

**Careers Guidance Exchange Programme  
Naples 17-21<sup>st</sup> May 2004**



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## Introduction

The following report has been compiled from a recent European Guidance Exchange Programme in Naples. Organised by Careers Europe, the exchange was part of the European Commission's *Leonardo Da Vinci programme (phase two)*, introduced to encourage and promote lifelong learning across Europe.

An essential part of the programme is to feed back and evaluate a day-to-day diary of the activities undertaken throughout the placement for dissemination purposes. Therefore, the following report has been compiled to share this information with colleagues and external agencies with whom I work directly and in partnership with.

Comparisons of different European systems will be compared, however due to such vast information I have included a list of useful websites in the bibliography for further research purposes.

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## Day One: Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May

### Introductions and Fondazione IDIS - "Citta Della Scienza"

The day begins with me meeting my European counterparts, to which I discover consists of five French, two Czech Republicans, three Hungarians, four Finnish, one Belgian, two Icelandic and one person from Wales.

We meet at Citta Della Scienza, a science centre in Naples which has become a European cultural centre established to promote science, technology, art and culture. As a cultural "city" or citta we discover that it is recognised by the European Commission as an approved European centre.

Warmly greeted by our Italian hosts and given our programme for the week we are introduced to the Citta Della Scienza and discover it was previously a steel factory in the mid-nineteenth century. De-industrialisation and loss of jobs (15,000) created this centre, which, now restored and restructured serves and accommodates the local community and businesses in its mission to spread scientific culture and innovation. Chosen because of its geographical location, we learn it has four archaeological sites and volcanic land, thus making it a good scientific area to invest in.

Having established its history, we understand that with the south of Italy being less developed than the north, the centre aims to address this as an economic and ecological project, creating jobs and stimulating people. As a new generation organisation it has:

1. A BIC -Business Innovation Centre which supports local businesses
2. A Science Centre which attracts visitors and schools as a centre for education and life-long training
3. A centre for guidance of further education and careers
4. Meeting and conference facilities to provide an art, science and cultural meeting place.

As a non-profit making organisation it is 70% self-financed through the services and activities it provides in Italy and Europe, the rest is covered by government grants.

## "YOUNG"

Before our tour of the centre we learn about "Young" which is a project for young people in Italy who truant. It appears that in Italy issues such as poor or lack of housing, poverty in families with no father figure and unemployment, running at 27-35% (55% women), Naples has an almost third world situation.

As a research project, co-financed by the European Commission, Young is part of the Leonardo Da Vinci Programme due to be completed in 2005. With partners including Careers Europe and the Regional education Office of Campania (Naples) the project is designed to combat underage employment and school truancy in Europe. With the target group of 15-17 year olds the project has three phases:

1. Research, analyse and share statistical data regarding school truancy and child labour in Italy, France, Hungary, Austria, Romania and the United Kingdom.
2. Establish an integrated model to combat truancy and child labour in Europe
3. Testing of the model and dissemination of information on the project's final outcome at national and European level.

Before lunch the group are given a tour of the centre, the science centre being the most stimulating. Amongst herds of school children, we are presented with an assortment of interactive scientific experiments, one of which relating to electricity and static proves to be literally "hair raising" as one member of the group demonstrates! By the afternoon it becomes clearly obvious that the centre is a great success and an inspiration for all.

### Italian Education

After lunch, we are introduced to the education and training system in Italy, which was reformed in 2003. We discover that primary education begins at 6 years, followed by 11-14 years at lower secondary and at this stage students decide whether to follow an academic or vocational route within further education. The academic route consists of eight specific pathways: arts, Classical, Economics, Languages, Music, Science, Technology or Human Sciences. For vocational training apprentices must be aged from 15 - 18 years to complete compulsory education and training and from 18-29 years for occupationally based training.

The evening follows with us having dinner offered by our hosts at an authentic Italian restaurant in the centre of Naples. In summary, a lovely start to the programme, enabling the group to relax and mix after an informative day.

## Day Two

### Presentations: Guidance

All participants arrive at Citta Della Scienza with plenty of information and presentations in tow. As part of the exchange we are expected to present our individual country's education and guidance systems, thus sharing good practice across Europe. In terms of guidance we cover topics such as provision, training/qualifications required for practitioners, client groups and their entitlement, use and availability of resources including ICT and information about quality standards. We find ourselves absorbing a variety of information which is summarised below:

### Italy

We begin with Italy and establish that the Ministry of Education and Labour is in charge of policies. There is no legal framework in Italy and since the late 1990s guidance policies shifted from central to regional control. With no guidance associations recognised at ministerial level there is no national system for accreditation of guidance structures. However, guidance is offered in guidance centres and schools in fragmented parts of Italy and increasing links in Europe are a way of helping them develop and progress.

### France

Practitioners of guidance require a Psychology degree and undergo teacher training. Guidance is free for all client groups in lower and higher secondary schools, career offices, prisons and universities, the latter being independent can only offer a small service to under/graduates, however they can visit career offices.

## **Iceland**

Since 1990 guidance training requires either a degree in education or Psychology plus teacher training and in September 2004 a compulsory masters programme will be introduced. Guidance is freely available to all in schools and universities however the service provision is not advertised and there are no guidance centres. There is a growing private careers counselling service in Iceland and a Guidance Counsellors Association with 120 members.

## **Hungary**

A degree and postgraduate qualification is required for guidance training in Hungary. Guidance is available in schools and job centres and additionally, some non-profit organisations dealing with unemployed people offer guidance. Often previously unemployed themselves, they do not have guidance qualifications, which highlights the fact that there is no guidance framework in place. This has implications as Hungary has a 6.7% unemployment rate and with a growing East and West divide, West being more developed than the East, unemployment is higher in the East. Therefore there is a greater need for guidance in the East than West.

## **Belgium**

Guidance training requires a Psychology degree with no specific studies in education, however there is an element of education included in the final year, assessed via exams.

With 3 ministers responsible for guidance and education in Belgium there is a strong guidance provision, especially in schools, available via group work and one to one interviews. Employment centres offer life long guidance to all client groups and there are no specific centres for adults only.

## **Virgiliano Park**

Late afternoon we break from the presentations and with a short bus ride visit "Parco Virgiliano", a beautiful park overlooking the beautiful bay of Naples and Versuvious (see front page of report). We discover from the presentations that we all have something to learn from each other.

## Day Three

At Citta Della Scienza we continue with yesterday's presentations, beginning with:

### Finland

The Education and labour authorities have the main responsibility for the organisation of guidance and counselling services in the public sector. Free guidance is available to all whether employed or unemployed, which is divided by a) educational institutions offering guidance to students and b) employment offices offering guidance to those outside the education and training system.

Immigrants permanently living in Finland are supported in many ways with international employment consultants in the large employment offices. Five months after immigration they are given a 3 year personal integration plan to assist them find work and acquire Finnish/Swedish language skills. This can involve labour market training courses and the use of interpretation services.

Guidance training requires a) a specific guidance counselling degree programme, b) a degree and teacher training qualification.

### England

Regarding guidance training I describe the Diploma and NVQ pathways in Guidance and introduce the Connexions Personal Adviser qualifications, which have evolved over the past few years. At this point I describe the guidance provision being, a) Connexions and their 13-19 year statutory client group and b) IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance), a network of agencies working in partnership to provide free impartial and confidential guidance to all adults.

I introduce the guidance provision at Barnet College within context of the whole student services department. I complete the presentation by introducing them to useful resources and the Matrix guidance accreditation process, which recognised by the Guidance Council, sets a national standard of quality.

## **Wales**

Since 2001 *Careers Wales* is responsible for providing free impartial careers advice and information and guidance for all ages. It consists of seven careers companies and works in partnership with schools, colleges, training providers, employers and community based groups. Adults receive free guidance in community education and employers are offered a free recruitment service when employing school/college leavers. Fees are charged for advice and guidance and redundancy counselling.

## **Education in Europe**

With all participants explaining their education systems, we firstly establish that, although different, most involve compulsory Primary education commencing around 5/6 years of age. Secondly, students generally start making academic or vocational decisions around 14 years of age. Choosing university as in the United Kingdom depended on family income, guidance, motivation and general state of the economy.

## **Information and communication Technology (ICT)**

In preparation for the afternoon we are given a group exercise to assess the use of ICT in guidance, establishing that ICT covers use of the internet/chat/discussion rooms, email, telephone, video conferencing and text messaging. This generates much discussion amongst practitioners in which issues such as confidentiality, accuracy, cost, technical problems, time management and impersonal service are raised. We are given a written exercise to feedback overall thoughts later on.

## **Video conferencing**

After lunch we continue with the subject of ICT in guidance and are given an interactive demonstration with Cristina Coghi, who we establish is involved in the research project "ICT Skills for Guidance Counsellors". Financed by the European Commission in the Leonardo Da Vinci programme framework, we learn that the project's objective is all about identifying ICT skills required by guidance practitioners, meeting professional standards and ethical principles.

The demonstration includes us all having a microphone with Cristina talking to us from her desk in Bologna. We see her on a computer screen

and questions are put to her which demonstrates the use of video conferencing in guidance. However, technical problems such as poor vision and delayed response highlighted the limitations of this technique.

### **Ariadne Project**

Via video conferencing we are introduced to the "Ariadne project" by Ralf Stenered, a Careers Counsellor from Sweden. Despite some technical problems, we learn that as a project it offers guidelines for internet based guidance for adults. As a project due for completion October 2004 it aims to provide a training model for professionals to use ICT in guidance. Partners consist of the UK (University of East London, Careers Europe), Italy, Romania and Sweden.

### **Day four**

#### **Eurodesk, Citta Della Scienza**

Thursday morning we are introduced to "Eurodesk Italy" by Giovanni Maccioni and discover it is a database for targeted young people (ages 15-25 years) and those who work for them. Full of useful information it covers everything from European culture, to education and training, to the mobility, study, work and leisure in Europe for young people. Launched in Scotland in 1990, it became a UK network in 1991 and a European pilot project in 1994. Since then Eurodesk has become a European network based in Europe with 27 partners across Europe.

With European Commission support (50% grant) other financial support in Italy comes from local relays, whilst other European partners are government funded. Partners have direct contact with the European Commission and undertake research and training to maintain up to date and accurate information.

#### **ICT Guidance Feedback**

Before lunch we are fed back the ICT guidance results from the previous day and because of the technical problems from the video conferencing we are not surprised with them. Firstly, it was generally felt by all that although video conferencing could save time and be used for study-distance learning it was difficult to set up, impersonal and inappropriate

for face to face guidance. However, with improvement it was identified as a future growth area.

It was felt that text messaging was a good method especially in urgent situations, but expensive and not personal. Telephones were perceived as more personal and expressive for guidance but susceptible to technical problems. Email was good for short queries and useful from a first guidance contact point of view. Internet/websites meant easy access to information/links however issues of accuracy, viruses and spam are potential barriers.

### **(CEICC)European Centre for Information, Culture and Citizenship, Naples**

After lunch we visit the CEICC which in the Network of Information Centres of the European Commission has a mission to help establish closer links amongst European citizens. Therefore, information and promotional activities are created to facilitate the integration process with three sub-divided services:

1. Info shop: Information documentation and guidance activities is addressed to the public
2. Research and Promotion: Researches projects and activities aimed at increasing awareness of European issues
3. Expo best practices: Promote active European citizenship and sense of belonging to the wider community than local/national one.

### **Day Five**

#### **Sof-Tel and Teledidactics**

Our final day begins in Naples with a visit to the University of Naples. We summarise the week's events and have a brief overview of the guidance available to undergraduates. Sof-tel coordinates and develops the guidance activities within the university, including the organising of tutorials and promotes links between students and employers. They have a database of students and employers to assist with work experience and employment. Tutors also assist with guidance.

SOF-Tel offers teledidactics, which uses technology to pass information and guidance to students in a practical yet visual way. We are given a

tour which includes viewing a film set where situations are acted, such as someone making a phone call about work and then we are taken to what appears to be a technical sound recording room where the situation is recorded and edited. From this a CD-ROM is made readily available to students who can integrate this within their studies, training and personal development.

### CROSS

Our final part of the guidance exchange involves an introduction to CROSS, who provide an individual outplacement careers counselling and guidance service to employees facing job redundancy. As a free service to the employee it is a transition service with a network present in eight cities and a registered company of the Ministry of Labour.

An outplacement plan offers guidance and counselling, labour market information/job search and mentoring services which serve the employer, employee and trade union by making the transition process emotionally painless, cost friendly, and legally uncomplicated.

## Summary

We complete our week of the guidance exchange and begin reflecting on what has been an amazing week of sharing good practice. Credit to our Italian hosts who have made the week enjoyable, interesting and fun.

There is much to be learnt from this experience on two levels, one in an educational and life long learning sense where we establish that we are united in our work to help people make decisions. On a humanitarian level we discover that as well as in our individual countries, there is much dedication, commitment and goodwill amongst guidance practitioners across Europe in our efforts to help people realise their full potential, both personally and professionally.

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