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Vocational Guidance Education in Full-Time Compulsory Education in Europe

European Commission

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE EDUCATION IN FULL-TIME COMPULSORY EDUCATION

LITHUANIA

School year 2007/08

Education is compulsory for pupils between the ages of 7 and 16. Provision of primary education commences when a child is 6/7 years of age. The four-year primary education curriculum is implemented by kindergarten schools, primary schools and other schools. Primary education is aimed at providing children with the basics of moral, cultural and social maturity and elementary literacy and enabling them to get ready for studies according to the basic education curriculum. The duration of the primary education curriculum is four years (forms 1-4). Upon completion of the primary education curriculum, a person gains primary education.

After completing primary education, 10/11-year-old children are taught according to the basic education curriculum implemented by gymnasiums and secondary, basic, youth, vocational and other types of schools. The purpose of basic education is to provide an individual with the basics of moral, socio-cultural and civic maturity, general literacy and the basics of technological literacy; to raise national consciousness; to develop the ability to make decisions and choices and to continue learning. The duration of the basic education curriculum is six years (forms 5-10). Upon completion of this curriculum, a person gains basic education.

Initial vocational training may be provided to individuals who have basic education and are at least 14 years old. Upon completing the initial vocational training curriculum and/or passing qualifying examinations, the student gets an initial professional qualification and/or completes basic education.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND NATIONAL OBJECTIVES

The law on education (2003) *(Švietimo įstatymas)* states that vocational information and counselling services include provision of information and counselling on learning opportunities (vocational education and higher education study programmes), education in other countries and employment prospects on the Lithuanian labour market. These services are provided in schools, information centres, counselling offices and labour exchanges in accordance with the regulations of the Minister of Education and Science and the Minister of Social Security and Labour.

Requirements of the vocational information and counselling services provision (2005) *(Profesinio informavimo ir konsultavimo paslaugų teikimo reikalavimų aprašas)* were approved by the Minister of Education and Science and the Minister of Social Security and Labour. This document defines the main institutions providing vocational information and counselling services and their functions: general education schools, vocational schools, career information points and career guidance centres. Institutions responsible for the coordination of the abovementioned services provision are the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. Institutions responsible for guidance

materials and the training of guidance staff are the Lithuanian Youth Information and Technical Creativity Centre, Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority and the Lithuanian Labour Exchange *(Lietuvos darbo birža)*.

The law on vocational education (2007) *(Profesinio mokymo įstatymas)* states that vocational guidance constitutes an integral part of the vocational education system. Guidance services are provided in general education schools, vocational schools, career guidance centres and labour exchanges in accordance with the order approved by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The municipalities plan, organise and administrate vocational guidance. The role of social partners in vocational guidance is also defined.

In 2003, the Vocational Guidance Strategy *(Profesinio orientavimo strategija)* and, in 2004, its action plan (amended in 2005), were jointly approved by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. The main objective of this strategy is to develop a system of guidance and appropriate services in accordance with economic developments and individual needs. Its action plan includes the creation of a legal framework, the establishment of a necessary infrastructure and training system for guidance practitioners, the development of a methodology and the improvement of the funding system. From 2005 to 2008, the implementation of the Vocational Guidance Strategy in Lithuania was carried out using the European Union Structural Funds. At national level, two interrelated national projects were implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science together with partners, namely the Lithuanian Youth Information and Technical Creativity Centre, the Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority and the Centre of Information Technologies of Education: 'Development and Implementation of the Career Guidance System' and 'Development and Elaboration of the Open Information, Counselling and Guidance System (AIKOS)'. Due to these projects, regulatory documents (standards and methodological recommendations) important for career information and counselling (standards for career information provision, standards for career counselling, etc.), as well as various training programmes and methodologies for guidance practitioners (career advisers, teachers, vocational education teachers, social pedagogues, school psychologists and career counsellors) were developed. Under these educational programmes, 1 800 teachers in general and vocational schools, 1 280 career advisers, 480 social pedagogues and school psychologists, 30 assessors of Career Information Points (CIP) and 10 experts of career counselling quality underwent training. In order to satisfy the needs of various target groups, a new version of the Open Information, Counselling and Guidance System (AIKOS) portal was developed (www.aikos.smm.lt). It includes about 4 000 descriptions of the study and training programmes, qualifications, education and science institutions and other items, in Lithuanian and English. 640 Career Information Points (CIP) have been established and provided with technical equipment.

In 2007, the Ministry of Education and Science approved the National Career Guidance Programme in the Educational System *(Nacionalinė profesinio orientavimo programa švietimo sistemoje)*. The aim of this programme is to create conditions for the further development of the career guidance system and improve the areas of management, infrastructure, contents and staff training in career guidance. The programme highlights the necessity to ensure the integrity of the career guidance system, the continuity of the

guidance services provision in the transition from general education schools to vocational and higher education schools. For this purpose, there are plans to create infrastructure and careers education *(ugdymas karjerai)* models for students in general, vocational and higher education schools, as well as students' career monitoring tools. There are also plans to train career guidance specialists, create new methodological materials and further develop the AIKOS system.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour share the responsibilities for the development and establishment of guidance policy and practice.

The Ministry of Education and Science establishes the order of guidance services (career information and careers education) in the educational system, i.e. it coordinates the provision of guidance services to pupils and students. The Ministry coordinates the work of a subordinate institution in the field of guidance – the Lithuanian Youth Information and Technical Creativity Centre.

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour establishes the order of guidance services in the labour market system, i.e. it coordinates the provision of guidance services to job seekers, employees, individuals with special needs, individuals who are not in training or employment, etc. The Ministry coordinates the work of subordinate institutions in the field of guidance: The Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority and the Lithuanian Labour Exchange.

In 2006, the Lithuanian Vocational Guidance Council *(Lietuvos profesinio orientavimo taryba)* was established. It is a supervisory body which assists the two ministries responsible for the development of the guidance system. The Career Guidance Council consists of representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, associations of municipalities, social partners (employers and organisations representing employees' interests), associations representing general and higher education institutions, associations of the institutions providing guidance services and career guidance practitioners, organisations representing students, youth and adults, the Euroguidance project and other stakeholders. The key task of the Council is to analyse various issues regarding the development of the guidance system at national level and make proposals to institutions and organisations which implement the Vocational Guidance Strategy, provide guidance services or in some other ways are related to the provision of these services.

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM

Vocational guidance education as a separate subject is not included in the curriculum. For general education schools, the Ministry of Education and Science approved the integrated technology course, technology and art technology (textiles and clothing, business and management, cinematographic art and fine arts, etc.) general programmes (2007) which include career guidance topics.

OTHER TYPES OF ACTIVITY/GUIDANCE SERVICES

Contacts with the professional world

The integrated technology course, technology and art technology (textiles and clothing, business and management, cinematographic art and fine arts, etc.) general programmes (2007) include career guidance topics which help to familiarise students with various occupations, learn which branches of the Lithuanian economy are promising and what their development trends are and learn about the world of work, the business environment and tools. This course is offered to students in general education schools (ages 14-19).

Some general education schools prepare optional courses or programmes on career guidance, career planning and similar issues for their students, integrating career topics into different subjects. Schools cooperate actively with other institutions providing career guidance services, educational and training institutions, companies and organisations, and organise activities, events and excursions in order to help students explore their personal qualities, get acquainted with learning opportunities and the world of work, and encourage students to be responsible for choosing an occupation and planning their studies and career.

Guidance services at school

Some general education schools have special career guidance working groups coordinated by deputy principals. These working groups solve issues related to the provision of career information and career education services at schools. The working groups prepare career guidance programmes which include plans for career guidance activities such as student assessment, individual counselling by social pedagogues and school psychologists, various thematic events, etc. The schools maintain direct links with all institutions providing guidance and with companies and organisations (to do the work shadowing).

Since 2003, almost 500 Career Guidance Points (CIP) have been established in general education schools by the Ministry of Education and Science, and the training of school specialists working as career advisers at CIPs has been carried out.

Guidance activities are organised on the basis of Career Information Points in these schools. In some schools, CIPs have been reorganised into career centres or similar subdivisions where services are provided by teams of school specialists. The teams usually consist of career advisers (teachers, class masters), a school psychologist, a social pedagogue, etc.

Career Information Points can be established in various types of institutions (school, labour exchanges, libraries, etc. as a subdivision and have free access to the Internet and national education and labour market databases. CIPs have career information materials such as publications, CDs, etc. Services at Career Information Points are provided by career advisers. In order to ensure the quality of services provided by Career Information Points, the Lithuanian Youth Information and Technical Creativity Centre arranges accreditation of the CIPs. In the case of successful accreditation (i.e. recognition of the high quality of the information services provision), they are granted with the accreditation certificate and certain benefits. The accreditation procedure is not obligatory at the current stage. In 2007/08, 285 Career Information Points at general education schools, 12 at educational centres, 4 at vocational schools and 9 in other institutions were accredited.

A Career Centre is a subdivision of a general, vocational or higher education school providing career training services to the students studying at these schools. The majority of career centres have been operating in higher education schools. Some general education schools have also established subdivisions for pupils' career development. In future, career centres are planned to be established in general education and vocational education schools on the basis of Career Information Points.

General education schools employ psychologists whose responsibilities include providing counselling to students about choosing the profession.

Guidance services outside school

The Lithuanian Youth Information and Technical Creativity Centre (under the Ministry of Education and Science) is the central institution of the educational system which performs important functions in career information and careers education: it plans and coordinates the development and accreditation of Career Information Points (CIP), the further development of specialist qualifications in career information and careers education and the preparation and publication of guidance materials (programmes, methodologies, etc.). Since 2003, the Career Planning Unit has been operating in the Centre. The objectives of the Centre are to plan and coordinate the development of the network of Career Information Points and Career Centres together with the municipal institutions; arrange accreditation, provide assistance, arrange qualification development for specialists working at the Career Information Points (career advisers, social pedagogues, school psychologists, etc.) and develop and publish methodological material for career information and careers education. In implementing the functions of the Central Career Information Point, the Career Planning Unit provides career information services to pupils, their parents and school specialists, and organises lectures on career planning and the search for career information.

Career information and careers education services may be provided at various subdivisions of educational institutions. Since 2003, 700 Career Information Points have been established by the Ministry of Education and Science in general education and vocational education schools, educational centres, libraries, labour exchange offices and other institutions. 59 % of CIPs are established in rural areas, 18 % in the district centres and 29 % in the largest towns of Lithuania.

The Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour is the central institution of the labour market system which performs important functions in career counselling. It coordinates the development and accreditation of Career Guidance Centres and carries out the quality assessment of activities at Career Guidance Centres, implements the further development of specialist qualifications in career counselling and develops and publishes methodological and information material (programmes, methodologies, etc.). The Career Planning Unit operates in the Authority. Seven Territorial Labour Market Training and Counselling Offices under the Authority are located in the major towns of Lithuania. At the end of 2007, territorial offices received accreditation and gained the right to provide career guidance activities in the country.

Territorial offices provide career counselling services to the unemployed, job seekers, employed people, students and anyone interested in obtaining a marketable occupation that

would suit their individual characteristics and satisfy the labour market needs. Besides the guidance services provided to job seekers, employees, individuals with special needs and individuals who are not in training or employment, the territorial offices also offer extracurricular guidance services to students in general education schools. Counsellors from the territorial offices have accumulated extensive experience in working with the long-term unemployed, young people without vocational education, soldiers, prisoners, the disabled, etc. Individual counselling is provided along with the possibility to receive counselling on various aspects of career choice, career planning and job searching via the Internet and telephone.

The Education Exchanges Support Foundation administers the Euroguidance project in Lithuania. The main aim of the project is to promote career guidance ideas in Lithuania and deliver information on career planning, studies and mobility opportunities in Europe. The target groups of the Euroguidance project are career guidance practitioners, institutions working in the field of career guidance, pupils and their parents and students. The coordinators of the project also organise training seminars for career information and counselling professionals and information events for young people choosing an occupation, and administer and disseminate information about various electronic means for career guidance.

QUALIFICATIONS OF GUIDANCE STAFF

The minimum qualifications for guidance practitioners are not strictly regulated. Depending on the institution, specialists providing career guidance services are called career information counsellors, career advisers, career counsellors, etc. Psychologists, social pedagogues, teachers and other specialists in higher education who develop their professional competence at various specialised training courses usually work as the abovementioned specialists. Several Lithuanian universities offer master's degree study programmes (e.g. Career Designing, Careers Education), programme specialisations (e.g. Carer Advising) or single courses in the field of career information, career counselling or careers education. The training and qualification development of guidance practitioners are usually implemented under various projects supported by the European Union structural funds.

In 2005, the Career Counselling Specialists' Association was established in Lithuania. This Association is an independent voluntary union of persons and legal entities implementing career information and counselling, career planning and careers education.

COOPERATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS, EMPLOYERS, PARENTS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

The cooperation between schools, employers and other stakeholders is usually arranged on an informal basis and takes the form of cooperation contracts between schools and employer organisations, which gives students the opportunity for work shadowing. Parents and the community are usually involved in the implementation of careers education programmes in general education schools.

The participation of employers and other stakeholders in the development of guidance policy and practice is ensured by the Lithuanian Career Guidance Council (2006). The Career

Guidance Council includes delegates of social partners (employers and organisations representing employees' interests), associations representing general and higher education institutions, associations of institutions providing guidance services and guidance practitioners, organisations representing students, youth and adults, the Euroguidance project and other stakeholders.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

Information on vocational guidance may be accessed via the specialised guidance portals as well as from the websites of institutions involved in guidance services provision.

Specialised guidance portals

The Open Information, Counselling and Guidance System (AIKOS) – www.aikos.smm.lt

The Open Information, Counselling and Guidance System (AIKOS) is the main information system that introduces learning opportunities in Lithuania for students in general education schools, individuals entering vocational and higher education schools, people developing qualifications, career information counsellors, employers and anyone seeking information about educational programmes in Lithuania, educational and scientific institutions, qualifications, training licences, etc. The website also contains information about occupations, admission rules at vocational and higher education schools, the labour market trends, classifications, Europass certificate supplements, etc. The portal provides an opportunity to search for the information necessary for choosing an occupation, training or studies, or for planning a personal career. At the end of 2008, a link between the AIKOS and PLOTEUS portal http://europa.eu.int/ploteus/portal will be established. It will be possible to access AIKOS information about learning opportunities in Lithuania on the PLOTEUS II portal.

A Guide to the World of Occupations – www.profesijupasaulis.lt

This website was created for individuals choosing a profession or trying to get employed. It also provides specialised information for higher education graduates, students in general education schools and vocational education schools, job seekers, people considering a change of profession, the unemployed and the disabled. Questionnaires for assessing interests and skills are also available.

Internet site of the publication *Career Guidebook* – www.euroguidance.lt/profesijosvadovas

This website contains an electronic version of the publication *Career Guidebook*. *Career Guidebook* is a publication about professions and ways to obtain a profession. It targets pupils, their parents, career advisers and counsellors and other people interested in occupations.

The Guidebook includes descriptions of occupations, specifies personal qualities required for a particular occupation and career trends. It also includes the latest information on educational institutions which provide professional training and their admission requirements. The Guidebook introduces learning opportunities abroad and career planning principles. A separate chapter is devoted to learning opportunities for the disabled.

Your Career School – http://www.karjerosmokykla.europass.lt/

This website is for anyone interested in a career: young and older people, students, people in employment or people looking for a job. It includes all publications of the Euroguidance and Europass projects and links to other useful pages. The information on the website is divided into three categories: education, work and careers.

EUROPASS – http://www.europass.lt/

This website introduces the Europass folder consisting of five documents (Europass CV, Europass Language Passport, Europass Mobility document, Europass Diploma Supplement and Europass Certificate Supplement). The purpose of Europass is to encourage the use of these documents, as they facilitate access to employment, working practice, or studies both in one's native country and the rest of the EU and help to provide information about education, professional skills, competencies and skills and abilities gained during training or practice abroad in a standardised form.

EURODESK Lithuania – http://www.eurodesk.lt

The website contains information about the European network of information services operating in 29 European countries and provides information especially for young people or people working with youth. The website includes information about European Union programmes, directly related to education, training and the youth environment. Information about addictive behaviour (drug and alcohol abuse) and its impact on health, youth mobility issues (working, living and studying abroad) and other topics are also available on the website.

The CareerGuide – http://www.career-guide.eu

The CareerGuide website (a Lithuanian version of the site is also available) provides information about the project designed for career counselling at general education schools and its results (the material is subdivided into three sections: 'Know about Yourself', 'Know about the Job Market' and 'Develop Yourself for Your Career Path').

Websites of institutions involved in guidance services provision

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania: www.smm.lt

The Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania: www.socmin.lt

The Lithuanian Youth Information and Technical Creativity Centre: www.lmitkc.lt

Career Planning Unit at the Lithuanian Youth Information and Technical Creativity Centre: http://kpc.rmtkr.lt

The Lithuanian Labour Market Training Authority: www.ldrmt.lt

EUROGUIDANCE: www.euroguidance.lt

Internet references

See above for the list of websites of institutions involved in guidance services.

Sources

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