



Report

Empowering individuals to learn – outreach and guidance services

Peer Learning Activity



ET2020 Adult Learning Working Group
November 2019
Prepared by: Simon Broek



ET 2020 Adult Learning Working Group
Peer Learning Activity
25 – 27 November 2019 Cracow, Poland

Contents

1. Context.....	2
2. Work process and content of the PLA	4
3. Key elements of successful policies for guidance systems that empower adults for upskilling and reskilling	9
1. Individualised approaches and outreach	9
2. Partnership	11
3. Policy framework.....	12
4. Quality Assurance and information.....	13
5. Guidance staff.....	15
4. Conclusions	17



1. Context

The aim of PLA was by comparing and contrasting policies from two countries, to identify the essential conditions for success of policy approaches regarding outreach and guidance that empower adults to learn/upskill and reskill.

The aim of the peer learning activity (PLA) was, by comparing and contrasting policies from two countries and looking at policies in other countries to identify the essential conditions for success of policy approaches regarding outreach and guidance that empower adults to learn/upskill and reskill.

The PLA built upon previous work in this field, notably the discussions organised during meetings of the ET2020 Adult Learning Working Group on empowering adults through guidance; the drafting of the stocktaking report (Achievements under the Renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning; 2019). Especially under priority 2 and 3 (supply and take up of provision (EAAL priority 2); access to adult learning (EAAL priority 3)), guidance is often referred to as an area in which policy developments took place. Member States see the need to expand guidance structures within existing structures and acknowledge the need for improvements in the areas of outreach and guidance.

Empowering is understood in the tradition of adult learning research (Knowles, Wenger, Freire) as both a characteristic of adult learning (adult learner as autonomous learner) and a result of adult learning (desired learning outcome of adult learning). Some of the characteristics related to an empowered adult learning include: ownership; motivation; confidence; responsibility; curiosity; energy; self-efficacy; goalsetting; and autonomy.

The topic of guidance in adult learning and empowering adults is not new. It has been the subject of many initiatives, studies and European projects over the years.

- **ELGPN:** The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN 2007-2015) assisted the participating countries and the European Commission in developing European cooperation on lifelong guidance in the education and employment sectors.¹ ELGPN published a Guidance Glossary in 2014.²

¹ See: <http://www.elgpn.eu/>

² EELGPN (2014), Lifelong Guidance Policy Development: Glossary: <http://www.elgpn.eu/publications/browse-by-language/english/elgpn-tools-no.-2-lig-glossary/>



ET 2020 Adult Learning Working Group
Peer Learning Activity
25 – 27 November 2019 Cracow, Poland

- **Cedefop:** Cedefop has worked on guidance as well. A key publications is their 2009 report ‘Professionalising career guidance Practitioner competences and qualification routes in Europe’, which includes a competence framework for career guidance³. Another key publication is the 2016 report ‘Improving career prospects for the low educated – The role of guidance and lifelong learning’⁴.
- **GOAL:** The Guidance and Orientation for Adult Learners project (GOAL: 2015-2018) was a collaboration between six partner countries: Belgium (Flanders), the Czech Republic, Iceland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, and Slovenia. The project sought to develop existing models of guidance and orientation in the participating countries so these services could reach low-educated adults and address their needs.⁵
- **Euroguidance:** Euroguidance is a European network of national resource and information centres for guidance in 34 European countries (since 1992). Its main target group consists of guidance practitioners in education and employment. Euroguidance supports the competence development of the guidance community on the European dimension of lifelong guidance.⁶

The PLA took these studies into account while looking in-depth at the two presented guidance policies to empower adults.

³ Cedefop (2009), Professionalising career guidance Practitioner competences and qualification routes in Europe.

⁴ Cedefop (2016), Improving career prospects for the low educated – The role of guidance and lifelong learning.

⁵ See for more information the EPAL website on GOAL: <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/guidance-and-orientation-adult-learners-goal>

⁶ <https://www.euroguidance.eu/>



2. Work process and content of the PLA

Basic information about PLA

Within the context of the Education and Training 2020 programme and the European Agenda for Adult Learning, this peer learning activity (PLA) was organised as part of the programme of work of the Adult Learning Working Group.

The PLA took place from 25 to 27 November 2019 in Cracow, Poland. Wojewódzki Urząd Pracy, the regional labour office (RLO) in Małopolska region hosted the meeting. Wojewódzki Urząd Pracy is responsible for the Małopolska partnership for lifelong learning; developed a specific quality assurance label for training providers; and designed and implemented a voucher system for basic and vocational skills training.

In total there were 22 participants, from 15 countries, mostly from Ministries, but also representing agencies, employers, trade unions and other stakeholder groups.

*First day – introduction to PLA,
the topic and two policies*

During the **first day**, the participants were introduced to how a PLA works and discussed different approaches to analysing policies. In addition, expectations were gathered and synthesized. The expectation of the participants broadly concerned:

- Identifying policy approaches that follow individual needs: what do adults need to be motivated to learn?
- Identifying policy approaches on how financial and non-financial instruments strengthen guidance and outreach approaches.
- Identifying policy approaches on effective partner and policy cooperation.
- Identifying policy approaches on how to reach out to adults in need of guidance and training.
- Come to conclusions and options relevant for policy makers.

Furthermore, it was expressed that the PLA could lead to new partnerships at policy levels and bilateral follow-up discussions, and potential cooperation in new EU projects.

After the introduction and identifying expectations, the policies from Poland and Slovenia were presented and analysed. The Polish policy also



received attention during the second and third day of the PLA. Below, the two policies are brief introduced:

Poland

The Regional Labour Office has the task to support adults in upskilling and reskilling. Its mission is to ensure through a high quality of services that all residents of the Małopolska region are competent, qualified and employed. Within different projects, the RLO offers professional assistance in career planning and implementation of the Individual Action Plan. Through outreach activities adults are approached and within a short time, an appointment is made. Based on the results of the meeting and tests⁷, an individual action plan is development by the adult and the counsellor. The training offer consists of primarily labour market and career oriented courses, but also language courses and courses for obtaining a driving licence.

Besides the outreach, guidance and training offer, the Małopolska policy contains three key components:

- **Małopolska partnership for lifelong learning:** This partnership started in 2008 with 55 institutions to better define what lifelong learning is and how the institutions can better support it. Currently, the partnership has around 100 members and has a clear organisational; structure (general assembly, secretariat, programme council). The partners are from the world of education, the world of work and government. The partnership coordinates and develops lifelong learning policies in the region and works on outreach activities (such as awards, local initiatives).
- **Voucher system for training:** Based on the experiences in Wallonia (Le Forem), Belgium, the RLO developed with ESF support a voucher system as demand-driven financial initiative for training. This voucher system empowers learners to take responsibility for their learning; ensures (through the quality assurance system) the quality of

⁷ RLO worked out the so-called Balance of Competence Method (BCM). During several meetings with the counselor, this method can identify client's competences based on his experience, as well as consider evidence confirming his learning outcomes. Client can also receive feedback on his educational and professional potential. BCM is more widely presented here: <https://www.pociagdokariery.pl/lista-materialow-dla-instytucji-uczacych-1/40,slow-kilka-o-bilansie-kompetencji#>; http://biblioteka-krk.ibe.edu.pl/opac_css/doc_num.php?explnum_id=962



services; allows flexibility in the training offer; and ensures accountability of public funding. The voucher is worth 15 PLN (3.5 Euro). A one hour foreign language training costs 1 voucher while one hour of driver's licence training costs 3 vouchers. Furthermore, participants need to pay an own contributions (13%). The vouchers specifically target low-qualified workers and workers aged 50+.

- **A quality assurance system for training providers:** To be eligible to receive public funding for training, the training provider has to be registered as quality assured provider (in service database).



In the Małopolska region, the partnership developed its own quality assurance framework (MSUES⁸) in 2011. The framework is accepted in the national system. The quality label looks at the quality of the organisation; services; personnel; and management. For each area specific standards are developed (see figure).

The Małopolska is the most successful region in Poland when it comes to offering guidance services to adults. Through the combination of the partnership, the demand-driven funding and the quality assurance system, the region has developed a consistent and effective outreach, guidance and training approach. Around 9,000 individuals are supported annually.

⁸ See: www.msues.pl



Slovenia

In the Slovenian context, guidance already received attention in the 1996 Adult Education Act (revised in 2018); the Adult Education Master Plans (2005-2010; 2013-2020; 2021-2030); and the Adult Education Annual Plans. The latter defines the guidance network of regional guidance centres (ISIO) in adult learning.

Guidance is seen as a public service that is accessible for all adults (16+, not included in regular school system). There are however specific target groups (employed 45+; unemployed 50+; low-skilled; elderly, Roma; people with special needs, etc.) with special attention defined.

In 17 local Guidance and Information Centres (ISIO), operate in the adult learning centres, established by local authorities, they analyse local needs, work in local partnerships (signed by agreement of principles for cooperation and activities) and conduct promotion and outreach activities.

The guidance approach is based on the following principles:

- Unified model – ISIO
- National coordination of operation (SIAE)
- National data base and platform for counselling service in adult learning guidance
- Validation of prior learning in guidance centres
- Defined competences of the counsellors with special trainings (initial, continuing)
- Developed outreach approaches
- Partnership networks (partners as referral)
- A quality assurance system for ISIO

Furthermore, the national approach also builds further on European experiences (for instance through the GOAL project).

By comparing the success factors identified for both the Polish and Slovenian policy, a first draft framework of successful policy approaches was developed.

During the **second day** the participants visited the guidance centre in the RLO and had the chance to discuss the partnership for lifelong learning as established in the Małopolska region. Furthermore, the voucher system



ET 2020 Adult Learning Working Group
Peer Learning Activity
25 – 27 November 2019 Cracow, Poland

Second day – analysing policies and identifying key elements for successful policy approaches

as developed in Małopolska was focused on to understand how the financial scheme empowers adult learners and employers to engage in guidance pathways and training. In addition, policies from all the participating countries were looked at to identify interesting practices in all the countries.

Based on the discussion on other national approaches, the list of success factors was revised, finetuned and further developed. Furthermore, examples were identified per set of success factors.

Third day – additional input on approaches to assure the quality of training.

During the **third day**, additional input was provided by the Polish RLO on the quality assurance framework for all providers that are eligible to receive vouchers. Inspired by the discussions, the key elements for successful policy approaches for guidance systems were further discussed by the participants and several clarifications were made and missing elements and aspects were added, after which consensus was found on the form and content of the five key elements.

This concise report will not provide a presentation of the detailed discussions that took place, but presents the overarching results in Chapter 3.



3. Key elements of successful policies for guidance systems that empower adults for upskilling and reskilling

The elements were identified based on amalgamating the factors for success identified in relation to the two policy examples discussed during the PLA and the reflections on the approaches in the other countries present in the PLA. In this it is important to keep in mind that these elements do not provide an exact 'blueprint' on what needs to happen in a country: the country context plays an important role in situating the elements identified; for example countries with a more top-down tradition in policy making and implementation in the (adult) education area might emphasise different aspects compared to countries that have a more liberal and cooperative tradition in policy development and implementation.

The elements are divided into five sets. Each consists of a title, summary statement, policy considerations and a pool of examples from the PLA participating countries that can act as inspiration when designing or revising policies.

1. Individualised approaches and outreach

A guidance system that supports adults to be empowered for reskilling and upskilling includes...

Summary statement: ...Approaches that reach out to specific target groups by going to where these adults are and working with community ambassadors and/or different institutions and organizations active on local level; that make information on guidance services, training and (job) opportunities easily accessible to all; and that are tailored to the needs of the adult as a whole person (not only looking at employability) and in which adults take ownership of the guidance and training.

Policy considerations: When developing/ revising policies the following could be considered:

- a) Develop a communication strategy that includes promotion, going to (remote) places where the target group is, working with



- ambassadors, awards, competitions or using different local institutions or organisations known to residents.
- b) Integrate in the individualised approach that adults feel empowered and are able to make own decisions and take responsibility for their training pathway.
 - c) Apply a holistic approach to guidance, looking at dispositional, situational barriers for learning, employment and social inclusion and the potential of individuals.
 - d) Work with other (social) services to apply a holistic approach to outreach and providing individualised support.
 - e) Apply different methodologies (questionnaires, portfolio, interviews, validation of prior learning, observations, group sessions) suited for the individual adult to assess the situation of the adults, its skills needs, and support the skills development.
 - f) Work flexibly as counsellor regarding time and place to meet the adults.

Reservoir of inspiration: The PLA identified examples for inspiration in SI, PL, EE, TK, AT, EL, ES, LV. Furthermore inspiration could be taken from the GOAL project⁹. The box below provides illustrations from Estonia, Greece and Latvia.

Estonia

- Guidance is provided through e-mail, skype, chats and phones. Skype is very popular among the clients and is can be used to communicate with disabled clients.
- Counsellors reach out to parents through their children (reach out in schools).
- Online portal with counsellors, presenting their profiles. Clients can pick the counsellor they want to work with.

Greece

- In every Second Chance School (schools for adults) there is a counsellor and there are various tools and platforms for guidance (OAED - profiling tool - online; free of charge; classifies job seekers; EOPPEP - online platform with tools to design career).

Latvia

- There is an online profiling tool for unemployed people that could also be used also for other target groups.

⁹ See for more information the EPAL website on GOAL: <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/guidance-and-orientation-adult-learners-goal>



- Latest revision of the education law gives the possibility to recognise partial qualification or come back to school after a break. It motivates people to finish their studies and return to a learning pathways.

2. Partnership

A guidance system that supports adults to be empowered for reskilling and upskilling includes...

Summary statement: ... An approach that is based on an operational partnership between all relevant stakeholders (education and training sector, labour market sector, cultural sector and other institutions and organizations related for leisure time, civil sector, family and social welfare, government, including local government) at the most appropriate level. In the partnerships roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined and agreed upon.

Policy considerations: When developing/ revising policies the following could be considered:

- a) Bridging gaps between different guidance services (labour market guidance, educational guidance, career guidance, social guidance and offering a one-stop-shop for guidance for adults.
- b) Ensure effective governance structures in maintaining the partnership (e.g. through agreements, setting up a secretariat, agreeing on terms of association and voting rights).
- c) Ensure that the partnership as a whole feels responsible for its success and for its failure.

Reservoir of inspiration: The PLA identified examples for inspiration in PL, SI, AT, TK, FR, but generally, these are more examples of cooperation instead of partnership. The box below provides illustrations from France, Poland and Turkey.

France

- France used to have a circle of social partnership in which employers, social service and providers of education and training cooperated.

Poland

- The Małopolska partnership for lifelong learning started in 2008 and currently has around 100 members. The partners are from the



world of education, the world of work and government. The partnership coordinates and develops lifelong learning policies in the region and works on outreach activities (such as awards, local initiatives).

Turkey

- In Turkey there is not a partnership approach, but there are coordination mechanisms in place. The roles and responsibilities could be better clarified.
- In Latvia there is not a partnership, but a cooperation mechanism with some partnership elements. The Adult Education Governance Board involve ministries, social partners, and organisations in making decisions in the adult education sector; setting priorities, aims and tasks; developing financing models and quality criteria. There is a secretariat and there is a voting mechanism to make decisions on adult education issues.

3. Policy framework

A guidance system that supports adults to be empowered for reskilling and upskilling includes...

Summary statement: ... A policy framework that is based on a coherent and overarching approach in which different policy fields (education, adult learning, culture, civic engagement, family and social welfare, entrepreneurship and employment, life wide guidance) are effectively included; that is based on a strong coordination mechanism (or coordinator); that is sufficiently resourced; and includes the right (financial) incentives for adults and institutions.

Policy considerations: When developing/ revising policies the following could be considered:

- a) Establish links between different policy areas and departments to align guidance approaches.
- b) Ensure that guidance and the cooperation between different policy areas is included in legal frameworks (or other key reference documents).
- c) Put in place a coordinating body that is able to align different guidance approaches.
- d) Apply financial incentives to stimulate specific behaviour (e.g. vouchers to activate adults to take up own responsibility for training).



Reservoir of inspiration: The PLA identified examples for inspiration in PL, SI, SE, TK, ES, LT. The box below provides illustrations from Sweden and Turkey.

Sweden:

- Long-standing provision/framework for guidance (beginning in 1940s)
- Guidance incorporated in different laws (school education, HE, adult education, etc.)
- Funding: guidance is considered as an “ordinary element” of the system rather than “project-based” element (comparison between PL and SE: PL – the guidance system for adults seems to rely heavily on European funding, SE: national funding is used, with the exception of project-based pilot initiatives in the field)
- Regulatory framework (top-level policy) intervenes in defining staff requirements for guidance counsellors (necessary to hold a bachelor degree in counselling)

Turkey:

- Guidance integrated in various top level strategies/steering documents (LLL Action Plan(s); National Development Plan 2019-2023)
- Guidance incorporated in different laws (law on formal education, university/HE law, non-formal/VET law, law on VET qualifications, employment law)
- Guidance linked to publicly-funded (adult) education/training provision
- Currently (since around 2 years) working on building bridges/links (coordination) between education and training provision under education and employment authorities (to which guidance can lead)
- Two key central web portals including the information on guidance:
1. LLL portal (under educational authorities): info on education/training courses, info on academic, psychological and career guidance; 2. Employment agency web portal: similar information/possibilities, but labour-market oriented; also information on guidance, but job-oriented guidance.

4. Quality Assurance and information

A guidance system that supports adults to be empowered for reskilling and upskilling includes...



Summary statement: ... An approach that is based on a quality assurance approach that ensures a high quality level of guidance and training services (that includes external audits); use of monitoring and evaluation information to improve services; and research on effective guidance approaches and (regional/future) skills needs.

Policy considerations: When developing/ revising policies the following could be considered:

- a) Establish a quality label that includes external audits and ensured a high quality of guidance services.
- b) Put in place a monitoring and evaluation system that allows to assess the quality of the guidance service and its (longer-term) results.
- c) Ensure that the guidance services make use of up-to-date and relevant (regional) labour market information.

Reservoir of inspiration: The PLA identified examples for inspiration in PL, SI, EL, FR, AT, LU, SE, NO, SK. The box below provides illustrations from France, Austria and Norway.

France

- Quality Framework EduForm 1 and 2 (increased quality level) to assure the quality of training providers.

Austria

- Austria implements a longitudinal study on guidance: Effekte-Nutzen-Wirkungen.¹⁰

Norway

- Norway: A national quality framework for guidance is under development, to be launched in January 2021. Several groups are at work in the project, working with:
 - o Ethics
 - o Competence standards (for counsellors)
 - o Career competences (CMS – Career Management Skills)
 - o Quality Assurance

¹⁰ Accessible via www.erwachsenenbildung.at



5. Guidance staff

A guidance system that supports adults to be empowered for reskilling and upskilling includes...

Summary statement: ... An approach to guidance staff development that ensures that the staff has the right competences, skills and qualifications and is able to continuously development in the profession through upskilling courses, mentoring, supervision and learning while working.

Policy considerations: When developing/ revising policies the following could be considered:

- a) Ensure that counsellors have a specific level of competence. This can be done through standard-setting.
- b) Ensure that there are pre-service and in-service training possibilities for counsellors.
- c) Ensure that counsellors continue developing and keep up with new developments while in the profession (through learning in the workplace, mentoring, supervision).
- d) Ensure that counsellors have the competences to work with specific target groups.
- e) Ensure that counsellors have the competences to refer adults to right (other) services and validations pathways.

Reservoir of inspiration: The PLA identified examples for inspiration in NO, EL, PL, SE, SI, LV. The box below provides illustrations from France, Latvia, Slovenia, and Poland

France

- University study for becoming a counsellor.
- Common standards of work for career counsellors are defined.

Latvia

- There are in-service training courses for all kinds of counsellors, especially in individual approach, for example, in-service-training course in Individual counselling.

Slovenia

- Initial training for counsellors in adult education is assured after university study (by SIAE).
- Further training is compulsory as a part of the quality assurance system (at least of 32 hours per year).

Poland

- Mentoring for young staff in guidance.



ET 2020 Adult Learning Working Group
Peer Learning Activity
25 – 27 November 2019 Cracow, Poland

- Supervision is a part of counsellor work.

Furthermore, inspiration could be taken from the Cedefop report (2009) on professionalising career guidance and GOAL project final report (2018).



4. Conclusions

A partnership approach in the design of policies, implementation of policies, funding of policies and delivery of guidance based on a holistic guidance strategy.

It will be noted that several of the key factors for success identified during this PLA match those identified by other research, as outlined in section 1 above. The evidence of the PLA strengthens the idea that guidance and outreach for empowering adults to learn and develop is a multi-faceted policy area for which a variety of different approaches need to be combined in order to be successful. What comes out clearly as the cornerstone of any policy in this area is that it should be based on a multi-stakeholder approach (partnership), in the design of policies, the implementation of policies, the funding of policies and delivery of guidance. This especially important in building bridges between education sectors, guidance system (education, career) and between education providers and companies as well as organisations active in culture, civic engagement, local policy and other important areas important for adults. This calls for a holistic guidance strategy that connects the different systems and in which guidance staff is well-trained and equipped.