



## BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Name of the Organization:	PROFESSIONAL ORIENTATION AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
Legal Status:	Branch of the “National Institute of Labor and Social Research” State non-Commercial Organization (in the system of Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the RA)
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### Mission:

Individual’s lifelong career guidance viable system’s Insertion in the Republic of Armenia.

To provide opportunities for individuals of different age groups and social working groups for professional effective choice, change or and career lifelong development, taking into account individual’s personal qualities, as well as labor market’s changing needs.

### Main Goals:

- 1.Provision of methodology to the institutions delivering Professional Orientation and Career Guidance services.
- 2.Training of specialists of the institutions of Professional Orientation and Career system,
- 3.Supervision (continuous provision of methodology consultation of the trained specialists in their workplace).
- 4.Rising public awareness

### Scope of the Professional Orientation and Career system (service providing institutions):

- 1.General educational institutions
- 2.Pre-vocational (craftsmanship), vocational and higher educational institutions
- 3.Institutions out of educational system for professional choice, career guidance, re-professionalization and re-qualification (including integrated social services, employment centres)

## BRIEF REVIEW

The reforms concerning professional orientation and career system in the RA were undertaken in 2012, when “The development concept of professional orientation system in the RA” and its implementation plan were approved by the government of the RA. The professional orientation system is defined by the concept which includes general education, vocational and higher educational institutions and institutions supporting NEET people in the issue of professional orientation and career guidance (Integrated social services/ employment territorial centres).

The functions of training the professional orientation and career guidance system specialists and the methodological consultation (educational supervision) of the trained specialists in their workplace as well as the function of rising awareness has been assigned to the Methodological Centre for Professional Orientation SNCO.

One of the main functions of Centre is supervision. It contributes to the consolidation of the system as the service providing specialists of the general education institutions, VET institutions and employment agencies.

According to optimization plan of the RA Government the centre became a branch of the “National Institute of Labor and Social Research” SNCO and was renamed as Professional Orientation and Capacity Development Centre. The functions of the centre have not been changed.

### IMPLEMENTED ACTIVITIES (2013 - 2018)

#### MONITORING AND EVALUATION

**General educational system:** General educational institutions are the primary and fundamental stage of professional orientation, where starts the process of professional orientation and decision making. Therefore, taking into consideration the importance of this stage within the framework of the reforms, extensive work has been carried out. An implementation model and methodology has been developed, school teachers have been trained, who were also provided with individual consultations at schools. From 2013 to 2018 more than 400 schools from Yerevan and all regions has been included in the professional orientation system, 880 pedagogues have been trained. The results of monitoring prove that the trained specialists conduct meetings for professional orientation according to the previously designed plan by the Centre. However, there are various obstacles preventing the implementation process of delivering services connected with the absence of functional and institutional bases. A survey has been conducted in 2016 to reveal, solve

and/or prevent the problems concerning the implementation of the professional orientation activities in the general educational system.

**Key issues:** *It should be stated that considerable work is being done in the schools with trained specialists who are motivated and have the permission to operate. However, within the framework of the reforms, from the perspective of consolidation of the professional orientation system, the activities implemented are not satisfactory, as the Ministry of Education and Science does not include separate courses for professional orientation and career guidance in the annual training plan which hinders the stability and continuity of activities done. Negotiations are being held now for the institutionalization of career guidance programs in the general education sector.*

**Achievements:** *Some general educational institutions, with their own initiative decided to include separate subject or club. With the support of donor organizations in this year 10 general schools will have career resource rooms suited for provision of personal, group and self services.*

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**VET system:** The reform program in the VET system was launched to create and develop career departments prioritizing its importance for implementation of professional orientation and career consultations for students. Firstly, samples have been designed for career departments' regulation and job descriptions for career specialists, methodology for providing services to individual students and groups, 10 modules. 143 specialists have been trained and were provided with the service of continuous consultation from all the regions of Armenia. One career consultant has been trained in all VET institutions from 2013 to 2018. Monitoring was conducted to assess the results of work implemented by them by means of previously designed questionnaire and visits, considering content issues as well as technical. The survey reveals that in VET institutions with career centre, the activities connected with students and alumni such as the processes of increasing their competitiveness in the labour market, promoting employment in their profession, conducting comprehensive statistics of this matter (never done before) are more structured.

**Key issues:** *It should be stated that considerable work is being implemented. However career consultants are mostly subject teachers or administrative workers who are simultaneously engaged in completing the database of students and alumni or conducting internships. The shortcomings of effective deliverance of career services are due to the existence of non-formal career subdivision and absence of specific vacancy for this position.*

**Achievement:** *Based on the results of monitoring after pilot program of 2016-2018 and ETF recommendations, The Ministry of Education and Science in the scope of budget year of 2018 and the mid-*

*term program has provided funds for the career counselor positions. This is an important achievement which formalizes the job of career counselor and career services in VET institutions.*

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**Higher Educational Institutions:** Higher educational institutions are also considered to be a stage in the professional orientation system, therefore, considering the situation, it should be stated that within the framework of the Bologna process, career centres were established in every university. Identifying their needs of abilities and skills, one specialist has been trained in every university aimed to provide professional orientation consultations and deliver methodological support to the development of career and entrepreneurship skills, to create a platform for discussing problems and events.

**Key Issues:** *The main contextual problem of the implementation of professional orientation and career services in the higher educational institutions is the fact that career counselors are more like a coordinator and don't work with students individually and provide consultations ( instead of providing services, they invite specialists.)*

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**Local employment centres:** From the perspective of the provision of lifelong career guidance, the next link are the integrated social service and local employment centres (ISS, LEC). From 2013 to 2018 a model has been designed for the provision of professional orientation services and a guide for the implementation process which were approved by the Minister of Labor and Social Issues. In each local employment centre of State Employment Agency one specialist has been chosen ( in large centres 2 specialists) to be responsible for provision of services. 51 specialists has been trained, who continuously receive methodological consultation during their working process.

**Key Issues:** *It should be stated that there are almost all the institutional and operational opportunities. But a number of problems still exist which hinders the consolidation of the system. The implementation of professional orientation and career guidance services is considered an additional workload by the territorial centre specialists. The shortage of time and the discomfort of atmosphere may be considered as a technical problem. The qualification of the specialists , their elementary vocational knowledge and skills are one of the most important factors. From the other hand, the stereotypes about professional orientation services left from the soviet union's times and the current economic situation restrict the the local centres' workers notions. Some local centres are not fully equipped with technical facilities or do not have appropriate territory at all.*

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**Other activities:**

The centre has planned and implemented different public events: professional or career days in the regions, career fairs, workshops for policymakers with the inclusion of international structures.

In 2014 an international conference with the headline “Career Guidance Issues and Development Trends” was held in Armenia for the first time, which was conducted by the centre.

The centre developed “**Career Management**” module for academic curricula which will result in the development of key capacities of VET and higher educational institutions. It’s aimed to increase graduates competitiveness and stable employment opportunities, to shape among students skills of self-recognition, self-assessment, entrepreneurship, gathering information on labor market, career opportunities and observation capacities.

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**New initiative:**

It’s planned to create an online platform for person's professional orientation and career planning, which should also have a mobile version. The services will be differentiated by the age and status of the beneficiaries. It can be launched and operated in the integrated centres. Based on the preliminary results, employment specialists can provide more targeted consultation.

The proposal of the online platform was developed and should be presented to the donors.