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The TCA event

“Strengthening Capacities of Learners with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties through Career Guidance Services”



TCA

20-22 November 2024
Belgrade, Serbia

Introduction

The transnational seminar "Strengthening Capacities of Learners with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties through Career Guidance Services" was held on November 20–22, 2024, in Belgrade, Serbia. It was the first event within the LTA initiative (**LTA – Long-Term Activities**) "Enhancing Inclusion through Guidance", established by the National Erasmus+ Agencies in Serbia, Denmark, Estonia, Lithuania and Austria. The initiative aims to enhance the social inclusion of students from vulnerable groups through Career Guidance and Counselling (CGC) services.

The first TCA event focused on students with disabilities and learning difficulties, a group that is often marginalized and at high risk of dropping out. This group of students emerged as a joint priority of the partnering NAs, focusing on the need to support the competence development of career practitioners in the education sector who work with them.

Some of the questions that the TCA aimed to tackle included:

- What kinds and forms of career guidance support are the most beneficial for students with disabilities and learning difficulties?
- What kind of knowledge, skills and information do career practitioners need in order to provide the support?
- What useful concepts from developmental psychology should career guidance practitioners understand to provide quality and tailored support to students with disabilities and learning difficulties?
- What existing good practices of CGC for these students can be found across Europe? Can they be adapted to different contexts?
- What gaps remain in CGC for students with disabilities and learning difficulties and how can Erasmus+ projects help address them?

Through a keynote presentation and practical workshops, participants had the opportunity to share their experiences and explore examples of best practices in providing CGC support to students from vulnerable groups. Furthermore, participants from 10 different European countries with diverse educational systems and available resources had the opportunity to connect, exchange experiences and share information with colleagues from other countries, and develop ideas for future projects on social inclusion through career guidance services.

This document provides an overview of the sessions, including key points and highlights that can be useful for career practitioners seeking to improve their practice of working with students with disabilities and learning difficulties.

All materials from the sessions can be found on this [**Padlet link**](#).



An inspiring lecture

The keynote speaker, Dejana Mutavdžin, a Teaching Assistant at the University of Belgrade, delivered an inspiring lecture on fostering a more inclusive society, recognizing the career needs of students from vulnerable groups, and providing them with suitable support. Furthermore, there was a discussion on the pros and cons of different disability models. In addition, she presented career development barriers and facilitators, which was highlighted as the most valuable take-away from this session.

The presentation and suggestions for further reading are available on this [Padlet link](#).

Workshops & Exchange of Good Practices

Six different workshops were organized during the event with a strong focus on sharing practical skills and exchanging good practices. During the workshops, representatives of organizations specializing in providing CGC support to clients with disabilities and learning difficulties from five European countries and CGC systems shared their examples of best practices in: ensuring the accessibility of CGC services, motivating students to use CGC services, developing individualized, needs-based and tailored CGC support and adopting available resources and digital tools for providing suitable support to students with disabilities and learning difficulties. The workshops were organized into three thematic blocks, to tackle different aspects of CGC for these students:

1. Ensuring the accessibility of CGC services and motivating students to use CGC support
2. Individualized approach and developing tailored CGC support
3. Using and adapting available resources and digital tools for CGC

All the presentations from the workshops are available on this [Padlet link](#).

1. Ensuring the accessibility of CGC services and motivating students to use CGC support

During this session, participants received guidelines and exchanged examples of good practice on ensuring the accessibility of CGC services to students from vulnerable groups. Providing individualized support and using a strengths-based, biopsychosocial approach was recognized as a valuable mechanism for building partnerships with clients and motivating them to use available CGC services.

During the workshop "Providing Opportunities: Social Impact and Employment Accessibility for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities", Nevena Tomović and Iva Petrović from the **non-profit organization "LiceUlice"** (Belgrade, Serbia) presented their work and explained how this organization supports individuals from marginalized groups using a strength-based, biopsychosocial approach. Participants were introduced to strategies for identifying individual strengths in addressing challenges such as life difficulties and career-related issues. Furthermore, participants were offered recommendations for integrating the biopsychosocial model and strength-based approach when working with a diverse population of beneficiaries, focusing on personalized and resource-oriented counseling. In addition, they shared practical tools for empowering individuals and fostering social inclusion. "Liceulice" is a street paper and a member of INSP – International Network of Street Papers. The concept is also present in other European countries and can be a useful ally for career guidance practitioners seeking alternative employment opportunities for students with disabilities and learning difficulties. For more information about "LiceUlice" and their work, visit liceulice.org

Waltroud Schober from "Wien Work" (Vienna, Austria) presented how this organization supports individuals from vulnerable groups and ensures the accessibility of CGC services. Participants were introduced to the Austrian system of youth coaching, framework conditions and the case management method. Furthermore, the specialized methodology of Youth Coaching for supporting young people in professional transitions was explained, with a special focus on ensuring the accessibility of CGC services for students from vulnerable groups. The Zurich Resource Model was also presented. More information about "Wien Work" and the Youth Coaching Methodology is available at: wienwork.at.



2. Individualized approach and developing tailored CGC support

Participants received guidelines and exchanged examples of good practice on developing client-centered and tailored support for individuals from vulnerable groups. Furthermore, they were introduced to a valuable tool for career exploration and a comprehensive model for providing career support to clients from vulnerable groups.

Heleri Tumm-Must and Aivi Sobak from the **"Astangu" organization** (Tallin, Estonia) presented JobPics – a picture-based career counseling tool designed to empower youth, particularly those with learning disabilities, to explore career options and identify their interests. Through interactive activities, participants learned how to support youth in recognizing their interests and potential value in the job market using this tool. In addition, participants explored methods for mapping out achievable pathways towards desired careers, based on the Jobpics framework. More information about the "Astangu" organization and their work is available at: astangu.ee.



The second workshop in this session focused on presenting a specialized programme for supporting students from vulnerable groups in their transition from education to the labor market – "From School to Life". The facilitator of the workshop, Katarina Medzihorska from the Vocational School of Transport in Zvolen, Slovakia, explained how the comprehensive approach fosters partnership building and cooperation, encourages clients to take responsibility and see themselves as experts in their own lives. In addition, the workshop highlighted that focusing on a strength-based, client-centred approach, taking baby steps and fostering a psycho-social support network for the client, are essential elements in the counselling process.



3. Using and adopting available resources and digital tools for CGC

The last session block outlined tools and resources developed for supporting students from vulnerable groups. Facilitators from Serbia and Germany presented digital platforms specially designed to support people with disabilities and learning difficulties in their transition to the labor market.

The first workshop in this session focused on presenting the digital platform **zaposljavanje.fmi.rs**, developed for connecting job-seekers with employers. Furthermore, Milica Glišić from the **organization “Youth Disabilities Forum – YDF”** (Belgrade, Serbia) presented their work and explained how this organization uses a comprehensive approach to fostering social integration and labor market transition of young people with disabilities. In addition, participants were introduced to individualized career counselling sessions and group soft skills training diverse CGC services provided by YDF within career centers in six cities in Serbia. More information about the “YDF” organization and their work is available at: **fmi.rs**.





Lisann Hansen from the “KulturLife” organization (Kiel, Germany) presented PlainVET – a specialized platform developed for supporting young people with learning difficulties in their transition to the labor market. The platform uses plain language to help students with intellectual difficulties to easily understand tips for developing career management skills (e.g. how to write a CV and a cover letter). Through interactive activities, participants got the opportunity to rewrite a text using plain language. More information about the PlainVET project is available at: kultur-life.de.

Contact

More information about the LTA initiative “Enhancing Inclusion through Guidance” is available on the [Salto Inclusion Education website](#), where you can also find information on future activities and materials within the LTA. If you are interested in joining the initiative, please contact the Serbian National Agency – Foundation Tempus (tcas@tempus.ac.rs).





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