it. There can be material, intellectual or emotional advantages. Learning and work are useful for the person if success (result) (e.g. an appropriate salary) can be attained.
 - > Ability is a measure of being able to perform well. Its quality and level are partly defined by inborn inclinations, partly by conscious improvement (learning and practising) and at the same time by environmental effects. Each ability can be measured and improved during the certain activity.

Functioning of the interests and abilities is important as it forms the bases for success in the career choice and later the success at work if the person is able to combine personal characteristics with professional requirements (studies and examinations) concerning the development of abilities during the training.

1.2. Definition of vocational orientation, career choice and correction

On the basis of the aforementioned theories, there is an opportunity to define vocational orientation, together with its components. The practising specialists (counsellors and teachers) have to differentiate certain fields, besides emphasizing the complexity of vocational orientation.

- Vocational orientation: through gaining a variety of information, young or adult people are able to orient in the world of work and find a future profession, that meets their personal demands. In this profession, obtaining a qualification and further studies will be necessary.
- Career choice: personal skills meet professional requirements and during the vocational orientation a decision is made. The person chooses a training subject or a professional field, often involving neighbouring qualifications.
The career choice is combined with the chosen professional field and the required studies. This is completed by finding training and educational institutions; a secondary school (grammar school, secondary vocational school or trade school), higher education (university, college or institutions offering high level trainings) or courses outside the school system. The cooperation of specialists (vocational counsellors and teachers) on personal demand is needed.

- Correction: for unemployed people or for adults close to unemployment, many of whom have professions no longer suitable for the labour market. There are also employees who are not motivated at their job and do not intend to find a workplace in their own professional field.

Almost all of us need vocational correction. In the developed countries, this can occur even 6 or 8 times throughout the whole working life. As concerns the timing of the correction, unless it is directly forced, it is appropriate to perform it only after the necessary consideration.

The abovementioned definitions help to interpret the aspects of career orientation. At the same time, it must be emphasized, that these three activities are complete together, as their parts and methods involve a good number of similarities. On this basis, no concrete institution-system can be connected to the definitions. As regards the age, the vocational orientation and career choice generally occur at the age of 14–45, and correction is characteristic for the age range 25-45 years.

2. The directing frames of vocational orientation

2.1. Organizational background of the directing system

Vocational guidance in Hungary falls under the jurisdiction of three ministries. By law, the responsibilities at the certain ministries are shared as follows:

- the Minister of Education: has the obligation (legal act 162/1998, 30.9.) of organising and supporting the institutional background of vocational guidance for young people and adults.
- The Minister of Economy regulates the activities of the labour offices, which are responsible for organizing employment services and career guidance for adults.
- The Minister of Social Affairs is responsible (legal act 2000. LXXXIX) for the employment rehabilitation of people with changed working abilities.

2.2. The legal regulation of vocational guidance

2.2.1. The European regulations of vocational guidance

The following documents include the main European requirements:

- Suggestions on the development of career guidance, given out by the Committee of the European Economic Union on 18th June 1966. In the document the following issues are emphasized; it should be free of charge and easily available. Ensuring the organizational background and the cooperation of the organizations and institutions is also important. The institutions have to contribute to the professional preparation,

social adaptation and mobility of people in the member countries. We expect that in the future financial funds for career guidance will increase.

- In 1975 the International Labour Organization accepted Agreement No. 142 on the development of human resources. The supplement of the Agreement includes the main requirements of career guidance. The Agreement was ratified in Hungary in 1976.
- In September 1998, a country-study on completing the ILO offer was prepared for the ILO with the title „Situation of career guidance and professional training between 1991 and 1998”. The study was prepared by the Department of Adult Training at the Ministry of Education in cooperation with the Department of International Issues at the Ministry of Social Affairs. According to the requirements of the ILO, the study introduces the legal conditions and achievements of career guidance.
- The employment policies of the European Commission, in the year 2000, are guidelines for the joining process, which also influence the planning of the tasks of career guidelines.

2.2.2. Regulations of career guidance in Hungary

The legal background of career guidance is provided in the acts and attached regulations on public education and vocational training and the act on the promotion of employment and consulting with unemployed people.

The sources of the law are:

The Public Education Act of LXXIX 1993, amended in 1999: this lengthens the duration of the school-education system and furnishes a wider basis as concerns general intelligence. The extension of general intelligence affords an opportunity not only to obtain modern qualifications, but also to participate in numbers of retraining courses and further education.

The most important regulations on career guidance, attached to the Public Education Act, are:

- *Act 10/1994 of the Ministry of Education:* on institutions providing pedagogical and professional services and on the conditions of the participation in these services;
- *Act 11/1994 (8.6.) of the Ministry of Education, 8/2000 (24.5.), amended by the Ministry of Education:* on the operation of educational institutions and career guidance at schools;
- *Act 14/1994 (24.6.) of the Ministry of Education, 3/1998 (9.9.), amended by the Ministry of Education:* on teaching obligations and professional teaching services, on the operation of professional teacher service institutions, participation in the services, and assignments of career guidance for handicapped children and young people with adopting, behavioral and learning problems;
- *Act 3/1999 (1.2.) of the Ministry of Education:* on the requirements of the faculty of career counsellors;
- *Act 19/1999 (21.4.) of the Ministry of Education:* on the requirements of the faculty of teachers who deal with career guidance.
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- *The Act LXXVI of 1993* on vocational training: the Council of Vocational Training in Hungary is required to control yearly the possibilities of employment for career starters who have obtained vocational qualifications, with special regard to unemployed career starters. In view of the experience, the Council makes suggestions to school owners to change the school system.

- The Act defines the basic activities of the worker developing and training centres. It also states, that, to assist the professional direction of the training centres, and to harmonize the demands of the labour market and the needs for regional vocational training, a controlling council has to be set up by the organizations establishing the training centres. According to regional labour market needs, the controlling council makes suggestions, (among other tasks), on the profile of such training centres.
- The legal background of the employment and career guidance for adults is given by Act no. IV of 1991 on the promotion of employment and guidance for unemployed people. The Act lays down, that the orientation of school-owners towards defining the training structure and school requirements is the task of the labour organization. In the field of career guidance, the most important regulations of the Employment Act are as follows:
 - *Act 6/1996 (16.7.) of the Ministry of Labour* on the support of employment defines the necessity of the training for job seekers.
 - *Government decision 1117/1995 (1.12.)*: on promoting the employment of young people, and the prevention of unemployment. The Action Program specifies that the cooperation between educational and labour institutions must be strengthened, and that the roles of information and guidance offices for young people in career guidance have to be increased.
 - *Government decision 1040/2000 (31.5.)*: on the employment policy of 2000, National Employment Action Plan 2000 in Hungary. Besides the unemployment of young people, the Action Plan deals in particular with the development of life-long vocational training and, within this field, it describes career choice and correction.

3. Main institutions and activity forms of career guidance

3.1. The National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance (NRCVG)

The Labour Centre of Csongrad County presented an application for the establishment of the National Resource Centre of Vocational Guidance in the frame of the LEONARDO DA VINCI Program run by the European Commission. The application was on the behalf of the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education.

- The NRCVG is an institute of the "lifelong learning" program. Its activities include giving information on the possible ways of careers, and it gathers, processes and distributes information on studying and training opportunities, qualifications and degrees with the focus on career guidance.
- The project gives Hungary an opportunity to join the European Network of the NRCVG Centres and to establish a national database for the structure and criteria of study and training facilities in the field of intermediate and higher education and training for adults.
- The Hungarian NRCVG helps to give international recognition to Hungarian schools. Through international contacts, its goal is to

provide students from abroad with the opportunity to continue their studies in Hungary and also to give the Hungarian youth the chance to attend European education and training institutes.

- The NRCVG established good connections with the organisations of the labour market in Hungary and abroad; however the services do not cover demands of the labour market directly. The Centre provides the target groups with information on initiatives and programmes of the European Commission and on mutual equivalence of qualifications and certifications.

- According to the conception of "lifelong learning" it offers services to each level of the society. The target groups include teachers, students, workers, unemployed people and career guidance organisations.

The Hungarian NRCVG has been operating in the frame of the Csongrad County Labour Centre. Concerning the activities, the NRCVG is closely linked with the Organisation of Career Guidance Counsellors.

The services are available individually, by telephone, letters and the Internet at <http://www.npk.hu/>.

3.2. Vocational Information Department

The VID is an independent department within the labour organization; its operational costs are covered by the maintainers: the employment offices in the counties or in Budapest. The professional and methodological development tasks and control were done in the past by the National Labour Research and Methodological Centre. At present, they have been taken over by the National Employment Office. The establishment of the institutional system began in 1994, with the help of the German Government (BIZ).

- The VID deals basically with career guidance for students, work beginners, adult unemployed and people who intend to change their professions. The department offers a great variety of services, and provides information for individuals on career choice, correction and employment.
- The VID aims at gaining the self-knowledge necessary for vocational decisions, and at providing information on professional requirements, job searching, the labour-market and training opportunities.

In the departments, helpful material is available: videofilms and folders about occupations, which are continuously developed and harmonized with the National Training List. The departments operate like libraries; the folders are in alphabetical order.

- The career choice and correction computer programs, apart from employment, also promote the development of self-knowledge.

Programs are available as follows:

- Orientation program: examination of skills and interests up to the age of 16,
- Job – interests program: the combination of occupations and interests, mainly for secondary school students, above the age of 16.

- „Whisper” consulting program: for unemployed career beginners and adults; introduces occupations and provides information on work abilities and general health conditions.
- Choices program: aims at people seeking and changing jobs. This includes 13 topics: types of interests, interested occupation, vocational fields, jobs, physical work, environment, salary, skills, characteristics, qualifications, adoptable professional skills, physical condition and learning subjects.

The aforementioned services are successfully used together with the traditional methods (individual consulting, psychological tests, etc.).

- Qualified vocational guidance counsellors, on both an individual and a group basis (school classes), assist the self-orientation process through providing up-to-date information.

- Vocational Information Departments or smaller units function in the following counties and towns of Hungary:
Budapest (Békásmegyer és Újpest), Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén megye (Miskolc, Ózd, Edelény, Sárospatak), Csongrád megye (Szeged, Hódmezővásárhely, Makó), Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok megye (Szolnok), Komárom-Esztergom megye (Tatabánya), Nógrád megye (Salgótarján), Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg megye (Nyíregyháza) és Vas megye (Szombathely).

The VID units (units existing in smaller towns) provide fewer services and databases and hire fewer vocational guidance counsellors.

- Establishment of the EUROFIT system: this began together with the extension of the VID network in Hungary. In the frame of the program, a regional institution system will be built, in which, besides the services provided by VIDs, information on training and employment opportunities in Europe is available. Through these services, the EUROFIT can become an institution, which helps people to get jobs, practise or study opportunities abroad. The EUROFIT is essentially connected to the EURES and the National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance in Szeged.

3.3. Career guidance at schools

The content of career guidance at schools differs in the various types of institutions, depending on the functions of the institutions.

- Career guidance at schools is provided by the form-masters or assigned teachers and aims at further studies and choosing schools. They give advice on vocational and school choice to parents and pupils, organise „open days” and „training fairs” at schools, and edit informational material. The vocational guidance institutions and secondary schools annually summarize the study opportunities in brochures. The brochures include professions requiring certain qualifications and school requirements. A few schools have put some information influencing the choice of careers onto the Internet.

- Career guidance at secondary schools: this aims at further studies in grammar schools and at preparation for the labour-market at secondary vocational schools. They work with the help of organizations providing information on the labour–market (municipalities, vocational committees in the counties, labour counsils in the counties, etc.).
- In the frame of the World Bank Program, vocational training for the young has been provided for years at vocational secondary schools. This has the added aim of the development of career guidance.
 - The vocational orientation project at secondary vocational schools was introduced in 1993/94. This is based on the individual skill development of students, to make them mature enough for their career choice. The „Choices” program on self-knowledge development, supported by computers, has been established in 130 schools.
 - A new project of the World Bank started in 1998/99 on the development and introduction of up-to-date qualifications, including the preparation of students for employment.

The „A” component of the project is the vocational training project for job-oriented young people after the secondary school leaving examinations. The project gives up-to-date, labour–market oriented, moduled and competence-based preparation. Activities belonging to the project are as follows: development of study material, analysis of jobs, establishment of career and employment guidance, supplement of school equipment (computer and office equipment), training for establishing and operating a management. The management should make available the flexible adjustment to the labour-market.
- In 2001/2002, career guidance as a subject was introduced in vocational schools with two lessons a week. This furnishes an opportunity to confirm a vocational decision or a later change of profession and to find jobs with the appropriate qualifications.

3.4. Career guidance outside the school system

3.4.1. Labour centres and units in the counties and in Budapest

- Services provided by the labour centres and units (among other services):
 - >special information for the target groups
(on career guidance, labour market, training, further education and employment)
Within these fields, there are services as follows:
 - career guidance: assistance to find the most appropriate job concerning individual skills and qualifications, providing information on vocational training opportunities and competence in employment.

- > guidance on jobs and careers, on job seeking methods and rehabilitation for both groups and individuals. Within these fields:
 - psychological consulting for people with mental problems; personal, family, life-style problems or unemployment. Tests for attention, skills and interests are used for unqualified people to improve their chance at the labour-market.
 - Job seek clubs, psychological services in the counties provide:
 - organisation of training about successful employment (e.g. development of self-knowledge, acquiring job seeking technics; such as, writing CVs, applications, practising discussions on salary, exercises for adapting workplaces, etc.).

- In 1998, on the initiative of the Ministry of Labour, forums on career guidance in the counties and Budapest came to exist.

They were financially supported by the National Employment Foundation and organised by the county/Budapest labour centres. The representatives of schools, parents, students and employers (chambers) contributed to the labour centres' job. The pilot project was supported by the National Employment Foundation in 1998-99. Each labour centre participated in the project and organised information forums, individual guidance and published brochures for students. The project contributed to decrease the number of unemployed young people. This can be the beginning of a long-term cooperation.

Organisation of fairs

Training fairs are organised once or twice a year by the training institutions within and outside the school system, by the labour centres and labour units (VID, offices for young people).

The schools and vocational institutions present their activities and training offers, publish information materials and brochures, and make it possible for individuals to work on the self-knowledge program on computers.

Young people with further study plans, unemployed job starters, permanent unemployed and careerists can participate in the program. Concerning career guidance, these fairs are useful and successful, however, for lack of financial funds, they are rarely organised.

3.4.2. Career guidance experience of training institutions outside the school system

A part of the training institutions make career guidance, (among other services), which is legally regulated in the act LXXVI and 6/1996 (16.7.) of Ministry of Labour. According to law, training courses, supported by the Employment Fund, include; teaching career guidance and knowledge on employment (labour market). These are trainings on developing personal and communicational skills, through exercises, as an addition to vocational subjects. They help the orientation at the labour market and improve the process of finding jobs.

- The preparation for career is done by the training institutions, in the frame of organised training programs, however, there are no regulations for the themes (e.g. number of lessons, level of knowledge, competence of teachers, etc.).
The career programs in Austria and Germany last weeks (sometimes months), however, in Hungary, only a few lessons or days are spent on them. The training institutions accept students mainly for marketing and business purposes, the preparation for career is usually not enough emphasized.

Suggestions for development

As concerns the terms and goals of career guidance for both students and adults, it is particularly important to emphasize the requirements of life-long learning. From this aspect, the career choice and "continuing the chosen profession" are series of expedient and efficient activities. To achieve a successful career, besides attending studies at school and outside the school system, one receives organized help from career counsellors.

The development of career guidance should be planned in a strategic program, which, short or long term, aims at defining the main actions and tasks for the successful career orientation of students and adults. The development program should pay attention to the priorities of the European Commission (e.g. for the development of career information), and at the same time, it should also give an opportunity for future change (e.g. assessment of the situation made by the OECD). The possible elements of development:

- An analysis is necessary on the possibility of establishing an individual career choice institution system. If there are personal, equipment and operational conditions, a public institution system for various purposes should be developed.
- The development of the information background of career guidance is necessary, connected to the partly existing system in the basic, middle and higher education and the labour organization. (Irisz-Sulinet, KIFIR, FIDÉV, FIT).
The career guidance action program of the Ministry of Education suggests the cooperation of availability. For achievements, the following are necessary:

>The development of the Irisz-Sulinet network and the KIFIR program to assist the career choice at schools, for primary and secondary schools, with special programs and information, based on a separate development project.

> National extension of the labour centres operating vocation information departments, harmonized with the development program of the labour organization, based on a separate development project.

>Connection of the information system of Irisz-Sulinet and VID to increase the availability of information. Through such development, we would be able to provide students applying for places at universities or colleges, young people choosing a profession, unemployed young people and those who intend to change professions with information at the same level throughout the whole country.

> Use of experience of the National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance.

> Information on university entries, database, usual and organized information on the FIDÉV project among the services of VID and Irisz-Sulinet.

- Theoretical and practical preparation of teachers and career counsellors, training and post-training, as a main condition of the methodological and effective career guidance for various demands of people at schools, in the labour organization and in training institutions. The basic and post-education of specialists has to be wide-ranging and up-to-date. The basis of this is the Szent István University in Gödöllő. Support for the establishment of new faculties at universities and colleges is necessary. There is also a need for the further promotion of new equivalent teacher post-graduate programs for the methodological improvement of career guidance. Basic studies of career guidance as facultative subjects are taught in various higher education institutions (Technical University of Budapest: Department of Technical Teaching, University of Pécs: Institute of Human Resource Development).

According to the career guidance action program of the Ministry of Education, it is necessary:

- > to support the development of vocational career guidance counsellor faculties in higher education institutions, and to establish basic, additional and post-graduate programs at the existing faculties;
- > to support the elaboration and distribution of methodological materials and brochures on career choice for practising career guidance counsellors (for career guidance specialists in vocational institutions within or outside the school system);
- > to utilize the professional competence of career guidance non-profit organizations and other bodies dealing with career guidance, training development and experience exchange.

- The support and development of research and experience exchange programs are also important to solve constant theoretical and practical problems, mainly concerning people with different qualifications, ages and situations on the labour market.

In this field, according to the action program of the Ministry of Education, it is necessary:

- > to introduce career guidance research for youth and adults, distinguishing the influence of factors of career orientation (classes of society, vocational groups, regions, environment, etc.); to elaborate projects on solving certain problems;
- > to monitor the effects of up-to-date training methods, including the possibilities of practical dissemination;
- > to carry out monitoring-analysis of the employment results of students;
- > to organize professional forums and conferences for career guidance institutions and specialists (schools, teacher services, teaching institutions and firms, labour centres and offices, and non-profit organizations), with the purpose of experience exchange and effective cooperation;
- > to develop FIDÉV programs in higher education.

Summary

As a short précis, we may emphasize that career guidance plays a particularly important role in stabilizing the individual's position in the society as concerns the professional and private life. The level of career orientation (awareness and success) and the choice and change of a profession decisively influence the success of the future career and, as a consequence, the quality of life. Counsellors and other specialists must consider career guidance as a main part of life plans, the contents and methodological development of which are of crucial importance.