

# Recommendations for Policy Makers

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The following recommendations for policy makers represent the Intellectual Output (IO) 4 of the Erasmus+ project LeadCareer. They are based on three previous outputs: Comparative Study (IO 1), Curriculum (IO 2) and Educational Material and Sample Activities (IO 3). More than a decade ago, the EU as well as other organisations came to acknowledge the importance of career guidance. Various programmes fostering this idea were established at different levels, including at the European Council and Parliament. In 2007, the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) was incorporated into this effort. It aimed to assist member countries and the European Commission in the development of a Europe-wide cooperation in lifelong guidance within the education and employment sector. Career guidance is an important issue in various areas and for different professions at all career stages. It is a way of dealing with newly arising challenges in a changing world. Pressing issues, like unemployed youth, employees who want to change their profession or find new or different ways of handling different challenges in life, are being addressed. The recommendations herein address the abovementioned key issues and encourage the implementation of the *I Am a Teacher – I Create My Career* curriculum at the supranational

as well as national, the organisational as well as individual levels. These recommendations are intended to convince policy makers on these different levels to advocate changes concerning career guidance policies and take actions for the implementation of the curriculum. The main part of the article describes the potential use of the curriculum for different key stakeholders. Furthermore, the most relevant issues related to the underlying assumptions, effects on and roles of key stakeholders, as well as the implications of issues are discussed. The recommendations follow a specific structure which divides them into four chapters: Abstract of the Curriculum, Aim of the Curriculum, Content of the Curriculum, Stakeholders and Potential Users of the Curriculum.

*Keywords:* policy, recommendations, career development, curriculum

### ***I Am a Teacher – I Create my Career! Curriculum***

In 2007, the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) was established. It aimed to assist the EU member countries and the European Commission in the development of a European co-operation concerning lifelong guidance in the education and employment sector. The programme is now closed and it is necessary that these ideas and recommendations are implemented at the national levels. On this level, the implementation of the ELGPN results has proceeded differently across member states.

In the course of their career, headteachers as well as teachers and other educational staff experience challenges they have to overcome. These include the challenges of improving their career competences, finding a good work-life balance, developing their own career, finding new ways for their career development if they want to leave the profession, taking responsibility, managing transitions or bringing about decisions.

Therefore the LeadCareer project, funded by the EU, was established within the Erasmus+. It focuses on the educational sector with all of its stakeholders and aims to help spread knowledge and skills for the career development of educational staff. The main goal of the project was to develop a curriculum which fulfils these special requirements by building up participants' competences regarding their career.

These recommendations constitute the Intellectual Output No. 4 of this project. They address policy makers on all levels of the system in order to implement the proposed curriculum and describe the benefits of such implementation for all system levels. The curriculum is designed for every educational staff mem-

ber, from pre-school up to secondary school and even beyond, for everyone who is willing to reflect on their current career regardless of their career stage or years of experience. The *I Am a Teacher – I Create My Career!* curriculum is at the core of the Output.

### ***Aim of the Curriculum***

The main aim of the *I Am a Teacher – I Create My Career!* curriculum is to increase participants' career competences regarding the guidance of their career so that they see it as 'a continuous process that enables citizens at 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 those capacities and competences are learned and/or used'.<sup>1</sup>

The curriculum is based on the belief that the kind of educational staff member who has the basic up-to-date knowledge of career decisions, is regularly gathering information on the labour market and actively comparing information to his or her career situation, makes not only better career decisions for himself or herself but also provides better support for developing the career competences of his or her students. The idea is to guide participants through different challenges in their career, which might also have an effect on their private life.

### ***Content of the Curriculum***

The *I Am a Teacher – I Create My Career!* curriculum consists of five modules. Each module is further divided into two or three topics.

The title of the first module is *My Career – My Dream*. Module 1 provides an introduction to the topic in general, an overview of the structure of the curriculum, and enables a deeper understanding of the present situation of participants' careers. At the beginning of Module 1, participants get a general introduction to the curriculum. It outlines the curriculum and explains the outcomes

<sup>1</sup> 'Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, Meeting within the Council of 21 November 2008 on Better Integrating Lifelong Guidance into Lifelong Learning Strategies.' *Official Journal of the European Union*, 13 December 2008, c 319.

that the participants will achieve. In this module, the focus is on ‘me’ and ‘my career’ over the course of time.

The title of the second module is *I Am the Leader of My Career*. Module 2 introduces participants to the basics of career guidance and career management skills. Relevant theoretical models are presented, basic terminology is explained and applicable skills for a 21st Century career management are described. Participants are informed about contemporary career guidance policies and the labour market. They relate the received knowledge to their own career development.

The third module is titled *My Personal Mastery*. Module 3 aims to empower its participants in their career development. Each participant identifies values, skills and goals in relation to his or her career development, then compares and contrasts them with the findings of the self-analysis. Participants use these insights to enhance their future career path.

The title of the fourth module is *I Plan My Career*. Module 4 is based on the previous modules (1, 2 and 3). In this one, participants work with the current concepts of career guidance. They focus on the specific planning of their career and personal planning, while keeping in mind the work-life balance aspect. In addition, Module 4 approaches the different activities of a potential transition.

The title of the fifth module is *My Learning Process*. The main content of Module 5 lies in the evaluation of participants’ learning path throughout the curriculum and the possible transfer of knowledge and skills.

### ***Stakeholders and the Potential Users of the Curriculum***

The curriculum is important for different organisations, groups and people on all levels of the educational system. Below, its use for selected target groups on the national, supranational, organisational and individual levels is presented.

### **Supranational and National Level**

On the supranational and national levels, the curriculum *I Am a Teacher – I Create My Career!* tackles those issues that were raised by the OECD and EU institutions and governments in the past. The curriculum contributes to good career decisions by headteachers, educational staff in schools and students, and therefore helps to improve employability in all areas of the society from young

people to older generations. Additionally, the issue of early school leavers is worked on by teachers who support these people in their career decisions.

Being able to influence or decide about career decisions is important to prevent burnouts and other illnesses, which happen very often within this profession due to several challenges. Good career decisions are important for a clear work-life balance and therefore for the health and satisfaction of different people in the society. All of this is consequently significant for national budgets due to a reduction in costs for unemployment benefits and the health system.

### ***Recommendations: Austria***

In Austria, the government is the first contact at the national level when it comes to the implementation of international initiatives. In this case, the matter concerns the Ministry of Education (Bundesministerium für Bildung), which has the power to implement this curriculum through law proposals and decrees. Financial support, the encouragement and possibility of the participation of headteachers and educational staff would also be helpful.

Moreover, by encouraging those who want to take part in a career guidance programme, the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (Bundesministerium für Arbeit, Soziales und Konsumentenschutz) can support people who are unemployed and looking for work.

### ***Recommendations: Croatia***

It can be claimed that rich countries are groups of successful individuals. At the European and global levels, it is important for every country to have successful individuals who can manage their career for their own good and the prosperity of the state they live in. The main purpose of the *I Am a Teacher – I Have a Career* curriculum is to improve teachers' competences for leading their own career. It is therefore important that the Ministry of Science and Education and the Education (Ministarstvo znanosti i obrazovanja) and Teacher Training Agency (Agencija za odgoj i obrazovanje) both support such a career curriculum. Its use and dissemination should also be fostered because one of the main aims of the curriculum is to strengthen teachers' competences in leading their career in the educational and private context. Again

we can point out that a successful career on the individual level has a great impact at the supranational level: employment, national budget, prosperity etc.

An approval on the supranational level opens the way at other levels.

### ***Recommendations: Slovenia***

In Slovenia, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (Ministrstvo za šolstvo, znanost in šport) is the authority responsible for the implementation of teacher and headteacher education and training initiatives at the national level whenever in-service training is required due to reforms or substantial changes in curricula. The Ministry needs to establish the newly designed 5-day curriculum as compulsory or recommended, and through this classification insert the programme in the so-called commissioned and priority programmes of in-service training for teachers and headteachers.

In addition, the National Professional Commission for Lifelong Career Guidance (Nacionalna strokovna komisija za vseživljenjsko karierno orientacijo) is responsible for the implementation of quality assurance guidelines related to lifelong career guidance which exist nationally. The Commission shall be informed about the newly proposed curriculum and trigger the initiative for its implementation.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (Ministrstvo za delo, družino in socialne zadeve) is, in accordance with the law, responsible for strengthening and enhancing career management competence for adults, especially adult employment seekers. The curriculum can serve as an encouragement for the competent Ministry to allocate financial means to support the implementation of the curriculum in public institutions responsible for training and education of employed and unemployed adults.

## **Organisational Level**

### ***Recommendations: Austria***

In Austria, it is the University College of Teacher Education (Die School of Education – Fakultät für LehrerInnenbildung) that is responsible for further teacher training. It would prove favourable if it included this curriculum in its yearly advanced trainings, so that school staff members can enrol in this class.

The Public Employment Service (Arbeitsmarktservice) provides, in cooperation with other private institutions, numerous workshops for people who seek new jobs. This curriculum would act as an enrichment for these institutions, since it helps work applicants reflect on their past career in order to adopt new possibilities or readjust to follow a new direction.

Another related institution is the BFI institute (Bildung. Freude Inklusiv) that is run by the Austrian Trade Union Federation (Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund) and the Chamber of Labour (Arbeitskammer). This institute also provides advanced trainings in all sorts of fields across Austria. The employment of this curriculum in this context would mean having an advanced nationwide option for all workers and employees in the field of career guidance.

### ***Recommendations: Croatia***

According to the available findings of different studies on career development in the Republic of Croatia (Strategy for Lifelong Career Guidance in the Republic of Croatia 2016–2020), there is a need for a career curriculum aimed at teachers, educational staff and citizens.

Such a curriculum offers a chance to different organisations to draw benefit from it. Preschool institutions and schools can be identified as the main beneficiaries. The identification of the strengths and weaknesses of their staff will help headteachers delegate tasks and activities better and plan teacher career development. This should lead to a more conscious approach in career guidance and to a better recruitment of teachers. Headteachers can use this curriculum as a source for strategic and career planning. All of this together can contribute to an enhancement of the school culture and therefore to school improvement aimed at school excellence, especially in regard to students' outcomes.

Additionally, the curriculum offers a chance to be implemented as a whole or in parts in the curricula of other organisations, e.g. at universities in teacher training courses to improve the career competences of future teachers. Other organisations, like the National Association of Headteachers (Hrvatska udruga ravnateljica), could use the curriculum to offer seminars to headteachers, teachers and interested freelancers to improve their career competences and to empower them to become more confident with career guidance. It could also be used by private organisations for

further education or by public institutions e.g. the National Employment Service (Zavod za zaposljavanje).

On the organisational level, the career curriculum can facilitate changes in educational institutions, support quality management in organisations, help set goals in the organisations that deal with the career development of staff, etc. In Croatia, this curriculum can be used by teachers, preschool and school staff, who want to change their job or career. It should be emphasised that teachers are not simply invited to change their career because of burnouts or illness. Many are not running away from their current jobs – the primary purpose of the curriculum is the development of their own career. Headteacher or educational staff associations as well as the institutions (preschools and schools) themselves can use this career curriculum for their own development and improvement.

### ***Recommendations: Slovenia***

The National School for Leadership in Education (Šola za ravnatelje) is the institution that develops and implements trainings for (aspiring) headteachers in Slovenia. The proposed curriculum could be adapted by the School to build leadership capacity in terms of career management skills. Also, the School can establish a new ‘train the trainers’ (i.e. train the headteachers) programme for the use of the curriculum with the educational staff in schools and kindergartens. Additionally, the School can establish closer links with the already existing programmes for headteachers, e.g. offer certain parts of the curriculum as elective subjects within the Headship Licence Programme.

The National Education Institute of Slovenia (Zavod RS za šolstvo) and the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (Center za poklicno izobraževanje RS) are both development, consultancy and training institutions for the members of the educational staff in kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools and colleges of higher education. They can adapt and use the curriculum in their training programmes in order to strengthen the career management competences of educational staff and thus support the implementation of career management skills in kindergarten and school curricula.

The Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (Andragoški center RS) offers trainings in basic competences that are necessary for adult life and work in the 21st Century. One of the basic com-

petences relates to career planning and other career management skills. The institution can adapt and use the curriculum within the framework of their existing programmes.

The Employment Service of Slovenia (Zavod RS za zaposlovanje) is the key Slovenian labour market institution. Its main activities include employment advice, job broking and lifelong career guidance. The curriculum can be used by the Service in parts or as a whole for implementing the measures of active employment policy and programmes for the unemployed. In the recent years, they have also been actively involved in trainings for career counsellors (funded through the European Social and Structural Funds); the curriculum can be partly included in the existing training curriculum and, in the future, in close cooperation with other institutions serve as a means to establish a competency framework for career counsellors.

The newly established curriculum can also serve the faculties who are responsible for pre-service teacher training. Parts of the curriculum (e.g. in the form of obligatory or elective subjects) would be an enrichment for the students to get to know and become trained in career management.

Another beneficiary of the curriculum are career centres at universities and faculties. The majority of them organise workshops, conferences, fairs, career days, networking activities, speed dating with employers, etc., all with the aim to help students manage their career paths and facilitate transitions to employment. The curriculum and the materials can be adapted and used by the centres' career counsellors and trainers in their training and counselling sessions with students.

There are also a number of various associations who can benefit from the use of the curriculum or promote the initiatives for the spread of career management knowledge and skills. In Slovenia, such associations include:

- Association for Lifelong Career Guidance (Društvo za karierno orientacijo), who can inform its members about the curriculum, form ideas for the further use of the curriculum (e.g. organise professional discussions), disseminate the curriculum and materials through their official communication channels (e.g. through its membership in national working groups).
- Associations of (kindergarten, primary school, secondary school) headteachers, who organise conferences and train-

ing for headteachers; the curriculum and materials can serve as a starting point for discussion with their representatives to organise trainings and conferences related to the development of teacher and headteacher career management skills.

- Association of Parents Councils (Zveza aktivov svetov staršev), which is very active in forming positions regarding several issues and collaborating in the preparation of school legislation. Informing the Association about the newly established curriculum in career management skills and the provided materials can be a means of dissemination and could lead to an enriched discussion among the Association members regarding the strengthening of career management skills in schools (with teachers and students).

Last but not least, there are numerous private organisations offering trainings in career management skills. The curriculum and the materials enable them a direct access to the content and the materials necessary for the implementation of their training programmes.

## **Individual Level**

### ***Recommendations: Austria***

It is recommended that headteachers complete a course following this curriculum, so that they become more knowledgeable in the field of career guidance. Moreover, at any given school, there should be at least one educational staff member who has completed this curriculum, in order to make sure that each location has at least one 'expert' available.

### ***Recommendations: Croatia***

By knowing and using the curriculum, headteachers get a chance to learn more about career guidance, which in turn enables them to design and advance their own careers. Furthermore, they are empowered to help their teachers develop their own career competences. Headteachers as responsible school leaders subsequently benefit from an improved (job) satisfaction of the staff.

Teachers who participate in the curriculum learn to handle their own career and gain a better insight into the basics of guidance, which gives them a chance to plan and manage their careers in order to achieve a good work-life balance. They are further enabled to develop their own career, find new ways for their career

development if they want to leave their profession or to manage the transitions.

These teachers' career management skills are then passed on to pupils to support them in managing their own career paths. This is especially important considering the current issue of high youth unemployment rates in Europe.

The curriculum envisions different activities by means of which teachers and other citizens of all ages and at any given period of life can: determine their own capacities, competencies and interests; make rational decisions regarding their own education, career development and training; take steps to change their own career. For example, if you are a pedagogue, psychologist, social pedagogue, teacher, headteacher, etc. an individual approach in the career curriculum can help you understand where your career is at this point in time, what is influencing your career, whether your wishes are realistic or not, how you can improve your competences in decision making, set goals etc.

### ***Recommendations: Slovenia***

Headteachers who are trained and qualified in career management skills can use this curriculum and its materials to develop and train their educational staff in career management skills. The list of 21 competences within the curriculum ideally serves as a suitable starting point for needs analysis. Whenever need be, headteachers can also seek support from external qualified trainers.

Headteachers and other members of educational staff can become trained and qualified in career management skills if the institutions mentioned at the organisational level provide the implemented curriculum through courses and trainings.

In addition, trainers and lecturers from other public and private institutions (who are responsible for the implementation of career management skills) can become trained and qualified in career management skills if the institutions mentioned at the organisational level provide the implemented curriculum through courses and trainings.

### **Conclusion**

The aim of this paper has been to provide a short introduction to outline and illustrate the recommendations of three participating

countries – Austria, Croatia and Slovenia. This shows that the different governmental institutions have to acknowledge the need for and, as their next step, approve a sustainable implementation of the curriculum. What is particularly necessary is to establish support on supranational and national levels so that, subsequently, a broad variety of institutions as well as individuals can benefit from the implementation.

### **Priporočila za oblikovalce politik**

Obravnavana priporočila za oblikovalce politik tvorijo Intelktualna spoznanja (1s) 4 projekta Lead Career v okviru programa Erasmus+. Temeljijo na treh prejšnjih sklopih spoznanj: Primerjalna študija (1s1), Kurikul (1s2) in Izobraževalno gradivo s primeri aktivnosti (1o3). Pred več kot desetletjem je EU skupaj z drugimi organizacijami prepoznala pomen karijerne orientacije. Razne programe, ki to idejo razvijajo, organizirajo na različnih ravneh, tudi ravni Evropskega sveta in Evropskega parlamenta. Leta 2007 se je prizadevanjem pridružila Evropska mreža za politike v vseživljenjski karierni orientaciji (ELGPN). Njen namen je bil pomagati državam članicam in Evropski komisiji pri razvijanju vseevropskega sodelovanja pri vseživljenjski orientaciji v sektorju izobraževanja in zaposlovanja. Vprašanje karijerne orientacije je pomembno na številnih področjih in za razne poklice v vseh obdobjih kariere. Gre za način spopadanja z izzivi, ki se v spreminjajočem se svetu na novo pojavljajo. Loteva se perečih vprašanj, kot so nezaposlenost mladih, zaposleni, ki želijo spremeniti poklic ali najti nove ali drugačne načine ravnanja z različnimi izzivi v življenju. Priporočila v članku načenjajo omenjena ključna vprašanja in spodbujajo izvajanje kurikula Učitelj sem – ustvarjam svojo kariero na naddržavni kot tudi državni ravni, ravni organizacije in posameznika. Namen priporočil je prepričati oblikovalce politik s teh različnih ravni k zavzemanju za spremembe v zvezi s politikami karijerne orientacije in k ukrepom za izvajanje kurikula. V glavnem delu sestavka opisujemo možnosti uporabe kurikula za različne ključne deležnike. Obravnavamo tudi relevantna vprašanja, povezana z domnevami deležnikov, z vplivi na deležnike in njihovimi vlogami, pa tudi posledice vprašanj. Priporočila so organizirana v štiri poglavja: Abstrakt kurikula, Namen kurikula, Vsebina kurikula, Deležniki in Možni uporabniki kurikula.

*Ključne besede:* politike, priporočila, razvoj kariere, kurikul

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