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LEADER
LEARNING AND DECISION MAKING RESOURCES

Intellectual Outputs 01

State of the Art

Project information

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Question #1: What is the value of a European approach to CMS?

- Would it be valuable to develop either a cross-European CMS Framework or a series of guidelines or parameters for national frameworks?
- What is the rationale for the development of CMS frameworks in LEADER countries? To what extent is there a state/public policy interest in CMS?
- How should any activity undertaken by the LEADER project be aligned with ongoing work in the ELGPN?

Career Management Skills (CMS) are increasingly considered as necessary for all citizens throughout their lifecycle, young and adults alike, in a fast-paced knowledge society in which the realities of employment and self-employment have shifted significantly. Given the importance of continuous professional and personal growth, Lifelong Guidance has evolved over the last few years into a central EU policy instrument incorporated in many EU policy and strategy initiatives in order to enhance the effectiveness and potential of VET, education and employment systems.

As far as a European CMS framework is concerned, according to Ronald G. Sultana, “one way of stimulating the development of national curricular frameworks is by promoting the emulations of the ones that already exist”. The US National Career Development Guidelines of 1988, for instance, inspired the development of the Canadian Blueprint of 1998, which in turn was the basis for the Australian Blueprint for Career Development of 2008. The ELGPN thematic work group considered these initiatives and reflected on the possibility of defining a “blueprint” which would be widely applicable to EU member states. It was soon discovered that the development of supra-national curricular frameworks faces a number of challenges, particularly in a region whose constituent countries have diverse education and training traditions, of which they are justifiably proud”(Sultana, 2010).

The aforementioned study continues to demonstrate that the concept of a unique European “blueprint” alone would indicate that there is an optimal way of doing things as opposed to a less efficient one, but there are further studies (Steiner-Khamsi 2004) that indicate that nothing could be farther from the truth. “Formal educational practices are filtered through national curricular and institutional cultures and traditions, which are deeply intertwined with a country’s or region’s history” (Alexander 2001). There are at least three very distinct curricular traditions in Europe and any innovation likely to be added to these systems is shaped by the different cultures and is defined and implemented within the rationale of historically embedded practices. Any attempt to either simply adopt a so-called general “blueprint” and to establish a Europe-wide reference network is bound to prove problematic.

The above said, it would be undoubtedly helpful and very valuable to attempt to develop either a cross-European Career Management Skills Framework (or at least a basic core) or a series of guidelines and suggestions for the national Career Management Skills Frameworks, based on singularities encountered on national level. The work of the ELGPN over the last few years has pinpointed some issues, which all need to be taken into consideration when attempting to

develop the core of the cross-European Career Management Skills Framework:

- Work towards enhancing and strengthening the cooperation among the EU countries, in order to encourage a better comprehension of the Career Management Skills.
- Create well defined national frameworks for the implementation of Career Management Skills, which will above all define a minimum of skills and knowledge that should be available to all citizens at all times, regardless of age.
- Pinpoint the Career Management Skills that are necessary for the groups at the risk of being socially excluded (such as immigrants, aging workers, ex offenders etc)
- Support and train further all the individuals involved in one way or another in the delivery of Career Management Skills (teachers, trainers, guidance practitioners etc), so that they are in a better position to support the target groups that they work with.
- Integrate the Career Management Skills in the educational and training contexts.
- Approach the assessment of Career Management Skills through innovative methodologies.
- Make sure that Career Management Skills are introduced and incorporated in the various structures supporting employment generation on national levels, in order to assist in combating unemployment, etc.

Question #2: How are CMS defined and understood?

- Is there agreement that career management is a lifelong process of learning and development?
- Is it possible and useful to define a series of CMS which it is important for individuals to develop in order to progress?
- How do members of the LEADER project define career management?

Is there agreement that career management is a lifelong process of learning and development?

Modern working environments are characterized by complexity and constant change. Finding and maintaining work is a cause for concern for more individuals than ever, as occupational stability and permanence have been significantly reduced.

We are no longer confined to a linear work model, in which a person begins to work in one profession and continues to work in the same profession for a significant amount of time and we now move towards new career models, which are often characterized as “unpredictable”, “versatile”, “circular” and “transitory”. Under the new circumstances of economic crisis and social instability and turmoil, the labor market cannot longer offer stable “routes” and therefore, every modern employee needs to become more responsible and proactive in order to steer his/her life

and career through an ongoing personal and professional process.

Simultaneously, another issue that comes up of significant importance today is the development of a “resilient” workforce, something that entails continuous education and re-inventing. Professional advancement comes to be secured through the development of “employability”, which is enhanced through the continuous upgrading and modernization of professional qualifications. Under this light, it is widely agreed that career management is a process of learning and personal and professional development that is necessary to identify what is needed in terms of skills for the effective career development of all the citizens.

According to the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (2010). Lifelong Guidance Policies: Work in Progress. A report on the work of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network 2008–10, career management skills are defined as “a range of competences which provide structured ways for individuals (and groups) to gather, analyse, synthesise and organise self, educational and occupational information, as well as the skills to make and implement decisions and transitions.”

Is it possible and useful to define a series of CMS which it is important for individuals to develop in order to progress?

Career management skills are defined as the life, learning, training and employment skills which people need to develop and manage their careers effectively” (European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network-2010)

When it comes specifically to Greece, an official Career Management Skills framework has not been yet developed, yet EOPPEP, the National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance is working effectively towards that direction. Currently EOPPEP is in the process of developing training materials for guidance practitioners and trainers and to this end, it has proceeded to identify and analyze the following indicative skills: a. Readiness to respond to positive or negative situations, b. Creating alternative professional perspectives, c. Ability to adapt successfully to career changes, d. Be able to demonstrate social awareness . e. Demonstrate career resilience, i.e. be able to cope with change, f. Have a positive outlook when it comes to future, g. Additional job searching skills, networking and mobility skills and time management skills.

Question #3: How can CMS be operationalised as part of the delivery of lifelong guidance services?

- Is there agreement that career management skills should be at the core of lifelong guidance interventions?
- What are the implications for the service delivery models that exist within LEADER countries of a greater focus on CMS?
- How have members of the LEADER project seen career management skills being operationalised within their countries?
- How useful is the idea of a European, national or sectoral CMS framework? Where has this been operationalised within the LEADER countries?
- How can we account for and respond to different approaches to operationalising CMS?
- What kinds of communities of practice exist which are capable of supporting the operationalisation of CMS frameworks.

Given the fact that European careers nowadays can be characterized as ever changing, transitional and “boundary-less”, there seems to be general consensus that skills that would allow the individuals to manage effectively this lifelong process are more than imperative and should be at the very core of lifelong guidance interventions.

Despite the fact that we cannot yet refer to a national operational or sectoral framework for CMS in Greece and the whole concept of applying CMS is relatively new, there is a generalized effort to include CMS in the implementation of all lifelong learning interventions. Skills, dexterities and competencies that have been always important for the management of an individual’s career development have always been important under that light, but efforts to standardize them and make them more comprehensive have taken place only recently.

The introduction of CMS is taking place gradually in all the service delivery systems in Greece, with particular emphasis given to the training of career guidance practitioners and trainers, who work with diverse target groups.

Efforts to operationalize CMS in various European countries have been examined and documented in the Concept Note No 3 issued by the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELPGN) titled “Success factors for CMS policy implementation”. In this concept note, four key aspects of the impact of the policy implementation process are analyzed, as crucial to the process:

1. The policy to be implemented

- The goals of the policy need to be well defined, clear and coherent.
- The significance of the policy needs to be adequately justified.
- The reform has to be incremental and fast paced
- National legislation should demonstrate the appropriate commitment to the policy implementation.

2. The people involved in the implementation

- Effective policy implementation should be multilevel-its acceptance and application should be easier if it is accepted by all the relevant players (top managers, middle managers, front liners etc.)
- Consultation and effective communication among all the involved parties is imperative.
- Key policy drivers should be actively involved.
- Policy implementation should be supported by sound content development, professional service delivery and well trained staff.

3. The place of implementation

- Organizational context –different organizational contexts pose different challenges when it comes to resource allocations, funding, public or private dimension etc.
- Sustainable funding is imperative for successful policy implementation.
- Political issues, as politics can undoubtedly influence whether a policy is implemented or not.

4. The pace of implementation

- Whether the pace of implementation is fast or slow pays a significant role in the policy implementation process.

- Effective monitoring is also crucial

The operationalization of the CMS frameworks here in Greece can be supported by the following professional communities: a. Career guidance counselors and practitioners, b. lifelong learning trainers, c. psychologists and any other professional group working with youth under the light of career guidance or adults re-designing and re-assessing their careers at any given time.

Question #4: What should be included within a CMS framework?

- How far should a CMS framework include skills, aptitudes and attitudes?
- What elements constitute a CMS framework? Should it include: a list of learning areas/skills; a learning model; levels; and a range of contextual elements?
- How far should CMS focus on the conventional career domains of work and learning and how far should this be broadened to include spheres such as home and community?
- What are the key differences in the CMS that are focused on in different LEADER countries.

As already elaborated above, the approach to Career Management Skills is different within the wider European context and this probably poses one of the most significant challenges in approaching policy in a uniform manner. The main differences encountered in the implementation of Career Management Skills are the following:

- Lack of consensus on the exact definition of Career Management Skills.
- Different educational and cultural traditions and perceptions, not allowing a uniform approach.
- Different level of importance attached to the implementation of Career Management Skills and subsequent introduction to relevant national policy.
- Different stages of implementation in different areas (VET, Adult Education, Employment, Career Guidance, Higher Education, Primary and Secondary level schools etc).

As the development of Career Management Skills is a process based on the exploitation of already available approaches put into practice in different context, there is general consensus that the European framework should draw basic elements from the Canadian Blueprint (1988), the United States National Career Development Guidelines (1988) and also the Australian blueprint (2008).

Based on the already implemented research, a Career Management Framework should be a. clearly defined and universal, available to be adapted to various contexts, b. should include elements of social and personal life, rather than only work and career, c. taking into

considerations issues that arise from their implementation in various different contexts, such as school, Higher Education, employment, vocational education and training etc, d. be predominantly based on the learning outcomes approach.

In the process of growing and developing, people are likely to acquire Career Management Skills in the following settings:

- Before starting work, i.e. in a school setting.
- In a setting moving from education to work, i.e. for example in a higher education setting.
- While working.
- When not working, either due to choice or necessity.
- Preparing to leave work or reduce work, drawing nearer to retirement.

There are many individuals who will develop Career Management Skills on their own and through a mix of formal and informal learning and life experiences, but there are also individuals who will need considerable professional support when it comes to taking decisions with respect to the learning and work related decisions they are faced with.

The Career Management Skills Framework for **Scotland** identifies four coherent themes with a number of associated competencies, something which gives a total of 17 competencies, as these are described below:

Self

These competencies enable individuals to develop their sense of self within society:

- I develop and maintain a positive self-image.
- I maintain a balance that is right for me in my life, learning and work roles.
- I adapt my behaviour appropriately to fit a variety of contexts.
- I am aware of how I change and grow throughout life.
- I make positive career decisions.

Strengths

These competencies enable individuals to acquire and build on their strengths and to pursue rewarding learning and work opportunities:

- I am aware of my skills, strengths and achievements.
- I build on my strengths and achievements.
- I am confident, resilient and able to learn when things do not go well or as expected.

- I draw on my experiences and on formal and informal learning opportunities to inform and support my career choices.

Horizons

These competencies enable individuals to visualise, plan and realise their career aspirations throughout life:

- I understand that there is a wide variety of learning and work opportunities that I can explore and are open to me.
- I know how to find and evaluate information and support to help my career development.
- I am confident in responding to and managing change within my life and work roles.
- I am creative and enterprising in the way I approach my career development.
- I identify how my life, my work, my community and my society interact

Networks

These competencies enable individuals to develop relationships and networks of support:

- I interact confidently and effectively with others to build relationships.
- I use information and relationships to secure, create and maintain work.
- I develop and maintain a range of relationships that are important for my career journey.

Question #5: Should CMS be assessed?

- Is assessment of CMS appropriate? What is the most appropriate method of evaluating CMS skills?
- What models exist across LEADER countries for the assessment of CMS?

If career management skills are considered to be important skills for an individual to acquire, then it is undoubtedly useful to provide learners, their teachers/educators and advisers with the necessary resources to assess these skills. There are a number of reasons for assessing these skills, i.e.

- To provide feedback to learners on their progress and raise their awareness of the skills they have and those that still need developing.
- To show all the involved parties that progress has been made and the individual can

demonstrate new competences.

- To motivate the involved individuals to remain engaged.
- To enable organizations to measure the impact of services.

The following are some indicative methods and tools for assessing CMS:

- Exercise books and logs, records of achievement.
- Assignments.
- Online programs.
- Career learning portfolios.
- Self-assessment and peer assessment.
- Observation.
- Structured interviews.
- Formal type examinations.
- Elaboration of individual learning plans, etc.

It appears that the appropriate assessment tool or methodology are used in accordance to the learning context that the Career Management Skills are delivered in and the target group that these are delivered to.

The assessment of career related learning and CMS has not been given the appropriate attention on European level despite the fact that CMS implementation policy is high on the European Lifelong Learning and Career Guidance Agenda.

In Greece yet again, the National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance has played a pivotal part in developing various online self evaluating tools for adults and adolescents, which can be easily accessed by all and provide the ground for evaluating CMS. These tools are briefly the following:

- The digital **E-portfolio Development Tool**, which can be found at <http://www.e-stadiodromia.gr> , is addressed at adults and allows them to evaluate the following indicative skills that are related to their participation in the labor market and the management of their social and personal life:
 - Adequate knowledge and understanding of the Greek language.
 - The ability to speak other foreign languages.
 - Numeracy.

- Digital literacy.
- Ability to engage in lifelong learning activities.
- Problem solving skills.
- Creativity and flexibility.
- Communication and interpersonal skills.
- Ability to work in groups.
- Entrepreneurial skills and finally,
- Vocational skills related to specific professions.

The digital **E-portfolio** is further complemented through the Career Management Skills Section of the same website, where adults can find useful interactive tools, activities and learning materials aimed at assessing their CMS.

- Along the same lines, adolescents are offered an E-portfolio development tool at EOPPEP's guidance portal at the following address: <http://www.eoppep.gr/teens>. The adolescents who will decide to use this comprehensive online tool will have the opportunity to perform a self-assessment on the acquisition of the following skills, as these have been formulated within the European Reference Framework:
 - Comprehension and communication in Greek.
 - Comprehension and communication in foreign languages.
 - Basic mathematic competence and basic competences in sciences and technology.
 - Digital literacy.
 - Learning to learn.
 - Social skills and competencies related to citizenship.
 - Ability to take initiatives and entrepreneurship.
 - Cultural awareness and expression.

This digital tool is also available to be filled in in the English language.

Question #6: What resources are needed to support the implementation of CMS frameworks?

- What kind of learning materials already exist for the development of career management skills?
- What new resources would LEADER participants like to see developed through the project?

The **National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance** is pioneering the relevant research and policy implementation measures in Greece, so it is only rational to infer that the resources available for Career Management in Greece are largely elaborated by EOPPEP. The following tools and methodologies are available on national level for the implementation of the Career Management Skills frameworks:

- The Lifelong Career Development Portal, which can be accessed at www.e-stadiodromia.gr. This Portal constitutes an integrated information hub for the delivery of information pertaining to all issues surrounding Lifelong Learning in Greece. It is targeted at adults in all stages of their professional development and contains sub-sections dedicated indicatively to Career Management, E-consultancy services, Career and Mobility information and resources, Career Portfolio Development etc.
- A portal aimed at adolescents and youth in general and can be accessed at www.eoppep.gr/teens. The portal contains a vast array of interactive and user friendly resources and tools, such as tests, e-portfolio development tool, information catalogues, videos on professions and basic skills required, useful links etc. The portal has also a dedicated “Ask the Counsellor” section, where adolescents can interact with a counsellor and get answers to their questions. The portal is used by both youth, but also career guidance practitioners.

On a smaller level, there are also methodologies and training materials incorporated within the training curricula of individual training courses, delivered by Lifelong Learning training centers and addressed at various target groups (youth, the unemployed, aging individuals, immigrants etc)

It would be interesting to see the following resources developed through the implementation of project LEADER:

- A training curriculum addressed primarily at career guidance practitioners, teachers and trainers for the delivery of effective training to support the implementation of Career Management Skills.
- Additional guidelines incorporated into a framework aimed at providing support to guidance practitioners working with groups at the risk of being socially excluded (immigrants, aging individuals, ex-offenders etc)

Question #7: How does the social context within which an individual operates impact on their CMS, their capacity to develop CMS and on the design of CMS frameworks?

- Is it possible to have the same CMS framework for clients in very different circumstances and with very different resources available to them?
- Should a CMS framework be developed with the aim of supporting social equity? If so, how can this be achieved?

There is general consensus that the Career Management Skills framework should be adapted to suit the needs of the so called “vulnerable social groups” and therefore take into account the social context and the social circumstances of groups such as NEETS, long term unemployed individuals, ethnic minorities, immigrants, aging workers etc.

It is understandable that each group faces a different set of challenges and therefore the approach should be modified accordingly in order to safeguard equal opportunities and equal access for all.

Question #8: What questions should be included in the proposed survey of LEADER countries practice in this area?

The stated objectives of the survey are:

- consulting directly the future beneficiaries of the core actions (training pilot projects);
- providing the partnership with information on weaknesses and critical aspects regarding guidance intervention at any age;
- collecting resources and strengths existing at local and national levels;
- creating a theoretical base for the project development;
- providing the partnership with methodological guidelines for the development of the main results.

All the above should be included in the proposed survey.

Any other comments, suggestions and idea to improve the project, the training and testing activities, the CMS resources.

References

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