



Executive summary of the public audit report

ORGANISING AND IMPLEMENTING VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

27 November 2014 No. VA-P-50-1-16



DEFINITIONS

OECD refers to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

School refers to an institution of general or vocational education.

Pupil refers to the person studying at institutions of general or vocational education.

EMIS refers to the education management information system.

CEMIS refers to the career education monitoring information system.

Project refers to the Project No. VP1-2.3-ŠMM-01-V-01-002 "Creation and development of career education and monitoring models in general education and vocational training (Stage I)" of the measure "The improvement and development of the vocational guidance system" VP1-2.3-ŠMM-01-V of the Priority 2: Lifelong learning under the Human Resource Development Action Program of 2007-2013.

Education assistance refers to the special assistance for pupils, their parents (foster parents, carers), teachers and education providers, the purpose of which is to increase the efficiency of education¹. The Law on Education states that vocational guidance is an integral part of education assistance.

Open vocational information, counselling and guidance system (AIKOS) refers to an integrated, open, non-commercial system, the main purpose of which is to provide up-to-date and high-quality information about education opportunities in Lithuania.

Career education information system for pupils (MUKIS) refers to a website focusing on information distribution and cooperation of target groups (pupils, career coordinators, advisers, teachers, parents, informal education specialists and representatives of the labour market).

Vocational information centre (VIC) refers to an office, which provides vocational information services, has a free access to the internet, the country's education and labour market data bases, accumulated vocational information materials in computer storage media, video tapes, prints, etc.

Vocational information² refers to systemic provision of information about vocational training, demand for qualifications in the labour market and the choice of profession.

Vocational orientation³ refers to helping a person to make a rational choice of profession, according to the person's individual qualities, the demands of the labour market and vocational training opportunities.

Purpose of career training⁴ — efficient training and creating conditions for pupils to develop their vocational competencies and supporting the pupils on their way of getting to know and realising themselves, as well as developing their personalities.

Career coordinator refers to a person employed for the purposes of the project, providing career services at an assigned school (usually persons working at that school: teachers, psychologists, social educators or librarians, in rarer cases — outside employees).

1 The Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania, 25-06-1991, No. I-1489 (amendment of 17-03-2011, No. XI-1281), Art. 2, pt. 27.

2 The Law on Vocational Education and Training of the Republic of Lithuania, 14-10-1997, No. VIII-450 (amendment of 03-04-2007, No. X-1065), Art. 2, pt. 8.

3 Ibid. Art 2, pt. 9.

4 The Career Education Program approved by the order of the Minister of Education of the Republic of Lithuania No. V-72 of 15-01-2014.

Career advisor refers to a person employed for the purposes of the project, who organised, coordinated, monitored and evaluated the activity of the career coordinators of the assigned schools.

Vocational practising refers to activities, which help the pupils to get to know various employment areas, vocational peculiarities and career opportunities, accumulate work experience, develop vocational motivation and plan the future career.

Career specialist refers to a person providing vocational guidance services. During the project these services were provided by career coordinators and career advisers.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Vocational guidance services are an important element of training and employment. That is an integral part of the active labour market policy. Therefore, in the rapidly-changing world the education system focuses a lot of attention on developing the independence and career management competencies in young people in order to enable them to manage their personal careers and make successful decisions.

Youth often cannot find a job due to a number of reasons, including inability to plan and manage their careers. Appropriate choice of a profession reduces the problem of youth unemployment. What is important is making a conscious and focused decision, which may be assisted by high-quality career education, vocational information and consultation services at school.

The resolutions of the EU Council of Ministers define four priority areas of vocational guidance: coordination of services, availability of services, development of career management competencies and ensuring quality⁵. They are important in our country too.

The purpose of the audit is to evaluate the organisation and implementation of vocational guidance.

During the audit we have examined the following;

- the availability of vocational guidance to all pupils;
- the continuity of all vocational guidance services;
- the quality of vocational guidance.

The audit covered the period of 2010-2013. The evaluation of changes involved using the data from earlier periods and the year of 2014.

During the audit period 419 000 pupils studied in 1 242 high schools and 76 institutions of vocational education⁶. Based on the Description of the Vocational Guidance Implementation Procedure⁷ and the Career Education Program, schools must create conditions for all pupils to acquire career competencies, i.e. knowledge, skills and attitudes towards oneself, also to improve self-expression and working skills, develop effective career decision making, career planning skills, the ability to coordinate career with other areas of life and self-realisation, providing the pupils with vocational information, consultation and career education services.

The audit was performed at:

- the Ministry of Education and Science;
- the Lithuanian Centre for Non-formal Youth Education;
- 12 municipality administrations (of the cities of Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai and Alytus, as well as the districts of Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Alytus, Lazdijai, Trakai and Kretinga), also 55 high schools and 4 institutions of vocational education in their territories (appendix 1).

⁵ Access on the internet http://www.euroguidance.lt/uploads/files/Naujienos/KVK_koncepcija_Konferencijos_isvados_2012.pdf [Accessed on 12-03-2014].

⁶ Data of the school year 2012-2013. Access on the internet http://www.smm.lt/uploads/lawacts/docs/609_98677ede4be08095c41c1266d2ae1e38.pdf and http://www.smm.lt/uploads/lawacts/docs/609_54a3e281bc786587003d9ee0b7473be6.pdf [Accessed on 06-03-2014].

⁷ Pt. 4.1, 6 and 6.1.2 of the Description of the Vocational Guidance Implementation Procedure, approved by order the Ministers of Education and Science and Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania No. V-1090/A1-314 of 04-07-2012.

The following public audit conclusions and recommendations were drawn upon the assessment of the audit findings. The recommendation implementation plan is provided in the appendix No. 4.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The development of vocational guidance is carried out as of 2003 by implementing projects funded by the EU: prior to 2010 they were focused on vocational information and consultation, but the information and consultation infrastructure did not include all schools. The career education development, implemented from 2010 to May 2014 involved only 72% of schools that have more than 100 pupils. Later the opportunity to participate in the project was extended for schools with 50-100 pupils for three months. Smaller schools did not participate in the project, which resulted in unequal access and unequal opportunities to all pupils to participate in vocational information, consultation and career education (subchapters 1.1 and 1.2).
2. According to the Description of the Vocational Guidance Implementation Procedure, the Career Education Program, the purpose of which is successful education and creating conditions for all pupils to develop their career competencies, had to be implemented by schools as of 2012, but the Program was approved only in 2014, therefore, the conditions for implementing career education were unequal during the audited period (subchapter 1.2).
3. After the projects funded by the EU were over, municipalities and schools did not receive information about long-term vocational guidance development plans, vision and national projects, and there is a lack of methodological support, which results in failure to ensure continuity of vocational guidance and the objective to reduce the number of pupils dropping out of the formal education system by developing their career planning skills may remain unattained.
4. The concept of the specialist providing vocational (career) guidance services to pupils, as well as qualification requirements, competencies, functions, and professional activity areas of such specialist have not been defined on the national level; also there is no system for improving the qualifications of vocational guidance service specialists and no preconditions for their continuous improvement, as well as equal access to services of the same quality for all pupils (subchapter 2.2).
5. Vocational guidance monitoring is implemented only as of 2013 and the implementation takes place without an approved list of quantitative and qualitative indices. There is no assessment of vocational guidance services and whether or not this development meets the users' expectations and needs; therefore, there is no sufficient basis for shaping the policy in this area (subchapter 2.3).
6. Schools use the recommendations for quality assessment of the general education schools, provided by the Minister of Education and Science in 2009, to evaluate only their vocational information and consultation activities. The same recommendations are used by external evaluators too. Other vocational guidance activities remain unevaluated and thus this information is insufficient in order to ensure the compliance of all vocational guidance services to the demands of the target groups and thus improve the quality of vocational guidance (subchapter 2.3).

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania:

1. In order to develop pupil's career competencies, it is necessary to create conditions for all pupils to access vocational information and consultation services (conclusions 1 and 2).
2. In order to ensure equal opportunities for pupils to receive services in the same quality, it is necessary:
 - 2.1. to define the qualification requirements, competencies, functions and areas of professional activity of a career specialist working at school (conclusion 4);
 - 2.2. to define the system for improving the qualifications of persons providing vocational guidance services, which would ensure continuous development of these specialists (conclusion 4).
3. In order to ensure high-quality functioning of the vocational guidance system, reasonable decision-making, as well as analysis and assessment of vocational guidance condition and changes, it is necessary:
 - 3.1. to approve quantitative and qualitative indices of vocational guidance monitoring (conclusion 5);
 - 3.2. to create a quality assessment/self-assessment system (conclusions 5 and 6).
4. In order to ensure vocational guidance continuity, more active use of the methodological measures and the website of the Career Education Information System for pupils, it is necessary to make sure that:
 - 4.1. it provides examples of the good practice of vocational guidance, the teachers can exchange experience, discuss and give questions that will be answered (conclusion 3);
 - 4.2. the methodological and informative material is constantly updated (conclusion 3);
 - 4.3. municipalities and schools are constantly informed about vocational guidance development plans and projects (conclusion 3).