

CAREER GUIDANCE IN MONTENEGRO in support of wider education and training policy goals

The Strategy for lifelong career orientation (2016–2020) defines lifelong career orientation as a chain of activities that enable individuals in each stage of their life to assess their capacities, competences and interests. This helps them to make the right decisions about further education, training and qualifications and to manage their choices in terms of education and preparation for the labour market.

Institutional capacity

Laws in the field of education, especially the General Law on Education, emphasise the need for personal development according to preferences and abilities. This concept is also stressed in laws on education levels (primary school, gymnasium, vocational education, higher education and adult education). The Law on National Vocational Qualifications includes many institutions that analyse the labour market situation and give this information to jobseekers and employers (2010). Other relevant legislation is the Law on Mediation in Employment and Entitlements during Unemployment (2019), which regulates relations in the field of employment, indicates employment opportunities and self-employment, and encourages career guidance for employed and unemployed people. The Law on Youth (2019) emphasises the importance of youth education and preparation for the labour market.

The Strategy for lifelong career orientation (2016–2020) is a key document that describes the main national policy directions, basic goals, principles, analysis of the current state, comparisons with European countries, priorities, measures and activities for implementing set goals. It emphasises the importance of developing lifelong learning and career management skills. The National Coordination Body was founded to implement the strategy. The body is comprised of representatives of all the stakeholders who participated in designing the Strategy: the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour Market and Social Welfare, the Employment Agency of Montenegro, the Union of Employers, the Chamber of Commerce, the Bureau for Education, the Centre for Vocational Education and Training (VET Centre), the University of Montenegro and the Education Union of Montenegro.

The Strategy for development of vocational education (2020–2024) emphasises the importance of the career guidance programme in schools, evaluation and monitoring of the overall process in schools and strengthening the competences of school teams for career guidance. The institutions that are responsible for

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Ministry of Education (MoE) is responsible for national policy in education. It empowers career guidance at all levels of education.

The Ministry of Youth focuses on young people aged 15 to 30 years, their personal and social development, education and preparation for the labour market.

The Ministry of Economy is responsible in the field of economy, defines labour market relations, focuses on the development of human resources and the promotion of forms of employment such as entrepreneurship and self-employment, including career guidance activities.

The Bureau for Education Services accredits and provides training sessions for school career guidance teams and is responsible for monitoring and evaluating career guidance with VET centres, schools and MoE.

The Ministry of Labour and Welfare creates laws that regulate labour market relations and closely cooperates with the National Employment Agency.

The National Employment Agency provides labour market information services for employed and unemployed people and employees and gives career guidance information and counselling through internal centres (CIPS).

Chamber of Commerce activities are focused on creating the most favourable business environment.

The National Europass and Euroguidance Centre has been established within the Ministry of Education. The main goal is to promote the European dimension in career guidance, encourage international activities and mobility, and promote Europass documents in Montenegro. The centre also provides information on education, opportunities to acquire the desired qualification, conditions to enter the labour market and mobility programmes available to Montenegro students. Since its outset, the centre has organised many consultations with school career teams to counsel teachers and students. It has prepared several tools for use by school career guidance teams and others in schools, for example the handbooks 'Career guidance and counselling in vocational education', 'Conducting interviews with students in primary and secondary schools', 'Using the social media in career guidance' and 'Guidelines for the use of Europass documents'. It cooperates with similar centres in countries of the region. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the centre has prepared a platform for acquiring new knowledge and skills for career counsellors, teachers, students and others.

monitoring and evaluation are the VET Centre, the Bureau for Education Services and the Ministry of Education.

The Strategy for inclusive education (2019–2025) sets out the principles for adapting curricula to children with special educational needs. It influences the education and training of these children according to their abilities and includes their preparation for the labour market. For each of these strategies, a suitable action plan has been created that consists of activities for the set priorities, indicators of achievement, the responsible institutions, time frames and financial sources.

Many projects in the previous period had a strong impact on the development of career guidance programmes and training in the education system. As part of the teaching process, career guidance began to be implemented in Montenegro with the support of several international projects. The first was a Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) project on Designing the transition of young people to the world of work in the Western Balkans (2008–2011), which resulted in training programmes for primary school teachers and appropriate manuals for teachers, and the development of the curriculum for the optional subject 'Professional orientation in primary school'. The second was a project called Modernisation of educational programmes and teacher training, carried out as part of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) IV project (2016–2017) in VET schools. In addition to modernisation of educational programmes, this project addressed career guidance in vocational schools. The final result was a three-day seminar for the career guidance team in vocational schools on the topic 'Career management skills in vocational schools'. The Labour Market Reform and Labour Force Development IPA project (2008–2012) was the initial project with which the career guidance programme in Montenegro started fully. The project results were the development of the first Strategy for lifelong career orientation (2011–2015) in Montenegro, a teacher training programme for secondary schools, an appropriate manual for teachers and workbook for students in secondary schools. The project resulted in the opening of centres for professional counselling (CIPS) and better cooperation between schools and CIPS. The study visit to Finland was organised for the working group which consisted of the representatives of the all stakeholders participated in the project. The study visit was an opportunity to analyse the experience and achievements of career guidance in Finland and to incorporate these good experiences into the strategy. This project contributed to career management skills development.

Organisational capacity

The **Bureau for Education Services** is responsible for general education from preschool to university. It develops curricula, organises counselling and training for teachers, carries out studies and externally evaluates schoolwork. The bureau selects and accredits training programmes for career guidance teams in schools and holds seminars.

The **VET Centre** is a public institution established by the Government of Montenegro. It is responsible for the development, research and quality of vocational education and training for secondary vocational schools and adult education. The centre develops occupational and qualification standards, organises the accreditation of teacher training programmes, organises seminars, and monitors and externally evaluates schoolwork and the work of adult education providers. Within the VET Centre, the Department for Adult Education works on a programme focused on career guidance for employed and unemployed adults. Every two years, the Bureau for Education Services and the VET Centre publish a catalogue with the teacher training programme, each institution within its own jurisdiction. Some of the training programmes are on career guidance in school, especially for career guidance teams. The training programme for career guidance teams for secondary school lasts five days and consists of three modules. The first module covers self-awareness, assessing personal abilities, interests and value orientation. The second includes career research, knowledge and

RESPONSIBILITIES

Centres for professional counselling (CIPS) are local centres for information and counselling, integrated into local public employment centres that belong to the Employment Agency of Montenegro. CIPS provide services for schools, employed and unemployed people, and parents. They organise counselling and information for a group or individually. Career advisors from CIPS visit schools and provide students with information about further education after primary and secondary school, and labour market information. CIPS organise a special programme 'Career guidance and the labour market in primary and secondary school', which includes the publication of a newsletter on enrolment in secondary school. This year the newsletter has been forwarded online to schools.

VET Centre: organises the accreditation of training programmes for VET education with MoE and provides training for VET school career guidance teams.

School teams for career guidance (primary and secondary) are responsible for making the annual career orientation plan in school. The plan consists of goals and career guidance activities for students, teachers, school management and parents. Plan implementation is monitored through the school self-evaluation process and by external evaluators from the Bureau for Education and the VET Centre.

The university career centre provides individual and group information, professional counselling, psychological testing, career planning, workshops for students on career management skills, and open days at schools and the university.

opportunities for further education and preparation for the labour market, job search techniques, how to write a CV and letter of motivation and job interview practice. The third module presents the decision-making process. It covers all stages of decision-making, setting alternatives and testing them, self-reflection, and making an action plan for implementation. In this programme, teachers are introduced to the Europass documents, using information and communication technology for job research, and labour market information. So far, career guidance teams have been trained in all primary and secondary schools. The implementation of career guidance activities in schools is monitored by the Quality Assurance Department of the Bureau for Education Services and the VET Centre. The methodology of external evaluation of schools has been defined, and one of the indicators of quality is implementation of a professional orientation programme for career guidance. Each school must have a plan for professional orientation at school level.

The **Career Centre at the University of Montenegro** connects the university and the labour market and contributes to the overall development of the economy and society. The centre was founded in 2012. It has developed programmes for individual or group professional information, professional counselling, psychological testing and career planning workshops for students, to introduce them to the main career management skills. The centre's activities include open door days for students in the final years of secondary school to introduce them to faculties' educational offer, and participation in the 'Summer job' project, a seasonal employment fair.

Centres for professional information and counselling (CIPS) are integrated into local public employment centres, which are operated by the Employment Agency of Montenegro. CIPS provide services for schools, employed and unemployed people, and parents. The centres organise counselling and information for groups or individuals. Career advisors from CIPS visit schools to give students information about further education after primary and secondary school, and the labour market. CIPS organise a special programme 'Career guidance and the labour market in primary and secondary school' in cooperation with the Ministry of Education to provide students with career guidance services and labour market information. Within this programme, CIPS annually publish a newsletter on secondary school enrolment. This year, the newsletter was forwarded online to schools.

Career guidance teams in each primary and secondary school are responsible for implementing the school's career guidance programme. As a rule, the team has five members and consists of the pedagogue and/or psychologist in school, teachers of different professions and school managers. Career guidance teams plan the implementation of career guidance in the school for teachers and students. One of the aims is to train all teachers in the school and promote career guidance as a principle in everyday teaching and practice. This is a compulsory part of professional development for teachers and the school. Each school must draw up its own plan for professional orientation and each student must have their own portfolio. Schools implement career guidance programmes in various ways: through class meetings, extracurricular activities, a cross-curricular approach, visits to job fairs, organisation of workshops, presentations on career guidance, information sessions, online presentations, cooperation with other institutions such as CIPS, faculties and so on. In some schools, students have been involved in evaluating career guidance services via questionnaires.

Career guidance for students with special needs has been developed through individual transition plans that have focused on students' potential, abilities, opportunities for learning and the transition to higher education and participation in the labour market. These are individual transition plan 1 (ITP1), which connects primary and secondary school, and individual transition plan 2 (ITP2), which focuses on preparation for employment and independent life. The team that develops and implements the ITPs consists of students, parents, professional associates in school, resource centres, employment services and employees, among others.

CAREER GUIDANCE CULTURE

All main stakeholders participate in the development of all strategic documents, laws and strategies. For example, in the development of the strategies for lifelong career guidance participated the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour Market and Social welfare, the Employment Agency of Montenegro, the Union of Employers, the Chamber of Commerce, the Bureau for Education, the VET centre, Universities, NGOs and others. However, during the implementation of activities there is not enough cooperation and synchronisation between partners so that sometimes there is an overlap of activities and unnecessary spending of the resources.

The role of **non-governmental organisations** is very important in career guidance and contributes to the overall quality of education. For example, the Agency for Democratic Prosperity – Zid, obtained small grants from the Ministry of Education in a public call for a project on education. Zid organised many projects, activities and a campaign about career guidance called 'Get involved' (2017 and 2018) and 'Career guidance for young people and unemployed people' (2019). So far, 250 users have passed this programme directly and 30 000 of them indirectly.

Individual capacity

The above teams are responsible for implementing and disseminating the career guidance programme in schools and have specific training opportunities. As a rule, pedagogues and psychologists are members of career guidance teams. Also, they have their own work programme in schools that consists partly of supporting students in their professional development. They can work with students individually or in a group. They also work with parents, who play the main role in helping students to develop their career. Students should feel free to create their own career path that will bring them satisfaction and career happiness. The National Council of Education has adopted general standards of competences for everyone in the education system, including directors, teachers, educators, pedagogues and psychologists, but these standards do not refer to career guidance practitioners. Instead, the accredited training that is offered ensures consistency. Teachers who are members of the career guidance team are very creative and recognisable as good teachers who have completed training programmes on areas such as communication, teamwork, peaceful conflict solving, motivation in the learning process, civic education and entrepreneurship. Many of them work as trainers in the educational system. All trainers have completed the trainer training programme according to the standards and procedures established by the National Council of Education.

The **main reform objectives** are building a career guidance culture, which is an integral part of the overall school culture that requires constant work. This process should involve all participants in school life, including teachers, students, school management, teaching associates, parents, local community and policymakers (the whole-school approach).

CAREER GUIDANCE CULTURE

Each person must constantly work on developing his/her own career management skills. Besides professional knowledge and skills, the number of transferable competences is important, such as good communication and language skills, adaptability, flexibility, problem solving, information and communication technology skills, openness, respect for others, self-reflection and learning to learn. The education system pays a lot of attention to developing transferable competences through various subjects, a cross-curricular approach, projects organised in school, and participation in international projects. One thought of a student illustrates this culture: "Don't teach me about a career, teach me how to learn."

ANNEX: GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

EUROGUIDANCE CENTRE WEBINARS

The Euroguidance Centre has organised webinars this year, adapted to the circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The webinar 'Improvement of the quality of career guidance and counselling in schools' for career counsellors of elementary and high schools was held from 25 to 29 May 2020. Thirty teachers from Montenegro participated. The webinar 'Digital week' was held from 16 to 18 July and from 15 to 17 September 2020 and the total number of teachers from primary and secondary schools that participated was 118. Topics included digital literacy, Excel with different tools, using PowerPoint and making video presentations.

MEDICAL HIGH SCHOOL PODGORICA

The main goal of the career guidance team is to encourage students to recognise their own capacities, acknowledge career development pathways and practice career management skills. Schools organise workshops on career guidance topics in which they raise awareness of the importance of lifelong education and career guidance. Students are enabled to visit organisations and thus to get to know the requirements of certain occupations. For example, pharmaceutical students have the opportunity to visit the pharmaceutical plant Alkaloid in Skoplje, the 'Josif Pancic' Pancevo Institute, the 'Simo Milosevic' Igalo Institute, and other similar institutions. These activities are important for students to get to know about certain occupations in real conditions.

CAREER CENTRE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTENEGRO

For the first time, the career centre organised a practice fair and scholarships for students and employers (11 to 12 November 2020). Students who applied through the fair had the opportunity to present themselves in a 15-minute interview. Employers awarded 50 scholarships to the best students.

CIPS ACTIVITIES

Constantly providing the CG counselling and information for schools, employed, unemployed and parents. Also, annually publishing a newsletter on secondary school enrolment.

NGO ZID, AGENCY FOR DEMOCRATIC PROSPERITY

Realization of various projects, seminars, forums and other activities like provision of LMI with the aim of increasing employability, primarily for young people. The last forum was held in December 2020.