

National Report on Guidance in Group Settings NAVIGUIDE LLP-LDV-TOI - 11-AT-0010

Project manager: Karin Steiner

Authors: Andrea Poschalko

Project: NAVIGUIDE
www.naviguide.net

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Each country partner must complete the following sections based on guidance within your own country. Please include any visual/diagrammatic explanations, web addresses and references. Please answer the following questions according to your national situation in guidance!

1 Guidance in General¹

Please explain how guidance takes place in your country.

- *Who provides the guidance services?*
- *Who do they target?*
- *Are there National policy objectives?*
- *What is positive/negative about guidance in your country?*
- *Are there specialised services?*

There are a great number of providers of vocational and educational guidance in Austria. The main providers of educational and vocational guidance are different educational institutions (schools, universities, adult and vocational education providers), special interest groups (e.g. chambers) as well as the Public Employment Service (AMS) or institutions close to the AMS. Characteristic of the Austrian system is that guidance is highly differentiated, centralised control/coordination is rather low, although different actors collaborate and cooperate especially at the regional level. For that reason a national working group on lifelong guidance was established by the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture in 2005, with the aim to develop and implement a lifelong guidance strategy in Austria. However, its strength is certainly the wide range and its well-developed information system. In the following, the main guidance areas and actors are described.

Guidance in Schools

Educational choices must be made at an early age in Austria. Educational pathways are highly differentiated, and sometimes these choices lead in fact to rather limited further options, such as access to higher education. Hence, these early decisions have a major influence on the subsequent career.

¹ cf. for the whole chapter Härtel, P. (2001) and Krötzl, G. (undated).

In 7th and 8th grades, students at all types of schools attend mandatory career guidance courses that are an integral part of the curricula and amount to 32 hours per year. These lessons are either embedded into several other compulsory subjects, or the lessons are provided as a separate subject. In this regard the school management is free to decide in which form they will offer information, guidance and counselling according to the formal curriculum. The results of a recent study suggest, however, that guidance courses as a separate subject are more effective than the cross-subject implementation – “integrated model”.² An OECD report has already highlighted this in the past as a point of discussion or development area.³

Furthermore, career education lessons can be supplemented by individual assistance provided by student advisers. The School Psychology Service also is a point of contact for both careers teachers and students. But the School Psychology Service plays only a minor role in the field of student guidance because it mainly deals with students with learning, behavioural or social problems within school life.

Accordingly the targeted group of these activities are students. In general, the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture is responsible for services in the school sector.

Guidance in the sector of universities and Fachhochschul-courses

In the sector of tertiary education there are several services that focus on the target groups of students and high school graduates. As part of the new University Act, which came into force this year (2011), mandatory educational and career guidance for all prospective students will be provided in future. For the resulting increased demand, however, the service has yet to be greatly extended.

² Hackl, M., Hannes, C., Mosberger, B., Moser W., Poschalko A. & Wenty, M. (2011).

³ OECD (2003), p. 4 ff.

At present, most university campuses offer Psychological Student Counselling Service centres. These centres are service facilities of the Federal Ministry for Science and Research that support students and prospective students by providing among other things career and educational advice.

Additionally at several universities specific points of contact for career planning after graduation or information and advice for graduates are available, as for example career centres.

Furthermore, the Austrian National Union of Students (ÖH) provides advice and guidance services on many different topics, also in the field of educational and vocational guidance. With the new University Act the services of the National Union of Students might be extended even further.

Regarding the Fachhochschulen (Universities of Applied Sciences, UASs) – a very well-organized field – the UASs Council (German: Fachhochschulrat), for example, provides detailed information material.⁴ The Austrian Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (German: Fachhochschulkonferenz, FHK) runs a website called FH-Guide.⁵ In addition, the UASs organise information days or evenings, open days as well as personal, individual student counselling.

Guidance in the sector of adult education

Adult education is a growing sector in Austria. That is why both the demand for counselling services as well as the importance of this area are increasing.

The major adult education institutions in Austria have their own counselling centres that occasionally do not only provide information about their own courses, but also offer some kind of general vocational and educational guidance, as for example the Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut (Institute of Economic Development, www.wifi.at) and the Berufsförderungsinstitut

⁴ See <http://www.fhr.ac.at/>

⁵ See www.fachhochschulen.ac.at/

(Vocational Training Institute, www.bfi.at). Some institutions of adult education also serve professional service within vocational guidance measures as subcontractor of the Austrian Public Employment Service and as a part of an active labour market policy. All these offers are primarily aimed at adults, but also at young people.

Guidance in the labour market sector

The Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS, www.ams.at) plays a key role in the field of educational and vocational guidance. The AMS is a service provider under public law with legal entity, which implements the labour market policy of the government. It delivers the corresponding services in more than 100 local offices. AMS services range from publishing numerous career planning materials, providing information on an individual basis to intensive personal counselling, especially for people in particularly difficult labour market situations. The AMS established several regional Vocational Information Centres (BIZ – Berufsinformationszentrum) all over Austria. These centres provide comprehensive information and advice with a regional focus.

In addition to the services provided directly by the AMS, it contracts out guidance services to a range of profit and non-profit organisations. These organisations again often subcontract work to self-employed counsellors. The services of the AMS are mainly aimed at people searching for jobs or apprenticeships.

Social partners

The organisations of the Austrian Social Partnership, representing both employers and employees, offer service centres for career information and counselling as well as a variety of guidance materials.

The Economic Chamber (Wirtschaftskammer) emphasises counselling on commercial-vocational training as well as job-related further education. Courses and trainings are conducted by their Institutes for Economic Development

(WIFI). The Chamber of Labour (Arbeiterkammer) is the legal representative of employees in Austria and works in close co-operation with the trade unions. They represent the social, vocational, economic and cultural interests of employees. The Chamber of Labour offers among other things career guidance and counselling for free.

Private, specialised and other Services

Additionally a number of private organisations, special interest groups, but also political parties, trade unions, executive search consultants as well as municipal institutions and a range of self-employed providers (e.g. psychologists) offer vocational orientation and training.

Especially target group oriented career counselling plays an important role in Austria. Numerous institutions and initiatives target different groups like immigrants, older job-seekers, women returners, girls/boys (gender-specific offers), people with disabilities etc. In general, the field of target group oriented career counselling is dominated by non-profit organisations, often commissioned or supported by the AMS.

Strengths and weaknesses of the Austrian vocational and educational guidance system

Austria participated alongside 13 other states in the "Career Guidance Policy Review" (OECD 2001–2003). The following systemic strengths and weaknesses were identified in the past:⁶

Strengths:

- Positive attitude of the actors
- Close collaboration and cooperation between the actors
- Active role of social partners

⁶ cf. Krötzl (undated), p. 6 ff.

- 3-level model of educational and vocational guidance at school (guidance lessons, school psychology, school counsellors)
- Mandatory character of guidance lessons at school
- Efforts beyond institutional boundaries for vocational and educational counselling in the sector of adult education
- Objectives and direction of policy interventions

Weaknesses:

- Many problems with educational and career choices are due to the early differentiation in the education system
- The “integrated model” of guidance lessons at school does not work sufficiently, also a lack of teacher education was outlined
- The time resources of the individual student advisers are tight; thus, the supply of individual counselling is limited at school
- Too little room for real-life encounters (e.g. internships)
- Rather little developed guidance in the tertiary sector
- The design of information brochures is often more producer-oriented than consumer-oriented
- Lack of and inconsistent quality criteria for the training of counsellors in the field of adult education
- The quality assurance and development work is generally less developed
- Networking of the various institutions is quite good on the regional level, but weak on the national level

Although many of these challenges have been addressed in the meantime, further improvement is needed. Therefore in Austria’s “lifelong guidance strategy”, a framework is defined to further improve the guidance system. Based on national and international studies and in accordance with the developments and discussions at EU level, the following programmatic goals have been established as cornerstones of the national lifelong guidance strategy:⁷

1. Implementation of basic competences in all curricula: Teaching and acquiring important basic skills for making responsible educational and career choices should be an aim in as many educational measures as possible.

⁷ cf. <http://www.lifelongguidance.at/qip/mm.nsf>

2. Focus on process optimisation and support: High-quality decision processes are essential for succeeding in making unerring educational and career decisions in all phases of life. Therefore, all measures should focus on these processes. Particular attention should be given to the support aspect.
3. Professionalization of counsellors, trainers: Improvement and intensification of education, further education and training of counsellors, coaches and teachers who work in the field of information, advice and guidance in various sectors.
4. Quality assurance and evaluation of offers, processes and structures: The quality of offers, processes and structures in the field of information, advice and guidance on education and careers should be systematically analysed and developed. Special attention has to be given to the actual needs of the citizens.
5. Widening access – creating provisions for new target groups: Offers should be designed and oriented in such a way that they actually reach the people who need this support.

2 Guidance Settings: Individualised and Group

- *How is guidance provided in your country?*
- *What is the prevalence of group and individualised guidance?*
- *What methods/techniques/tools are used for guidance in group settings?*
- *Are these methods/techniques/tools also used in individualised settings?*
- *If not, what makes them so effective in a group setting?*

According to a recent study career guidance is mainly conducted in individual settings. Only 7% of advisers do not offer single sessions, whereas 56% of advisers do not have group settings in their weekly schedules.⁸ Regarding the main stakeholders in the field of guidance (see section 3), the following section describes the three areas of school, labour market (PES) and social partners in more detail.

Guidance in Schools⁹

⁸ Eickhoff, V., Gaubitsch, R. & Novak, G. (2010), p. 25 ff.

⁹ cf. OECD (2003), p. 14 ff and BMUKK (2009).

In the Austrian school system, career guidance is provided mainly in a group setting, although individual advice is provided by student advisers and a supplemental School Psychology Service that can offer specialised assistance.

Because of the fact that Austrian students have to make a very important decision regarding their further education at the end of 8th grade, it is mandatory for all grade 7 and 8 students to take part in career education lessons. These lessons are supported by a formal curriculum and take up 32 lesson periods per year in total. Mostly the lessons are given in an “integrated” way (see above in section 1). The curriculum includes for example parents’ evenings, self-reflection (in cooperation with external institutions), the design of future scenarios (in cooperation with external bodies and partners), treatment of the school and regional environment (in cooperation with external institutions), research by students regarding careers and training of their choice (in cooperation with external institutions, experts), application training and decision-making.

The career education lessons can be supplemented by individual assistance provided by student advisers. These teachers receive special training for the task of supporting students. In the past those activities were characterised rather by a lack of time and facilities. In sum this means that only very few students are able to receive individual advice in terms of career and educational guidance.

As a further supplement to the regular career education lessons and student advisers the School Psychology Service offers specialised assistance by qualified psychologists, although it is a relatively small service. Many of the students are not referred to the School Psychology Service for specialised career advice, but for emotional, behavioural or study difficulties they are facing.

Guidance in the labour market sector¹⁰

The Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS) offers a wide range of services regarding career guidance. One of these are the Career Information Centres (BIZ) that provide a wide range of information media on occupations, employment opportunities, education and training paths for free. On the one hand, the staff at BIZ offers support by answering questions about occupations, education and training as well as labour market and job opportunities. On the other hand, the BIZ offers automated services like the so-called "Samsomat", where you can get information on job training and work opportunities in Austria and Europe, or the "eJob-room" in which candidates are able to independently search for job vacancies and even put their application online. Apart from that it is possible to write and print out applications at the Career Information Centres.

More and more people use the increasing number of "virtual counselling services" via the internet. This is of course less individual, and there is no face to face contact. However, the users have the opportunity to examine their interests and skills online, often by written tests, and to get an idea of their individual job profile as well as their labour market prospects. Especially in the field of online media the AMS is very active and offers a wide range of services, as for example the "Qualifikations-Barometer" ("Qualification barometer" <http://bis.ams.or.at/qualibarometer/berufsbereiche.php>), the "Arbeitszimmer" ("working room", <http://www.arbeitszimmer.cc>), the "Karrierekompass" ("career compass", <http://www.ams.at/buw.html>) and the information system "your choice" (<http://www.yourchoiceinfo.at>), which covers the fields of school education/graduation, studies (universities, colleges, private universities), distance learning, courses, trainings, post-graduate programs, jobs and educational institutions in Austria.

¹⁰ cf. OECD (2003), p. 8 ff; <http://www.ams.at/buw/24726.html> and Höglinger, D., Steiner, K., Muralter, D. & Kasper R. (2010), p. 6 ff.

In addition to the individual and personal service for people searching for a job or apprenticeship, the Public Employment Service (AMS) also offers vocational orientation and activation measures that are carried out in a group setting.

For example, the AMS training course “Vocational orientation and coaching measure” (BOCO I), which focuses on vocational orientation, is carried out in groups of approximately 20 people. The Public Employment Service has decided to divide the course into three parts. The first part consists of the introduction and clearing phase. The objective of this phase is to identify the final participants for the further course and it includes the topics of getting to know each other and group identification, content and time plan, objective of the measure, information about general conditions, girl-specific support, assessment of the participants’ current personal and professional situation, increase of communication and conflict resolution skills and suitability for an integrative vocational training. The second part deals with vocational orientation and goal setting. The objective of this phase is that the participants get detailed and wide-ranging information on possible training pathways, and it covers information, personality analysis, matching, filling knowledge gaps from school, computer basics and social skills. The last part is the preparation phase for the following apprenticeship or employment with the objective that the participants begin an apprenticeship or enter employment.

Social partners¹¹

The educational institution of the Austrian Economic chambers(WIFI) offers educational and vocational guidance and support in career decision-making with the benefit of its close link to the economy. First, the actual situation of the client is determined by the counsellor in some information and counselling sessions. Using scientifically-based tests the personal potential of the client

¹¹ cf. <http://www.wifi.at/> and <http://www.bildungsberatung-wien.at/>

may be analysed as well, that is his/her skills, aptitudes and interests. In a subsequent consultation further steps and options are developed and discussed.

The more employee-oriented Vocational Training Institute (BFI) also provides career guidance. It offers free support regarding training, educational and career decision-making, career change and financial support for education. Counselling regarding the recognition of foreign education and the later acquisition of qualifications is offered as well.

Methods used in guidance

Unfortunately there are no exact data on the use of different methods in individual and group settings and certainly not in detail for the different measures. However, practical examples of methods used are listed in the following. This list is compiled from data from a project by the ÖVBBL, in which 18 guidance practitioners were interviewed about their repertoire of methods.¹²

The methods mentioned and used range from assessment and psychological tests, counselling approaches, different theories and models, work on goals and resources to training methods in general etc.

¹² <http://www.oevbbl.at/>

Assessment, psychological/scientific tests

- Myers-Briggs personality test
- Tony Alessandra personality test
- ExpAdviser personality test
- BIP (Bochum Inventory for job-related personality description)
- General Interest Structure Test (AIST)
- Vocational aptitude test (BET)
- The performance test system (LPS)
- 16-factors personality test

Work with goals and interests

- Interests (10 things I like to do etc.)
- Various coaching methods to target work
- Concrete goals
- SMART goals

Work with resources and skills

- Skill list
- Competency model by Erpenbeck and Heyse
- Competency-based counselling approach
- Social/material resources
- Maintaining resources
- Worksheet: Demonstrate skills
- Analysis of potential with Skill Cards
- Portfolio methods

Career choice theories

- Trait and Factor Approach
- Career choice theory of John Holland
- Theory of Krumboltz

Counselling and communication methods

- Systemic Counselling Concepts
- Systemic Consulting and Communication theories
- Reframing
- Client-centred approach by Carl Rogers
- Elements of the Theme-centred Interaction Methods (TCI)

Biographical work

- Biographical questions

- Life and career curves
- Life profile
- Working with a success story
- Wheel of Life

Support and assistance

- Job assistance
- Supported Employment
- Vocational training assistance
- Job Coaching
- Empowerment

Other Tools

- Elevator presentation
- Role playing
- Video analysis
- CAR-principle
- AIDA principle
- Five pillars of identity by H. G. Petzold

3 National Stakeholders

- *Who are the key stakeholders in guidance in your country?*
- *What do they invest (time, money, commitment, energy etc.), and what outcome/impact do they expect?*

The main providers of educational and vocational guidance in Austria are different educational institutions (schools, universities, adult and vocational education providers), special interest groups (e.g. chambers) as well as the Public Employment Service (AMS) or institutions close to the AMS. A quite recent study has shown that the main employers of over 300 surveyed practitioners are the AMS, the Economic Chamber, the Chamber of Labour as well as the school authorities.¹³ In a study from 2003, it was estimated that Austria's total government spending on education and career guidance is about

¹³ Eickhoff, V., Gaubitsch, R. & Novak, G. (2010), p. 19 ff.

8.48 EURO per inhabitant aged 15–64.¹⁴ In general, the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture is responsible for services in the sector of schools. The Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS) works on behalf of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection and with the involvement of the social partners. Last but not least the social partners themselves are among the most powerful key players in the field of vocational guidance in Austria.

4 Qualification and further training of guidance staff¹⁵

- *In general what types of qualifications do guidance practitioners have?*
- *Is there a minimum qualification required?*
- *Is there specific training provided for career counsellors?*
- *Are there further education/training courses provided for guidance practitioners?*
- *Is there a continuous Professional Development (CPD) process in place? If so, how does this work?*

In Austria, an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 people work in the field of educational and vocational guidance. A recent study shows that the educational level of the practitioners is high. However, only few of them have specialised training in vocational guidance. Among the most frequently mentioned initial qualifications are studies of psychology and pedagogy, training as trainer, coach as well as life and social counsellor (Lebens- und SozialberaterIn) and professional experience in general. In addition, counsellors responding to the survey named more than 40 different job titles for their activities. Although this is a sign of high diversity in the professional field, it can also be seen as a lack of a clear job profile. But this is not surprising, since 43% of respondents also pursue other professional activities.¹⁶

¹⁴ OECD(2004), p. 8.

¹⁵ cf. for the whole chapter Steiner, K. & Poschalko, A. (2011), p. 51 ff and Höglinger, D., Steiner, K., Muralter, D. & Kasper, R. (2010) .

¹⁶ Eickhoff, V., Gaubitsch, R. & Novak, G. (2010), p. 11 and 16 f.

Actually there are no formal framework in the sense of an established occupational profile and no uniform quality and/or training standards in Austria, as in many other European countries. But of course there are some regulations in Austria. For example, in a decree of the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture the main content for the training of student advisers is regulated. Based on this specified framework curriculum¹⁷ the teacher training colleges of education (German: Pädagogische Hochschulen) have to prepare a detailed plan of study. In contrast to this there is no uniform regulation for the qualification of teachers teaching career education. According to the Federal Ministry future qualification efforts tend towards school development and coordination of actions at the school site. Hence, a curriculum framework for career orientation coordination will be tested, which will be conducted from 2011/12 to all teacher training colleges in the same way. At the same time specially enhanced training opportunities for teachers at the school site will be increasingly expanded (SCHILF School-based teacher training).¹⁸

Also in the AMS area some requirements for the qualification of trainers are defined. For example, practitioners in Vienna have to be trained as a coach, trainer or supervisor, to the extent of at least 110 teaching units. By using a 10-point system, which captures both the educational background and the practical experience, their professional competence will be assessed. However, this is a rather broad approach that requires regarding educational and vocational guidance only little specific content. Moreover, the requirements differ in the individual federal states.

In addition, there are numerous initiatives to strengthen professionalism and the professional profile of guidance trainers in Austria (see also section 5). There is, for example, a quite new academic course on "Educational and Vocational Guidance" at the Danube University Krems (DUK). DUK also offers

¹⁷ cf. http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/16757/2008_15_beilage.pdf

¹⁸ Information of Mr. Gerhard MinR Krötzl, Head of Unit I/15a (Issues of information, advice and guidance on learning and work) in the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture.

the opportunity to attain the ECGC-certificate. ECGC – European Career Guidance Certificate was a Leonardo da Vinci funded project with the objective to develop a standardised and internationally transferable certification system that allows acknowledgement of formally and non-formally acquired competences of career guidance counsellors.¹⁹

The Federal Institute for Adult Education in St. Wolfgang (BIFEB – Bundesinstitut für Erwachsenenbildung St. Wolfgang) offers training targeted at educational and vocational counsellors. The training courses deal with topics like client-centred counselling, information management, tools of educational counselling, systematic counselling, teaching counselling etc. („Training course for educational and vocational counselling“; German: „Lehrgang universitären Charakters für Bildungs- und Berufsberatung“, www.bifeb.at).

Another institution that is important for certification in Austria is the Academy of Continuing Education (wba – Weiterbildungsakademie, www.wba.or.at). wba certifies formally and informally acquired skills and competences of guidance trainers by using defined quality standards (a quality assurance curriculum). In a first step trainers can collect their acquired competences and practical experience, which are then evaluated and accredited on the basis of the curriculum. Missing competences have to be acquired. Once all competencies are accredited, the trainers receive a wba-certificate. On the basis of this certificate it is possible to acquire a wba-diploma with four different focuses (teaching/leading groups/training, education management, counselling, librarians).

These are only some examples that demonstrate that the education and training landscape in the field of educational and vocational guidance in Austria is relatively wide-ranging now. There are individual seminars offered by various

¹⁹ See <http://www.donau-uni.ac.at/de/studium/bildungsberufsberatung/index.php>

educational providers, comprehensive training courses as well as courses on the academic level.

Overall, counsellors in Austria seem to be very active in continuing training; more than two thirds of over 300 surveyed trainers took part in further education in the recent past, especially on topics like education, counselling/methodology and women/gender.²⁰

Without appropriate legal regulation of the initial qualification of counsellors/trainers the question of the proportion of educational and vocational counsellors with relevant training will, however, remain open in the future, as training courses often entail considerable costs. Remuneration is an important aspect of professionalism, as trainers sometimes are confronted with a low income situation. This leads to an increase of precarious employment and high psychological distress.

5 Existing Networks for Career Counsellors and Trainers²¹

- *Are there any fora/ways for guidance practitioners to exchange information or to share good practice, e.g. regular peer meetings, conferences, seminars, workshops etc.?*
- *If yes, is this a formal or informal process?*

Networking is also important in terms of quality and professionalism in guidance. Hence, there are some networks and associations that deal with the question of quality assurance in guidance. For example, the professional association of Austrian career guidance counsellors (VBB – Verband für Berufs- und Bildungsberatung, <http://www.berufsberater.at>) has established a quality assurance program, which members have to apply for. Members are obligated to regularly attend further education, supervision and intervision. Moreover, they should be aware of their competences and responsibilities as well as of

²⁰ Eickhoff, V., Gaubitsch, R. & Novak, G. (2010), p. 42.

²¹ cf. for the whole chapter Steiner, K. & Poschalko, A. (2011), p. 6 f and Höglinger, D., Steiner, K., Muralter, D. & Kasper R. (2010), p. 15 ff

their limitations and shortcomings. Of course, the exchange among practitioners is also encouraged.

Another example is the Association of education and career counsellors (ÖVBBL – Vereinigung für Bildungs-, Berufs- und LaufbahnberaterInnen, <http://www.oevbbl.at>). It was founded in December 2007, and its main targets are professionalization, embedding and promoting education and career guidance in society, in the economy, in national and European politics and research as well as networking, for example at a regulars' table. In particular the work on a compact, but at the same time open professional profile is an important request of the association. As a result of a project that was funded by the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture counsellors provide insight into their activities. The project title is "Profession: Educational, vocational and career counsellors – find Identity – live Diversity – show Profile", German: „Berufsbild: Bildungs-, Berufs- und LaufbahnberaterInnen – Identität finden – Vielfalt leben – Profil zeigen“. Profiles of 18 practitioners are presented on their website.²²

A further initiative to support and promote cooperation in the field of lifelong guidance on an international level is the foundation of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN). It is a network of 26 participating European states and three observing countries. Austria is represented by the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (BMUKK), the Public Employment Service (AMS) and the Styrian Economic Society (STVG).

Euroguidance also acts as international network in the fields of education and career information and advice, and consists of Euroguidance Centres in all EU countries, EEA countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Turkey and Switzerland. The Euroguidance Network is a partner of ELGPN and aims to promote mobility in Europe as well as the development of a European

²² http://www.oevbbl.at/projekt_bildungsberaterIn/html/interviews.html

dimension in the field of guidance. Each Euroguidance Centre provides comprehensive information about guidance. The Austrian Euroguidance Centre is located in the Austrian National Agency for Lifelong Learning at the OeAD (Austrian Exchange Service GmbH). Its field of activity is, among others, also the establishment of networks between the stakeholders in guidance at a national and international level.²³

However, regarding the networking of advisers or counsellors there is further potential for development in Austria. At least 82% of over 300 questioned practitioners consider networking as a primary measure for quality assurance and professionalism in the profession of educational, vocational and career guidance practitioners.²⁴

6 Existing Methods, e.g. handbooks, databases, resources etc.

- *How do guidance practitioners access information on new methods and resources in guidance?*
- *Are there online platforms that assist practitioners in gaining new information and sharing good practice?*
- *How effective are they?*
- *Do you have any idea of their usage? What is good about them/what is not so good about them?*

There are a number of resources that guidance practitioners have access to.

For the school sector the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (BMUKK) provides a variety of materials. For example, teaching materials for vocational guidance are available in print and online, consisting of seven volumes. The information provided ranges from fundamentals of guidance on occupational mobility to materials on topics like gender and work-life balance as

²³ Vgl. <http://www.euroguidance.net>; <http://www.lebenslanges-lernen.at>

²⁴ Eickhoff, V., Gaubitsch, R. & Novak, G. (2010), p. 48.

well as new technologies and their impact on the work environment.²⁵ A special internet guide for educational counselling provides useful links and information on schools, universities and professions.²⁶ An internet platform for implementing the new curriculum in the HS and AHS at lower secondary level (by bmukk) provides, inter alia, teaching materials for guidance lessons,²⁷ and so does the Austrian School Portal²⁸ including the special IBOBB site.²⁹ There are much more information and materials available for free especially at regional level or through regional initiatives and measures.

In addition, the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture and the Federal Ministry for Science and Research, or more precisely the advisory bodies of the two ministries (school psychology and psychology student counselling), have developed a concept for intensifying advice for high school graduates. This concept is the so-called "Studienchecker" and includes measures to provide better guidance for young people making career and study choices.³⁰

As mentioned above the AMS also provides a great variety of online information and print brochures about occupations and education opportunities. In addition, the AMS research network (German: AMS-Forschungsnetzwerk) offers a comprehensive information and service platform presenting research results and activities in order to make them more usable. For example, the network platform offers methods and information manuals to download for free. These concrete methods can be subdivided according to various target groups (such as gender-sensitive methods, multi-cultural counselling etc.). In each manual specific methods are described in detail, but also general information about the subject area as well as extensive links to further information are given. Moreover, the methods are also available in a database. This database allows a

²⁵ See http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/service/psych/material_bo.xml

²⁶ See <http://www.schulpsychologie.at/intguide.htm>

²⁷ See <http://www.gemeinsamlernen.at/>

²⁸ See <http://www.schule.at/>

²⁹ See <http://www.schule.at/gegenstand/ibobb/>

³⁰ See <http://www.studienchecker.at/>

quick, flexible and comprehensive search using different criteria as well as printing single methods.³¹

In general, the media of the Public Employment Service are very well-known and frequently used by practitioners. The methods and information manuals in particular are well-known, too. About 70% of more than 300 surveyed practitioners are familiar with those handbooks, and about 40% to 50% of counsellors use them in practice as well.³²

The information materials provided by the social partners are also quite well-known. For example, the BIC (computerized career information, German: BerufsInformationsComputer) of the Austrian Economic Chamber provides comprehensive online career information. In addition to detailed job descriptions the users get a first opportunity of career guidance by using "Tips on career choice" and "Interest profile".³³ The career atlas of the Chamber of Labour (Arbeiterkammer, AK), for example, also contains detailed information for vocational and educational choices. This service is provided in cooperation with the AMS.³⁴ By using the AK-career interest test users can get an individual interest profile and specific career suggestions that fit this profile.³⁵

There are far more sources and information materials that cannot all be mentioned. So you can say that there are numerous region-specific institutions that provide information and materials on guidance topics.

7 Further comments

- *Do you have any other comments that would be interesting to capture regarding Guidance in your own country? Particularly in relation to group guidance?*

³¹ <http://www.ams-forschungsnetzwerk.at>

³² Eickhoff, V., Gaubitsch, R. & Novak, G. (2010), p. 41 ff.

³³ See <http://www.bic.at/> and <http://www.ibw.at/>

³⁴ See http://fmserver.braintrust.at/ak_ooe/startframe.html

³⁵ See <http://www.fwd.at/bkakooe3/>

No further comments.

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