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Vocational Guidance Education in Full-Time Compulsory Education in Europe

European Commission

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE EDUCATION IN FULL-TIME COMPULSORY EDUCATION

SLOVENIA

Academic year 2007/08

Education is compulsory for pupils between the ages of 6 and 15. It is offered in basic schools *(osnovna šola)* and is organised as a single structure (without distinction between primary and lower secondary levels). Pupils receive the same education (divided into three cycles lasting three years each) without a change of school. The end of compulsory education is a key moment in terms of guidance. Pupils have the possibility to go on to general, technical or vocational upper secondary education.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND NATIONAL OBJECTIVES

There are several legal sources which define (very generally) the objectives of the national policy in the area of guidance.

According to the law on basic education (1996; last revision 2007), the objective of guidance education is to prepare pupils to make their choice of profession. In 1999, Guidelines for guidance services in schools were adopted and 'vocational guidance' officially became one of the most important functions of school counsellors. Before that, the network of vocational counsellors was maintained by the Employment Service of Slovenia (ESS). Its responsibilities included the testing of pupils at the end of compulsory school. Vocational counsellors from the NEA visited schools and invited pupils to fill in an interest-related questionnaire and take a general aptitude test. Each school counselling service prepares its own 'Vocational guidance programme', which includes the following activities: gathering the information needed for the occupational and learning choices of pupils; vocational guidance diagnosis; vocational counselling; vocational education; and guiding, motivating and accompanying pupils and parents.

In the employment sector, it is implicitly recognised that guidance plays an important role in reaching objectives established by the country's Employment Service and in contributing to a high level of employability.

The document entitled 'Measures of Active Employment Policy 2007-2013' considers guidance services as a measure allowing different target groups (people who are or are not employed, early school leavers and others) to reach a high level of qualification.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Ministry of Education manages and finances guidance services offered by schools. Basic (single structure) and upper secondary schools are responsible for the establishment of their own **counselling services with vocational guidance duties**.

The Employment Service of Slovenia (whose local and regional offices are coordinated by a central service) provides information and occupational counselling to anyone who may need it (adults as well as young school leavers). The ESS co-finances the Resource Centres for Vocational Guidance (NRCVG), including the national coordination centre, several regional RCVGs and still more information branches. The network of RCVGs has existed since 1999. Each basic school has its own counsellor at the RCVG. Schools and RCVGs cooperate by forming joint commissions for vocational guidance, whose members are teachers responsible for 9th-year classes, school counsellor(s) and the occupational counsellor of the local RCVG.

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM

According to the 1998 National Basic School Curriculum, careers guidance must be integrated as a cross-cutting approach into different subjects from the 1st to 9th years (e.g. in geography, 'exploring what meteorologists do', in art subjects, 'visiting real artists at work', and in natural sciences, 'motivating pupils for jobs in sciences'). In the lower years (pupils aged 6-12) of compulsory education, teachers integrate information on the professional world and different professions into their subjects or other extracurricular activities. In the upper years, guidance is provided by teachers during school lessons and class discussion periods and by school counsellors after classes (see below). In the 7th and 8th years, pupils get acquainted with the electronic database on the choices available in upper secondary education (programmes, schools, entry requirements, study periods and further options in higher education) and learn how to use it. They all receive a free brochure called the 'Vocational Guide'.

Traineeships within the framework of the curriculum

Traineeships are not included in the compulsory education curriculum (they are part of upper secondary vocational education curricula).

OTHER TYPES OF ACTIVITY/GUIDANCE SERVICES

Contacts with the professional world

Pupils in the last two years of compulsory education (ages 13-15) have the possibility to visit companies. These visits are organised by school counsellors. Counsellors often turn to the Resource Centres for Vocational Guidance, established and financed by the Public Employment Service. These services provide more possibilities for the organisation of visits according to pupils' needs.

Guidance services at school

Each school employs one or several school counsellors who provide pupils with a wide range of services (personal, social and vocational guidance). They devote approximately 35 % of their working time to guidance tasks (in upper secondary education, the amount of time reaches approximately 20 %). Counsellors work with pupils individually, in small groups or in class. Each year, the schools gather teachers, school counsellors, counsellors from the Public Employment Service and local doctors to organise a 'team conference' whose

objective is to discuss the 'professional preferences' of each pupil from the point of view of different experts. The Institute of Education and the Vocational Education and Training Centre regularly publish promotional materials and manuals for careers guidance in basic and upper secondary education.

Guidance services outside school

In the public employment sector, guidance is provided by counsellors who work in the regional and local offices of the Public Employment Service as well as in the Resource Centres for Vocational Guidance. They provide their services to people seeking employment, adults and pupils (those in the last year of compulsory education). These services offer a test taken by pupils at the age of 14, which is used to identify pupils' vocational preferences, interests and general aptitudes.

Pupils are informed about the occupations from different angles:

- choosing the 'right' institution for further education;
- competencies needed for working in a specific occupational field;
- the characteristics of the labour market (employment possibilities);
- companies and organisations which employ people for specific occupations.

QUALIFICATIONS OF GUIDANCE STAFF

Counsellors in schools and in the Public Employment Service must have a master's degree (previously, a university degree) in psychology, education, social work or social pedagogy. Specific initial training for vocational guidance as such does not exist. Methods and tools for vocational guidance are incorporated in courses on school counselling work, which are compulsory for future psychologists and teachers. School counsellors have the possibility to take a large number of ongoing training programmes in connection with guidance, many of which are specialised in this area (e.g. 'Training for vocational guidance', 'Models of vocational counselling', 'Experiential learning for vocational guidance', etc.).

COOPERATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS, EMPLOYERS, PARENTS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

According to the Guidelines (1999), basic schools must try to involve parents in vocational guidance activities for pupils. For example, vocational and learning guidance seminars are organised for parents; parents are invited to organise visits to their workplaces with the objective to introduce young people to different professions, their content, etc. Other types of cooperation, such as cooperation between schools and the employment service offices – consisting in visits to these services – exist. Furthermore, cooperation with the local environment, which is one of the compulsory school activities, usually involves visits of pupils in the upper years to local companies and other prospective employers, and/or visits of external professionals to schools. In the past few years, Chambers (of Crafts, Commerce and Industry) have been showing increasing interest by initiating and joining vocational guidance projects. Often, the cooperation between schools and employers is organised on the initiative of the Centre for Vocational Education and Training (public agency), which

plays a linking role in the vocational guidance event. Since 1993, IZIDA (a private NGO) has been very active in the field of careers guidance for youth and adults. IZIDA provides ongoing training in vocational guidance and coordinates projects which bring together schools, employers and parents.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

A large amount of official information on programmes, schools, the labour market and different professions is published by the Ministry of Education, the Public Employment Service and other bodies involved in guidance at national level. Many other organisations also produce brochures, websites, etc., providing information in this area.

Websites containing information related to employment vacancies and programmes, training possibilities, etc., are provided by the Public Employment Service (www.ess.gov.si), the Centre for Education and Vocational Training (www.cpi.si), and many other organisations (for example www.acs.si).

Internet references

http://www.ess.gov.si/eng/Introduction/Introduction.htm

http://www.ess.gov.si/eng/Nrcvg/nrcvg.htm

http://www.cpi.si/en/

http://www.izida.si/

Sources

1. Country report (CEDEFOP) Vocational Education and Training (2008)
2. Guidance Policies in the Knowledge Society. Trends, challenges and responses across Europe. Cedefop comprehensive report. Ronald G. Sultana. Cedefop Panorama series; 100. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2004.
3. Eurybase; Eurydice.