

Output 3

Preventing ESL through Career Guidance

Best Practices Report

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I. Introduction

The *Study on best practices* is a specific output of the *Guiding Cities* project. Besides the *Collection of best practices* which provides an analytical input on how guidance actions aimed to reduce ESL are designed and implemented in the partner countries, this report serves as an endeavour to identify similarities and differences among those practices, as well as factors for success in this area.

In this way it should support the project aims to improve the professional development of both local technicians delivering municipal services and guidance practitioners working in the school education sector. It should also help to develop strategies to improve the quality of careers education and careers development in the classroom.

The other Guiding Cities project outputs are:

- [State of the art report on Guidance in the partner countries](#) (Spain, Italy, Greece and Romania);
- [Guiding Cities Model](#) as a tool to map different possible actions, actors and needs of a community relative to guidance and lifelong learning;
- [Checklist](#) to assess performance against the developed model.

As good practices, they need to be methods or techniques that have consistently shown results superior to those achieved with other means, and that are used as benchmarks¹. They should be best of breed: The highest current performance level in an industry, used as a standard or benchmark to be equaled or exceeded”, but not necessarily a *best or leading practice* where it would be inordinately difficult to identify or implement the best practice.

There are eight attributes that the partnership considers important in order to be selected and included in the selection of good practices:

1. include ethical considerations;
2. have a transferable character, be a model procedure that can be applied/replicated in other settings;
3. provide something useful;

¹ <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/best-practice.html#ixzz3VCsrwh00>

4. be a reference for others;
5. demonstrate an impact on the target group;
6. be sustainable.
7. be evidence based.

II. Analysis of good practices on the Guiding Cities model

The selected 47 practices were indexed and their contents analysed against the different aspects of the *Guiding Cities Model*. The results of the analysis are presented below for each parameter of the model.

II.1. Governance and coordination

II.1.1. Strategy and policies: political priority, financial commitment, policies and strong involvement from all stakeholders

While there could be small scale projects addressing a local problem that take strategies and policy as something implicit, once more than one entity is involved, strategies and policies tend to become an explicit point of reference. The practices surveyed are very well connected to local, national and international strategies and policies. In most, if not all cases, referencing local and/or international strategies and policies was one of the criteria for awarding a grant. The specific documents referenced depended mostly on the institution financing the project.

The public administration/local government is a very significant partner in the implementation of many projects (practices: [47](#), [1](#), [3](#), [27](#), [43](#), [45](#)). It can play a wide range of roles, from being the beneficiary of the services and the facilitator in accessing the target groups, to offering financial support and acting as an authority in certifying the services provided.

The involvement of private companies offering counselling and guidance services is skewed towards high income countries (Italy and Spain).

While relegated to the role of beneficiaries in the eyes of the public, pupils and their families, which have constituted the most frequent target groups of the projects surveyed, were regarded as stakeholders and given a voice within these projects (practice [35](#)).

The financial resources for the projects were drawn from a variety of sources: local government, European Social Fund, the Lifelong Learning Programme and Erasmus+, etc.

They each come with a set of, mostly similar, objectives and frameworks that influence the activities and outcomes of the projects.

II.1.2. Coordination among stakeholders and actors: coordination structures or mechanisms

The coordination structures of the projects that have been included in the survey range from informal meetings, to the attempt to set up round tables and long time partnerships among local and national stakeholders.

Several initiatives were specifically dedicated to fostering better coordination among counselling and guidance services providers. In one such instance (*Barcelona Orienta Agreement* – see practice [31](#)) a document referring to the coordination of services and sharing of information related to the goals and strategies of guidance services was signed by 45 stakeholders. The *Granollers Guidance System* ([43](#)) is a good example of governance, where the local City Council, coordinates and strategically plans the guidance services through the organisation of a vocational training council. It features participation from all the city council services involved, as well as from all the organisations that provide guidance in the city, to align all the activities and programmes and to define a guidance model that fits the characteristics of the city. In another example, also from Catalonia (practice [27](#)), we have seen the establishment of a network made up of 20 municipalities, two supra-municipal bodies and two trade unions, that has received support from the *Barcelona Provincial Council*. A set of two *Lifelong Learning Programme* funded projects (*GIRC*² and *GIANT*³) have developed a methodology aimed at creating communication mechanisms between guidance service providers, that was piloted in several Italian contexts – they are generally recognized for their fragmented landscape when it comes to this type of services – with inputs about the possibility of transferring it to Spanish and Romanian contexts.

The instruments used to support a connection between stakeholders have taken many shapes and have reflected circumstantial needs of the initiatives. They differ in the element they emphasize communication (e.g. round table), methodology (e.g. action plan), quality (e.g. quality plan) or comprehensive approaches (e.g. strategic plan).

² http://www.cetrans.it/esperienze/schede/prog_girc.htm

³ http://www.adam-europe.eu/prj/4475/project_4475_en.pdf

II.1.3. Cross-sectoral coordination / multi-service partnerships

Efficiency and impact, as reported by the people who have submitted the descriptions of the good practices, was directly connected to the involvement of professionals from different backgrounds. Some of these professionals were associated with an institution dedicated to that particular type of expertise (e.g. public employees working for the local government), others were embedded in an institution focused on an area different from their own expertise (e.g. IT expert in an educational institution).

Counselling and guidance services provided within the projects surveyed are related to a large array of sectors (e.g. education, industry, culture) which, in order to achieve their goals, have required close cooperation with at least some stakeholders in those areas.

As expected, providers of educational services are the ones most often taken as partners in the counselling and guidance projects surveyed. They can range from a specific school or a consortium of schools, to regional and national authorities.

Counselling and guidance professionals have worked alongside psychologists, teachers, criminologists, artists, public services employees, to name but a few, in order to deliver quality services. This in turn is reflected in name of the teams working on or supporting the guidance process: coordination committee/team, diversity committee, social committee, curricular unit, etc.

II.1.4. Local adaptation/application: services and resources responding to concrete local needs (bottom-up approach) and engaging locally based community services (bottom-up initiatives)

The availability of locally developed initiatives that focus on the characteristics of a particular region seems to be directly connected to the availability of funds and capacity to implement them. EU funding has made a significant contribution to capacity building related to counselling and guidance initiatives in regions that lacked the resources to implement them.

Projects developed under the *Lifelong Learning* and *Erasmus+ Programmes* (practices [15](#) and [23](#)) have paid particular attention to the adaptation of experiences to local contexts and kick-starting initiatives aimed at tackling local issues like reducing bullying within schools or promoting soft skills.

The role of the local government institutions is crucial in the development of bottom-up initiatives (practice [9](#), [30](#), [33](#), [36](#), [45](#)) and including them in the development and

implementation process improves the effectiveness and gives a boost to the projects' sustainability.

II.2. Accessibility

II.2.1. All citizens have the right to access guidance services at any point in their lives.

The projects surveyed focus on target groups from a variety of backgrounds, but the age range is limited in most cases to K-12 students, with one project going as far as young people up to 30 years of age (practice [25](#)). This has probably something to do with the way the good practice examples were collected, rather than the availability of counselling and guidance programmes for citizens of all ages and backgrounds.

Projects tend to be built on one of two factors:

- a) the target individuals are near a key transitional stage (lower secondary to upper secondary education, upper secondary to labour market or higher education in practices [47](#), [6](#), [7](#), [19](#), [40](#), [38](#));
- b) they are facing one or several risk factors (reduced economical means, low academic achievement) (practices [13](#), [10](#)). Some projects have tried to address both issues ([28](#), [34](#)).

Counselling and guidance services directed towards VET students were very well represented within the sample analyzed, which is not surprising (e.g. [38](#), [43](#)) or fairs specialised on VET studies ([27](#)). VET students are expected to join the labour market as soon they finish studies, meaning that, if for some reason at the end of their studies they feel misrepresented by their career choice, the costs of qualifying for another profession is very high.

The data collected is lacking examples of good practices related to adults and seniors. This is not to say that these services do not exist, but while policy documents are aware of the needs of these target groups, as well as the benefits of engaging them through guidance services, we know from practice that the resources dedicated to these groups are considerably lower when compared to other age groups.

To improve accessibility, guidance services should be given visibility to guarantee citizen awareness

While ideally anyone could access guidance services throughout their life, the economic reality is that these services are geared towards people at risk or people that are at some transitional point in their career (school to the labour market or from one job to another).

Signposting services and one stop shops for guidance are increasingly available, especially in countries with high per capita incomes.

The counselling and guidance providers do their best to promote their services to their designated target groups, but their financing model will shape this process. If the services are funded on a continuous basis, as is the case for public bodies and some public-private partnerships, campaigns to promote services are part of the regular practices. If funding is project based, communication with target groups will have to take in account the resources available during its lifetime, as well as the gaps between funding that can arise. The examples in our inventory of good practices tend to reflect mostly the second type of funding scheme, meaning that there are certain goals regarding the type and number of people covered, but efforts to promote the services to the general public are limited.

II.2.2. Communication actions to improve awareness of the relationship between guidance and educational success

All good practice examples have either mentioned, or it could be inferred from the description of activities, that communication was part of the core elements of the project. The content of the communication strategy has varied according to resources, formal requirements by the financing entity, the characteristics of the target group, as well as the objectives of the project. The relationship between guidance and educational success has been emphasized both in relation to with the end users (practice [2](#)), as well as in relation to the governing and financing bodies (practice [29](#)). On the one hand, there is the promotion of services as something that can have a significant impact on academic achievement; on the other, there are lobby activities directed towards local and central government, as well as other grant operators in order to encourage the creation of guidance services within educational settings.

Communication with the beneficiaries of educational services is explicitly included in the information provided by the people that have filled out our reporting template, but lobby activities can mostly be inferred from how the activities of some projects were set up. For instance there is the [Posat'hi](#) project run by the City Council of Sabadell ([40](#)), or the the “Eina Guidance Tool“ ([30](#)) of the City Council of Badia del Vallès as a practice that organises municipal campaigns addressed to the entire population to encourage people to create a life project.

II.3. Methodologies of provision

The majority of projects included **activities that directly involved students**, such as guidance and counselling (almost half of the projects), workshops or various group activities (almost a third of all projects), professional development courses or training for students, adaptation of curriculum and external placements in workplaces, tutoring and mentoring, the use of mediators and creative activities. There were also some special activities used in only one of the projects from the database, such as inter-school visits (practice [20](#)), the use of portfolio (practice [5](#)), thematic summer camps and job fairs (practice [21](#)). The digital component was important in communicating with students, and also useful as an educational tool. Almost a fifth of the projects used websites, databases, online learning platforms and apps.

Activities were also **directed towards teachers and counsellors**, such as training (a fifth of the projects) and provision of guidelines and materials with resources.

A fifth of the projects were interested in the **active involvement of parents** as a means of supporting students.

An important component of the methodological approach in many projects was the **involvement of relevant stakeholders and raising awareness** in the general public and in decision makers.

II.4. Measures to promote lifelong guidance and learning

II.4.1. Providers:

- Out of 43 projects registered: 26 were provided by public entities, 8 by private bodies and 9 by a public/ private partnership.

II.4.2. Area of implementation

- The majority of the projects were implemented in urban areas, only a minority (8 practices) having activities in rural areas.
- Most of the projects (28 out of 43) were implemented at local level, with those remaining at regional, national and European level.

II.4.3. Target groups

- While there were some projects with only one target group, many of them targeted more than one group.
- The vast majority of projects (40 out of 43) were targeted at students of various ages, including university students.
- 21 projects were directed at early school leavers (young drop-outs, NEETs, students at risk of leaving schooling and training, young persons with no compulsory secondary education diploma).
- The same number of projects (21) was directed towards teachers, while 18 projects targeted guidance practitioners.
- Parents were also approached by 13 projects from our database.
- One project targeted NGOs and one project was addressed to immigrant students from Greece.

II.5. Empowerment of choice and personal development

II.5.1. Needs addressed

The practices describe diverse challenges, with the economic crisis amplifying the effects and posing difficulties for the students and their families. The described difficulties are leading to various negative effects:

- school failure;
- irregular school attendance;
- school drop out;
- increased need for support of the students with special needs.

The school drop out was caused in some cases by the lack of flexibility of the educational offer (i.e. lacking Professional Training Cycles during post compulsory education in the *Batxillerat* in Catalonia).

Needs mentioned in strategic planning documents

- at european level
 - *Education and Training 2020; European Social Funds.*

- at national level
 - *Decree 76 / 15.04.2005* “Actions for the educational success and the prevention of school drop out” requiring schools to identify the students who drop out or who attend discontinuously and transmit their data to the employment centers, as well as to implement guidance paths aimed to prevent and combat the early school leaving;
 - *National Reference Strategic Framework (NRSF) 2007 – 2013* One of the 4 thematic NRSF priorities consists in the “more efficient development and use of the human capital in Romania” and a key objective is represented by the “stimulation of school participation and reducing early school leaving”;
 - *Government Strategy for Roma, 2001* to stimulate the school participation and to reduce school abandonment; to encourage Roma parents to participate in school education processes and beyond; designing and implementing training programs for school mediators and teacher training in intercultural education.
- at regional and interregional level
 - Catalan Government: *Framework Agreement of the fight against school failure / Department of Education plan for academic success / The plan for academic success/ Guidance Plan of the Barcelona Education Consortium / Programmes to improve results and measures against school failure* within the Barcelona Municipal Action Plan ([29](#), [37](#), [39](#));
 - *Memorandum of Understanding "Building a model and practical intervention to support actions to local guidance networks"* between Italian regions (of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Lazio, Marche, Piedmont, Umbria and the Autonomous Province Trento) testing strategies and coordination instruments of territorial networks of guidance services (i.e. the use of the software S.Or.Prendo in practices [3](#) and [4](#));
 - *"Provincial Plan for Guidance, Antidispersion and Right to Education"* including specific measures for prevention of early school leaving (practice [2](#));
 - *"Regional system of lifelong guidance"* in the Marche Region Italy with career guidance as key to achieving integration between the sectors of education, training and work (practice [3](#));
 - *"System actions for the development of integrated regional system of guidance"* in Umbria Region Italy (practice [4](#));

- *Tuscany Regional Strategy* identified the excessive separation of schools from the labour market as one of the main factors of delay of Italy compared to the Lisbon targets and therefore affirming the centrality of the presence of the working world in the learning processes and promoting dual education system (practice [8](#));
- Guidance Pilot Plan ([35](#)) from Barcelona Provincial Council.
- at local level
 - by City councils
 - Vocational Educational Council in Granollers ([43](#));
 - Guidance at School: Mentoring, Accompanying and the Continuation of Studies (L'orientació a l'institut) ([47](#)) by the Terrassa City council which coordinates the different actors and planning strategic lines and activities on guidance;
 - Local Educational Plan (PEE) from the Badia City council ([30](#)) to feature the participation of all the agents from the educational community and share a common guidance model of the city.
 - by schools
 - “*School’s Strategic Plan*” priorities: the method of cooperative and transversal work (practice [46](#));
 - “*Guidance to the school transition*”;
 - “*Career guidance: career management skills*”.
 - by other actors
 - Company Board CSR decision to provide counselling to high school students from the Greek island of Milos (practice [11](#)).

II.5.2. Aims and Objectives

The identified best practices in guidance and counselling addressing ESL pursue a variety of objectives:

- consolidate and implement the quality of education and of integrated services for guidance; developing the capacity of schools to offer high quality educational programmes and to become a resource centre the community;
- developing a mechanism for collaboration between key stakeholders in education (practices [4](#), [9](#), [18](#));

- trainings in guidance methods and techniques for teachers and practitioners (practices [5](#), [17](#));
- education support
 - motivate school attendance of students at risk of school leaving (practice [5](#))/ foster emulation among students (practice [12](#)); overcome prejudices and stimulate interest in STEM careers (practice [46](#))
 - empowering the target group to express itself by means of creative writing of dramatic texts to engage youth at risk (practice [23](#)); improving life quality through positive educational messages by different expression techniques of art-therapy (practice [24](#))
 - social integration; development of social skills like empathy, responsibility (i.e. the "guardian" in the school environment - practice [12](#)); development of self-esteem of children who experience social exclusion and rejection and who are not attending school (i.e. the *Mobile School* providing education and emotional development to children living and working on the street) (practice [13](#));
 - empowerment of repatriates and immigrant parents to help their children to learn about the Greek educational system and acquire a working relationship with the school
 - support in order to pass the exams; acquisition of certified skills;
 - develop prevention and recovery mechanisms/ socio-educational individualized intervention/ reduction of discomfort, training and mentoring support (practice [7](#)); prevent drop out of students in risk, roma students (practices [10](#), [20](#)); promote the continuation of studies for students (practice [47](#)); increasing participation to education of children from economically disadvantaged areas. -reducing school dropout and ESL; increase the rate of kindergarten attendance (practice [10](#));
 - reduce bullying systematically (practice [15](#));
 - create original educational material (practice [15](#)).
- career guidance: support the school choice at secondary school level by self-awareness and involvement of the students, parents and teachers; develop tools to support realistic and adequate academic and career choices that meet the needs of different target groups (practices [1](#), [3](#), [5](#), [11](#), [34](#));
 - counselling sessions (individual or group format);

- providing guidance to the families of students in their last year of compulsory secondary education (fourth year of ESO) so that they can help their children choose a post-compulsory training route. By providing this support of families, the aim is to help students make more solid choices as regards which studies to pursue and thus reduce the number of students dropping out after they complete compulsory education and during the first year of post-compulsory studies.
- integration on the labour market (practices [6](#), [7](#)):
 - facilitate the insertion into the labour market; linking education with the labour market/ correlate the provision of training and development of the territory/ connection of education and training institutions with the world of work; remove the obstacles of the person;
 - provide the tools needed to improve their employability;
 - job-shadowing gives future high school graduates the possibility to be the „shadow” of an employee in a company/ or selected institution for the duration of one day, based on the expressed interest in a certain profession (practice [22](#));
 - monitoring the VET graduates insertion into the labour market; accompany the students on the way to work (practice [19](#));
 - local TET - *School-to-Work Transition* (practice [41](#)) programme to guide and support young people by establishing a transfer protocol between the secondary school and the municipal and local TET services. (practice [36](#));
- awareness in raising campaigns: i.e. *APROPA conference*, organised by the Cornellà de Llobregat City council, to introduce the public to the city’s educational services and resources (practice [32](#)).

Examples
<p>Eina Guidance Tool (30):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● to encourage the creation of life projects; ● to promote short, mid and long-term training routes; ● to encourage an increase in the number of young people with post-compulsory training; ● to work on the competencies that lead to developing successful training pathways.
<p>Career education (practice 46)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● to promote the students’ self-awareness; ● to guide the students so that they may decide on their academic and professional future; ● to develop critical thinking in the student, making them aware of the importance of making justified decisions; ● to learn how to work as a team: assessing, respecting and confronting the opinions of classmates;

- to increase the students' basic skills, especially in autonomy and personal initiative, communicative, linguistic and audiovisual skills, skills in information processing and digital skills.

Supporting VET students (practice [19](#)):

- to explore one's own career;
- to become aware of their personal profile;
- to be responsible for personal career decisions;
- to develop positive and realistic attitudes towards the employment process ;
- to share learning experiences and knowledge;
- to analyze the labour market;
- to understand the correlation between interests, competencies, attitudes and opportunities.

The Local School-to-Work Transition Network has established some specific objectives (practice [27](#)):

- to provide support and/or optimise the methodology for helping young people make the transition from secondary school into the professional world;
- to provide innovative methodologies to intervene in groups of young people;
- to strengthen planning and coordination strategies for the Local School-to-Work Transition Service;
- to attain an effective and fair range of opportunities for the transition into employment;
- to implement or improve assessment systems for the results and impact of the programmes in terms of efficiency and effectiveness;
- to consolidate the Local School-to-Work Transition Network;
- to implement or strengthen intra-municipal coordination mechanisms;
- to implement or strengthen inter-municipal coordination mechanisms with nearby areas.
- to strengthen the supra-municipal collaboration network through innovation;
- various objectives are established for each school year based on these objectives. the objectives for the 2014–2015 school year were:
 - to establish and/or consolidate stable methods of collaboration between the city council, secondary schools and educational services in the area, in the school-to-work transition actions.
 - to design strategies to improve academic success in the city.
 - to guarantee support for young people, during and after completing compulsory secondary education, in relation to the range of options available in the region, paying special attention to more disadvantaged groups.

El Llindar Second Chance School. (practice [42](#))

- Building personalised pathways;
- Building training pathways better suited to teenagers and young people who have dropped out of school and have few qualifications;
- Offering time and spaces for learning in which students feel comfortable enough to learn;

- Creating spaces for subjective support;
- Transitioning through different levels of education and obtaining certifications;
- The return to the education system.

II.6. Competences of the Practitioners

A key factor to success of the selected practices were the human resources available, so it is interesting to explore who the people are behind these best practices and what characteristics they possess.

Categories of staff

The presented practices describe specific roles within the projects with different weights on categories of staff: management, guidance practitioners, technical /IT experts, or administrative staff. The staff structure is generally presented as on a rhombic format, where the biggest part is represented by implementing staff (i.e. guidance practitioners, trainers, teachers) and with a relatively small representation of the technical/administrative staff.

Management tasks - defined as coordination, monitoring, evaluation - are appointed either by project managers within the respective organizations, or officials of the local authorities.

The staff involved in the activities employed both permanent and temporary staff. The four countries of the project present specific differences in what concerns the education and labour systems as well as the profile of the guidance practitioners from each sector. This variety includes: guidance counselors, teachers, trainers, (year) coordinating tutors, adolescent educators, tutors, psychologists, special education psychologists, social workers, social welfare educators, youth workers, employment advisers, education technicians etc. (practice [35](#)).

In some initiatives (i.e. practice [25](#)) the volunteering schemes seem to be workable options for assuring the efficiency, with students from the respective organizations involved in the implementation of some of the project activities (explaining their experiences to younger students or interviewing professionals). A valuable asset is also represented by support persons external to the school, such as: alumni, parents and typical collaborating professionals (practice [28](#)).

An example of a multidisciplinary staff scheme is provided by the City council of the *Barberà del Vallès* including different municipal agents (practice [27](#)):

- technicians (one from a Foundation; one from the Education Department, one from the Youth Department of the local Council);
- social educators from the Social Services Department;
- representatives from local high schools;
- a representative from the Adult Training College;
- representatives of parents of secondary school students;
- a representative from Vallès Occidental Educational Services.

The qualification level is not an issue of special concern in the majority of the practices, the most important one being the prior experience and the status of the experts/practitioners in the respective communities. For academic tasks (i.e. scientific coordination) specialist university lecturers/researchers with a doctorate are preferred, while young doctorate students are utilized for group work tasks (practice [46](#)).

Selection criteria include:

- experience in the delivery of guidance consultancy services, both in the training of operators and technical services (practice [4](#))
- dedication to guidance;
- working in the youth, employment and education services;
- experience with socially vulnerable groups;
- international certification (EBCC) (practice [21](#));
- high professional credentials in their areas of intervention (practice [7](#))
- university degree (in the fields of psychology, education and criminology);
- university diploma and certificates of continuous training in the field of guidance (practice [44](#))
- training (in the areas of psychology, pedagogy, social education, sociology and psycho-pedagogy).

The human resource selection is done by different officials of the provinces, or representatives/managers of schools (practice [2](#)).

The references to evaluation of staff indicate in some cases monthly activity reporting by the project staff as well as weekly sessions of supervision of the counselors provided by experts in counseling (practice [21](#)).

Besides participation in the different local and regional guidance networks, training activities were provided by specialists (e.g. school counselors, trainers, psychologists) to practitioners or to students. Continuous monitoring and support were offered by the project team. (practices [1,17](#)).

Training is provided on the following topics (practices [47](#), [20](#), [45](#)):

- democratic leadership;
- mentorship;
- different areas of the national curriculum;
- non-formal education;
- skills-based guidance;
- guidance techniques;
- hiring;
- intermediation;
- guidance and social networks;
- empowerment of guidance counselors.

II.7. Common framework and quality standards

From the common aspects included in the responses concerning the frameworks, the tools seem to be a relevant aspect of the projects. The responses seem to point towards a given set of elements:

II.7.1. Traditional tools

A representative example is *EMB – Erasmus Minus Bullying* (practice [15](#)) – offering original educational materials (book, CD, Manual) assembled by students and teachers in 10 schools; it also makes suggestions concerning its configuration and use, in order to systematically reduce bullying; noteworthy is the use of mediation as a pedagogical tool.

Another significant example is the one concerning the optimization of existing resources – sharing resources with the secondary school to give guidance within the tutorial sessions with students and tutors (practice [33](#)).

II.7.2. Tools based on new technologies

A good example is the career matching software *SO.R.PRENDO* in Marche Region (practices [3](#), [4](#)), which has been used in a project that covered the entire region and combined guidance systems with providing tools and intervention models easily transferable to other realities. This tool is already in use in other regions of Italy.

Another significant example is the one concerning the monitoring of VET graduates insertion on the labour market (practice [19](#)).

II.7.3. Guidelines

Several projects managed to develop (via committees and/or consortia) working schemes for the local authorities, thus not only enhancing co-operation at a local level, but also developing approaches with great potential for transfer into other contexts.

One of the examples is the *School-to-Work Transition Network – Guia't Fair* (practice [27](#)) – an exhibition that showcases the full range of professional training that is offered in the local area. Its targeted audience is represented by students in their fourth year of compulsory secondary education and baccalaureate students. A project of this type is a clear example of the transversal work and networking in a relatively small area made up of 20 municipalities, two supra-municipal bodies and two trade unions, that has received support from the *Barcelona Provincial Council*, with municipalities that are very diverse and different in size, but with a specific problem as regards the rates of school leaving, which is also closely linked to the region's economic profile (weight of the industrial sector, the importance of the services sector with low-level production, etc.).

II.8. Evaluation of performance and effectiveness

The data collected seems to indicate that the focus of the projects was not primarily oriented towards practices related to benchmarking and standards. However, a relevant example could be found in the design of the project *The Family Suitcase* (practice [35](#)) of which the project design includes an impact assessment. The assessment procedure has been designed by IVALUA (practice [35](#)), the benchmark institution for public policy assessment in Catalonia.

In terms of effectiveness, the following examples are relevant:

II.8.1. Replicability is envisaged by projects like *Ithaca: Searching your way “One day at work”*, designed to foster an entrepreneurial and opened spirit, developing awareness and

knowledge of the environment in which they operate and propose suggestions. Another project, *TET – School-to-Work Transition Programme* (practice [28](#)), is representative for an entire list of projects dealing with the support for schools in order to facilitate the transition to working life.

II.8.2. Flexibility in relation to users' needs (the project *Ithaca: Searching your way “One day at work”* – practice [26](#)): results in terms of visibility, and the evaluation has returned very positive results both from the teachers / guidance counselors and from users on the following aspects (ease of use of the instrument, purpose guidance, general utility).

II.8.3. Checking working hypotheses: some projects, like Education of immigrants took moderate targets into consideration, such as checking working hypotheses concerning changing the working relations with schools, a significant approach if we consider the overall scope of the network, since it focuses on methodology.

II.8.4. Measurable indicators

One main category of data referred to the effort of including hard evidence (e.g., the number of participating students, number of visits to the blog), but with a clear focus on results that are less accountable in terms of narrow timeframes. The instruments that were primarily used take into consideration user (student or teacher) satisfaction or change of academic orientation.

A relevant example of a project with a special focus on evaluation is Road Map, which has used indicators established at the beginning of the project to evaluate the impact due to the interest in comparing the data in other local authorities where the Road Map has not been implemented.

Other projects adopted instruments that were considered replicable in new contexts, created broad. A nice example is *Making school life beautiful* (practice [16](#)). The promoters have found help at the RONI (*Risk of Neet Indicator*) research, a proper set of practises to foresee and prevent the problem of Early Leaving School developed by East Sussex University. The result is an improved concept of school, characterised by higher level of self expression and self - esteem for the learners, as well as an energetic role in school life for all.

III. Conclusions

There are a number of ideas that emerged from the survey on the identified good practices.

First, it is important, as practitioner to adopt a reflective approach and to analyse the situation while taking as reference the whole picture, understanding the context, and the existing resources of different types. At the same time it is necessary to identify and address the causes and not merely the symptoms. Coordination and networking should be assured between all municipal agents that work with young people (practices [29](#), [31](#)). This issue is also connected to the need of standardisation and profesionalisation of the counselling activity.

Acknowledging the Pygmalion effect: many programs are specifically addressed to children who experience social exclusion and rejection, showing acceptance and providing them and their families support, which has a real effect in terms of their activation and empowerment.

Career guidance, as recognised by many policy documents, is indeed an essential component in leveraging social change and supporting education of the target groups.

There are instances of relevant advancements of the school toward the needs of the labour market and cooperation with companies and facilitation of school to work transition is an important approach in many contexts. In this context there is still a need for more effective collaboration between stakeholders: the formal education system, ICT developers, employment services, NGOs, and local communities. The counselling services providers need to better assess guidance and career counselling needs and to support the adaptation of the formal curriculum to the current labour market.

The diversity of terminology is evident in the presentation of practices as was asked for by the reporting format. To give an example, the target of the projects was expressed as aims, objectives, results, outputs, and much less as outcomes.

The frequent appeal to participants' degree of satisfaction can be linked to a process of self-assessment, which is partially the result of the lack of specific elements that were not included in the design of the project; specifically, elements related to the positioning of the project halfway between a stocktaking approach, and a project aimed at long-term results in the field. At the same time, this situation is related to a specific aspect of assessment in this field, that is, client/participant satisfaction.

On the basis of the provided informations and data, we can formulate the working hypothesis that transnational projects (such as those between Spain and France) were in the position to better gauge the progress within the project aims and objectives, given the referentials existent

in both countries (similar projects and/or networks) and the interest in assessing progress as a basis for further projects.

In what concerns the local context, project promoters and partners were more moderate in terms of formulating expectations towards the project; therefore, the issue of assessing the results – given the fact that long-term and geographically wider aims were more discreet – received a more moderate significance.

Another track of modernisation of the services refers to the inclusion of the soft skills in the national curriculum in order to facilitate the development of a positive attitude towards career choice and development (self-awareness, communication, personal marketing, entrepreneurship, teamwork, decision making, occupational and labor market analysis).

Also it is important to plan on the long term envisaging positive effect of counselling for the students and rather have a proactive than a reactive approach to the existing challenges. When IT platforms are used for personal portfolios or data for instance it is important to assure portability of information so that they can be used by other relevant services of the student (i.e. education organisation he pursues next in practice [21](#)).

Data gathering instruments, such as the template provided as a basis for the present report, should be accompanied by indications for the filling of the questionnaire – terminology, good examples, common technical terms, and so forth.

Projects must include more explicit components of presenting the outcomes in more accountable ways.

Evaluation should not be seen as an end in itself, isolated from views of the project's aims. In order to improve this component, attention should be paid to:

- aligning relevant evaluation methods with anticipated outcomes of the projects;
- improving data skills of the main actors responsible for the projects, including peer learning based on specific activities organized as part of the projects.

Also, practitioners in the field should overcome specialty autism and collaborate (not only cooperate) in multidisciplinary teams of professionals from all areas (practice [44](#)).



Guiding Cities



Annex – List of Best Practices

No.	Title of Good Practice	URL
Italy		
1	Condor: Guidance Council	http://www.guidingcities.eu/best-practices/condor-guidance-council/
2	Project P.A.R.I. (Paths for Antidispersion, Recovery, Inclusion) – Guidance Workshops to Combat Early School Leaving	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=726
3	Implementing Career Matching Software S.OR.PRENDO to the Regionale System of Lifelong Guidance	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=728
4	Guidance Resources: Software SO.R.PRENDO in Umbria Region	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=730
5	School Citizenship: Guidance at school	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=732
6	Siena Guidance for Young People - Guidance Services, Job-Support and Active Labor Market Policies	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=734
7	Project MEN.T.OR.E.: Tutoring, Mentoring and Guidance for Empowerment	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=736
8	Project P.A.S.S.A.L.O. School-work Dual Education System in Province of Siena	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=738
9	ASSIS.T. Development of the Regional Guidance System	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=740
Greece		
10	Training of Roma children	http://www.guidingcities.eu/best-practices/training-of-roma-children/
11	Career guidance in the Greek Island of Milos	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=744
12	Adopt a Student	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=746
13	Mobile School	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=751
14	Education of Immigrants	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=749
15	EMB, Erasmus Minus Bullying	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=753
16	Making School Life Beautiful	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=755
Romania		
17	Widening the Future. Improving Guidance Interventions at School	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=757
18	Project “ School – a chance for each” Organizing	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=760

	Education “Second Chance” Programs	
19	Monitoring the VET Graduates Insertion on the Labour Market (MIA)	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=762
20	Priority Education Areas	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=764
21	Career Start – European Best Practices in Career Counseling for Romanian Students	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=766
22	Job Shadow Day	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=768
23	Writing Theatre	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=770
24	National Contest of School Counselling through Art-therapy „Express freely!”	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=772
Spain		
25	Informa- red: Integrated Guidance Itineraries	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=774
26	Ithaca: Searching Your Way “One day at work”	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=777
27	School-to-Work Transition Network – Guia’t Fair	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=784
28	TET – School-to-Work Transition Programme (Transició Escola Treball)	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=786
29	Barcelona Orienta Agreement	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=788
30	Eina Guidance Tool	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=791
31	Road Map	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=794
32	APROPA Conference	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=797
33	Joves.TET	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=799
34	ACADA	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=805
35	La Maleta de les Famílies (The Family Suitcase)	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=808
36	Aprents (Apprenticeship) Project – TET	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=813
37	Projecte de Vida Professional (Professional Life Project)	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=815
38	Coneixement d’Oficis (Knowledge of Professions)	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=818
39	Servei d’Orientació Pla Jove (Youth Plan Guidance Service)	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=820
40	Posa-t’hi	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=823
41	Local School-to-Work Transition Service	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=825
42	Reconnecta’t	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=827

43	Granollers Guidance System	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=829
44	Mars XXI: Is A Human Colony On Mars Possible?	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=831
45	Support Mentoring – Being a young person after secondary school	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=833
46	I plan my future (Planifico el meu futur)	http://www.guidingcities.eu/?post_type=best-practices&p=658
47	Guidance at School: Mentoring, Accompanying and the Continuation of Studies (L'orientació a l'institut)	http://www.guidingcities.eu/best-practices/guidance-at-school-mentoring-accompanying-and-the-continuation-of-studies-lorientacio-a-linstitut/

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