

Aspects on Working Life Knowledge in Nordic Adult Counselling



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Norway:
Karriereveileder, yrkes- och utdanningsveiledere, studieveileder



Finland:
Opinto-ohjaaja, studievägledare, studiehandledare, ammatinvalinnan ohjaaja, yrkesvägledare, ammatinvalintapsykologi, yrkesvalpsykolog, uraohjaaja, karriärvägledare

Iceland:
Náms- og starfsráðgjafi



Denmark:
Erhvervsvejleder, studievejleder, studievalgsvejleder



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Nordic Council of Ministers



Aspects on Working Life Competences in Nordic Counselling

This report is based on the joint knowledge, experience and reflections of NVL's Counselling and Guidance Network.

The report is aimed at elucidating and describing the counsellors' knowledge of working life in adult guidance and is put together and edited by the Counselling and Guidance Network within the Nordic Network for Adult Learning, NVL, in cooperation with the coordinator for the network.

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Summary

The Counselling and Guidance Network has, by exchanging experience, discussions, studies, and reflections, in addition to carrying out a minor study, tried to examine the need advisors have for knowledge of and views on working life. The study has among other things revealed an additional need among advisors and counsellors for knowledge about working life. Reviewing the education for advisors in the participating countries has highlighted this need because within the various areas of education the main emphasis is on student and careers guidance within the school system and education.

As a starting point the network mapped similarities and differences in Nordic education for advisors, in general as well as in particular, as to what sort of knowledge on working life is offered within the framework of education. An empirical study on the advisors' knowledge of working life and the labour market, and their need for further knowledge of this area was carried out.

The study also revealed that practising advisors are inadequately provided with up to date information on working life and a context for such updating. This is also true for all types of guidance and counselling.

Based on the above we maintain that it is urgent and desirable that educational institutions, within the framework of the education of advisors, improve this area of education, and develop working life competences for the students. The network further considers that the continuous updating of working life information should also be enhanced and strengthened for advisors in practice.

The report presents the results from our studies and it is our hope that it will contribute to the improvement of the quality of guidance and counselling from a Nordic perspective.

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Introduction

NVL's guidance and counselling network is a Nordic network for adult counselling with representatives from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The work in the network is based on the Nordic Council of Ministers' strategic plan for education and research and is across sectors within the lifelong learning perspective. NVL's vision is to show diversity, encourage cooperation and strengthen the Nordic dimension.

The network's intention is to provide a meeting place for projects and contexts, between policy and practice, in addition to stimulating dialog within the Nordic region, fostering innovation and contributing to development by encouraging cooperation and engagement in matters concerning adult learning.

The main focus of the group is to examine and reflect on guidance and counselling for the adult population in the Nordic countries. The aim of the network is to exchange experiences concerning adult guidance and to look at the systems in the different countries with regard to the organisation, theories and practices of adult guidance and counselling as well as to examine how the guidance and counselling education programmes cater to the adult population with regard to their needs for specific guidance.

Another goal of the network is to emphasise the importance of quality when providing career guidance to adults. The definition of career guidance being – the professional services and activities aimed at assisting individuals, of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers.

The source of quality in career guidance is based on the quality and design of the education offered to the guidance practitioners and enabling them to maintain their knowledge and the quality of their work through lifelong learning.

Adult guidance is an important part of lifelong learning, and is prioritised by SVL (Steering Group for the Nordic Cooperation on Adult Learning) within the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The network has mapped similarities and differences in Nordic education for advisors, in general as well as in particular, as to what sort of knowledge of working life is offered within the framework of the education. An empirical study on the advisors' knowledge of working life and the labour market, and their need for further knowledge of this area was carried out.

Because of the lack of a common Nordic definition of counselling, the NVL, in this report uses the same definition as that used by OECD and CEDEFOP in OECD's publication *Career Guidance: A Handbook for Policy Makers* (2004). „Career guidance refers to services and activities intended to assist individuals, of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers. Such services may be found in schools, universities and colleges, in training institutions, in public employment services, in the workplace, in the voluntary or community sector and in the private sector. The activities may take place on an individual or group basis, and may be face-to-face or at a distance (including help lines and web-based services). They include career information provision (in print, ICT-based and other forms), assessment and self-assessment tools, counselling interviews, career education programmes (to help individuals develop their self awareness, opportunity awareness, and career management skills), taster programmes (to sample options before choosing them), work search programmes and transitions services“. (p.11)

Lifelong learning, lifelong counselling and future competences

An aid in developing competences for the future

In January 2006 the Nordic Network for Adult Learning established a think tank to draw the outlines for discussions organised by the Nordic Council of Ministers on future competences from the perspective of continuing education.

A work group of Nordic specialists was formed to perform the task of identifying future key competences. The work focused on a number of critical questions: What will Nordic working life and society look like in the future? What competences will adult individuals need to develop in order to function? Through what systems and organisations can this competence be developed?

Based on the trends and developments that may influence our societies during the next five to ten years, a series of images of the future were sketched. The work group concluded that competences should be categorized into three main groups: Professional competence, social competence, and personal competence. The work group produced 19 messages. Two of them are closely linked to the provision of lifelong guidance:

Message number 6: Adult education must systematically create constructive conditions for people to deepen their self-awareness and reinforce their self-image as this provides the foundation for effective competence development in other fields.

Message number 14: Diverse forms of counselling and career coaching will play a central role in enabling individuals to take personal responsibility for planning and continuing their competence development.

The report supports, as do many other documents based on the experience of various European countries, the importance of lifelong guidance in promoting lifelong learning through activating citizens in developing their skills and in being active in their own competence development.

The European Union has further reinforced the function of counselling with a resolution. The resolution "Council Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies" contains four points that the member states are requested to follow:

1. Encourage the lifelong acquisition of career management skills
2. Facilitate access by all citizens to guidance services
3. Develop the quality assurance of guidance provision
4. Encourage coordination and cooperation among the various national, regional and local stakeholders

For further information: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/104236.pdf

Background

Adult Counsellor's need for a knowledge of working life

In the report we use the *“arbetslivskunskap”* working life knowledge in the sense of understanding and knowing working life in a broad sense, being familiar with the supply of and demand for labour, understanding the relationship between education, work, recruitment and career change, understanding adults under changing circumstances, laws and regulations and knowing how to seek information.

During the last decade a series of changes have influenced the role of the counsellor, both in general and in more specific terms. The changes in the labour market are an ongoing process following changes in society on a local, regional or global level.

The structural transformation of working life has influenced the mobility and exploitation of labour. New markets are established and old ones closed down. Technical development has added new substance to old routines and new assignments emerge as a result of the changes.

A great number of assignments performed nowadays are hard to define, because, among other factors, the application of computers is a necessary part of almost all types of assignments. The application of computers is obligatory for many people in order for them to be able to perform their job and this makes it more difficult for someone who is not involved in the work to describe the job.

With the growing number of choices, combined with the escalating number of providers in the field of education and players in the labour market, every individual is exposed to a complicated picture of what jobs can be performed after a completed education and what qualifications have to be acquired in order to be able to perform particular tasks. Different educational backgrounds may lead to similar work at the same time as education becomes more and more specialised.

Qualifications tend to be less transparent. Many employers put emphasis on more abstract competences such as social competences, independence and flexibility for the sake of more specialised competences. Specialised competences are developed within the companies, in their own educational departments and thereby become less “visible” for the ambient society.

Rapid changes in working life and in the labour market, and cultural diversity, in addition to the extensive flow of information, make it necessary for counsellors to continuously update their knowledge of areas involving the labour market and qualifications and, based on that knowledge, create systems which benefit the individuals seeking counselling. The counsellor should be familiar with functions of the labour market and how education and working life interact. Furthermore, extensive knowledge of the rights and obligations of the labour market are absolutely necessary to be able to work as a good counsellor. In addition, the counsellor has to be familiar with, and be able to explain the differences between a trend, a prognosis and a whim in the labour market and in a simple way apply the concepts from a local, regional and national perspective.

A necessary starting point for a practising professional is to be aware of his own learning and his own view of how learning takes place. Thorough knowledge of labour markets, working life and education are prerequisites for quality counselling which the seeker has a right to demand. The present problem is not lack of information but whether one has the knowledge to find relevant information and is able to interpret it in the right way.

With respect to the validation of knowledge and real competences becoming a part of adult education and lifelong learning, counselling and guidance face different conditions that make it necessary for the counsellor to continuously update his or her knowledge of changes in the labour market. The validation of knowledge and real competences is a form of identification and verification of an individual's competences and qualifications that requires that

the counsellors have extensive knowledge of working life, the content of the work and the working environment.

During recent years, the educational institutions' courses on working life and the labour market have deteriorated. As syllabuses for the various counsellor and guidance courses in the Nordic countries reveal, this competence has been surpassed by more theoretical areas of education. The loss of working life competence does not occur without consequences to the actual practice of guidance.

The counsellor has a great need and continuous demand for further education and updating about working life and its mechanisms. The need for adult counselling and guidance is currently growing rapidly due to ongoing redundancies and lay-offs that demand individual solutions for adjusting to the ever-changing labour market.

Career counsellor competences

In view of the aim of the report as well as what has previously been explained here, there is a strong focus on explaining what knowledge and competences are needed for counsellors.

These competences, which preferably can be expressed in terms of quality measurement, have as one of their main objectives the clarification of what knowledge the counsellor needs in order to provide practical advice to a the client who is seeking qualitative and general guidance within the framework of lifelong learning. The objective is to secure, from a societal as well as individual perspective, legitimacy, quality and equality.

Counselling is an educational process to the extent that it provides the individual with tools so that he/she can make decisions that enable him/her to live a more "effective life" as well as to progress in life. The methods applied are salutogenic. This implies that the positive aspects of the individual are highlighted and the counsellor is focused on what aspects of the individual can be further developed. The method increases understanding, awareness and practical skills.

A grown up individual is a result of what he/she has experienced and through the counselling process his/her own potential, hidden resources and unexploited capacity are revealed. In the counselling process the counsellor links the experiences and the competence of the individual to their working life and vocational education, both short and long term. This relationship between the counsellor and the learner implies that the counsellor needs to have an in-depth understanding of working life. Knowledge about working life is an imperative skill for the counsellor in his/her effort to make the learner aware of what factors will make him successful when he enters the labour market.

Through the understanding of the counsellor about society and the labour market, the learner can from an individual perspective establish a basis on which he/she can construct a vision for the future. The counselling can in a qualitative way be adjusted to the situation of each individual.

These requirements for quality and competence in working life and in the labour market have as their main objective to clarify what competence as well as what attitude the counsellor needs to command in order to be able to provide the learner with counselling which is as broad-based as possible.

As a point of departure for describing the required competence in practical terms, we can divide competence in to two main areas.

Key competences, which all counsellors need to be in command of.

Specialised competence that is related to working life and the labour market.

Key competence is a competence embodying the know how and skills as well as the attitude towards counselling that is fundamental for all work with career development, irrespective of profession.

Counselling requires many different, specialised competences, but here we refer to requirements that need to be fulfilled in order to be able to provide counselling concerning working life and the labour market.

This includes competence concerning:

- Supply and demand for labour
- Different professions and tasks, how they develop, arise or disappear
- The situation at work-places with respect to salaries and required skills
- Legal framework
- How to seek information
- Competence development, at home and abroad
- The link between competence development and work
- CV's and application for employment
- Recruitment
- Demographic development
- The organisation of the labour market
- Dynamics of change

The above-mentioned elements are competence requirements for those who intend to deliver service to persons who seek assistance and support from a professional counsellor.

Systems for adult counselling in the Nordic countries

An overview

Denmark

In connection with a comprehensive structural reform, which came into effect on 1st. January 2007, the public employment services and the municipalities' employment offices were merged, and 91 Job Centres, which cover all 98 municipalities, now provide vocational/career guidance for adults. One of the main reasons for creating the new structure has been the wish to establish a one-stop access system, making it easier for citizens to get the employment and guidance services which they need and are entitled to.

The job centres are entitled to provide information, counselling and guidance about work openings and education to all citizens, and to the employed. In Denmark it is called "open guidance". The problem is that the services are limited and differ from one job centre to another in how many resources they allocate in open guidance. In some job centres open guidance is offered every day - in others only once a week.

Under the Ministry of Education, 7 regional guidance centres have been established and their main function is to guide in relation to higher education. Though their main function is to guide young people in the transition from youth education into higher education, they also provide guidance and counselling for adults outside the education system wishing to enter a higher education programme.

An on-going experiment in order to support the guidance system for adults is carried out by establishing activities and networks between existing institutions, but without creating new guidance institutions as in the guidance reform on the youth level in 2004. At the end of 2007, 22 adult guidance networks, which cover the whole country, were established. The main tasks of these networks are 1) to provide outreach services especially to low-skilled workers at their workplace; 2) to train so-called "training ambassadors" among staff at the workplaces; 3) to establish networks among enterprises; and 4) to give advice to employers.

Finland

There are two established systems of guidance and counselling that complement each other in their operation and goals: student counselling provided by the school system, and the vocational guidance and career planning, together with the educational and vocational information services run by the labour administration.

The division of tasks between these two systems is clear. Educational institutions have the main responsibility for counselling of pupils and students. Universities and high schools, and some special schools are exceptions to this rule. The guidance and counselling services for adults are still in the development phase compared to the established system of services for students in primary schools, secondary and vocational schools. Some adult educational centres have recently started specialised guidance services, while in most adult educational institutions the only counselling services offered are by the teachers responsible for guidance as a secondary task to their teaching. According to the current regulations on adult counselling and guidance within the educational system these are basically set by the syllabus. According to the law on vocational adult education (21.8.1998/631) it is stated that the educational provider is entitled to provide education meeting the needs of individual students that often includes guidance and supervising. Within liberal adult education and the open universities there are no current regulations set for the provision of adult counselling. The advisors in the school system usually have pedagogic education including specialisation in guidance.

The psychological career guidance services of employment offices are mainly intended for those outside the education and training system. There are, anyhow, also other professional groups at the employment offices than the psychologists who are working with guidance: educational advisors, rehabilitation advisors and career counsellors. However, all guidance and counselling services provided by employment offices are available for students too, when needed, and some of the employment offices work in close cooperation with local educational institutions. The goal of the guidance and counselling services is to help individuals make choices concerning their education, training and career planning at different stages of their lives. In Finland all citizens have a chance to receive guidance and counselling whether they are students, at work, unemployed or outside the labour market. The counselling and guidance praxis is described in the laws of public employment services (30.12.2002/1295). The requirement for vocational psychologists working at employment offices is a MSc. in psychology.

The development in Finland during the past years has been towards a holistic system of counselling and guidance aiming at providing all citizens with support during periods of transition, regardless of age or position in the labour market. The ministry for labour and the ministry of education formed a joint workgroup that has set forth a strategic plan for adult counselling, (Työhallinnon julkaisu 365/2006). This cooperation resulted in an extensive development programme financed by the European Social Fund during the years 2007-2013. The aim of the programme is to develop new web and telephone-based forms of personal service, and to educate teachers and other groups of professionals working with guidance and counselling across sectors. During the last ESF-period a special web-based service with working life information was created; ammattinetti.fi.

Iceland

The majority of guidance and career counsellors in Iceland work within the formal school system at all levels (primary, secondary, tertiary). The ministry of education is responsible for the formal school system and guidance provided there. Career counsellors also provide guidance and counselling within employment offices (Ministry of social affairs and social security), lifelong learning centres (Ministry of education, Icelandic Confederation of Labour and the Confederation of Icelandic Employers), at community level (local communities), and in private practice.

Adult guidance is a relatively new concept within the Icelandic community. Career counselling for adults on the labour market has received special attention lately concentrating on the needs of different groups with a focus on those who have not completed upper secondary education. The Education and Training Service Centre (ETSC) co-operates with 12 lifelong learning centres around the country towards reaching out to adults with little formal education, working on motivating them in their competence development and linking them with suitable educational offers. The ETSC develops educational offers, based on needs assessments, in cooperation with the lifelong learning centres and relevant stakeholders, which can be validated into the formal school system, aiming at building a bridge between the non-formal and formal school systems. The Icelandic educational system is open to all ages, including adults who want to continue their education or re-enter. Institutions that provide guidance and counselling specifically for adults are the following:

- Employment offices. Guidance and career counsellors are based in public employment offices around the country, eight in total.
- Lifelong learning centres are located at ten different places around the country and offer guidance and counselling, as well as two educational centres within the industries. These services focus on guidance for employees on the labour market with little formal education, including guidance related to lifelong learning and validation of competences. Trade unions have been active in the development of guidance and counselling for their members.
- Municipality level: In Reykjavík, the Adult Education centre is open to all community members and professional counsellors offer guidance and counselling.
- The guidance and career counsellors are located at community centres in Reykjavík and work in close cooperation with professionals such as social workers, psychologists etc.
- In private organisations. Career counselling by private practitioners has been quite limited.

Norway

In Norway there is a tradition of providing guidance and counselling within the formal educational system (compulsory, secondary and tertiary), and post tertiary level (i.e. college and university). This type of guidance primarily focuses on various educational possibilities and to a lesser degree on possibilities in the labour market and questions concerning the labour market.

NAV (Arbeids- og velferdsforvaltningen) is the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Organisation, the sister organisation to the Swedish Public Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen) / The Swedish Social Insurance Agency (Försäkringskassan). NAV was established in 2006, as a comprehensive welfare reform, planned to finish in 2009. By then there will be a NAV office in every municipality in Norway where services are offered and self-service where possible. Self-service on the Internet and by telephone makes the services more accessible to users and gives more time for closer follow-up for users with extensive or complex issues. According to earlier employment law NAV were assigned the responsibility for adult guidance and counselling. This was removed from the legislation a couple of years ago and this type of guidance and counselling is not prioritised within the NAV anymore.

There is an existing agreement that career counselling in Norway shall be strengthened and there are ongoing research projects aimed at finding the most suitable system for adult counselling and guidance in Norway. During the period 2005 -2007 a pilot project was carried out in three municipalities under the commission of the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. Three municipalities (Nordland, Telemark and Akershus) received a grant to try out different models for career counselling. The project has been assessed both in an interim report and a final report. The project resulted in national recommendations on how municipalities should organise their career counselling services, and in the national budget for 2008 the government granted funds to all municipalities to strength-

en the area of counselling and guidance. There are plans to increase the amount granted for 2009. A number of municipalities have commenced the establishment of career counselling services, but since there are no national recommendations, the supply varies with regard to extent and organisation from one municipality to another.

In several reports and assessments recommendations on the establishment of a national centre for career counselling have been proposed. This measure has not been taken, but in a Proposition, (St.prp. nr.1) for 2008-2009 the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research consider it necessary to establish a national centre for career counselling, in order to ensure that the needs of citizens, working life and society are met.¹ In 2009 the Ministry to call upon VOX, The Norwegian Institute for Adult Learning, to propose a mandate for such a national coordinating organisation and assess the need for resources, organisation and leadership.

There are a few private practitioners offering their services in Norway. Adult guidance and counselling at community level is provided by some municipalities in resource centres and in some of them the emphasis is on cooperation between different bodies like the educational system, the labour market and NAV. There is a great demand for guidance within the adult population and services are limited. All adults (over 25 years) in Norway have a right to a secondary education and to have their real competence validated. Career centres have been established in a few communities.

Sweden

In Sweden there is a long tradition of independence amongst the different social service departments, including schools and education. The different departments develop their own goals and are unique in the sense that the government has no legislative power over these activities.

However, the departments are restricted to certain guidelines from their superior ministries. The National Agency of Education (Skolverket) and Swedish National Labour Market Administration (AMV- Arbetsmarknadsverket) are responsible for guidance and counselling and give guidelines to the local authorities. The local authorities decide their own course of action based on guidelines to achieve educational guidance and job orientation for students as well as for adult education and for adults in general.

This service is provided in National Schools for Adults (Vuxenutbildningen) or Schools for Adults run by communities or in special career guidance centres often combined with lifelong learning centres and to a certain degree the Swedish Public Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen). The number of counsellors with adequate education for adult counselling has grown during the past years in connection with commitment from local education centres and the validation of adults' real competences at the same time as the personal guidance efforts of the Swedish Public Employment Service have declined. Recently the services have invested in technical support that enables customer self-service, with computers from which they can get information via different sources on the Internet.

Traditionally, counselling has been viewed as an individual right, but for some years, people outside the educational system or not registered at a labour market office have had difficulty finding information on counselling. The situation has improved since many municipalities have established career guidance centres. An unemployed person can seek counselling services at employment offices, but this type of service requires that the individual is seeking employment or is in some kind of a "transition period".

Recently the possibilities of finding qualified counselling have improved.

1 Chapter. 258, Aim for 2009, 3rd. part.

Summary

The overview shows that guidance and counselling for adults is provided within all of the participating Nordic countries. The service is primarily provided within the school system and in employment offices. Private guidance, counselling agencies, web-based counselling and information are, to some extent, available in all of the countries.

This overview implies that all the Nordic countries are working towards increasing access to counselling services for the adult population. This is probably a result of the societal changes, the opening of educational possibilities and diversity of professions that in turn are caused by globalisation and increased mobility of the workforce. This calls for the guidance and counselling profession to look closely at their own education so that the best service is available to the adult population. A strategically organized leadership at government level is needed in order for the adult population in the Nordic countries to have complete and open access to guidance and counselling in the Nordic region. The cooperation of relevant social partners and between service units is of utmost importance.

Counsellors' education in the Nordic countries

The content of counsellor education as well as qualification requirements varies to a great extent in the Nordic countries. This even applies to the professional titles for counsellors:

Denmark: Careers advisor, student advisor, study counsellor (at seven centres in the country, advising on higher education).

Finland: Student advisor, study supervisor, vocational counsellor, vocational psychologist, careers advisor

Iceland: Study and careers counsellor

Norway: Careers advisor, occupational and study advisor, student counsellor

Sweden: Student and careers counsellor, student counsellor (in colleges), occupational counsellor (at employment offices), career counsellor (working mainly at career centres)

Below is a brief summary that describes how counsellors' education is organised in the Nordic countries. The overview demonstrates significant differences in the ways in which the education is conducted. As of 2008, Sweden is offering master's programmes for counsellors, which implies that all the Nordic countries could offer master's programmes. In Denmark, the master's programme is a one-year programme within the ordinary system for adult education. Consequently, the Danish master's programme is not comparable to the other countries' master's programmes.

| Country | Sweden | Sweden | Norway |
|--|---|--|---|
| Title and duration of education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's programme in career development and counselling, 120 ECTS, full time study. • Cooperative programme provided by the Malmoe College, Stockholm University, University of Umea, with Stockholm's University as the leader (starting in the autumn of 2009). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study- and career counsellor examination, 3 years, 180 ECTS. • Full time study, at campus or as distance learning. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's degree in career counselling. Full time over 2 years or part time over 4 years. • Master in career/vocational-pedagogy, emphasising guidance. Full time over 2 years or part time over 4 years at university. • A variety of courses at university level, equal to 10-60 ECTS. Part time and individual courses. |
| Admission requirement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A degree from a study counsellor programme or corresponding education. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic requirements for university admission. Social studies "A" as well as one year working experience (will be changed in 2010). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor-level in pedagogy or corresponding education • Bachelor level • Relevant employment experience (real competence) • Study competence. Variety of pedagogical education. Real competence through employment experiences. |
| The main content of the education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classical and modern perspectives with respect to individuals and society. • Career development and counselling. • Scientific theory and methods. • Counselling dialog in transition • Practical training • Independent assignment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counsellor theory • Counsellor methods • Counselling of individuals • Counselling of groups • Research in counselling • Examination • Practical training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling theory • Counselling methods • Educational systems • Practical training in counselling • Paper • Master's thesis |
| Towards what form of counselling is the education aiming? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary school • High school • Adult education • College/University • Högskola | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary schools • High schools • Adult education • University | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocational and educational counselling as well as career guidance at all levels in the educational system. • Private counsellor • Counsellor at NAV • Persons who work with HR in both the private and government sector. |

| Country | Finland | Finland | Finland |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p>Title and duration of education</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional study programme provided by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. Duration is approximately two years and the programme can be conducted together with employment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialising in study- and career-guidance; a study equal to 60 ECTS • A number of courses during 1.5 years, usually as a part time study. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor degree in pedagogy; 180 ECTS. • Masters degree in pedagogy 120 ECTS. Both are full time university programmes. |
| <p>Admission requirement</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's in psychology while employed as vocational psychologist at an employment office. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher university degree, teaching certificate and vocational teacher certificate. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High school degree or a comparable vocational education. |
| <p>The main content of the education</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theory of career selection and career development • Counselling methods • Personality- and suitability testing and evaluation • Industrial and labour market policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifelong learning and counselling, theories and methods in counselling, education and employment, research methods, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is possible to specialise in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A) Guidance oriented pedagogy B) Guidance oriented educational sociology C) Guidance oriented adult education |
| <p>Towards what form of counselling is the education aiming?</p> | <p>Mainly adults, both employed and unemployed, but also other groups, for instance youth.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary school, high school, vocational education, college, and adult education. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary school, high school, vocational education, colleges and adult education. |

| Country | Denmark | Denmark | Iceland/University of Iceland |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>Title and duration of education</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's degree in counselling. Part time study of 60 ECTS that normally takes 2 years to complete as part time study. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma in study- and career-advising Part time education equal to 60 ECTS, that normally takes 2 years to complete | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master's in study- and career-advising Full time study of 120 ECTS that normally takes over 2 years to complete. The study includes 30 ECTS master theses (research). • Diploma in study- and career advising (for completing one year of the master programme). Full time study of 60 ECTS, that normally takes one year to complete. It can be completed over 2 years as a part time study. |
| <p>Admission requirement</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a minimum requirement a relevant medium long higher education as well as 2 years of relevant working experience. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As minimum, a lower degree from higher education and at least 2 years of relevant professional experience. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B.A. degree: pedagogy, psychology and sociology • B.Ed. degree (teachers in primary schools) • B.A. degree in particular field as well an additional year in pedagogy • B.A. degree in theology • B.S. degree in ergo therapy |
| <p>The main content of the education</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research based higher education, counselling theory. <p>Further information: http://www.dpu.dk/site.aspx?p=5028</p> | <p>All students are required to complete a basic education in study- and career-advising consisting of 3 obligatory courses;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling and counsellor • Counselling and individuals • Counselling and society. <p>In addition students must complete 2 selective courses and one project.</p> <p>Further information: http://www.vidar.dk/</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling theory • Counselling methods • Educational and professional guidance • Individual guidance • Research guidance • Practical training of 225 hours • Thesis <p>Further information: www.his.is</p> |
| <p>Towards what form of counselling is the education aiming?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research, leadership, development, evaluation and teaching counselling. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational- and career- counsellors in all sectors. | <p>Educational and professional guidance in all sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary school • High school • Vocational school • University • Adult education/counselling • Employment service |

Knowledge concerning working life in the Nordic counselling education

In connection with a more precise mapping of education the network focused on the content of working life knowledge. This reveals that there is great deal of variation among the components in different countries, both with regard to quantity and quality and the lack of common definition and systemization.

In some of the educational programmes, students can choose to take modules on the subject, but the problem is that it is not an obligatory part of the education. In the obligatory education the subject is often covered as a part of a number of modules covering an overview of social sciences rather than as a separate subject in itself. Another example of how it is an implicit element is where it is a part of career guidance as an academic discipline, rather than concrete knowledge relating to the labour market and working life.

Mapping counselling and guidance education in the Nordic countries reveals that the part of the education dealing with working life and the labour market in most of the countries is far from sufficient if the aim is to provide adequate insight and the knowledge needed to provide counselling and guidance for adults in transition while taking the rapid changes of the labour market into account. The network believes there is an apparent need to further systemize and define the requirements for working life knowledge as an obligatory part of the education for professional career counselling in the Nordic countries.

Denmark

In the fundamental education for counsellors the obligatory part only includes a partial section on working life and labour market knowledge. An optional course (module) named Adult Guidance contains further education on the subject but the course is a part of a study direction in adult counselling which has to be selected at the start of the education.

On the master's level in guidance and counselling the content of the subject is also limited. There are however other types of education, not directly related to guidance and counselling, that offer education on working life and the labour market.

To sum up it can be stated that in education for counsellors in Denmark, education on working life and the labour market is inadequate.

Finland

Regarding Finland, in the university educations offered for guidance and counselling the content devoted to working life and the labour market varies a great deal. At Jyväskylä University, the 60 credit education is divided into five different elements and one of the elements - Societal Awareness (Samhällelig medvetenhet) counting 10 credits - is almost entirely concentrated on working life and labour market knowledge. In the education for counselling at Joensuu University the schooling on working life and the labour market is inherent in other elements of the education, as in didactics and discussions on specialised teaching methods it is required that the students gather that type of information. Pro-graduation thesis and other papers may certainly include much knowledge relating to working life and the labour market depending on the theme. The subject may also be chosen as a part of optional studies. The main focus of the educational programmes for guidance and counselling offered by the polytechnics is also on counselling methods and communication skills, but usually there is at least one course on changes in the working and educational market and trades. Labour market policy plays a central role in the education offered by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, but the development of trades and branches is not nearly as well represented. An obligatory one or two week period of practical training at the students own choice, is usually spent with a company, and this has proven to be very useful.

Iceland

The education of guidance practitioners has been quite focused on educational guidance within the formal school system. Through the development of a master's programme the possibility of choosing to focus more on guidance outside the formal school system is evident. Within the education a specific course that aims at increasing knowledge about the labour market or workforce development and changes within the local and global community is available, although it is to some extent included in several courses. Currently the education is being re-evaluated, taking into account the increasing demand for labour market knowledge.

Norway

Among practising counsellors the need for knowledge concerning working life and the labour market is perceived to be greater than what is provided in the course of the education. How great the emphasis is on the subject varies greatly between colleges and the teaching is in most cases a single guest lecture by a representative from the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Organisation (NAV). In general it may be stated that education on the basic principles of working life and the functions of the labour market is much too limited and should be strengthened by all providers of education for guidance and counselling. A part of the education should also contain an element on how information can be updated. Practitioners consider that this plays a very important role in achieving success as a career counsellor.

Sweden

All education for study-advisors and career guidance at the three areas in Malmö, Stockholm and Umeå include to a greater or lesser degree courses on working life knowledge and principles of the labour market.

The study

The representatives in the network carried out a study on the need for and opinion on working life knowledge in their respective countries based on their circumstances and conditions in these countries. The study consisted of three parts. The first part was a mapping of existing educations for counsellors in general. The second part aimed at establishing to what degree working life knowledge is represented within the various educational programmes. The third part contained a survey from all the countries on the need for and perception of working life knowledge already practising counsellors have in order to succeed in counselling and guidance.

This part also examines how the counsellors maintain and update their knowledge and whether anyone is responsible for ensuring the competence of adult counsellors in guiding adults on a rapidly changing labour market.

Every single guidance and counselling network representative has conducted interviews with a selection of adult counsellors, representing various parts of the career guidance systems in every country. The interviewed counsellors represent diverse segments of the educational system and the employment services. Diverse methods have been applied. In some instances, groups of counsellors have been interviewed. Elsewhere other individual interviews have been employed as well as telephone interviews and questionnaires via e-mail.

However, the content of the questions has always been the same: What situations in your work as a counsellor require knowledge of working life and the labour market? What type of knowledge do you need? How should knowledge on working life be incorporated into counselling? How do you acquire information about the subject today? Who enables you to acquire the knowledge you need? Are you a part of a network with other counsellors or persons knowledgeable on the subject? How would you prefer to obtain this type of knowledge in the future?

The aim of the study has been to shed some light on the counsellor's need for and application of knowledge about the labour market and working life in the act of counselling. The interviews were based on a questionnaire, including questions like: In what situation in your counselling does a need for knowledge about the labour market and working life arise? What type of knowledge do you need? How should knowledge on working life be incorporated into counselling? How do you acquire information about the subject today? Who enables you to acquire the knowledge you need? Are you a part of a network with other counsellors or persons knowledgeable on the subject? How would you prefer to obtain this type of knowledge in the future?

Implementation

Denmark

The first part of the study contained a review of the diploma education in study and career counselling focusing especially on how working life is incorporated into the education. The master's programme in counselling was also included in this part of the study.

The second part of the study was carried out through individual interviews and dialogue with counsellors from four different counselling institutions. A counsellor from a vocational school, an adult study centre (VUC), from a guidance centre and from a job centre (employment service) participated in the interviews. In the interviews the participating counsellors to some extent described the background and experiences of their colleagues.

The interviews were carried out according to the common framework described above.

Finland

The first part of the study contained a review of the educational programmes for counselling at the University of Jyväskylä and the University Joensuu, HAMK – University of Applied Sciences and Jyväskylä Polytechnic as well as the education provided by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, the Labour Institute in Jyväskylä.

The second part included two occasions for discussion. The first discussion was organised in Helsinki where counsellors from different organisations discussed questions they had received in advance. Among the participants there were counsellors from the employment services and the university and adult education centres, in addition to individuals developing counselling services.

The second discussion was in connection with a national personnel education for study advisors and career counsellors working at employment offices. Questions on working life knowledge were presented to 25 counsellors from the whole of Finland. The participants on both occasions were also able to add to their contribution in writing afterwards.

Iceland

In Iceland the questionnaire was sent by e-mail to all career counsellors in Iceland, a total of ca. 200 individuals. Those working with adults were asked to respond and many of them replied. Those who replied could also write personal comments.

Norway

The study was carried out by e-mail and telephone interviews. Questionnaires about the emphasis on working life/ labour market knowledge in the education of counsellors were sent to all colleges and universities in Trondheim by e-mail. A follow up to those who did not respond was done with telephone interviews. In addition career counsellors in four counties: Telemark, Hordaland, Buskerud and Troms were interviewed by phone.

Sweden

The study was carried out in two parts in Sweden. In the first part ten career counsellors working with adults were informed about the purpose of the study and invited to take part in a seminar on the problem related to the counsellors' need for working life knowledge and understanding of the labour market in his/her counselling practice. The counsellors in question received a basis for discussion, a questionnaire and an article on guidance, counselling and working life knowledge in order to prepare for the seminar. This material was then followed up with a one day seminar where the issue, the experiences and knowledge of the counsellors were discussed resulting in material being provided for this report.

Result

Some recurrent groups of adults seeking counselling and guidance

The study confirmed that there exist a number of “typical” groups of adults seeking counselling and guidance and their need for counselling and guidance contributes to the definition of the knowledge that the counsellors must have.

First and foremost is the group of adults changing jobs, which are either forced to change profession or do so voluntarily. Around 30% of the workforce changes jobs yearly. Many are forced to change professions, either because of their health, i.e. they have acquired some illness, or have “burned-out”, causing them to leave their profession. Others wishing to change profession have been enticed by the economic boom but in many instances have an unrealistic view of their own potential.

Another group consists of those adults who are employed but in need of study guidance and career counselling for their career development because they lack qualified education and have a limited perception of the possibilities offered by society to strengthen their position on the labour market. This group usually needs information about study guidance and career counselling and how and what the services can contribute to their development. This group requires outreach work.

In addition there are the unemployed seeking guidance on their possibilities on the labour market. An extra challenging group are academic individuals with a narrow area of expertise, together with immigrants who experience difficulties in finding their place on the labour market. The needs of immigrants vary, based on their educational background and working experience in addition to their cultural background.

The integration of immigrants is often a long and demanding process, involving many different authorities, educational instances and other professionals. To develop a coordinated service process where the individual is in focus is a challenge facing the whole system. In order to do this, cultural competences, language skills and expert knowledge on counselling methods are required. In addition there is the group of individuals working with temporary assignments, such as project recruitment.

Individuals seeking counselling and guidance aimed at validation of real competences also make up a large group. The concept of validation of real competences, the new learning term and lifelong guidance require extraordinary knowledge about the labour market and contributes to the exposure of the counsellors’ knowledge about the labour market. There is also an emerging need for guidance of older individuals about to exit the labour market on how to decrease time spent working for the sake of their leisure activities and counselling for pensioners.

The need for knowledge on working life and the labour market

In all the Nordic countries the dilemma was pointed out, as was the issue of the balance between the interests of society against those of the individual with regard to including the labour market. Some counsellors even doubted whether it should be a compulsory element of all counselling instances. Some raised ethical questions and discussions about how, for example, information about shortages on the labour market should be a part of guidance and to what extent counsellors could be expected to relocate people to where labour is wanted. As one of the interviewees said: You should inform and guide in an objective manner, but make certain that the client makes the choice.

But it was also made clear that information about the labour market in counselling is not all about orientation on where labour is needed.

Another thing revealed in the interviews was that it can be difficult to update knowledge about the labour market if one does not already possess basic knowledge about the labour market attained for example through counselling education. As an interviewee put it, he had received a key to understanding the labour market through his education, and he regarded this as essential part of being able to follow, understand changes and put them into the right context etc.

The study actually revealed that there is an enormous amount of information about the labour market in the Nordic countries, but for counselling a particular type of information is needed, and that particular type is neither easily available nor easily comprehensible. There are a lot of numbers and statistics on hand but not in context and these may therefore be difficult to use. The information is for professionals and not for counsellors needing to apply the information in a different context. To be able to familiarize oneself with all that information and to distinguish what is important is an important competence for a counsellor. It was also revealed that in some countries there is a need for organised Web-based information to be available for counsellors to use with their clients.

The counsellors that participated in the study want both more basic and updated knowledge on working life and the labour market. Whether the subject is represented in counselling and guidance education is one issue but another is how to ensure that the knowledge is updated.

The study reflects that there is a growing need for this type of knowledge among counsellors. The clients expect answers to a number of questions on how they should act on a labour market undergoing rapid and never-ending changes. The political systems also put an increased emphasis on information about the labour market in counselling and guidance. Therefore it may seem strange that there is less concentration on supporting counsellors with this knowledge now than during the past. One example of this is that the systems of guidance and counselling within the educational system and employment services are further apart now than in the past and that cross-sectoral networks in counselling are non-existent. Therefore the counsellors experience isolation working in one counselling system without being connected to other counselling systems. This contributes to decreased knowledge about each other's systems and areas of knowledge - the labour market among other things.

Examples of the need for knowledge:

The study reveals that counsellors lack concrete knowledge and competences in the following areas:

- The general development of the economy and the development within different branches from a local, national and global perspective, future need for competences, democracy, etcetera.
- The employment process, the whole process with applications, CV's and interviews including trends in the area under discussion.
- Career building, the relationship between education and work and the reverse (real competence) understanding at which profession / vocation the education is aimed, even particular niches, career change, how to move from one job to another, where further education is necessary and when one possesses the competences needed.
- Validation and qualification, real competences, formal and informal competences.
- Business administration: recruitment and HR – what is important for companies when recruiting, internal competence development.
- Starting a business.
- Rights and obligations in relation to the labour market, wages, working environment and so on.

Summary and final discussion

Being knowledgeable about the economy and labour market means that you have to be familiar with various subjects. It does not only require an overview of the development of the labour market, where there is a demand for labour etc. It also means understanding competences in relation to the connection between education and profession.

How is it possible to obtain this knowledge in the different counselling and guidance systems? Is anyone responsible for providing the counsellor with this knowledge?

The study reveals that the participating counsellors do receive information concerning the labour market and related subjects from the media, vacancy advertisements, clients, Web portals, magazines, debates, conferences, meetings and information material provided by the employment offices. Many of the interviewees emphasised that they gather a relative amount of information from their clients, which is interesting because the clients have a profound expectation that the counsellor is well informed on the subject. To correct and complement ones knowledge is acceptable and reasonable but to acquire basic knowledge via that source is not, in terms of professional counselling and guidance.

It is characteristic of the manner in which the counsellors acquire knowledge on the subject that it is done at random, in a way that is neither structured nor systematized. In all but one counselling institution, the main emphasis is not on this subject and there are not enough resources to perform any systematic work with it. It is therefore coincidental information the individual counsellor has/receives and it is up to every individual to motivate themselves to acquire the knowledge believed to be necessary. It also depends on the prior knowledge and experience the counsellor has. In this context one can consider how the counsellor develops his/her own competences – how active he or she is in lifelong learning and what tools can be reliably applied while analysing ones own need for competences.

The conclusion, therefore, is that no one can be held responsible for adult counsellors having adequate and updated knowledge on the economy and the labour market, neither in the counselling or guidance institutions nor in other authorities. It may seem strange considering that there is also considerable political concentration on labour market knowledge and perspectives within the guidance and counselling services in the educational system.

How could it be possible to cover the subject in an organised manner?

The interviewed counsellors were asked how they would like to receive knowledge regarding the labour market in the future and what needed to be done to realise these ideas? The following are some of the ideas presented:

- More and better contacts with companies through longer practical periods in companies in addition to short study visits.
- Formalized cross-sectoral networks between counsellors from all parts of the system
- Improved cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry for Employment and the Economy on this dimension.
- Basic course on the labour market.
- Further education and possibly continuous or supplementary education after the counselling education.
- A yearly updating in the form of, for example, a course.
- Development of existing portals with career profiles and knowledge concerning the labour market.
- Establishing a portal site with knowledge in relation to the labour market.
- A one week course in social sciences.
- Cooperation with and introductions from labour unions and employers' associations.
- Presentations / lectures by experts both national and international.
- Establishing study circles.
- Targeted information presented in easily understandable language.

Based on the results of the study for the need of more knowledge on the economy in adult counselling and the proposals made by the counsellors the network regards it as necessary to strengthen knowledge concerning the economy at different levels. This should be done through more in depth knowledge in the basic education and through supplementary education at the same institutions that provide the basic education. At the same time it is also of great importance that practising counsellors can continuously update their information outside the formal school system. This can

be brought about by individual counselling institutions or networks of institutions developing a closer relationship with working life and becoming more outgoing towards the economy and parties on the labour market. The counselling institutions can play an important role in focusing on the economy and taking initiatives towards shared discussions and competence development on the matter. Ministries, particularly the Ministries of Education and Labour also share an important responsibility for ensuring that the subject is prioritized and that this important/vital competence of adult counsellors is strengthened.

In the end the responsibility for offering counsellors further education, ensuring their participation therein and for continuous updating lies with the heads of the organisations where counsellors work. The network also considers that in order to increase knowledge on the subject it is the task of every individual counsellor to develop cooperation with the labour market and become more outgoing towards the parties in the labour market. In addition, it is important that the counsellor is engaged in different professional networks and counsellor networks where the transference of knowledge can take place.

References:

Denmark

The Danish Ministry of Employment: www.bm.dk

Danish Ministry of Education: www.uvm.dk here under adult counselling: <http://www.uvm.dk/Uddannelse/Vejledning/Vejledningsordninger/Voksenvejledning.aspx>

Centre for Study Advising and Career Counselling www.vejledning.net

Counselling education: www.vidar.dk (under: "diploma education" and "master's education")

Finland

The Finnish Ministry of Employment and the Economy: www.mol.fi and www.ammattinetti.fi

European Counselling Research Forum: <http://www.guidance-europe.org>

Centre for International Mobility, CIMO: www.cimo.fi

The Finnish National Board of Education: www.oph.fi or www.edu.fi

Iceland

The Association for Guidance and Counselling in Iceland www.fns.is

The Education and Training Service Centre. www.frae.is

The Icelandic Ministry of Education <http://www.menntamalaraduneyti.is/>

The Icelandic Ministry of Social Affairs <http://www.felagsmalaraduneyti.is/raduneyti/almennt> Education for guidance and counselling www.hi.is

Norway

The Norwegian Institute for Adult Learning www.vox.no

The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Organisation www.nav.no

Upper secondary education and training www.vobli.no

Sweden

The Swedish National Agency for Education www.skolverket.se

The Swedish Employment Services www.arbetsformedlingen.se

The Swedish National Network for Guidance and Counselling in Adult Education www.syvnet.rvux.se

EU:

OECD (2004). Revised November 20th 2007 at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/53/53/34060761.pdf>

Managing change: lifelong guidance in Europe: http://www.eu2008.fr/PFUE/cache/offonce/lang/en/accueil/PFUE-09_2008/PFUE-17.09.2008/realiser_un_espace_europeen_de_l'orientation_tout_au_long_de_la_vie;jsessionid=EA601E8D1245711BA5875DAAD90CF45A

Key competences for lifelong learning: <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c11090.htm>

NVL:

Framtidskompetenser - och hur vi utvecklar dem <http://www.nordvux.net/page/457/nordisktanketank.htm>

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|  Nordiskt Nätverk för Vuxnas Lärande |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| NVL | Tema | Projekt | Vuxnas lärande | Kalender | DialogWeb | |
| Vägledning | | | | | | |