

Leading career development services into an uncertain future: Ensuring access, integration and innovation

Country paper: Estonia

In advance of the symposium all attending countries are asked to produce a country paper setting out the key issues for their countries in relation to the key themes of the conference.

Please use this template to enter your information. You should aim to be concise. Use bullet points and links rather than providing a lot of local detail. **The paper should be no more than 10 pages in length.**

How to submit:

- Download the Country Paper Template, save this on your computer.
- Prepare the country paper based on consultation within the country team and preferably with relevant national authorities and information sources.
- Submit the Country Paper by sending it to jmc@iccdpp.org (John Mc Carthy, director ICCDPP)
- Deadline: **31st of January**

If you have questions concerning the country paper, please contact John Mc Carthy (jmc@iccdpp.org)

Background information

1. List all of the members of your country team with their organisation.

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2. What are the key aims your country has for participating in this symposium?

Our main aim is to find efficient and innovative guidance policies in education and labour sector including learning from practices at international level.



Theme #1 - Context and challenges for career development policy.

In your country...

3. Is the level of policy interest in career development:

- Growing?
- Shrinking?
- Staying about the same?

Comment

In 2018 current government decided to rearrange career services system in Estonia. The purpose of the career services reform was to make the system more efficient by reducing fragmentation. Starting from 2019 career information and career counselling services previously provided by two main organisations (one in the field of education and the other national public employment service - PES) are now solely offered by national PES i.e. Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund / Eesti Töötukassa.

It was also decided that the activity of National Guidance Forum will be restored to provide support and expert knowledge to carry through the career services reform and develop career services (including career education in schools) in accordance with expectations and needs of interested parties.

According to national curriculum in general education, schools have the responsibility to organize notification of pupils and parents regarding opportunities for further study and shall ensure the availability of career services to pupils (career education, information or counselling). In addition to that, schools deal with career development through one of the cross-curricular topics, i.e. "Lifelong Learning and Career Planning". The optional subject of career education is also included in the national curriculum for basic school as well as in the national curriculum for upper secondary schools.

In vocational education, one purpose of organizing vocational education is to create opportunities for the development of a person with knowledge, skills, and attitudes, i.e., competencies, willingness to work and participate in social life and lifelong learning. To achieve this goal, schools must ensure that the student has access to career services.

At the moment, the process of curriculum renewal is going on under the leadership of the Ministry of Education and Research. Working groups have been set up for reviewing general competences and other issues in curricula (including career education). From 2017, Foundation Innove has been working with reviewing syllabi (subject fields competences, learning outcomes).

4. What are the key political, social, economic and technological issues that are likely to have an impact on people's lives and careers in your country?

Give up to five of the most important issues as you see them.

1	Development of technology, digitalisation - automatisisation of workplaces (technology taking over 'traditional jobs', initiating the necessity for constant upskilling)
2	Aging and diminishing population
3	Mismatch of the skills and competences of the workforce with what the labour market needs
4	Equal opportunities and social justice
5	Opportunities for people with special needs in education and labour market

5. What roles do career development programmes and services play in addressing these political, social, economic and technological challenges?

The dynamically changing economic and labour market situation, that currently entails a constant development of technology, affects directly the need for labour force and the type of skills it has. Career services have a crucial role to play here – it is important to offer people up-to-date information about the labour market, educational trends etc and at the same time also give them skills how to use all this data in favour of their future choices. This can diminish the level of mismatch between skills and competences of the workforce compared to the ones the labour market needs.

Also, in order to support young people in making the choices about their future career paths and along with it diminish the level of school drop-outs, career services have the role in teaching the youth competences of decision-making while having full knowledge and being aware of the future trends of the economic development and labour market in line with it. A recent survey revealed, that 40% of students currently feel that topics related to career planning are tackled in a minimum level or are not tackled at all in the school system.

In Estonian context the programs that deal with development of career services system also entail activities of upgrading the skills level of career specialists working in EUIF (the sole provider of career counselling and career information services in Estonia), since there are no programs in formal education for career specialists).



Theme #2 - Aims for, and access to, career development

In your country...

6. What are the key policy aims for career development programmes and services?

Estonia is currently in a middle of a career services reform - until the end of 2018, career information and career counselling services were provided by two parallel systems - by EUIF (national PES) mainly to unemployed, employed and inactive people; and by special regional centres (called Rajaleidja centres), that offered career services to the young. The previous system caused replication of services and therefore inefficient use of human and financial resources.

Starting from 2019 career information and career counselling services are solely offered by and developed in the EUIF. In line with making the most efficient use of the resources, the reform also aimed at joining together expert knowledge (since the staff of career specialists was formed from the ones previously working in the two systems) about labour market and education.

The aim of the programs are on the one hand to increase the share of grown-ups, who have specialized or vocation education and on the other to enhance the key competences of lifelong learning and through that increase the competitiveness of the labour force. Also the programmes aim at diminishing the school drop-out level and supporting the process of making aware career choices of the young.

7. What groups of people can access career development programmes and services and what groups are excluded?

In Estonia we can say that since the beginning of 2015, when national PES opened service provision for working adults, guidance is available for all.

As mentioned above, national PES is responsible for the guidance provision for all groups. In addition, all educational institutions are implementing the national curricula, which includes development of career management skills (CMS). Schools are also responsible for assuring the access to guidance to their students.

8. How are the opinions of citizens and service users heard and incorporated into policy and practice?

In order to ensure coordinated development and provision of career guidance, National Guidance Forum was re-established by EUIF. Members of National Guidance Forum include Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Social Affairs, Estonian Association of Career Counsellors, Estonian Youth Work Centre, Estonian Schools Heads Association, Estonian Students Union, Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Foundation Innove and Foundation Archimedes / Euroguidance Estonia. Wider circle of experts and representatives will be involved when it comes to decision-making in more specific areas.

The main task of the Forum is to agree on and monitor the career services development goals, also propose further actions necessary to widen the access to and increase the quality of career guidance.

Important part of feedback comes regularly from the users - before 2019 recommendation index approach was used by the Foundation Innove to collect weekly feedback from the students who received career services. This practice will be also introduced in EUIF starting from March 2019.

The usual surveys can't be held often and the results often come too late; that's why regular recommendation index questionnaire offers valuable data about client satisfaction. The recommendation index is then calculated and was +32% on the scale of -100 to +100 in 2018 and 85% of respondents found decision making easier after service provision. Quick and specific feedback also helps to test new approaches, new methods in service provision, changes in organization, surroundings, etc, and immediately receive feedback from the target group, which helps us to decide whether to go on with the new approach. [See more Lifelong Guidance in Estonia, page 7-9.](#)

9. Is there a framework for ethical practice in career development? How does this framework balance the interests of the individual with the demands of policy and signals from the labour market?

In May 2014 the Estonian Association of Career Counsellors published the Code of Ethics for Career Guidance. The Code of Ethics main goal is to clarify which values and work principles should be followed by practitioners. It is considered a part of the occupational qualification standards and is recognized by the main employers of career practitioners. [Available in Estonian.](#)

Ethical practice is also part of the quality guidelines and competency model in EUIF.



Theme #3 – Integrating career development into wider society.

In your country...

10. Which ministries or jurisdictions are responsible for career development programmes and services? Clarify what programmes and services each ministry or jurisdiction has responsibility for.

The career services system in Estonia is currently in a middle of a reform-period. Until the end of 2018, the development and provision of career services was divided between the two ministries - Ministry of Education and Research (in the context of young people) and Ministry of Social Affairs (in the context of working-age people).

With the reform, starting from 2019, the provision of career counselling and career information services is done to all population groups by the PES. Also, the methodological development of these services is done in the PES.

The Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for career education and educational counselling for SEN which includes socio-pedagogical, psychological, special education counselling and speech therapy (services provided in the school system and by the regional Rajaleidja Centres of Innove). See on-line: [Educational counselling in Rajaleidja centres](#) and [Support for students with SEN.](#)

11. What leadership, co-ordination and collaboration approaches exist within the career development system to ensure collaboration across different sectors and different types of clients.

For example, how are career development systems within the education system connected to those within employment, health and youth work?

In order to ensure coordinated development of career services and career education, National Guidance Forum was re-established by EUIF. See more detailed description in pt 8.

12. What are the main challenges to leadership in the field and the main obstacles to effective collaboration?

Estonian guidance provision has in large extent been financed by European Social Funds, and until the end of 2018 the two main programmes were implemented by different institutions - Foundation Innove in education sector and Unemployment Insurance Fund as national PES in the employment sector - split between different sectors. Also, as mentioned above, the new reorganisation influences current state of play.

We need to stress however, that the ESF funding has over many years assured a long-term planning.

The main challenge is communication between institutions and this is the reason for re-establishing the National Guidance Forum.

13. What kind of cooperation (if any) is there between the career development services and stakeholders like employers, trade unions, the media, NGOs, professional organisations etc?

The main cooperation body to ensure the coordinated development of career services in Estonia after the reform from the beginning of 2019, is the National Guidance Forum, that has the important counterparts of policy makers and practitioners on board. The members of the board are representatives of organisations, that are responsible for either offering or coordinating career education, career counselling and career information services.

The Central Federation of Trade Unions and the Estonian Employees' Unions' Confederation are both members of the EUIF's supervisory board. The supervisory board is the highest decision-making body in the EUIF. The strategic goals, main annual tasks and also the budget must all be approved by the supervisory board prior to implementation.

Since the EUIF is responsible for offering various labour market services (both active and passive), its everyday cooperation partners to provide these services entails a wide range of employers and NGOs. In order to keep an intense relationship with the employers, the EUIF has specialised consultants in each regional bureau, whose everyday task is to find out the needs of the employers and help to create solutions to them in their region. Through this cooperation relationship, the PES has a good overview of the practical problems the employers in Estonia are facing, that need to be addressed.

In order to have the programs that are implemented to support people's career choices and the choices made about skills development in line with the future needs of the labour market, Estonian Qualifications Authority is conducting analysis of the sectoral needs for labour and skills necessary for Estonia's economic development over the next 10 years (<http://oska.kutsekoda.ee/en/>). These analysis are called OSKA surveys. The surveys are unique since they use a combination of quantitative as well as qualitative research methods and analyse professional qualifications across all

levels of education. The OSKA Coordination Council plays a key role in matching labour market needs with training resources, taking into account the proposals and suggestions put forward by sectoral expert panels. The Coordination Council consists of the representatives - board members or organisation heads - of the Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Finance, the Estonian Employers' Confederation, the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Estonian Service Unions' Confederation (TALO), the Estonian Trade Union Confederation and the EUIF.

The reports of the surveys are one of main information tools for the career professionals in their everyday work.

In order to have an overview of the short-term labour market needs, an in-house tool of the EUIF - Occupational Barometer - is being used (<https://www.tootukassa.ee/eng/baromeeter>). The barometer is a qualitative method of forecasting short-term labour demand by occupation. The estimates are compiled by the regional departments of the EUIF, which involve external experts wherever possible.

14. How is the professionalism of career development workers developed and maintained whilst working with other professionals?

In Estonia, there is no academic training available for career professionals. Most of professionals have a higher education degree in social sciences. To some extent universities offer professional training courses for career practitioners.

The development of practitioners' professional competencies on the basis of the requirements of the occupational qualification standard is important, and training courses are mostly organized by the employers of career practitioners as well as by some extent also in universities and private companies. In EUIF basic training and also continuous training is provided on various skills necessary.

To ensure international exposure, we invite speakers and trainers from other countries, and our practitioners have opportunities to travel in Europe for training purposes.

15. Do other types of professionals (e.g. teachers and social workers) deliver career development? How is a professional service ensured?

The national basic school and national upper secondary school curriculum includes compulsory central topic which supports pupils' career planning – "Lifelong learning and career planning". In addition, the curricula are accompanied by the syllabi of the elective subject in careers education. National curriculum does not prescribe to the school precisely what actions are to be taken to achieve the set goals – each school is able to select the best ways, methods and means based on the specifics and abilities of the school.

The main challenge is that there is very little specific training available for teachers responsible for cross-curricular topic and elective course. The school is obliged to ensure the availability of career counselling, so close cooperation with EUIF (and before 2019 with Foundation Innove Rajaleidja centres) is important part in supporting pupils career development.

Career guidance is considered also as a part of youth work. As part of the youth guarantee the Ministry of Education and Research also launched an initiative to support young people aged up to 26 to bring young people not in education or work (NEETs) back to education. The Youth Prop Up is an action plan for young persons of 15 – 26 years in age who are not involved in studies or employment. The Association of Estonian Open Youth Centers is implementing the action plan for this initiative in close cooperation with EUIF career practitioners. [See more on-line about YOUTH PROP UP.](#)



Theme #4 - Leading innovative change for the future.

In your country...

16. What are the key innovations or ways that career development programmes and services have changed over the last 10 years? This could include changes relating to technology, practice, management and governance and the use of new theories and evidence.

In general, 10 years is a very long period when it comes to the provision and development of career guidance in Estonia.

The main driver regarding the governance has been the aim to make effective use of resources, avoid duplication and fragmentation, and to improve the quality and access of services. During the last 10 years we have had two major reforms in the field - in 2014 when current Lifelong Learning Strategy initiated the establishment of centralised youth guidance centres in education sector (in every region Foundation Innove established Rajaleidja / Pathfinder centres and in 2019 initiated changes by state reform.

Technology has been one of the main drivers to support the process. This includes for example improvement of information resources, e-services linking different data sources, on-line tools to collect feedback from clients, e-courses for practitioners and the use of several digital solutions to support citizens career development (chat service on-line; the use of digital learning environments).

A crucial step was taken in 2015, when public guidance services were made available for all after the national PES started to provide also to working adults. So far career counselling was only available for young and unemployed.

Innove has developed a career development competence model that describes the relevant areas of competence, competencies, attitudes and learning outcomes illustrating their development. This model allows both individuals and career professionals or other involved parties to monitor the development of the competencies necessary for career development, and thus deliberately and purposefully engage in their development. Please see on-line [Estonian model: Support for the development of career management skills.](#)

In the field of responsibilities of the PES, a shift has been taken towards creating equal opportunities for people with health problems in the process of entering the labour market and staying active there. This has been supported by the Work Ability Reform, that aimed at increasing the employment of disabled people (it changed work ability assessment and benefits. People with disabilities and long-term health problems are receiving more support in employment as well as in their daily life).

17. How do national policies and initiatives, where they exist, ensure and support the development of innovation in career development services provision?

In short we can say that the culture of continuous improvement is the key. In addition, proactive participation in international guidance networks is an important source for mutual exchange and inspiration for innovation both for guidance institutions and professionals.

National policies and accordingly the programmes value the quality assurance and professionalism of practitioners in the field of lifelong guidance. This creates an open environment where new ways are welcomed, e.g. in practitioners training, development of tools and methodologies to make the service more attractive and user-friendly to the citizens.

18. What new, innovative and promising interventions in career development programmes and services is your country planning for the future? How are such innovations making the most of open data initiatives, online technologies, artificial intelligence and other forms of innovation?

Currently Estonia's largest career portal Rajaleidja.ee, which facilitates career planning information and tools, is also undergoing major changes. Ministry of Education and Research has launched new portal <https://haridusportaal.edu.ee/> which will be main portal for educational and labour market information and also career development issues. Secondly, EUIF hosts a practical web page for career planning called www.minukarjaar.ee ("mycareer").

Before 2019 [Rajaleidja](http://Rajaleidja.ee) chat-service enabled people to start an online discussion directly with a career practitioner. New chat service will be set up in 2019 by EUIF.

There have been also some new and exciting tools for career development:

- Estonian Youth Work Centre has made first virtual reality videos of occupations (medical workers, soon youth workers). We are hoping to make this a new way of introducing different occupations and work environments alongside with more common texts, photos and videos;

- Foundation Innove has opened [virtual tours of all vocational education institutions](#) in Estonia have been made;

- thematic e-courses for career practitioners.

In its service provision, Estonia is taking the maximum of X-Road, a system which ensures the direct and secure exchange of data between various information systems. This means that the clients of PES, be they either grown-ups of the youth have to present the minimum amount as possible on paper, instead the gathering of background information concerning the very client is done automatically in the information systems.

As an outcome of the career services reform, the PES is launching a brand new career centre in the Capital, Tallinn. The centre welcomes all client groups and aims at offering career information and support in making one's decisions about labour market and educational paths with a help of various interactive and technological solutions.

19. How is the training and continuing professional development (CPD) of careers professionals encouraging innovation and taking account of new evidence as well as changes in technology and the labour market?

Since formal education does not prepare career information specialists or career counsellors, the PES is responsible for giving the skills to its career specialists (a systematic training platform is being developed in the PES in order to offer a step-by-step skills obtaining process for newcomers; in line with this constant upskilling is under attention in order to provide a qualitative service by professionals through various channels). Training courses are not provided only in a face-to-face form, but where possible and suitable, e-training courses are used (including video training modules).

Euroguidance centre in Estonia supports the competence development of the guidance community on the European dimension of lifelong guidance. In practice it means the e-training on multicultural and international mobility issues and focusing on professional terminology in English. The centre also promotes learning mobility of practitioners themselves, e.g. co-operating with Nordic universities on the use of technology in the field of guidance.

Final reflections

20. Is there anything else that you could like to address through participating in this symposium?

International partnership and collaboration across borders is an important source for inspiration and mutual exchange in many levels. For example, Euroguidance centres in 35 European countries give opportunities to test out, develop new approaches, and learn across borders. IAEVG give global guidance community to meet at annual guidance events and share new knowledge and exchange practices.

Implementation of Erasmus+ supports innovation in lifelong guidance. For example there is a small collection of new initiatives in newly published Euroguidance Insight, see <https://www.euroguidance.eu/resources/publications/insight-newsletter/insight-autumn-2018> and every year Erasmus+ funded Euroguidance publishes so called Euroguidance Highlight introducing most recent development in their national centres. Highlights 2017 is available at <https://www.euroguidance.eu/resources/publications/euroguidance-highlights/euroguidance-highlights-2017> and the next one about 2018 initiatives will be published very soon.

We believe that next to the regular exchange within networks, the international mobility of practitioners is a key for international exchange of practices.

Also, EU programming for the future might interest policy makers both in Europe and outside. There was a forum for Future Learning organised in Brussels January 24th, 2019, see https://ec.europa.eu/education/events/forum-on-the-future-of-learning_en.