

The joint 12th ELGPN Plenary Meeting and 1st Policy Review Meeting, Dublin, Ireland 27–28 February 2013

The joint 12th ELGPN Plenary Meeting and 1st Policy Review Meeting was held in Dublin, Ireland on 27–28 February 2013. This associated event of the Irish 2013 EU Presidency was organised by the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) and the European Commission, in cooperation with the ELGPN. The meeting was attended by 88 delegates from 32 countries, including observers Switzerland and Serbia. Representatives of ELGPN partner (Cedefop and Euroguidance) and parallel organisations (IAEVG, EAIE, ICCDPP and the PES Network) also participated in the meeting.

The meeting began with a welcome address from Minister for Training and Skills, Ciarán Cannon T.D. Ms Linda Darbey of NCGE then gave an overview of recent developments in lifelong guidance policy in Ireland. The meeting also received briefings from Mr Koen Nomden (European Commission DG EAC) and Ms Susanne Kraatz (European Commission DG EMPL).

The Plenary meeting welcomed Switzerland, which had applied to join ELGPN as an observer, to fully participate in 2013–14 Work Programme activities. The meeting also decided that the Finnish Institute for Educational Research at the University of Jyväskylä will continue in the co-ordination task until the end of 2014. It was also agreed that a letter should be prepared by the Irish 2103 EU Presidency with the ELGPN Co-ordination Unit for submission to the Commission, to indicate the enthusiasm within the Network to continue its work beyond 2014, and its willingness to initiate discussions with the European Commission about options for the future management and potential grant for the ELGPN.

The meeting marked a beginning of the new phase in the development and work of the ELGPN. Policy Review Clusters (PRCs) in which member countries work to adapt and implement the ELGPN Resource Kit met for the first time to discuss their plans and the way forward. Thematic Task Groups also met to

discuss their activities for the ELGPN 2013–14 Work Programme.

At the end of the meeting, Ms Margit Rammo, Head of National Resource Centre for Guidance Unit at Foundation Innove invited ELGPN members to the 2nd ELGPN Policy Review Meeting to be held in Estonia on 6–7 June 2013.



Plenary meeting participants gathered for a family photo at the the joint 12th ELGPN Plenary Meeting and 1st Policy Review Meeting (Photo: William Farrell Photography)

The meeting agenda, presentation and photographs from the meeting can be found at

<http://ktl.jyu.fi/ktl/elgpn/events/2013/pm12>.

Irish National Conference: Lifelong Guidance: Building the evidence base, Dublin, Ireland, 1 March 2013

by Jennifer McKenzie

The National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) followed the ELGPN Plenary and PRM meeting on 1 March 2013, with a National Conference, *Lifelong Guidance: Building the evidence base* at which members of ELGPN were invited to attend and participate.

The aim of the National Conference on Guidance, hosted and co-ordinated by NCGE, as the first meeting of the National Forum on Guidance 2013–2014, was to introduce and launch the process of gathering evidence in guidance practice across sectors.



From Left to Right Raimo Vuorinen, ELGPN; Jennifer McKenzie, NCGE; Minister Ciarán Cannon TD and Linda Darbey NCGE (Photo: William Farrell Photography)

This programme of work reflects the activities of the ELGPN across 31 member states engaging in the process, to support member states to adapt, implement and test the European Resource Kit developed by the ELGPN.

Delegates attended the conference from all sectors of guidance in education, the labour market, schools and VEC management organisations, higher education careers services, universities providing guidance qualifications and invited guests from the Euroguidance and ELGPN networks. Delegates heard of the benefits of gathering evidence in guidance from keynote speaker Dr Deirdre Hughes and updates from Koen Nomden and Susanne Kraatz from the EU Commission.

Speaking at the conference to launch a national process to gather data and evidence in all sectors of lifelong guidance, Irish Government Minister for Education and Skills, Mr Ruairí Quinn noted that “Evidence based practice will help those of us responsible for policy making and for allocating funding to make informed decisions into the future”

To view keynote speeches and presentations from the National Conference on Guidance 2013 please visit <http://www.ncge.ie/about-us/national-forum-on-guidance-first-meeting-of-2013/>.

Peer Learning Event: Guidance in employers' age management strategies, Thessaloniki, Greece, 10 December 2012

by Pedro Moreno da Fonseca

Cedefop's peer learning event on *Guidance in employers' age management strategies* in December 2012 debated interim findings of a Cedefop study with the same name.

The study aimed at investigating:

- i. How European and national policies and strategies address the issue of staying longer in employment;
- ii. How lifelong guidance is embedded in employers' age management strategies supporting older workers' (55+) lifelong learning and skills development; and
- iii. To what extent different forms of guidance support are available to this target group.

A presentation on 'generativity' by Lynn Barham from the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling, UK provided an immediate stimulus for the debate. The underlying idea is that given their experience in life, members of older age groups can make specific contributions to organisations and society without necessarily acting formally as mentors: they can pass on their skills, standards and history of their organisation or occupation, they can lead by example, develop new processes, help others acquire skills or achieve standards and help them understand. If employers harness this potential, they can fully integrate the added value of staff life experience and explore its developmental potential. Based on this concept, Lynn Barham discussed the agenda and driving values of guidance services for older workers. In her view, user centrality is crucial to ensure that older workers get engaged in guidance activities and find them relevant. They must take account of users' personal experiences, needs and aspirations.

Karen Schober, from the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG), delivered a presentation on desirable aspects of guidance activities for older workers, such as the need to:

- o address all stakeholders, avoiding the typical structure of regular guidance services in which users have to “come to the service”;

- the need to enhance users' motivation and capability for voluntary engagement;
- the need to guarantee practitioners' skills and develop new skills and methods appropriate for guidance and counselling interventions with older, experienced people.

She also addressed the need for employers and companies to create job profiles and career paths within the enterprise that provide occupational opportunities and perspectives for employees as they get older.

Following these briefings, participants reflected on the initial findings of the Cedefop study. The aims of the study and the initial case study findings were outlined by Pedro Moreno da Fonseca, Cedefop's expert working on guidance and counselling, Bert-Jan Buiskool and Michel Winnbust from Panteia, the contractor. The case studies reflected on several types of guidance activities such as mentorship, information and counselling and identified several critical issues, to be further researched in the study. One such issue concerns the motivation of firms to implement guidance activities and the role of managers, workers and other professionals in guaranteeing the success of the activities. It was discussed how managers of small and medium firms, with limited financial and human resources at their disposal can be motivated and capacitated to implement organised guidance activities.

Along the same lines, employers' representative Jukka-Pekka Kivioja, from the Finnish Confederation of Industries gave a presentation and comments on the results. He focused on how selective incentives of financial (e.g. benefit/tax incentives to firms, annual prizes to managers) or non-financial nature (e.g. "good practice" national distinction) aimed at firms and managers can play an important role in establishing guidance-supported career development activities.

The last session of the day was dedicated to a reflection on older workers' skills. Cristina Milagre from the Portuguese Qualification Agency, presented the Portuguese scheme for validation of informally and non-formally acquired skills, with interesting perspectives on the adoption of national frameworks, by companies, for their internal systems. In particular, she commented on how workers who have embarked in validation schemes outside the firm, then critically contribute to the

establishment of similar internal systems, linked to the public system of skills validation.

Detlef Köhler from the German PES, presented the German PES programme of counselling for the qualification of SME workers and its potential benefits for older workers and firms. Some of the highlighted benefits were the increased employability and flexibility of workers in the mature career stage and the reduction of absenteeism costs due to higher workers' motivation. The session was concluded by a presentation on the origins and effects of skills obsolescence and mismatch. Cedefop expert Jasper van Loo highlighted how guidance can help individuals identify learning opportunities coherent with their experiences, aspirations and life-plans in several life stages, thus promoting successful, satisfactory careers.

The debates held throughout the day generated a number of reflections that will feed into the next stages of the study. They ranged from fundamental principles driving guidance provision for older workers, to the financing of private activities and the role of relevant stakeholders in identifying and advocating potential users' needs. Issues discussed included:

- **The cost of guidance:** The structure and organisation of guidance activities is closely related to their final cost. Larger organisations can more easily establish a rationale for the inclusion of guidance activities in their HR management, with resource to external professionals, or by hiring staff with specific skills in guidance. Small and medium firms, as well as third sector entities might not have the possibility to do so. Providing targeted training to managers and cooperating with public employment services and other guidance providers (e.g. association, private, providers, trade unions) is a possibility to assure access of SME' workers to guidance. Then, how can guidance be made affordable for SMEs and other entities with limited financial resources?
- **New activities in guidance (outreach/capacity building):** Regular, publicly-funded guidance providers (e.g. employment services, VET providers) can implement outreach activities to support the development of community-based services to increase labour market integration and learning activities of older individuals.

Workers' associations/networks, local organisations, third-age organisations are examples of organisations which can benefit from outreach activities aimed at capacity building in guidance areas. Further, the cooperation of public employment services and trade unions with third sector organisations can help identify needs and offer services to groups of older workers with specific needs (e.g. migrant workers, female workers returning to work).

In spite of an eventful day, with several participants and speakers snowed in airports all over Europe, the event, which was opened by Cedefop's acting deputy director, Mara Brugia, fostered mutual learning and brought further ideas to the study.

Further information on this workshop is available on:

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/events/20624.aspx>

Variables Affecting Readiness to Benefit from Career Interventions - Lecture by Professor James P. Sampson

Professor James P. Sampson Jr. from the Florida State University gave a lecture at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland in the beginning of March 2013. The lecture was a part of the University's 150th anniversary celebrations of teacher training in Finnish.

The session was organised by the National Centre for Lifelong Guidance Expertise at the Finnish Institute for Educational Research, the University of Jyväskylä (<http://ktl.jyu.fi/ktl/english> and <http://ktl.jyu.fi/ktl/evokes>) in co-operation with the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, ELGPN (<http://elgpn.eu>) and the Center for the Study of Technology in Counseling and Career Development at the Florida State University (<http://www.career.fsu.edu/techcenter>).

Professor Sampson has been co-Director of the Center for the Study of Technology in Counseling and Career Development since the 1980s. The centre was established to improve the design and use of computer applications in counselling and guidance. Professor Sampson has published several books and articles in this field and served as a Consultant for

the European Commission, the World Bank and several countries.

In his presentation "Variables Affecting Readiness to Benefit from Career Interventions" Professor Sampson identified and briefly described the broad range of variables that may influence clients' readiness to benefit from career interventions. These variables can be divided into four categories: personal characteristics and circumstances, limited knowledge of self, options and decision-making process, and prior experience with career interventions.



Professor James P. Sampson Jr. gave an excellent lecture at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland in the beginning of March 2013. (Photo: Siiri Pajunen)

The presentation also considered the consequences of low readiness for effective use of career interventions. Clients may discontinue the use of career resources and services or they may develop a negative perception of their skills. Clients can also selectively acquire information to confirm their pre-existing decisions.

Professor Sampson emphasised that readiness assessment is an essential part of guidance process in which career services are designed to fit to the client's needs. Using readiness assessment also allows for a more efficient use of resources as the clients receive the services and interventions according to their needs and staff can consequently assist a greater number of clients.

The link to the recording of the lecture will be made available on the ELGPN website.

National Conference on lifelong guidance, Aarhus, Denmark, 16 January 2013

The University of Aarhus hosted a national conference on lifelong guidance on 16 January 2013 in co-operation with the Nordic network of adult learning (NVL), the Knowledge Centre for Educational and Vocational Guidance and the national association of educational institutes (Uddannelsesforbundet).

Altogether 120 practitioners discussed the recent policies in adult learning in Denmark and in the European Union and their implications for staff competences both in adult learning and adult guidance. Ms. Hanne Wøller from the Danish Ministry of Education and Children presented the current strategies for lifelong guidance in Denmark and the ELGPN Co-ordinator Dr. Raimo Vuorinen introduced the outcomes of the ELGPN 2011-12 Work Programme and highlighted some options for using the Resource Kit within the local context. In her workshop Ms. Carla Tønder Jessing examined different models of professionalism among the guidance practitioners in the EU Member countries. The conference materials are available at:

<http://nck.au.dk/arrangementer/arrangement/artikel/vejledning-af-kortuddannede-paa-kanten-af-arbejdsmarkedet/>

Nordic conference for career practitioners, Gothenburg, Sweden 14–15 March 2013

Over the last ten years the Nordic network of adult learning (NVL) has supported the co-operation in lifelong guidance practice and policy development by thematic guidance networks and annual conferences. The NVL co-ordinator Ms Antra Carlsen has also initiated a discussion on synergies between the NVL and the ELGPN Nordic delegations.

The 2013 Nordic conference for guidance practitioners was organised in Gothenburg, Sweden on 14–15 March 2013. During the workshops over 150 practitioners from all the Nordic countries examined the competences of career practitioners in diverse cultural contexts and in the current labour market. Dr Gudbjörg Vilhjálmssdóttir from the University of Iceland introduced the key findings of the comparative study “Voice of Users”, which

highlighted the increasing interest of citizens to get involved design of guidance services. In his presentation Mr Lars Djernæs from the Nordic Council of Ministries analysed the current labour market policies and the implications for lifelong guidance. Dr Shamak Rezaei from the University of Roskilde analysed immigration and its implications for individuals and societies as well as the emerging challenges within the Nordic welfare states. Mr Michael Linblad introduced narratives in which young immigrants describe the challenges they meet in completing their secondary level education in the Nordic countries. The ELGPN Co-ordinator presented the key outcomes of the ELGPN 2011–12 Work Programme and options for promotion of lifelong Career Management Skills in the Nordic context. The conference materials are available at the NVL website at:

<http://www.nordvux.net/page/1552/seminarium2013.htm>

Support for regional lifelong guidance practice and policy development in Finland

In March 2011 the national working group for lifelong guidance in Finland presented a strategic plan for the development of lifelong guidance in Finland. One of the proposed priorities is to widen access to the services by strengthening the local co-ordination of the guidance services. In the beginning of 2013 the regional Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment were designated to promote the co-operation between sectors in the design and implementation of lifelong guidance services.

This initiative is supported by national development programme of adult guidance under the current ESF period. On 6–7 March 2013, the national human resources training and development centre for regional and local administration (<http://salmia.fi>) in Jyväskylä, Finland launched a new training and development programme for the regional co-ordinators under the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. Ms Jaana Apiainen from the Ministry and of the Finnish national ELGPN delegation together with the ELGPN Co-ordinator Dr Raimo Vuorinen introduced the rationale behind the current EU policies in lifelong guidance and the potential of ELGPN tools for local guidance practice and policy development. The local co-ordinators were invited to

make proposals how to improve the Resource Kit in meeting the challenges in co-operation in the regional level. More information about the national development programme in adult guidance is available at <http://www.opinovi.fi>.

A new analytical paper from PES to PES Dialogue: Job profiles and training for employment counsellors

The European Commission DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion has published an analytical paper on Job profiles and training of employment counsellors in the EU Member countries. The objective of the paper is to give an overview of the specifics of job profiles, competences requirements and training programmes for employment counsellors in public employment services (PES) in Europe.

The paper is one of the outcomes of the PES to PES Dialogue, which aims to help public employment services to anticipate new trends and needs which require adjustment of their service offer and business models. The report is available at the Commission website at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=8936&langId=en>

Upcoming events

- 2nd Policy Review Meeting, Estonia, on 6–7 June 2013

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