

ELGPN GLOSSARY

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Revised

June 2012

The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN)

The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) was established in 2007 with the aim of assisting the European Union (EU) Member States (and the neighbouring countries eligible for the EU Lifelong Learning Programme) and the European Commission in developing European co-operation on lifelong guidance in both the education and the employment sectors. Its purpose is to promote co-operation at Member State level in implementing the priorities identified in the EU Resolutions on Lifelong Guidance (2004; 2008). The network was established by the Member States; the Commission supports its activities under the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-13.

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Acknowledgements

This Glossary is the result of a team effort by members of the four ELGPN Work Packages. Special thanks are due to all those who sent in comments on earlier drafts of the document and in particular to Bernhard Jenschke, Susanne Kraatz and Hélia Moura for their helpful suggestions. Thanks are also due to Raimo Vuorinen and Tony Watts for their support throughout the process of finalising the Glossary.

About the ELGPN Glossary – Introduction

The ELGPN Glossary has been developed to provide a common set of definitions for lifelong guidance (LLG) policy development and related guidance terminology. It provides a set of definitions that have been agreed by members of the ELGPN to support the use of *ELGPN Lifelong Guidance Policy Development: a European Resource Kit*. The aim of the Resource Kit is to support policy review and peer learning processes both within and between countries. However, in the absence of another source that defines commonly used terminology in this field, it is hoped that the ELGPN Glossary will also prove to be a valuable resource for practitioners working in this field across the EU.

A critical issue for the Glossary is to define a set of terms, many of which are used in the Resource Kit, in a lifelong guidance context and thus facilitate dialogue on LLG policy development across the EU. As far as possible the glossary uses existing EU definitions, but these have been supplemented and extended where necessary to provide definitions that are relevant in a contemporary guidance context. However, certain terms, which have been defined in EU resolutions and directives, have not been changed.

In particular, Lifelong guidance has been defined in EU directives and provides the context for the work of the ELGPN. In this Glossary, Lifelong guidance and Guidance have been adopted as the umbrella terms in describing both particular activities and the field. However, it should be recognised that there is not complete agreement on how terms are used and some of those working in this field would use the term career counselling rather than career guidance as the generic term to describe their work, while others either use the two terms interchangeably or together, that is use the phrase career guidance and counselling, to describe what they do. A separate definition of counselling has been included in the Glossary but certain readers may have different perspectives on precisely how the terms counselling and guidance should be used.

The Glossary complements other existing ones that are either focused on related topics, such as the glossary on quality in education and training (Cedefop, 2011), or that have a practitioner focus, such as the Career Guidance and Counselling Glossary prepared under the EU Leonardo da Vinci programme.

The Glossary and definitions have been written in English in the first instance; it is recognised that some terms cannot easily be translated into other languages without losing some of their meaning. Some terms may also have been used in a more specialised or restricted context in certain countries, reflecting local circumstances.

Selection of terms

Terms for inclusion in the Glossary have been chosen by members of the ELGPN Work Packages, but other key interested parties (e.g. Cedefop, European Commission) have also been consulted during the course of its preparation. The terms included reflect the focus of the four Work Packages:

- Work Package 1: Career management skills
- Work Package 2: Widening access
- Work Package 3: Co-operation and co-ordination
- Work Package 4: Quality assurance and evidence base

Organisation of the Glossary

The main body of this Glossary contains 75 key terms used in the Resource Kit, presented in alphabetical order in English. Each entry contains (in this order):

- the term in English
- a definition of the term in English
- additional comment on how the term is used in lifelong guidance and to explain the definition
- reference to the source of the definition (where no source is listed, this means that no existing definition has been found and a definition has been written especially for this Glossary).

Where appropriate in the entry for the relevant term, we have noted whether the term is a synonym for another term used in the Glossary. We have also used the comment section to identify closely related terms, or terms with similar or overlapping definitions.

Development of the Glossary

Initial work on the ELGPN Glossary was conducted by members of the four ELGPN Work Packages, who identified potential terms to be included in the Glossary and also provided some definitions as well as identifying key reference sources. Dr Charles Jackson from the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling (NICEC) in the UK has acted as editor for the subsequent work to finalise the Glossary for publication. An earlier draft was presented to the 10th Plenary Meeting of the ELGPN held in Copenhagen in April 2012. This new version takes on board comments and suggestions made both at that meeting and subsequently by ELGPN members.

Access to guidance

Conditions, circumstances or requirements (e.g. qualification, education level, special needs, gender, age etc.) governing admission to and participation in guidance activities, and/or the right to use guidance services or programmes.

Comment:

Adaptation of the definition used in education and training to a guidance context. This is a restricted definition of access, which is more generally defined in a service context as: 'the right to use a particular service'.

A key concern is that lifelong guidance policies encourage social inclusion and 'that all citizens have a right to access guidance services at any point in their lives' (Lifelong Guidance Policy Development: a European Resource Kit 2012).

Source: Based on Cedefop (2008b).

Career

The interaction of work roles and other life roles over a person's lifespan, including how they balance paid and unpaid work, and their involvement in learning and education.

Comment:

The main issue is whether a definition focuses exclusively employment; employment and training; or adopts the broadest of all conceptions to include non-work activities.

There are a large number of definitions of 'career' in the academic literature. For example:

- the evolving sequence of a person's work experience over time (Arthur et al., 1989);
- a career is the sequence of employment-related positions, roles, activities and experiences encountered by a person (Arnold, 1997);
- career is viewed broadly to stress life roles and lifestyles, occupation being considered only one part of career (Hansen & Gysbers, 1975);
- the individual's lifelong progression in learning and work (Watts, 1998).

Other definitions include:

The sequence of various socially significant human roles deriving from an individual's work, learning, self-expression and leisure activities and spanning the individual's working life, work locations, positions and achievements. (Career Guidance and Counselling Glossary, undated).

A career is the sequence and variety of occupations (paid and unpaid) which one undertakes throughout a lifetime. More broadly, 'career' includes life roles, leisure activities, learning and work (University of Sydney Careers Centre Glossary of Career Terms, undated).

Career is a lifestyle concept that involves the sequence of work, learning and leisure activities in which one engages throughout a lifetime. Careers are unique to each person and are dynamic, unfolding throughout life. Careers include how persons balance their paid and unpaid work and personal life roles (Canadian Career Development Foundation, 2002).

Source: Based on UNESCO (2002).

Career adviser

Career advisers assist people to explore, pursue and attain their career goals.

Comment:

Career advisers/counsellors have normally received professional training and possess a recognised professional qualification.

Synonym for career counsellor and guidance counsellor.

Source: UNESCO (2002).

Career centre

A place where people go to receive career guidance.

Comment:

A career centre may offer a range of different services or interventions and these may range from self-help materials (e.g. books, information sources or access to ICT-based career support) to one-to-one support from a career counsellor.

It is also possible to envisage a virtual career centre – i.e. an online career portal – being considered as a particular type of career centre.

Source:

Career choice

An individual's career intention based on their personal aptitudes, abilities, aspirations and goals, tempered by the realities of the labour market and their personal circumstances.

The process through which an individual's career intention is developed and realised.

Comment:

A career choice need not be work-based: the definition is intended to reflect the broad nature of career choices.

The term is often used to describe the process of developing a career intention as well as the outcome of that process.

Source: Based on Career Guidance and Counselling Glossary.

Career counselling

The interaction between a career/guidance counsellor and an individual.

An individual or group process which emphasises self-awareness and understanding, and facilitates the development of a satisfying and meaningful life/work direction as a basis to guide learning, work and transition decisions, as well as how to manage responses to changing work and learning environments over the lifespan.

Comment:

Other definitions include:

- Career counselling facilitates the learning of skills, interests, beliefs, values, work habits, and personal qualities to enable each participant to create a satisfying life in a constantly changing work environment (Krumboltz & Worthington, 1999).
- The career counselling process is focussed on helping individuals not to choose a career but to construct it (Watts, 2000).

Source: Based on Career Guidance and Counselling Glossary and Canada Career Information Partnership (2006).

Career counsellor

Career counsellors assist people to explore, pursue and attain their career goals.

Comment:

Career advisers/counsellors have normally received professional training and possess a recognised professional qualification.

Other definitions include:

- A professional trained in career guidance that is able to assist others to make rational career choices (Career Guidance and Counselling Glossary).
- A career counsellor provides counselling in educational, career and personal domains. A career counsellor assists individuals to achieve greater self-awareness, develop a life/work direction, increase understanding of learning and work opportunities and become self-directed in managing learning, work and transitions (Canada Career Information Partnership, 2006).

Synonym for career adviser and guidance counsellor.

Source: UNESCO (2002).

Career decision-making

The process of making a choice between particular career alternatives.

Comment:

This definition does not set out to describe the nature of the process (e.g. rational, logical, etc) by which a career decision has been made or what aspects (e.g. individual, job characteristics, etc) have been considered. An alternative definition of career decision that emphasises these elements is:

- The choice of a particular option as the result of a logical series of steps used to identify and match individual aims and organisational development/labour market needs (Career Guidance and Counselling Glossary).

Source:

Career development

The lifelong process of managing learning, work, leisure and transitions in order to move towards a personally determined and evolving future.

Comment:

Career development is also used to describe the outcome of this process.

Other definitions include:

- The total constellation of economic, sociological, psychological, educational, physical and chance factors that combine to shape one's career (Sears, 1982).
- The continuous planning carried out to advance a person's career based on experience and on any training undertaken to upgrade qualifications or to acquire new ones (UNESCO).

Source: Based on the Career Guidance and Counselling Glossary and Canadian Career Development Foundation, (2002).

Career education

Programmes and activities of learning to help people to develop the skills necessary to manage their career and life pathway. These include accessing and making effective use of career information and guidance.

Comment:

Other definitions include:

- The systematic cooperation of educational institutions, parents and society in assisting young people and adults to acquire knowledge and skills that will enable them to make rational vocational decisions (Career Guidance and Counselling Glossary).
- The development of knowledge, skills and attitudes through a planned programme of learning experiences in education and training settings which will assist students to make informed decisions about their study and/or work options and enable effective participation in working life (Australian Ministerial Council for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 1998).

Source: Institute of Career Guidance: Careers Education Committee.

Career guidance

A range of activities that enable citizens of any age, and at any point in their lives, to identify their capacities, competences and interests; to make meaningful educational, training and occupational decisions; and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which these capacities and competences are learned and/or used.

Comment:

Career guidance is defined in the same way as lifelong guidance.

Guidance is provided in a range of settings: education, training, employment, community, and private.

Career or vocational guidance is often just called guidance by practitioners. Guidance is in fact an umbrella that encompasses counselling as well as activities such as informing, coaching, teaching, assessment and advocacy.

It is treated as a synonym of guidance and vocational guidance. Educational guidance, however, has been treated as a more specific term.

Source: Council of the European Union (2008).

Career information systems

Systems, often computer-based or online but also in print, designed to aid an individual or a group in their choice of career, employment, occupation or work by gathering together, organising and providing information about specific occupations, professions or organisations including descriptions of pay, conditions, training, qualifications and experience required.

Comment:

A career information system also comprises the databases that are used as sources of information.

Source: Based on Career Guidance and Counselling Glossary.

Career management

An ongoing process of preparing, implementing, and monitoring career plans.

Comment:

Sometimes career management is carried out by the individual on their own; but in some situations career management involves others, such as an individual's employer, working together with the individual.

Source: Based on Storey (1976).

Career management skills

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.

Comment:

Career management skills are the life, learning, training and employment skills which people need to develop and manage their careers effectively.

Source: European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (2010).

Case management

A collaborative process which assesses, plans, implements, co-ordinates, monitors and evaluates the options and services required to meet an individual's health, social care, educational and employment needs, using communication and available resources to promote quality cost-effective outcomes.

Comment:

A term originally used to refer to the management of health needs of individuals and families. Individual case management lies at the heart of preventive strategies to reduce unemployment. This is achieved by identifying appropriate tailor-made intervention measures and by determining the targeted assistance needs of each respective client.

Source: Case Management Society UK.

Coaching

A process designed to focus on skill development and behaviour change to deliver improved performance. Coaching is usually delivered one-to-one.

Comment:

Some careers professionals have labelled the work they do as 'career coaching' or as 'career/life coaching'.

Much coaching aims to improve the performance and leadership skills of managers, and coaches are often brought into an organisation from outside. However, some employers are starting to emphasise the coaching role of managers in relation to the employees that work for them, contrasting this to other roles that managers have as leaders, managers and mentors.

Coaching is both performance-focused (which means that it is concerned with helping individuals perform tasks to the best of their abilities) and also person-centred (which means that it is the individuals being coached who are seen as having the important insights) (Somers, 2012).

Other definitions include:

- Coaching is unlocking a person's potential to maximise their own performance; helping them to learn rather than teaching them (Gallwey, 1974).
- A collaborative solution-focused, results-orientated and systematic process in which the coach facilitates the enhancement of work performance, life experience, self-directed learning and personal growth of the coachee (Greene & Grant, 2003).

Source:

Common quality-assurance framework

Set of common principles, guidelines, criteria and tools adopted by a group at a local, regional, national or international level in order to develop and assure quality in guidance delivery and in relation to the qualification of guidance practitioners.

Comment:

A more general definition would be a set of common principles, guidelines, criteria and tools adopted by a group at a local, regional, national or international level for the quality assurance of services.

Source: Based on Cedefop (2011).

Co-operation mechanisms

Processes, systems or organisational structures used to facilitate people or organisations working together.

Comment:

Lifelong guidance requires co-operation between partners, within existing structures. This might be largely informal in nature, or based on a co-operation agreement with decision-making powers being retained by each partner.

Co-operation mechanisms could cover a variety of settings, e.g. between different levels in education/training, across national boundaries, or between education and the labour market. They could also cover co-operation between individuals working in different settings or between the organisations they work for.

Source:

Co-ordination mechanisms

Processes, systems or organisational structures used to facilitate people or organisations co-ordinating their work or interventions together.

Comment:

Co-ordination of lifelong guidance activities is likely to require a co-ordinating structure, with operational powers and funding (and possibly a contract or legal mandate). The establishment of national fora is one way that has been used to encourage co-ordination of lifelong guidance activities.

It could also involve the sharing of responsibility for different activities in a programme of careers work.

Source:

Cost-benefit analysis

Comparative analysis of the costs and benefits of a guidance service or particular guidance activity – and of the value of that service or activity – to select the most financially beneficial solution.

Comment:

Cost-benefit analysis is one way of assessing and measuring the cost benefits and social returns on investment of differing types of careers interventions.

Source: Based on Cedefop (2011).

Counselling

The interaction between a professional and an individual helping them to resolve a specific problem or issue.

Comment:

It involves actively listening to an individual's story and communicating understanding, respect and empathy; clarifying goals and assisting individuals with the decision-making process. Counselling is a mutual relationship between a counsellor (a professionally trained helper) and a client (a consumer of counselling services) (UNESCO 2002).

Most counselling is conducted on a one-to-one basis but counselling may also be carried out in a group setting.

Source: Career Guidance and Counselling Glossary

Distance guidance services

Guidance services that are provided remotely, for example by telephone, email or via the internet. The key feature is that the client and guidance worker are not in face-to-face contact and, in the case of automated internet guidance, no guidance worker is directly involved in the delivery of the guidance service.

Comment:

Often delivered using ICT.

See definitions for 'e-guidance' and 'ICT'.

Source:

Drop-out

A drop-out is anyone who has withdrawn from an education or training programme without completing it.

Comment:

Drop-out is a more general term and should be distinguished from 'early school leaver' which has a specific meaning in an EU context. See separate definition.

Source: Based on Cedefop (2008a).

Early school-leaver

Early school-leavers are individuals below the statutory school-leaving age who have withdrawn from or left an education or training programme without completing it.

Comment:

In an EU context this term has a specific technical meaning. The early school-leaving rate is defined by the proportion of the population aged 18-24 with only lower secondary education or less and no longer in education or training. Early school-leavers are therefore those who have only achieved pre-primary, primary, lower secondary or a short upper secondary education of less than 2 years (ISCED 0, 1, 2 or 3c short), and include those who have only a pre-vocational or vocational education which did not lead to an upper secondary certification.

Early school-leaver needs to be distinguished from drop-out which is a more general term.

Source: EU Council Recommendation on Early School-Leaving (2011).

Economic and social outcomes of guidance

Guidance has social and economic outcomes: in particular, improving the efficiency and effectiveness of education, training and the labour market through its contribution to reducing drop-out, preventing skill mismatches, increasing job tenure and boosting productivity; and also addressing social equity and social inclusion.

Comment:

Economic and social outcomes are usually considered together as the two outcomes are closely linked.

See separate definitions of 'Guidance outcomes', 'Learning outcomes of guidance' and the definition of 'Outcome (quality)'.

Source:

Educational counselling/guidance

Helping an individual to reflect on personal educational issues and experiences and to make appropriate educational choices.

Comment:

Sometimes used to describe a broader range of activities: for example, advising pupils or students on their educational progress, on career opportunities, or on personal difficulties or anxieties (UNESCO).

Source: Based on Career Guidance and Counselling Glossary.

e-guidance

Counselling or guidance that is delivered using ICT and which may or may not directly involve a guidance counsellor. Frequently used to describe the provision of information or the use of self-assessment tools and exercises via the internet.

Comment:

e-guidance covers the provision of guidance activities and services using all forms of ICT, including:

Online Guidance

Guidance provided via ICT, for example using a computer or similar electronic device (e.g. a mobile telephone). May include interaction with a guidance professional via email, webchat, sms or social media (e.g. Facebook). Frequently used to describe the provision of information or the use of self-assessment tools and exercises via the internet.

Telephone guidance

The provision of guidance services via the telephone. It may involve a telephone conversation with a guidance worker or, less frequently, the delivery of pre-recorded information. Similar services are now also provided by webchat, sms or via the internet.

Web guidance

Guidance activities provided via the internet using ICT. This may include the provision of information, the use of self-help materials and tools, as well as more interactive activities, such as participation in forums or discussion groups, and email or web-based discussion with a guidance worker.

Source:

Effectiveness

Extent to which the objectives of a policy or an intervention are achieved, usually without reference to costs.

Comment:

Important to distinguish from efficiency which can generally be defined as referring to the relationship between results achieved (output) and resources used (input).

In a guidance context, it is important to distinguish between effectiveness for the individual and for the organisation (e.g. employer, guidance provider) providing the service. Effectiveness can also be measured at a societal level.

Source: Cedefop (2011).

Employability

Combination of factors which enable individuals to progress towards or get into employment, stay in employment and progress during their careers. The employability of individuals depends: (a) on personal attributes (including adequacy of knowledge and skills); (b) on the way these personal attributes are presented on the labour market; (c) on the environmental and social context (incentives and opportunities offered to update and validate their knowledge and skills); and (d) on the economic context.

Comment:

Employability is often a focus of lifelong guidance activities and particularly of employment counselling/guidance.

Source: Based on Scottish Executive (2007); Tamkin & Hillage (1999).

Employment counselling/guidance

Counselling or guidance that addresses one or more of the following domains: career/occupational decision-making, skill enhancement, job search and employment maintenance. Activities include assessment, development and implementation of an action plan, follow-up and evaluation.

Comment:

The outcome of employment counselling is to help clients improve their employability and self-sufficiency in the labour market.

Source: Canada Career Information Partnership (2006) and Career Guidance and Counselling Glossary.

Empowerment

The process of enabling and encouraging people to take greater responsibility for the control of their own lives and careers by developing greater confidence in their own capabilities.

Comment:

Guidance aims to empower people by assisting them to become competent at planning and managing their learning and career paths and in making career transitions.

Empowerment is about enabling individuals to take charge and make full use of their knowledge, energies and judgment.

A term that can be applied to both individuals and communities.

Source:

Entrepreneurship guidance

Guidance activities designed to assist individuals in reviewing their suitability for setting up a new business venture or embarking on self-employment, and to promote proactivity, entrepreneurship and a sense of autonomy.

Comment:

Guidance may facilitate linkages between job providers, entrepreneurs, and innovation.

Being entrepreneurial can be relevant in a wide range of situations and not just in setting up a new business or when someone becomes self-employed.

Source:

Evidence

The information presented to support a finding or conclusion. Evidence should be sufficient, competent and relevant: there are four types of evidence: observations (obtained through direct observation of people or events); documentary (obtained from written information); analytical (based on computations and comparisons); and self-reported (obtained through, for example, surveys).

Comment:

Evidence can come in a variety of forms provided by a variety of research methods, and can be of varying strength or robustness. The strength or robustness of evidence depends upon the qualitative or quantitative approach used. Social, economic and management indicators can constitute an appropriate evidence base, if they adequately reflect the relation of guidance provision to specific outcomes (i.e. retention rate in education or employment) by, for example, connecting to performance measures and indicators.

Source: Glossary, United Nations, Monitoring, Evaluation and Consulting Division (MECD).

Evidence-based policy and practice

The conscientious, explicit and judicious use of current evidence of what works best, and most cost-effectively, to inform lifelong guidance policy and practice.

More generally, any activity, intervention or way of working that has been designed on the basis of evidence that demonstrates the effectiveness of the particular approach (policy or practice) being used.

Comment:

An example of using of an evidence-based policy would be where data on lifelong guidance service usage and potential demand are collected systematically at national level to develop evidence-based policies to target provision for different groups.

Although different, it can be seen as an adjunct to reflective practice.

Source:

Flexicurity

An integrated strategy for enhancing, at the same time, flexibility and security in the labour market. Flexicurity attempts to reconcile employers' need for a flexible workforce with workers' need for security – confidence that they will not face long periods of unemployment.

Comment:

The European Commission in its *Employment in Europe 2006* report describes flexicurity as an optimal balance between labour market flexibility and security for employees against labour market risks. The Commission's interpretation of flexicurity involves replacing the notion of job security, a principle that dominated employment relations until recently, with that of 'protection of people'. The flexicurity model, first implemented in Denmark by the social democratic Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen in the 1990s, is a combination of easy hiring and firing (flexibility for employers) and high benefits for the unemployed (security for the employees). Perceived as a new way of viewing flexibility, flexicurity represents a means whereby employees and companies can better adapt to insecurities associated with global markets.

The EU has identified a set of common flexicurity principles and is exploring how countries can implement them through four components:

- flexible and reliable contractual arrangements;
- comprehensive lifelong learning strategies;
- effective active labour market policies;
- modern social security systems.

See Sutlana (2011) for a discussion of the implications for lifelong guidance of the concept of Flexicurity.

Source: European Commission.

Guidance

Help for individuals to make choices about education, training and employment.

Comment:

Career or vocational guidance is often just called guidance by practitioners. Guidance is in fact an umbrella that encompasses counselling as well as activities such as informing, coaching, teaching, assessment and advocacy.

See earlier comments under 'Career guidance'.

Sometimes used as a synonym for career guidance or vocational guidance.

Source: Hawthorn (1991).

Guidance counsellor

A trained individual delivering guidance as defined above.

Guidance counsellors assist people to explore, pursue and attain their career goals.

Comment:

Synonym for career adviser and career counsellor.

See earlier comments.

Source: Career Guidance and Counselling Glossary.

Guidance outcomes

Guidance has economic, social and learning outcomes and these reflect both its personal impact and the wider societal benefits.

Comment:

See separate definitions of 'Economic and social outcomes of guidance' and 'Learning outcomes of guidance', and also the definition of 'Outcome (quality)'.

Source:

Guidance policy

Policy that determines and shapes the range and extent of guidance services that exist, their aims and principles, how the services are funded, and who is eligible to use them and under what circumstances.

Comment:

Normally thought of as being government policy but many organisations, such as educational institutions, employers, charities and trade unions who offer career guidance, may also have policies that shape their services and determine who is eligible to use them.

Source:

Guidance services

The range of services offered by a particular guidance provider. These might be services designed for different client groups or the different ways that guidance might be delivered (e.g. face-to-face, online, telephone, etc.).

Comment:

Sometimes also used to refer to the range of services offered in a locality (region or country) by a number of different providers.

Source:

Guidance systems

The way the delivery of guidance services has been designed and organised. This might be the approach taken in a particular country or region to the organisation of guidance services or a particular way of delivering guidance, such as online or at a distance.

Comment:

How the delivery of guidance services is organised can have a significant impact on their coverage and effectiveness.

Source:

Impact

General term used to describe the effects of a programme, policy or socioeconomic change. Impact can be positive or negative as well as foreseen or unforeseen.

Comment:

Impacts of guidance might include:

- increased job satisfaction;
- lower drop-out rates/increased tenure;
- improvements in skills related to career management;
- other social and economic benefits.

Source: Cedefop (2011).

Indicator

Quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor.

Comment:

Developing and ageing indicators to assess the performance of both guidance activities and guidance services is an important component in the development of lifelong guidance policy. See 'Quality indicators'.

Source: Adapted from OECD (2010).

Information and communication technologies (ICT)

Technologies which provide for the electronic input, storage, retrieval, processing, transmission and dissemination of information.

Comment:

ICT-based tools are used increasingly in career guidance. For example, many career information systems rely on ICT. ICT and related technology are also used to underpin e-guidance, distance guidance services, on-line and web guidance.

See definition for 'e-guidance'.

Source: Cedefop (2004).

Job-search training

Training designed to help people in their search for jobs/employment.

Comment:

Job-search training is often provided alongside other guidance services and can include a number of different elements, such as: information and advice on where to find out about potential jobs; help with the application process (e.g. CV writing, completing application forms); and preparation for job interviews and other elements of the selection process (e.g. taking selection tests, participating in an assessment centre).

Source:

Key competences

The sum of skills (basic skills and new basic skills) needed to live in contemporary society. In its recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning, the European Commission sets out the eight key competences: communication in the mother tongue; communication in foreign languages; competence in maths and basic competences in science and technology; digital competence; learning to learn; social and civic competences; sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; and cultural awareness and expression.

Comment:

Note that the term is also used to describe the competences required for a particular job or those competences which are seen as most critical for job performance.

Source: Cedefop (2008a).

Labour market information systems

Systems, mechanisms or processes for gathering, organising and providing information about the state of the labour market and/or professions and jobs. This includes recording changes taking place within the labour market, employment, jobs and the professions.

Comment:

Such systems often include databases linked to ICT systems and accessible via the internet. They are usually designed to be used by career counsellors and also by clients on a self-help basis.

Source:

Learning outcomes of guidance

The set of knowledge, skills and/or competences an individual has acquired and/or is able to demonstrate after completion of a guidance activity or through participation in the guidance process.

Comment:

The proposed definition is related specifically to a guidance context and has been adapted from the more general definition of learning outcomes.

Career guidance has been shown to lead to improved learning outcomes, such as greater access to, and participation in, learning and training, improved retention rates in education and training, greater education and training attainment and higher level skills, improved motivation and hence attainment in education and training (Careers Scotland 2007).

See separate definitions of 'Economic and social outcomes' and 'Guidance outcomes'.

Source: Based on Cedefop (2008b).

Lifelong guidance

A range of activities that enables citizens of any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which these capacities and competences are learned and/or used.

Comment:

This is an approach to guidance which does not see it as a one-off or single point in time activity. It argues for guidance to be delivered proactively and not just at transition points and refers to guidance activity undertaken throughout life (i.e. at any lifestage) and that takes a lifelong perspective (i.e. from early in school and throughout both working and non-working life).

Life-wide guidance is a dimension of lifelong guidance just as life-wide learning is a dimension of lifelong learning. Life-wide guidance can be formal, non-formal or informal and can take place across the full range of life activities (personal, social or professional), across all sectors (education, initial training, employment and continuing training) and at any stage.

Source: Council of the European Union (2008).

Lifelong learning

All learning activity undertaken throughout life, which results in improving knowledge, know-how, skills, competences and/or qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons.

Comment:

Life-wide learning has been defined as learning, either formal, non-formal or informal, that takes place across the full range of life activities (personal, social or professional) and at any stage.

Source: Based on Cedefop (2004).

Mentoring

A developmental relationship that enhances both an individual's growth and his/her career advancement.

Comment:

Mentoring involves both career and psychosocial functions. Career functions are seen to include: sponsorship, coaching, protection, exposure and challenging work. Psychosocial functions include: role modelling, counselling, acceptance and confirmation, and friendship.

Classic mentoring usually involves a relationship between an older/more experienced person and a younger/less experienced one.

Source: Kram (1985).

Outcome (quality)

Positive or negative longer-term socio-economic change or impact that occurs directly or indirectly from an intervention's input, activities and output.

Comment:

In the context of lifelong guidance, the term 'outcome' is commonly used to describe the effect that a service has had, either on the individual client, or on the wider community or economy as a whole. In this sense, 'outcome' is really what is meant by the 'impact' or 'impact measure' of a service, i.e. the learning, social and/or economic outcomes achieved by the individual.

Both 'outcome' and 'output' refer to the effects or end-results that the project or service is designed to produce.

Source: Cedefop (2011).

Output (quality)

Immediate and direct tangible result of an intervention.

Comment:

In the context of lifelong guidance, the term 'output' is commonly used to refer to a guidance provider's volumes of delivery, its 'turnover', or 'throughput': for example, the number of interventions delivered per quarter or the number of interventions per client.

Both 'outcome' and 'output' refer to the effects or end-results that the project or service is designed to produce.

Source: Cedefop (2011).

Performance measures/indicators

Data, usually quantitative, that provide a measure of an individual's, team's or organisation's level of attainment, against which the level of others can be compared.

Comment:

A performance measure/indicator is a measure that has been selected by policy-makers, funding bodies or managers, as a way of assessing and measuring the delivery and effectiveness of a project or a service. In education, performance measures often relate to the retention, achievement and progression rates of schools and colleges. In career guidance, performance measures often relate to the number of interventions, client satisfaction level and positive destinations achieved by the guidance service.

Source: Cedefop (2011).

Personal action planning

The process of mapping out the necessary steps that an individual needs to take and the services s/he might need to use in order to achieve an identified educational, vocational or personal goal. The process might be conducted by the individual on their own, in conjunction with someone else (e.g. a career counsellor) or by using a proforma/template or online tool.

Comment:

The definition has been extended to include personal goals as well as educational and vocational ones.

Source: Based on Career Guidance and Counselling Glossary.

Portfolio

A portfolio is designed to be a record of the competences (skills, knowledge and abilities) and experiences of an individual. It may list formal qualifications or include examples of work as well as recording training courses, work experience and non-work activities undertaken by the individual.

Comment:

The development of portfolios is an increasingly common career education activity in schools and universities.

Source:

Profiling

The process of collecting information about a person to form a profile that describes him/her. This may involve collecting a standard set of information, possibly to compare people, or the construction of a one-off description of a person.

A similar approach is also commonly used to profile jobs or occupations and a job or occupational profile may be included in a career information system to make it easier to make comparisons between jobs and occupations.

Comment:

Both the profiling of people and the profiling of jobs/occupations are common activities in guidance.

Source:

Quality assurance

Activities involving planning, implementation, evaluation, reporting, and quality improvement, implemented to ensure that guidance activities (content of programmes, design, assessment and validation of outcomes, etc.) meet the quality requirements expected by stakeholders.

Comment:

Quality assurance for guidance typically involves ensuring that all staff understand what is required of them, that the necessary resources (including sufficiently trained staff) for effective delivery are available, and that performance is reviewed regularly and systematically to identify areas for improvement. A number of independently accredited quality standards (i.e. necessary training of staff) exist that have been developed to support organisational quality assurance.

See also 'Quality system'.

Source: Based on Cedefop (2011).

Quality criteria

Independent standards for measuring the quality of guidance provision or services.

Comment:

Quality criteria are the indicators used to show that a guidance service or guidance activity meets quality standards.

See definitions of 'Quality assurance', 'Quality indicators', 'Quality standards' and 'Quality system'.

Source:

Quality indicators

Formally recognised figure(s) or ratio(s) used as yardsticks to judge and assess quality performance.

Comment:

Quality indicators are statistical measures that give an indication of output quality. However, some quality indicators can also give an indication of process quality.

The evidence identified to show that a guidance service meets set quality criteria.

See definitions of 'Quality assurance', 'Quality criteria', 'Quality standards' and 'Quality system'.

Source: Van den Berghe (1996).

Quality standard

Technical specifications which are measurable and have been drawn up by consensus and approved by an organisation with recognised and relevant expertise at regional, national or international levels. The purpose of quality standards is optimisation of input and/or output of guidance.

The standard(s) that an organisation sets for all of its key business operations and that help clarify what an organisation expects of its employees in delivering these operations or a client can expect when using the service.

Comment:

Quality standards are an important feature of a service's comprehensive quality-assurance system and criteria are the details identified to reach the set standard(s). This includes quality indicators on the evidence identified to show the service meets set criteria.

They refer to the systems and procedures developed by career practitioners and stakeholders in the career sector that:

- define the career sector, its membership and its services;
- recognise the diverse skills and knowledge of career practitioners;
- guide practitioner entry into the sector;
- provide a foundation for designing career practitioner training;
- provide quality assurance to the public and other stakeholders in the sector;
- create an agreed terminology for the sector

(adapted from [Canadian] National Steering Committee for Career Development Guidelines and Standards, 2004).

See definitions of 'Quality assurance', 'Quality criteria', 'Quality indicators' and 'Quality system'.

Source: Based on Cedefop (2003).

Quality system

Organisational structure, procedures, processes, and resources needed to implement quality management. The quality system provides the framework for planning, implementing, and assessing services provided and for carrying out required quality assurance and quality control.

Comment:

See definitions of 'Quality assurance', 'Quality criteria', 'Quality indicators' and 'Quality standard'.

Source: ISO (1994); MassDEP.

Quantitative and qualitative evidence

Numerical information is used to provide quantitative evidence, while qualitative evidence is based on observation and judgement and deals with meanings. Qualitative evidence is usually provided by experts or people considered by virtue of their training or work experience to be appropriately qualified to make such assessments.

Comment:

For a guidance service, numerical evidence might be, for example, the number of clients using the service, their ratings of satisfaction with the service, or the number who obtained employment; while qualitative evidence might be provided by interviews with clients about their experience of using the service carried out by an independent researcher.

Source:

School-to-work transition

The process of moving from education or training to employment, covering the period in which the change takes place.

Comment:

Many guidance activities are designed to support people making this transition.

Transition between education and employment (integration path, type of employment – with regard to level and status – and duration) is complex. Integration depends on many factors (gender, age, qualification, employment policy, guidance and counselling provision, etc.).

See also definition of 'Transition'.

Source: Based on Cedefop (2008a).

Self-help provision

An approach to the provision of guidance services that depends on the client either working on their own using resources and materials designed to be used without additional support from a career counsellor, or where responsibility for choosing an appropriate form of career support is left up to the client.

Comment:

Many guidance services offer self-help materials to their clients; such materials are also widely available in other settings, such as libraries, on the web, etc.

Many self-help materials can also be used in group settings with or without the involvement of a career counsellor.

Source:

Self-knowledge

Knowledge that an individual has about him/herself.

Comment:

Developing self-knowledge/awareness is considered an important activity in career counselling: many career interventions are designed to increase self-knowledge.

Source:

Self-management of competences

When an individual takes responsibility for the development of their own competences. Sometimes this might also include the individual taking responsibility for the recording or logging of their competences: for example, in a portfolio.

Comment:

The ability of an individual to take responsibility for self-management of their competences is often a goal in lifelong guidance.

Source:

Self-service

A mode of delivery of guidance services in which it is up to the client to select the guidance services, interventions or activities s/he will use.

Comment:

In some settings, this is done by the client providing information about him/herself and then being directed automatically to services that might be appropriate. This approach is particularly common where on-line guidance services are being offered as all or part of the guidance service.

Source:

Transition

The process of moving from one education, employment or training situation to another. This would include a move out of the labour market, for example into unemployment or to look after children, and the move back into employment, education or training after a period of not being in work, education or training.

Comment:

Many lifelong guidance activities are designed to support people making transitions of one kind or another.

See also definition of 'School-to-work transition'.

Source:

Transversal skills

The skills individuals have which are relevant to jobs and occupations other than the ones they currently have or have recently had. These skills may also have been acquired through non-work or leisure activities or through participation in education or training.

More generally, these are skills which have been learned in one context or to master a special situation/problem and can be transferred to another context.

Comment:

The term 'transversal skills' has largely replaced the term 'transferable skills'.

Source: Based on Cedefop (2008a).

Validation of non-formal and informal learning

A process of confirmation by an authorised body that an individual has acquired learning outcomes against a relevant standard. It consists of four distinct phases: (1) identification – through dialogue – of particular experiences made by an individual; (2) documentation – to make visible the individual experiences; (3) a formal assessment of these experiences; and (4) recognition leading to a certification, e.g. a partial or full qualification.

Comment:

This term has been designed to replace 'Accreditation of prior experiential learning' (APEL), 'Recognition of non-formal and informal learning' (RNFIL) and 'Validation of prior learning' (VPL).

This process is often linked to specialised guidance activities. An intention is to enhance 'the role of guidance in relation to accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) and to learning in the workplace including formal, non-formal and informal learning' (Lifelong Guidance Policy Development: a European Resource Kit 2012).

Source: EU proposed definition from DG EAC.

Vocational guidance

Help for individuals to make choices about education, training and employment.

Comment:

Sometimes used as a synonym for career guidance or guidance.

See related definitions for 'Career counselling', 'Career guidance', 'Guidance'.

Source: Hawthorn (1991).

Work experience

Knowledge, skills and competences acquired by an individual during their working life.

This term is also used to describe short periods of work-based learning (commonly carried out while the individual is participating in a related education or training programme) or working as a trainee or intern in order to gain experience of a particular occupation or type of work.

Comment:

It is important to distinguish the two common meanings of this term.

See 'Work-based learning'

Source: Based on Career Guidance and Counselling Glossary.

Work practice

The opportunity to participate in work activities in order to gain experience and develop appropriate work skills and attitudes to work.

Comment:

See 'Work experience'.

Source:

Work-based learning

Acquisition of knowledge and skills through carrying out – and reflecting on – tasks in a vocational context, usually in the workplace.

Comment:

The accreditation of work-based learning is often linked to lifelong guidance activities.

Source: Based on Cedefop (2011).

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