



Program
„Uczenie się przez całe życie”

**National Report on the
quality situation in
guidance in group
settings in
POLAND**

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Project:

Guide me!

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1 Offer in scope of guidance in group setting measures in Poland

Following the assumptions adopted by the Council of the European Union on 27–28 May 2004 vocational guidance in Poland is:

“on the one hand – an integral component of educational systems and employment services, and on the other hand – the development of professional career and continuing improvement of professional qualifications and competences, which becomes an integral component of life of each being”

In the context of these assumptions each citizen of the European Union, including Poland, should have a wide access to professional guidance services on each stage of development and, which follows, should be able to count on the support and services of a professional vocational counsellor whose education is based on academic grounds (on bachelor, master and postgraduate level).

Polish vocational guidance is a process which is the effect of planned activities of educational and employment institutions (Skłodowski, 2006). All counselling activities are regulated by the national laws of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. Founding on these grounds, the only official initiator and regulator of counselling activities in Poland are state agencies, that is the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education.

1.1 Initiator(s) of guidance measures

Following the works of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy related to the issue of career counsellors' services in Poland, there are legal acts clearly describing the responsibilities, working tools, standards of service and principles of work of career counsellors. All career counsellors employed by state bodies have to abide by:

- Law of 20 April 2004 on the promotion of employment and labour market institutions (Dz. U. z dnia 1 maja 2004 r.)

- Regulation of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 2 March 2007 on the standards of labour market services (Dz. U. z dnia 16 marca 2007 r.)
- Regulation of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 2 March 2007 on the specific conditions of running labour market activities by national employment bodies (Dz. U. z dnia 16 marca 2007 r.)

All individualized works concerning the quality of guidance in counselling institutions should be based on the framework of the legal acts mentioned above.

1.2 Organisations carrying out the training measures

The legal acts mentioned above clearly specify the structure of institutions and organisations providing vocational guidance services in Poland, they also describe all tools that can be applied to offer guidance services.

“Law of 20 April 2004 on the promotion of employment and labour market institutions (Dz. U. z dnia 1 maja 2004 r.) empowers the following institutions to offer guidance services and apply guidance tools:

“**Art. 6.** 1. Labour market institutions that realize the tasks enumerated in the Law are:

- public employment services;
- Voluntary Labour Brigades (OHP);
- employment agencies;
- training institutions;
- institutions of social dialogue;
- institutions of local partnership.”¹

Public employment services are: county and regional employment offices, Minister of Labour and his office as well as voivodship offices.

Employment agencies are mainly all job agencies, HR agencies, vocational guidance agencies and temporary work agencies.

¹ Ustawa z dnia 20 kwietnia 2004 o promocji zatrudnienia i instytucjach rynku pracy (Dz. U. z dnia 1 maja 2004 r.), rozdz. 3, art. 6

Training institutions include: state schools, non-state schools, universities and non-school education facilities.

Institutions of social dialogue are employers' associations, associations of the unemployed and nongovernmental organisations.

In article 38 the law clearly describes the responsibilities of specific labour market institutions in the area of vocational guidance:

“§ 38 1. Vocational guidance means offering the unemployed and searching for a job the assistance in choosing a proper job and place of employment and offering employers assistance in selecting candidates to work on positions requiring specific psycho-physical predispositions, especially by:

- 1) giving information on jobs, labour market and education and training opportunities;
- 2) giving advice with the application of standardised methods facilitating the selection of a job, change of qualifications, starting or changing employment, including testing professional aptitudes and interests;
- 3) sending to specialised psychological and medical examinations in order to obtain a professional opinion with regards to one's applicability to specific job, work or area of training;
- 4) initiating, organising and running group guidance for the unemployed and looking for a job;
- 5) giving information and advice to employers with regards to the selection of candidates to work on positions requiring specific psycho-physical predispositions.”²

Additional regulations with regards to training tools in vocational guidance are included in the Regulation of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 2 March 2007 on the specific conditions of running labour market activities by national employment bodies (Dz. U. z dnia 16 marca 2007 r.)

² Ustawa z dnia 20 kwietnia 2004 o promocji zatrudnienia i instytucjach rynku pracy (Dz. U. z dnia 1 maja 2004 r.), rozdz. 10, art. 38

1.3 Setting in which guidance measures are carried out in Poland (either in single coaching, group coaching, group training etc.)

Configuration of guidance tools applied with regards to people in need of the support from a vocational counsellor is established during the meeting with the client on the basis of the analysis of his/her individual needs. Formal aspects of counsellor's activities, depending on the needs of the person applying to the counsellor, are defined by the state regulations, especially chapter 4, § 23 of the Regulation of 2 March 2007

“§ 23 1. Vocational counsellor, offering vocational information and guidance, uses in particular the following:

- 1) vocational guidance methods and tools;
- 2) self-developed programmes on vocational information and guidance;
- 3) standardised diagnostic tools for examining vocational interests, predispositions and aptitudes;
- 4) databases of the unemployed or job searchers and of employers;
- 5) local, regional, national and international resources of professional information, including data on professions, educational opportunities and labour market;
- 6) address information of institutions specialising in solving the vocational problems of the unemployed or people searching for a job;
- 7) information materials containing employment office's resources.

2. Vocational counsellor applies only these methods and tools that he has been trained to use and which he is authorised to use.

3. Selection of psychological tests is subject to individual assessment of the vocational counsellor with psychological education, who, while applying these tests, should respect tests' copyrights and procedures of testing and result interpretation appropriate to a specific test."³

And chapter 6 of the Regulation of 2 March 2007 :§ 43 to § 50

“§ 43. Trainings in the area of the ability to search for employment are meant for the unemployed or people looking for employment, especially for those who:

- 1) do not have experience in looking for employment;
- 2) have lost motivation to look for employment as a result of long-term failure to find a job;
- 3) want to return to the labour market after a long term of lack of professional activity.

§ 44. 1. Training in the area of the ability to search for employment is preceded by an interview or individual counselling, as a result of which the counsellor gives the opinion on the purposefulness of the participation of the unemployed or job seeker in the training.

§ 45. Trainings in the area of the ability to search for employment are carried out in groups of no more than 14 persons.

§ 46. County employment office carries out trainings in the area of the ability to search for employment based on the training programme recommended by the proper Minister, by posting the information on the web site of the Ministry.

§ 47. 1. Programme of the training in the area of the ability to search for employment, mentioned in § 46, lasts three consecutive weeks and consists of two parts:

³ Rozporządzeniu Ministra Pracy i Polityki Społecznej z dnia 2 marca 2007 w sprawie szczegółowych warunków prowadzenia przez publiczne służby zatrudnienia usług rynku prac (Dz. U. z dnia 16 marca 2007 r.), rozdz. 4

1) 40 hours of workshops activities in the form of separate thematic sessions, realized during 10 consecutive working days.

2) practical job searching by the participants, during next 5 working days and at least 15 hours of meetings, whose aim is to share and discuss the experience in looking for a job, mutual assistance and support while looking for a job.

2. In justified cases, if the participants have been selected to the training from the point of view of specific type of problems they may have while looking for a job, the training programme may be adjusted to their specific needs, however the general scope of the content and time of sessions, mentioned in pt. 1 needs to be respected.

§ 48. 1. Activation sessions in the labour club are concerning specific issues useful for people who are unemployed or look for employment in supplementing their knowledge and skills necessary for active job searching and are carried out in the form of workshops.

2. Activation sessions are carried out in groups of no more than 16 persons.

§ 49. Participation of an unemployed or a job-seeker in activation sessions can be preceded by an interview with a vocational counsellor or professional development specialist, which will allow to indicate the scope of sessions in which he should participate.

§ 50. Trainings in the area of the ability to search for employment and activation sessions in the labour club are conducted by the leader of the labour club; in cases requiring specialised knowledge the leader can cooperate with other staff of the employment office or people mentioned in art. 39 pt. 4 of the Law".⁴

⁴ Rozporządzeniu Ministra Pracy i Polityki Społecznej z dnia 2 marca 2007 w sprawie szczegółowych warunków prowadzenia przez publiczne służby zatrudnienia usług rynku prac (Dz. U. z dnia 16 marca 2007 r.), rozdz. 6

1.4 Requested initial and further training of guidance staff in Poland

Professional preparation of a vocational counsellor to work is of utmost importance in Polish conditions. Such universities as the University of Łódź (faculty: Psychology) or Jan Długosz Academy (faculty: Pedagogy) offer an opportunity to study to become a vocational counsellor on master's level. Vocational counsellors in Poland can also become people with master's degree who have completed relevant post graduate studies. Besides master's degree, majority of labour market institutions require from vocational counsellors also a proper licence.

Vocational guidance, as an extensive area of knowledge, requires a proper preparation of people undertaking to work in the guidance sector. The suggestions below indicate fully the need to professionally educate vocational counsellors:

1. Vocational guidance, as a separate discipline, requires full specialised education.
2. Vocational guidance, as a sub-specialisation within other professions, requires (or not) additional training.
3. Vocational guidance as an additional profession based mainly on life experience of the counsellor, allowing to offer assistance to less experienced clients.
4. Vocational guidance as a self-help activity, offering assistance to individuals or groups of people at similar age or with similar experience to that of the counsellor.

There are 5 systems of teaching counsellors, which is related with the systems defined above:

1. Full time studies.
2. Continuing studies (while working).
3. Extramural studies.
4. Short courses, lasting a few days, raising qualifications.
5. Supervision and support of more experienced counsellors.”⁵

⁵ <http://www.sdsiz.pl/index.php/publikacje/161-doradztwo-zawodowe-w-krajach-unii-europejskiej>

Law of 20 April 2004 on the promotion of employment and labour market institutions (Dz. U. z dnia 1 maja 2004 r.), clearly stating the competences characterising a professional vocational counsellor employed in a state institutions, is a step to meet the requirements regarding the preparation of vocational counsellors.

„Art. 94. 1. Vocational guidance tasks are realized by:

- 1) vocational counsellor - trainee;
- 2) vocational counsellor;
- 3) 1st degree vocational counsellor;
- 4) 2nd degree vocational counsellor.

2. A vocational counsellor can be a person who has obtained a professional licence if he/she:

- 1) possesses full ability to take legal actions;
- 2) has not been punished by the law;
- 3) possesses higher education;
- 4) has performed tasks in the area of vocational guidance for at least 12 months in public employment services or has completed certified trainings preparing to perform the job within two years before submitting the application for the licence;
- 5) is of Polish citizenship or possesses enough Polish language skills to perform the job.

3. A person who does not meet conditions mentioned in pt. 2 can do the activities on a vocational counsellor – trainee position under the supervision of a vocational counsellor or after completing a certified vocational guidance training.

4. 1st degree vocational counsellor can be a person who meets all criteria mentioned in pt. 2 and:

- 1) has worked at least 24 months on a position of a vocational counsellor in public employment services and has completed master degree studies in psychology or vocational guidance;
- 2) has completed certified vocational guidance trainings.

5. 2nd degree can be a person who meets all criteria listed in pts. 2.1, 2.2, 2.5 and:

- 1) has completed post-graduate studies in vocational guidance;
- 2) has worked at least 36 months on the position of a 1st degree counsellor.

Art. 96. 1. Activities in the area of human resource development planning and organization of trainings for the unemployed and job-seekers are performed by a vocational guidance specialist.

2. Vocational guidance specialist can be a person who:

- 1) possesses full ability to take legal actions;
- 2) has not been punished by the law;
- 3) possesses at least secondary education;
- 4) has performed activities in the area of training organisation in public employment services within at least 12 months;

5) has completed certified training in the area of human resource development or training organisation.

3. An independent vocational guidance specialist can be a person who meets all criteria mentioned in pts. 2.1, 2.2, 2.5 and:

- 1) possesses higher education;
- 2) has worked at least 24 months on the position of a vocational guidance specialist;
- 3) has completed a certified human resource development training.

4. Vocational guidance specialist mentioned in pts. 2 and 3 is obliged to improve his/her professional qualifications by participating in at least one training within 24 months of work.”⁶

⁶ Ustawa z dnia 20 kwietnia 2004 o promocji zatrudnienia i instytucjach rynku pracy (Dz. U. z dnia 1 maja 2004 r.), rozdz. 17, art. 94

1.5 Requested quality certificates from the guidance institutions

Vocational guidance certificates are currently related to one area of vocational counsellors' education. In accordance with the law of 20 April 2004 on the promotion of employment and labour market institutions, each vocational counsellor employed in a public labour market institution, has to possess a proper licence, which is granted in accordance with the Regulation of the Minister of Economy and Labour of 20 October 2004 on the procedure of licensing vocational counsellors and job assistants (Dz. U. 2004 r., Nr 238, poz. 2393).

2 Quality programmes in continuous and further group training in Poland

Each institution dealing with vocational guidance in both single and group settings, functions in accordance with state regulations with regards to vocational guidance.

3 Quality situation in guidance in group settings in Poland

The quality of vocational guidance as a global process still encourages to make a deeper analysis. This report focuses mainly on clearly stated formal aspects related to ministerial activities. "necessary legal regulations defining the tasks of ministries and institutions operating in the area of the whole system of counselling and principles of their cooperation are still lacking"⁷. To the end of solving this issue, the establishment of National and Regional Integrated Vocational Counselling Centres should be considered, as suggested by professor Henryk Skłodowski. "They would unify the activities of all institutions dealing with job counselling – schools, universities, Employment Offices as well as employers, and their task would include, among others,:

⁷ Skłodowski H., Konferencja Wojewódzkiego Urzędu Pracy i Wojewódzkiego Ośrodka Doskonalenia Nauczycieli w Łodzi, „Zintegrowany system doradztwa zawodowego szansą na sprawnie działający rynek pracy”, Smardzewice, 8.10.2009

- coordination of the cooperation between the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, so that their works are not doubled, but separated, according to existing needs,
- integration of the vocational guidance system in the educational system (on primary, secondary, post secondary and university level), as well as in institutions such as Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Offices and employment offices,
- conducting widely understood vocational counselling for the staff of these institutions,
- giving individual and group guidance assistance to the staff of all levels of vocational guidance”⁸

3.1 Existing problems on the system and meta level

“The efficiency of functioning of the whole counselling sector can be described from a few perspectives”⁹ The first perspective concerns the professionalism of guidance services in the aspect of professional standards, the second one is related with the political and organizational level. The third question concerns the modes of functioning of counselling services. The fourth perspective is related to the clients and their evaluation of the services they receive. The final element of the efficiency of vocational guidance are the vocational counsellors themselves and their subjective sense of efficiency in their activities and efforts. All elements listed above constitute the foundation to develop and evaluate the quality of vocational guidance.

⁸ Skłodowski H., Konferencja Wojewódzkiego Urzędu Pracy i Wojewódzkiego Ośrodka Doskonalenia Nauczycieli w Łodzi, „Zintegrowany system doradztwa zawodowego szansą na sprawnie działający rynek pracy”, Smardzewice, 8.10.2009

⁹ Bańka A., Ocena, pomiar i usprawnienie jakości procesu doradztwa zawodowego, Wyd. Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej Departament rynku Pracy, Warszawa, 2005, s. 14

3.2 Suggestions by experts to improve the situation or solve the problems

It can be clearly seen that from the formal point of view in Poland there is lacking an individualized form of describing the quality of vocational guidance. The regulations related to guidance services are defined by legal acts, but there is lacking a document that would describe the regulations of controlling the quality of vocational counsellors' work. A possible way to solve the problem of the quality is a wide promotion and application of the Vocational Guidance Quality Evaluation Scale developed by professor Augustyn Bańka

"The purpose of the tool developed for the evaluation of the quality of vocational guidance:

- psychometrically reliable and accurate measurement of different micro skills of the counsellor,
- diagnosis of counsellor's competence deficiencies,
- evaluation of potential abilities of the evaluated person,
- evaluation of training priorities for both beginners and experienced counsellors in the area of vocational guidance and career counselling."

4 Existing quality standards in guidance in group settings

The quality of vocational counsellor's work in Poland is influenced by a number of tools which are professionally applied in his/her work. The counsellor's technique is described by the quality of offered services. There does not exist however one single document indicating elements constituting the quality of vocational counsellor's work. There can be listed nonetheless a number of items that support the technique of a vocational counsellor, such as:

- "Classification of professions and specialisations" (2472 professions and specialisations) developed by the Institute of Labour and Social Affairs as requested by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy;
- Set of files including information about different professions (301 professions)
- Set of films about different professions (119 films)

- "Job guide" (description and characteristics of 542 professions)

The quality of counsellor's work is also affected by different techniques such as:

- Counselling interview
- Methods of interest evaluation. Such techniques include, among others:
 - Self-examination set
 - Vocational Interest Questionnaire
 - Vocational Preferences Questionnaire
 - General Aptitude Test Battery

Besides a number of techniques are applied, that require psychological education from the counsellor.

- Methods of individual and group guidance

4.1 Quality certificates used in the Poland

There are none.

4.2 Quality efforts or individual quality programmes by the initiators, training institutions or trainers' organizations

"In contemporary vocational guidance the most important tasks are the following issues:

- quality of the guidance process
- quality management
- quality control
- quality assurance
- quality development"

In activities aiming at improvement of the quality of counselling process one can refer to professor Bańka's proposals concerning the development of techniques and methods for the precise measurement of the quality of counselling activities. Professor Bańka suggests to focus on two group of methods:

"- Methods intersubjectively directed to audit the quality of functioning of institutions providing counselling services.

- Methods intrasubjectively directed to processes of self-reception, self-evaluation and self-supervision. „

An example of the institutional quality audit model is the technique called EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management). The characteristic feature of this method of quality measurement and control is continuous monitoring and development of counselling skills as well as the revision and assistance from trained supervisory staff that conducts the audit.

The final objective of this method of audit of guidance quality is to reveal the potential of improvement, and not giving the assessment of the institution providing vocational guidance services.

Another example of institutional audit models and quality management is the method called 360° Feedback, also called multi-rater feedback - "method of inter-relations based on multilateral evaluation. Its aim is to communicate the observations, indicating strengths of the staff and development of specific areas of functioning of the staff and the whole institutions. This information feedback comes from the staff, managers, peers (colleagues) and internal or external users (clients). The feedback describes specific behaviour of the staff (reflecting technical skills and business competences) and relevant position of an employee in the structure of an organisation (company). The measurement method is based on the forecasting employees' behaviours on the basis of questions (at least 100) noted on five categorial evaluation scales."

Psychometric tools can be used for a more precise evaluation of the quality of counselling process and vocational counsellor's work. Their objective is:

- “ – analysis of the quality of counselling relation,
- perceived effectiveness of counselling,
- perception of counsellor's attributes revealed during the counselling process,
- perception of the counselling process”

“Examples of tools for the evaluation of the quality by measurements of perceptions and impressions of persons using counselling services:

- Barrett-Lennard Inventory

- Counselling Evaluation Inventory
- Counsellor Effectiveness Scale - CES
- Counsellor Rating Form - CRF)
- Counsellor Effectiveness Rating Scale - CERS

These methods are characterised by the main features:

- Firstly, they focus on perceptions, attitudes and expectations of the beneficiaries of the counselling process.
- Secondly, first methods of evaluation of vocational guidance quality are of a theoretic character, which means that they are not based on a specific counselling theory, are then derived only from empirical observations”.

5 Important quality domains in scope of guidance measures with regards to the specific problems in Poland

“An especially significant problem in the functioning of modern career guidance is the lack of theoretical and methodological support from universities and scientific institutions” Professor Henryk Skłodowski, expert in vocational guidance, suggests that the quality of guidance lies not only in the hands of state civil servants, authors of laws and regulations, but most of all in the hands of scientists and researchers whose task is to create a unified system of vocational guidance. The establishment of National and Regional Vocational Guidance Centres mentioned before could be a step on the way to develop such a system. The problem of vocational guidance is not only of organizational or substantial nature, but of financial one as well. In his papers and speeches professor Skłodowski indicates that “it is of utmost importance to support this action by creating favourable legal, organisational and, most of all..., financial conditions” .

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