

Labour market information in lifelong guidance

AO/RPA/PMDFON/LMI in Guidance/007/14

Case study visit focusing on eGuidance, Denmark

prepared for CEDEFOP – European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

Disclaimer

This text is presented in its original form.

It has neither been revised nor edited by Cedefop.

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1. Background information for the case study

The current section starts with a short introduction to the focus of the current case study and the field-visit to Denmark. It continues with a presentation of the host organisation which played a key role in the organisation of the field-visit and ends by providing meaningful information about the Danish labour market and the national career education and vocational guidance system as well as the integration of Labour Market Information (LMI) in this context.

1.1 Field-visit identity

The following Table 1 summarises the main elements of the field-visit, namely the host organisation that facilitated the activities during our visit, the main contact persons and the timing of the visit:

Table 1: Main elements of the field visit

County in focus	Denmark
Host organisation	Division for Guidance of the Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality (http://eng.uvm.dk/)
Focus of the case study	eGuidance (eVejledning): A digital guidance service which assists people across Denmark to make important choices with respect to their career and education by providing them with information and advice via a broad range of virtual communication means such as phone, email, online chat, text messages and social media.
Location(s)	(a) Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality (http://eng.uvm.dk/) – Copenhagen (b) National Agency for IT and Learning (http://www.stil.dk/Service/English) – Copenhagen (c) Youth Guidance Centre of Copenhagen (http://www.uu.kk.dk/uu-copenhagen-youth-guidance-centre-copenhagen) – Copenhagen (d) Regional Guidance Centre of Copenhagen (http://www.studievalg.dk/kbh) – Copenhagen (e) Copenhagen Hospitality College (http://www.hrs.dk/copenhagen-hospitality-college) – Copenhagen
Contact persons	Host Organisation (a) Jørgen Brock – National Adviser at the Department for Youth Education and Vocational Adult Education and Training of the Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality (jb@uvm.dk , +45 33 925 000) Contractor (a) Iakovos Delioglani – Project Manager at Q-PLAN INTERNATIONAL LTD (delioglani@qplan.gr , +30 2310 411 191) (b) Kostas Giagtzoglou – Consultant at Q-PLAN INTERNATIONAL LTD (giagtzoglou@qplan.gr , +30 2310 411 191)
Dates of field-visit	7-9 September 2015

1.2 Background on the host organisation

The **Division for Guidance** is part of the Danish Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality and has the overall responsibility for guidance within the educational system in Denmark. In fact, all legislation pertaining to guidance in the frame of compulsory and youth education (especially regarding the transition from compulsory to youth education), falls under the responsibility of the Division, which also prepares, implements and monitors any relevant legislative reforms.

As foreseen by Danish law, the Division has the obligation to serve as a National Resource Centre for Guidance, planning and running (among others) surveys, research and evaluations. The national guidance web-portal (i.e. the “Education Guide” – <http://www.ug.dk>) and its wealth of information on the Danish education system and labour market as well as the eGuidance service are both managed and operated by the National Agency for IT and Learning of the Division.

Finally, the Division is actively involved in international cooperation in the field of guidance. Participation in the international network ELGPN has been an important part of its work in the field of EU agenda and instrumental for developing strategies in line with the EU Resolution on Lifelong Guidance as well as with EU and OECD recommendations on guidance policies and practices.

1.3 Background on the labour market and integration of LMI

In order to analyse eGuidance, we need to place it into the context of the overall characteristics of the labour market in Denmark as well as of the national career guidance and vocational education system. To this end, this section provides meaningful information about the general context of LMI in Denmark along with some additional insights into the Danish labour market as well as an overview of the main elements of career guidance and vocational education within the country.

1.3.1 General context of LMI in Denmark

A shift towards a more active labour market policy has been witnessed in Denmark after the labour market reforms of the 1990s. The aim of the reform has been to upgrade the skills of the unemployed as a means of equipping them to take advantage of new job opportunities, while equally strengthening their right to draw unemployment benefits in conjunction with their obligation to be available for work. Thus activation became not just a right but a duty for all the unemployed. The various Activation programmes include general and vocational guidance, job search assistance, individual job-oriented action plans, private and public job training, education, leave schemes, job rotation and the sharing of full-time jobs.

According to the Government’s strategy for education and lifelong learning, skills upgrading makes new demands and presents new challenges with regard to the future organisation and development of the education system and adult education and continuing training. Demands are made especially on educational institutions and enterprises and on the way in which relevant players can all contribute to the further development of a culture of lifelong learning. Towards that, a very important challenge is to strengthen the interaction between the education sector, working life and the learning which takes place during leisure time.

The constant changes in the labour market and in society make new demands on the skills and adaptability of individuals. Participation in adult education and continuing training help individuals participate actively in the labour market throughout their lives. The competitiveness

of Danish enterprises and the quality of their services is largely dependent on investment in continuing training and competence development. An increased effort in adult education and continuing training at all levels, promoting lifelong skills upgrading for all, is therefore necessary for the development of Denmark as a leading knowledge society and plays an important role in the national strategy for lifelong learning.

Dual training systems (students alternate between periods spent at a training placement, generally in an enterprise, and periods of college-based learning where social partners play a key role in relation to both the content and organisation of VET) for vocational education and the introduction of regulated traineeships including in further education, seem to ease the transition from school to work for young people. Hence, the traditional strong partnership with the social partners that characterises the Danish VET system is instrumental in ensuring the responsiveness of education and training provision to the changing needs of the labour market, enabling both enterprises and individuals to adjust their skills and competences accordingly.

National trade committees and national advisory councils on vocational upper secondary education and training (Rådet for de Grundlæggende Erhvervsrettede Uddannelser, REU) and on adult education and continuing training (Rådet for Voksen- og Efteruddannelse, VEU) are responsible for updating VET programmes and ensuring that they integrate the skill and competence needs of the labour market at national level.

In a report on modernising VET, the Ministry of Children and Education put forward an idea of centralising VET analysis and forecasting to ensure that new skills demands, changing labour market conditions and new occupational profiles are detected earlier than today. As a consequence, the ministry launched a survey of the trade committees' analysis and prognosis practices to clarify the need for supplementary analyses and prognoses. Since 2008, the ministry has gathered these activities in the 'central analysis and prognosis unit' with the specific goal of matching VET provision to labour market needs.

1.3.2 Career education and vocational guidance

In Denmark, priority is given to educational and vocational guidance for young people. The Danish Act on guidance aims to develop a transparent guidance system with easy access to high quality guidance services. This Act supports the Danish Government's declared goals that by 2015 95% of all young people should complete a youth education programme and that by 2020 60% should complete a higher educational programme.

In this respect, guidance is regarded as a continuous process which shall help young people become more conscious of their abilities, interests and possibilities, thus enabling them to make decisions regarding education and employment on a qualified basis. The institution responsible for guidance and for having a controlling and coordinating role in relation to the guidance system is the Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality and the Ministry for Higher Education and Science.

Provision of high quality guidance services is important at all levels of the education system. Starting with general career education in form one of in the Folkeskole and delivering of guidance from form 7, pupils are gradually prepared for making their first educational and vocational decisions. There have been some changes made in the Danish guidance system since its reform on 2004. Therefore, three types of independent guidance centres provide guidance in relation to the transitions from one level of the education system to another:

(a) fifty six Youth Guidance Centres (Ungdommens Uddannelsesvejledning) which are distributed among the 98 municipalities in Denmark. These centres provide guidance services for young people up to the age of 25 years, focusing on the transition from compulsory to youth education. Youth guidance centres assess the extent to which young people have the academic/vocational, personal and social competencies to begin and complete an upper

secondary education. In cooperation with the school principals, the youth guidance centres organise guidance activities at schools – close to the pupils. Teachers are responsible for the provision of general career education from form one to form nine, but the youth guidance centres serve as a source of coordination, inspiration and further development in this area. The centres are obliged to establish contact with young people under the age of 25 who have not completed a youth education programme and are outside the education system or the labour market. Together with the individual young person, the guidance counsellors discuss different opportunities and schemes that may help them get back into education, training or employment;

(b) seven Regional Guidance Centres (Studievalg) deal with the transition from youth education to higher education. These centres provide guidance for students in youth education programmes and young people and adults outside the education system who wish to enter a higher education programme. These regional guidance centres are funded by the Ministry of Higher Education and Science which also has the overall responsibility for the centres. The centres have been selected after a call for tenders and operate on the basis of a contract with the Ministry. The centres are obliged to format a quality assurance system and, therefore, are required to carry out an annual report on the results of each centre's quality assurance system whereby the users are involved in their evaluation;

(c) eGuidance which can be reached by e-mail, chat, phone, text message or social media seven days a week from morning to evening. eGuidance is for all citizens – young persons and adults. eGuidance was launched in January 2011;

The Danish guidance system also consists of the following elements:

(a) the national guidance portal: <http://www.ug.dk> is an ICT-based career information and guidance portal. The portal provides citizens – young people and adults – with substantial career information in order for them to make qualified decisions about education, training and career;

(b) thirteen Centres for Adult education and continuing training which provide guidance for adults, either employed or unemployed, in the field of further adult education. At the centres guidance counsellors provide free and non-binding career guidance to companies as well as to individuals. People in employment or outside the labour market can get an overview over the various education and training programmes. They will receive an individual plan for their further education and training, which can lead them towards their career target.

Another important feature of the Danish guidance system is the National Dialogue Forum which take place three to four times per year. Denmark has a long tradition of cross-sectoral cooperation on guidance issues at national, regional and local levels. At national level, this is achieved through this Forum which aims to:

(a) to develop and enhance the level of quality in Danish guidance services; and

(b) to secure a close dialogue between the Minister and relevant organisations, institutions, guidance counsellor associations and individuals holding a leading position in Danish guidance.

Finally, one of the main objectives of the Danish guidance system as means of professionalising the Danish guidance services offered, is to improve the qualifications and competencies of guidance practitioners. Consequently, one common training programme is offered to guidance counsellors from all sectors. It is a requirement that educational guidance practitioners complete the diploma or master programme in educational and vocational guidance or the bachelor's degree programme in public administration. Alternatively, guidance

practitioners with extensive experience in the field can apply for assessment and recognition of their competencies and prior learning.

Cooperation across sectors is a key issue in the act on guidance. The aim is to ensure a **coherent guidance system** and a regular exchange of experiences, knowledge and best practice.

2. Initiative in focus: eGuidance

2.1 Objectives

eGuidance (eVejledning) is a digital guidance service launched in 2011 by the Danish Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality with a view to enhancing and complementing the already existing offers of the national guidance system (e.g. Youth Guidance Centres, Regional Guidance Centres, etc.).

The service is integrated within the national guidance web-portal “Education Guide” and operated by the National Agency for IT and Learning (Figure 1). It mainly targets young people in order to support their upper secondary and higher education choices, thus empowering them to advance their education and career selection process on their own. However, eGuidance also supports the career management and skill development of all citizens, regardless of their age, by offering them an overview of career opportunities following the completion of their education and training, as well as by introducing them to adult and continuing (vocational) education and training opportunities.

Figure 1: eGuidance home page

om eVejledning
[eVejlednings tilbud - samlet oversigt](#)

Åbningstider
Mandag - torsdag: kl. 9: -21
Fredag: kl. 9-16
Lørdag: kl. 12-16
Søndag: kl. 12-21

eVejledning

Chat
med en eVejleder.

Ring og sms på 70 2222 07
Ring og få vejledning om dine uddannelsesplaner.

Mail
Send en mail, du får svar i løbet af 24 timer

Digitale møder
Brug for ny viden og inspiration? Deltag i eVejlednings digitale møder.

eVejledning på Facebook
Følg os og giv dit bidrag på vores Facebookside.

eVejledning på Twitter
Følg eVejledning på Twitter.

Facebook til forældre
Få svar på dine spørgsmål på facebook-siden ForældreGuiden - om unges valg af uddannelse

At chatte med eVejledning
Hvordan kommer eleverne i gang med at chatte og få et udbytte af det?

Digitalt møde om at søge videregående uddannelse i kvote 2
Få gode råd og vejledning om at kvalificere sig til optagelse gennem kvote 2

All in all, **eGuidance** addresses the needs of everyone who is faced with an important education and/or career decision by conveniently providing them with **independent**

information and personalised guidance through a wide variety of **virtual communication channels** (e.g. telephone, online chat, email, SMS, social media, etc.) every day of the week.

2.2 Implementation

Career guidance and information provided in the framework of **eGuidance** are tailored to the needs of the following **target groups**:

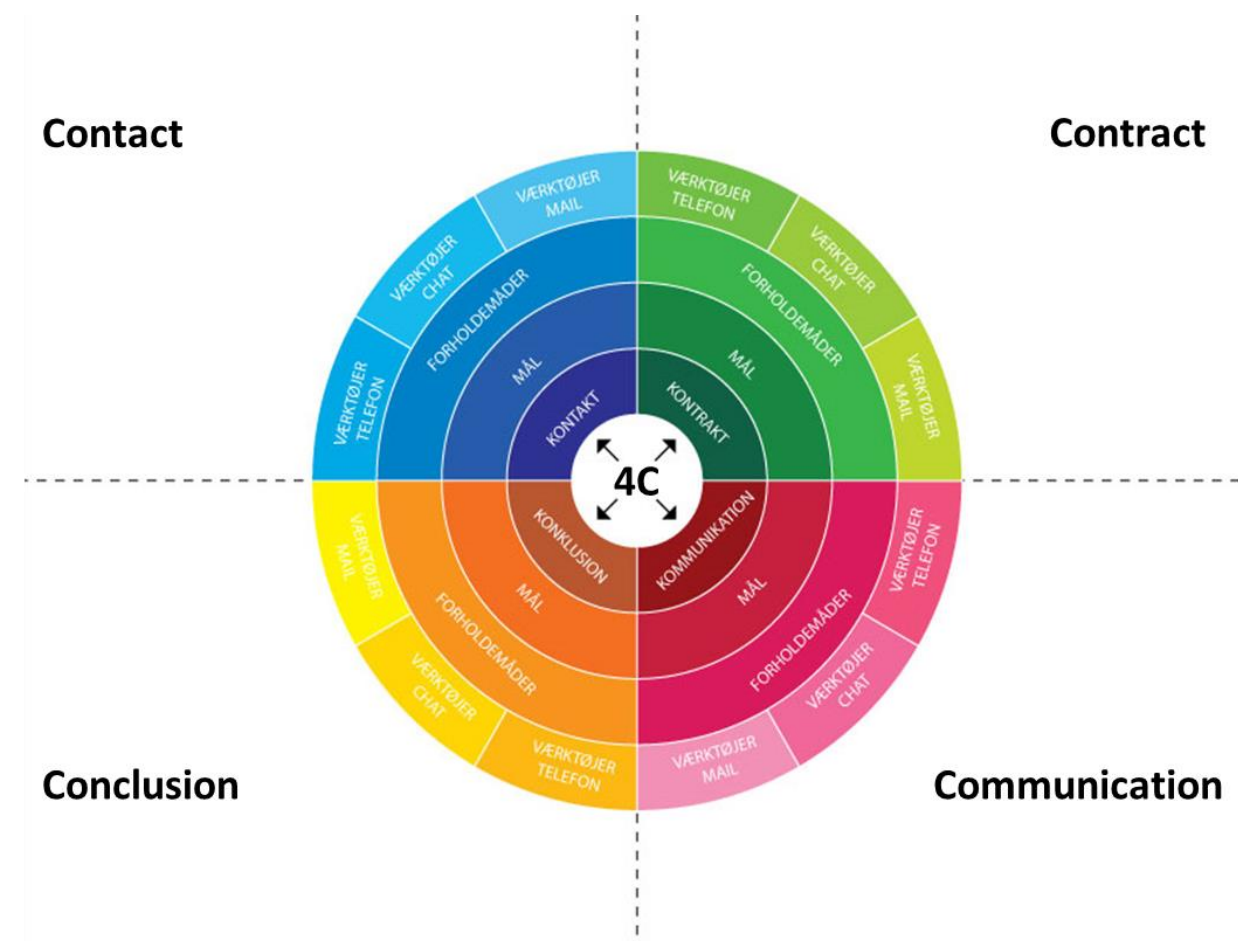
(a) young pupils in lower secondary education who are at the doorstep of upper secondary education following their ninth or 10th year of compulsory education;

(b) adolescents in upper secondary education who wish to make the transition towards higher education;

(c) adults who are interested in receiving continuing (vocational) education and training or in following a relevant programme within the youth or higher education system.

In order to effectively interact with and provide personalised guidance to the abovementioned target groups, eGuidance counsellors employ a **tailored guidance model developed in-house in order to facilitate the virtual sessions** that they have with their clients - the **4C model** (Figure 2).

Figure 2: The 4C eGuidance model



The 4C model was developed specifically to fit the unique, virtual interactions of eGuidance counsellors based on the models of Gerard Egan, Carl Rogers and Gunnel Lindh and consists

of **four distinct phases**: (i) **Contact**; (ii) **Contract**; (iii) **Communication**; and (iv) **Conclusion**. Each phase entails a specific way of engaging with the client and has different objectives and content as follows:

(a) the Contact phase serves as the starting point of the model and aims at establishing and maintaining a good relationship with the clients. The guidance counsellor emphasises on actively listening to the clients so as to understand their situation and provide them with personalised advice while at the same time encouraging them to reflect on their own needs and interests;

(b) the Contract phase is aimed at co-defining along with the clients the focal issue of the virtual guidance session. This is achieved with the help of targeted questions such as: *“What shall we start talking about?”* or *“What question would you like to have answered?”*. Counsellors often return to this phase as the virtual guidance session progresses and new questions / issues emerge based on their discussion with the clients;

(c) communication is the phase during which counsellors process the information that they receive from their clients and try to place their issue into perspective. To this end, eGuidance counsellors interact with their clients with questions / remarks such as *“Is it okay that I provide you with some links through the chat?”*, *“One moment please. I am just trying to find an answer”*, *“Let me ask a colleague and I will get back to you in a few minutes”*, etc.;

(d) conclusion refers to the phase during which the counsellor provides clients with information and/or instructions with respect to the focal issue defined during the Contract phase and proceeds to evaluate their readiness to act. Instructions typically involve looking directly into a suggested education or career path and reflecting on different options. For instance, a counsellor may suggest that the client looks for further information about certain training programmes or jobs by visiting the “Education Guide” or even other relevant websites and initiating another virtual guidance session after putting some thought into the available options. Depending on the case, referring the clients to other suitable guidance units (e.g. Youth Guidance Centre, Regional Guidance Centres, etc.) is also possible.

The 4C model is accompanied and supplemented by a dedicated **tool kit** with **recommended approaches** (e.g. an exploratory and challenging approach for the communication phase, an experimental approach for the conclusion phase, etc.) and **examples of questions** that counsellors can employ during each phase to effectively interact with their clients. In addition to the aforementioned, the tool kit also includes **guidelines** to assist eGuidance counsellors in tackling the challenges that the different virtual communication channels employed in the framework of eGuidance imply.

In particular, the **virtual communication channels** employed by eGuidance counsellors encompass:



Online chat: Guidance via chat is the most popular form of contact for the younger target groups of eGuidance. The counsellors properly adapt their chatting style to each client, so as to facilitate the discussion and allow them to more easily talk about their current situation. During the session, they share links with the clients, who are also given the opportunity to go through them together. Finally, the counsellors frequently summarise key points of the chatting session to ensure that progress is being made at all areas necessary.



Telephone: Engaging with clients via telephone requires the undivided attention of the counsellor so as to avoid any potential gaps in the discussion. The counsellors listen closely to the clients, adapt their communication style accordingly and provide clients with enough time and space to reflect. Similarly to the online chat, the counsellors frequently sum-

up the progress of the conversation before moving on with the session (e.g. by asking “*Are we heading towards the right direction?*”). Contacting eGuidance via SMS is also possible. However, this channel is only used by few clients who, more often than not, have a very specific question. Answers provided this way are quite short and in case necessary clients are asked to contact eGuidance counsellors through a different channel.



Webinars / digital meetings: This channel is employed for providing collective guidance to a group of clients. It includes webinars given to entire classrooms along with their teachers as well as digital meetings for which different clients across Denmark who share common interests (e.g. students about to complete upper secondary education and interested in choosing and applying for admission to a higher education institution) are invited to attend via distance participation.



Email: This channel provides eGuidance counsellors and their clients with an asynchronous channel of communication. As such, counsellors are provided with plenty of time to properly answer the questions of their clients. At the same time, clients are provided with the opportunity to carefully consider the answers provided by eGuidance counsellors, reflect on their situation and potentially come up with further questions they would like to ask. In practice, the first response to an email of a client is typically a request for more information. Many further emails may follow as clients provide additional information regarding their situation and interests. However, there are also cases which counsellors can provide a full answer and therefore clients are not required to write back and continue the dialogue.



Social Media: The eGuidance Facebook page ⁽¹⁾ provides an alternative, contemporary way for clients to interact with counsellors as well as with each other as the activity on its wall is visible to the public. Indeed, interactions on Facebook may be between the counsellor and an individual client or even several clients who are taking part in a debate and help each other. Any questions made by the clients are initially answered by the counsellor, who is also responsible for filtering any external responses in order to ensure that only helpful comments are made available to the public. eGuidance also maintains an active Twitter account, which clients can follow to get informed on interesting topics on a variety of themes revolving around education and employment.

The broad spectrum of communication means employed by eGuidance counsellors enable them to provide a convenient guidance offering to clients across Denmark seven days a week ⁽²⁾. In this context, **the main tool utilised by eGuidance counsellors to deliver LMI to their clients is the Danish guidance web-portal “Education Guide”** (Figure 3), which is also operated and maintained by the National Agency for IT and Learning.

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.facebook.com/eVeiledning?sk=wall>

⁽²⁾ The eGuidance service is available from Monday until Thursday from 9.00 to 21.00, on Friday from 9.00 to 16.00, on Saturday from 12.00 to 16.00 and from 12.00 to 21.00 on Sunday.

Figure 3: Home page of the “Education Guide” guidance web-portal

The screenshot shows the home page of the UddannelsesGuiden web-portal. At the top, there is a search bar and the logo of the Undervisningsministeriet. Below this is a navigation bar with five tabs: 'UDDANNELSER TIL UNGE', 'VIDEREGÅENDE UDDANNELSER', 'VOKSEN- OG EFTERUDDANNELSER', 'JOB', and 'FÅ INSPIRATION'. The main content area is divided into several sections, each with a representative image and a brief description. The sections include: 'Uddannelser til unge' (10. klasse, erhvervsuddannelse, gymnasial uddannelse eller anden aktivitet), 'Videregående uddannelser' (Bachelor-, kandidat-, professionsbachelor-, erhvervsakademi-, kunstneriske eller maritime uddannelser), 'Voksen- og efteruddannelser' (Kurser, masteruddannelser, diplomuddannelser og enkeltfag), 'Job' (Der findes et utal af job på det danske arbejdsmarked. Her beskrives de mest almindelige af dem.), 'Velkommen til den nye UG' (Nyt design og ny struktur, men samme oplysninger og værktøjer), 'Ny som studerende' (Læs om nogle af de ting, der har betydning for dig, når du begynder på en uddannelse), and 'Spørg en vejleder' (eVejledning vejleder om uddannelsesvalg via chat, mail, sms og telefon). At the bottom of the page is a footer with five columns of links: 'Inspiration' (Få inspiration til lærere og vejledere, interview), 'Om UddannelsesGuiden' (Om ug.dk, Udbyder.ug.dk, Nyheder og RSS, Teknisk information, Cookies), 'Vejledning' (eVejledning, Studievalg, Voksenvejledning, Ungdommens Uddannelsesvejledning), 'Indhold' (Uddannelser, Job og arbejdsmarked, Uddannelsessteder, VidensCenter for vejledning), and 'English' (About UG.dk, Programmes in English).

The “Education Guide” web-portal contains a **wealth of information on:**

(a) education and training opportunities at all levels;

(b) jobs and professions: More than 500 job descriptions are included in the portal, organised in 20 profession areas (e.g. Industrial Production, Textile and Clothing, etc.). Each job description is linked to one or more education and training opportunities and vice versa;






(c) labour market conditions and statistics (e.g. employment prospects, business structure, industries, labour market development, etc);

(d) study programmes taught in English at Danish colleges and universities.

In particular, data from the labour market are collected by the Ministry for Employment (<http://uk.bm.dk/>) as well as Statistics Denmark (<http://www.dst.dk>), the central statistical authority of the country. The collected data are processed and delivered to the ICT specialists of the “Education Guide” ready to be imported to the back end of the web-portal. In the front end of the web-portal, **information provided by the “Education Guide” is organized to focus on specific target groups:** children (and their parents) seeking general or vocational upper secondary education; young and adult students who wish to follow a higher education; and adults seeking continuing (vocational) education and training, jobs and career information.

A dedicated area in the web-portal is addressed to guidance counsellors for professional use providing them with access to novel guidance literature and research and a calendar with relevant events. Other features of the web-portal include a section with an electronic news service and various information and guidance tools (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Indicative information and guidance tools provided by the “Education Guide”

	<p>Education Zoom (Uddannelseszoom): This tool enables clients to make meaningful comparisons between different educational paths or professions (e.g. based on expected wages after graduation, unemployment statistics, etc.).</p>
	<p>Access card (Adgangskortet): Through this tool clients are able to select a list of interesting subjects which they followed during their upper secondary education. Based on their selection, they are subsequently provided with an automatically generated list of relevant higher education paths that they could follow.</p>
	<p>Study Selector (Studievælgeren): The Study Selector is a tool designed to help students to choose an educational path after high school. Clients can choose their interests and in turn receive suggestions on possible educational paths. The choices made are saved and the client has the option to come back and reuse the tool several times.</p>
	<p>Education System (Uddannelsessystemet): This tool presents an overview of the educational system in Denmark. Clients are guided to further information by clicking at the different types of education.</p>
	<p>Job Compass (Jobkompasset): The Job Compass provides an overview of available jobs within different professional areas. After reading about the job, clients can explore various educational possibilities.</p>

2.3 Results and SWOT of eGuidance

Since its launch in 2011, eGuidance has supported the career and education decisions of more than 340,000 individuals across Denmark providing them with personalised guidance and information. In 2014 alone, eGuidance counsellors had more than 95,000 virtual guidance sessions, almost 14% more than 2013. With this in mind, it comes as no surprise that even though this relatively novel guidance service was initially established for a period of two years, its operation is now extended. In fact, as the field visit also indicated, it appears that the popularity of eGuidance is growing amongst the Danish population, creating a positive impact on the national career guidance and education system.

By far the most popular virtual communication channel employed in the framework of eGuidance is the online chat, which accounts for more than 50% of the virtual guidance sessions provided by the service. Through the online chat clients can conveniently and anonymously ask exactly what they want while having the option to leave the conversation whenever they want. Moreover, during the course of the chatting session clients are able to respond at their leisure and thus have enough time to properly reflect on their current situation and possible future choices as suggested by their eGuidance counsellor. Another interesting virtual communication channel employed by eGuidance is social media, which are becoming increasingly popular amongst individuals of all ages (but mostly younger people) and thus provide eGuidance counsellors with an opportune channel to reach prospective clients. Building upon this growing popularity of social media as well as the already high percentage of Facebook users in Denmark (approximately 2,3 million), the eGuidance Facebook page (launched in 2012) has currently more than 17000 followers. Its “wall” provides clients with a digital place to share their experiences and learn from the experience of others as well as with well-tailored advice delivered by eGuidance counsellors.

Overall, as evidenced by the operation of eGuidance for almost four years now, the utilization of virtual communication means in career guidance and education presents unique benefits when compared to more traditional guidance means (e.g. as face-to-face counselling), including

increased flexibility and convenience for clients. Indeed, eGuidance counsellors can provide information and guidance to clients seeking support in choosing their future career and/or education from all over the country regardless of their geographical location. Clients can conveniently access the service through their personal computer or portable devices (e.g. conventional or smart phones, tablets, laptops, etc.) all seven days of the week. Furthermore, the anonymity implied by some of these virtual communication channels allows clients that are “shy” and/or afraid to share their personal story to overcome their inhibitions and receive meaningful advice tailored to their particular situation and interests without exposing their identity.

At the same time, however, virtual guidance has also unique implications. Inherently the service is addressed to clients that possess the level of ICT literacy required to use the virtual communication channels employed by eGuidance. Ownership of or access to appropriate infrastructure and tools is also a requirement (e.g. an eGuidance client needs to own or at least have access to a telephone, an internet connection, etc.). Another important implication is that the guidance approaches employed by eGuidance counsellors need to be adapted to the particularities of each different channel (e.g. the approach used to communicate with clients through the online chat is not entirely suitable for guidance sessions via telephone). In this respect, the 4C model provides an overall guidance approach as well as specific guidelines for each channel so as to ensure that each session will follow a consistent structure leading to a concrete guidance outcome and ideally, action on the side of the client, regardless of the channel. Still, the nature of certain channels may have a direct effect on the guidance practice employed. For instance, the algorithm of Facebook requires eGuidance counsellors to maintain constant activity on the eGuidance Facebook page in order for their posts to appear on the newsfeed of the client. This is why a different eGuidance counsellor is appointed as responsible for managing the Facebook page of the service each day with a view to addressing questions posted by clients and at the same time maintaining the required page traffic.

Effective management of the channels used to reach and communicate with prospective client is of utmost importance for eGuidance. With this in mind, management level executives of the service as well as the counsellors themselves constantly monitor the popularity of the channels used, which may decline in the future and thus require the utilisation of different channels and consequently, the development of novel guidance approaches. This is why eGuidance has established several feedback mechanisms (e.g. user surveys delivered through Facebook, Google Analytics, data gathered by eGuidance counsellors, etc.) to collect information that can help improve the effectiveness of both eGuidance as well as of other guidance units. In fact, experiences gained through the operation of eGuidance are communicated to other career and education counsellors across Denmark through newsletters, articles and presentations at various conferences.

In order to tackle the challenges implied by digital guidance practices, eGuidance employs 40 well-skilled counsellors, all of whom have considerable guidance and ICT competencies as well as a good knowledge of the entire Danish (vocational) education and guidance system. In addition, they are supported by a systemised structure of knowledge and information sharing while the “Education Guide” serves as their principal source for LMI. Only 15 employees work full-time for eGuidance. The rest are part-time employees and work for eGuidance either 40% or 60% of their time (i.e. two to three work days per week). Part time employees are also employed in other guidance units (i.e. Youth Guidance Centres, regional Guidance Centres or even Job Centres). As such, eGuidance is able to maintain close communication channels and cooperate with the several guidance centres in Denmark.

The following table summarises the main conclusions that the field-visit team has drawn from the implementation and results of eGuidance in the form of a SWOT analysis (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats).

Strengths

- (a) Unique benefits implied by the utilisation of virtual communication channels to deliver career guidance and information (e.g. anonymity, increased convenience, asynchronous communication, etc.);
- (b) Availability of the eGuidance service seven days a week;
- (c) Guidance approaches are tailored to the particularities of each channel and guided by a well-structured communication model (i.e. The 4 C model), which was developed based on academic literature;
- (d) Well-developed feedback mechanisms to monitor and improve the performance of the eGuidance service (e.g. user surveys delivered through Facebook, google analytics, data gathered by eGuidance counsellors, etc);
- (e) Well-skilled counsellors with strong guidance and ICT competencies who have a good knowledge of the entire Danish (vocational) education and guidance system;
- (f) A good ICT system which facilitates knowledge and information sharing amongst eGuidance counsellors;
- (g) Close collaboration and synergies developed with the other guidance centres in Denmark aimed at improving the effectiveness of both eGuidance as well as other guidance counsellors.

Weaknesses

- (a) Unique challenges implied by virtual guidance practices (e.g. clients need to have ICT skills, access to an internet connection, etc);
- (b) Dependence of guidance practices on how certain channels function.

Opportunities

- (a) Increasing penetration of smart phones and internet services;
- (b) Growing popularity of social media amongst all ages and especially younger people.

Threats

- (a) The popularity of certain virtual communication channels may decline in the future and thus affect the current practices of eGuidance.

3. Transferability and developments towards the future

In order to assess the potential of transferring the ICT-fuelled practices employed by the eGuidance service to other national contexts, it is important to consider the main elements of the educational and guidance system in Denmark which led to the launch of the service and facilitate its operation since then. In particular, the following contextual parameters have to be taken into account:

(a) existence of an ambitious political vision for the future of career guidance and education: The education and career guidance system in Denmark is driven by a strong political vision. Following the education act of 2004, in 2010 the Danish Parliament adopted the "Ungepakke 2", according to which 95% of all young people in Denmark should complete a youth education programme by 2015 and accordingly, 60% should complete a higher education programme by 2020. The eGuidance service was launched with the (financial) support of the Danish Government within this context with a view to achieving these ambitious political goals for the future;

(b) a well-structured guidance system which consists of guidance centres that address all age groups and complement each other: The eGuidance service was launched within the guidance system of Denmark in order to complement and enhance the already existing and well-developed guidance services in the country provided at regional/local level. The Youth Guidance Centres target pupils in lower secondary education and young people up to 25 years of age, without an upper secondary or vocational education, the Regional Guidance Centres are aimed at people who are in the transition from youth to higher education as well as people with a youth education or higher education who are interested in life long learning, while the Job Centres address people who are unemployed. On top of these targeted guidance offers, eGuidance addresses all the aforementioned groups at national level, thus further strengthening the Danish guidance system;

(c) well-educated guidance counsellors equipped with the skillset and knowledge required to unlock the full potential of eGuidance: Guidance and information delivered via virtual communication channels entail practices that require well-tailored skills and expertise (e.g. how to effectively operate various ICT tools simultaneously). To this end, an intensive three-month training programme is provided to all eGuidance counsellors in order to drive the development of the competencies required to provide quality guidance through virtual communication means;

(d) availability of specialised training offerings for existing and aspiring guidance counsellors aimed at ensuring and improving their qualifications: Five university colleges in Denmark provide a one-year modular common training programme at diploma level aimed at guidance counsellors. Furthermore, the Danish University of Education offers a one-year Master of Education programme in guidance counselling. eGuidance counsellors (just like all guidance counsellors in Denmark) are required to complete the diploma programme or to prove through assessment and recognition of prior learning that they possess the required qualifications;

(e) utilisation of a guidance model tailored to the various virtual communication means employed: Each virtual communication channel entails different challenges with respect to interacting with clients and thus requires a suitable approach. This is why eGuidance counsellors have developed and leverage the 4C model as well as its accompanying toolkit, both of which assist them in their everyday virtual guidance sessions according to the particularities of the individual channel in use.

The eGuidance service appears to be steadily finding its place within the guidance system of Denmark and shows promising potential in contributing to the achievement of the future political goals set by the Danish Government. However, the future holds several challenges for the national guidance system as well. It appears that currently the focus on youth guidance in Denmark is mainly on providing information and advice on how to choose an education path, with relatively less emphasis on the labour market and potential career paths. However, there is a definite political wish to orient the guidance services provided to younger age groups towards the labour market. The “Education Guide” is vital to this end with a wealth of LMI, which is already intensively used by career counsellors across Denmark. However, as new professions are emerging and existing ones change constantly, effectively describing these new jobs and especially to young students, becomes a challenge for guidance counsellors. In order to tackle this challenge, collaboration between schools and companies that will provide young students with the opportunity to experience actual work places is perceived as a key lever. In fact, surveys run by the Division for Guidance indicate that students want to indeed go out of the schools and have a “taste” of real jobs. Such initiatives, that enable students to visit companies, do exist at the moment, but only on very small scale. A lack of interest from the side of the business community appears to be the main barrier. Another challenge therefore is “convincing” companies to open up their doors to interested students. In this respect, a new project has been developed by the Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality with the aim to encourage students to visit companies and vice versa, incentivise professionals from companies to visit schools and showcase their work to students. This initiative will be integrated in career guidance and education provided in the frame of Danish compulsory education (Uddannelse og job) with a view to fostering cooperation between schools and companies.

Annex I – Educational framework

I.1 Overview of the educational system

The principal objective of the Danish educational system is **equal access to education despite of social background**. Education for all is fundamental for the maintenance of the country's competitiveness and the enhancement of their innovative potential. The **Danish** educational system's structure is outlined in Figures 4 and 5, describing how the different stages of education are followed in time (age of the pupil) as well as the main options for education after basic education.

The current Danish educational system consists of primary and lower secondary education (grundskole/folkeskolen for students of 6-16 years of age), general and vocational upper secondary education also referred to as youth education programmes (ungdomsuddannelser, for 16-19 years of age), higher education (videregående uddannelser) as well as adult education and continuing training.

Education is compulsory between the age of six and sixteen. **Compulsory education** consists of ten years of **primary and lower secondary education** (ISCED 1 and 2), including one pre-school year (grade 0) plus nine years (grades one to nine). It is possible to prolong the compulsory education (Folkeskole) with a tenth grade.

In Denmark, **upper secondary education programmes** (ISCED 3), also referred to as youth education programmes, are divided into **general upper secondary education programmes**, which primarily prepare for higher education and also, **vocational upper secondary education and training programmes**, which primarily prepare trainees for a career in a specific trade or industry.

Higher education is offered by four types of higher education institutions:

- (a) Academies of Professional Higher Education (Erhvervsakademi) offering professionally oriented first cycle degree programmes;
- (b) University Colleges (Professionshøjskole) offering professionally oriented first cycle degree programmes;
- (c) Research universities (Universitet) offering first, second and third cycle degree programmes in all academic disciplines;
- (d) University level institutions offering first, second and third cycle degree programmes in subject fields such as architecture, design, music and fine and performing arts.

Adult general education and vocational education and training range from non-formal education to qualifying general education and continuing vocational training. **Adult and continuing higher education** normally consist of two years of part-time study, equivalent to one year of full-time study (60 ECTS credits). Certain master programmes require one and a half years of full-time study (90 ECTS credits). Admission requirements are a relevant educational qualification and at least two years of relevant work experience.

Adult education qualifications are available at levels corresponding to those of the ordinary higher education system:

- (a) the Further Adult Education degree (videregående voksenuddannelse) is awarded after studies at short cycle level and gives access to diploma programmes;
- (b) the Diploma degree (diplomuddannelse) is awarded after studies at first cycle level and gives access to master programmes;

(c) the Master degree (masteruddannelse) is awarded after studies at second cycle level.

Adult courses leading to formal qualifications qualifying for further education or for the labour market include:

- (a) preparatory adult education;
- (b) general adult education;
- (c) higher preparatory single-subject courses;
- (d) adult vocational training;
- (e) basic adult education;
- (f) further adult education;
- (g) diploma programmes;
- (h) master's programmes.

Figure 4: The Danish educational system (1 of 2)

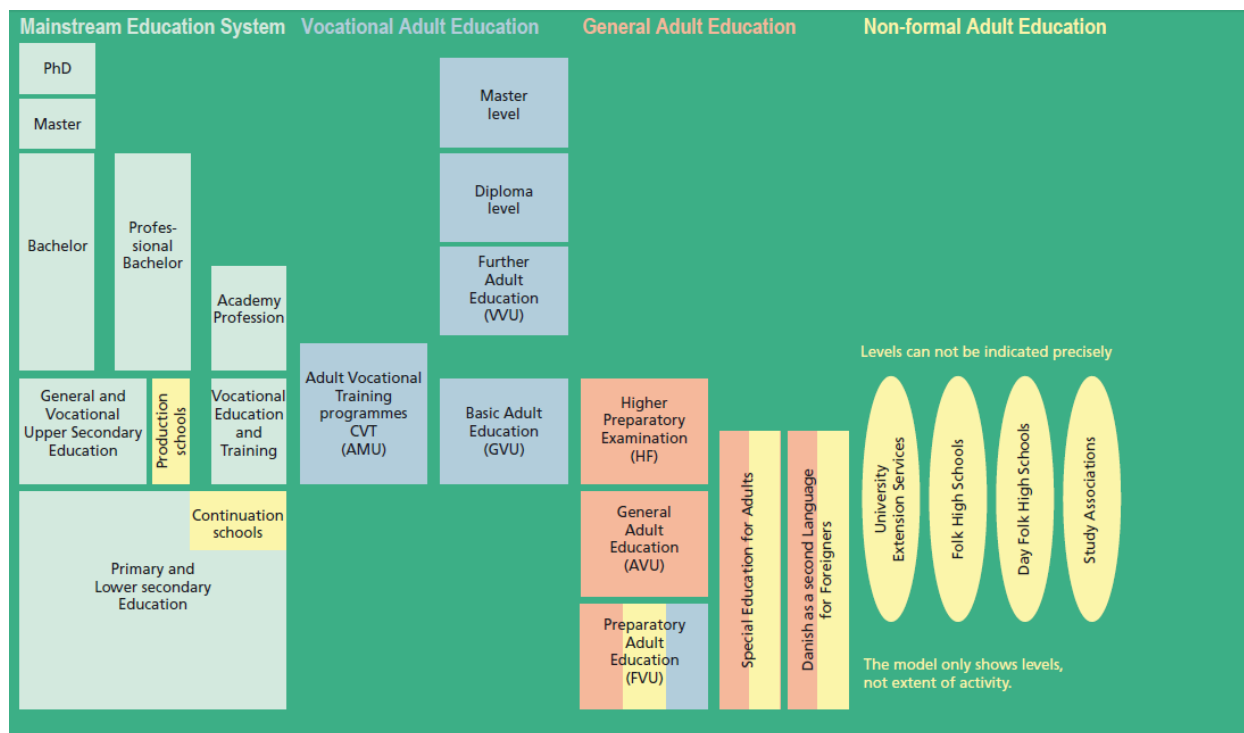
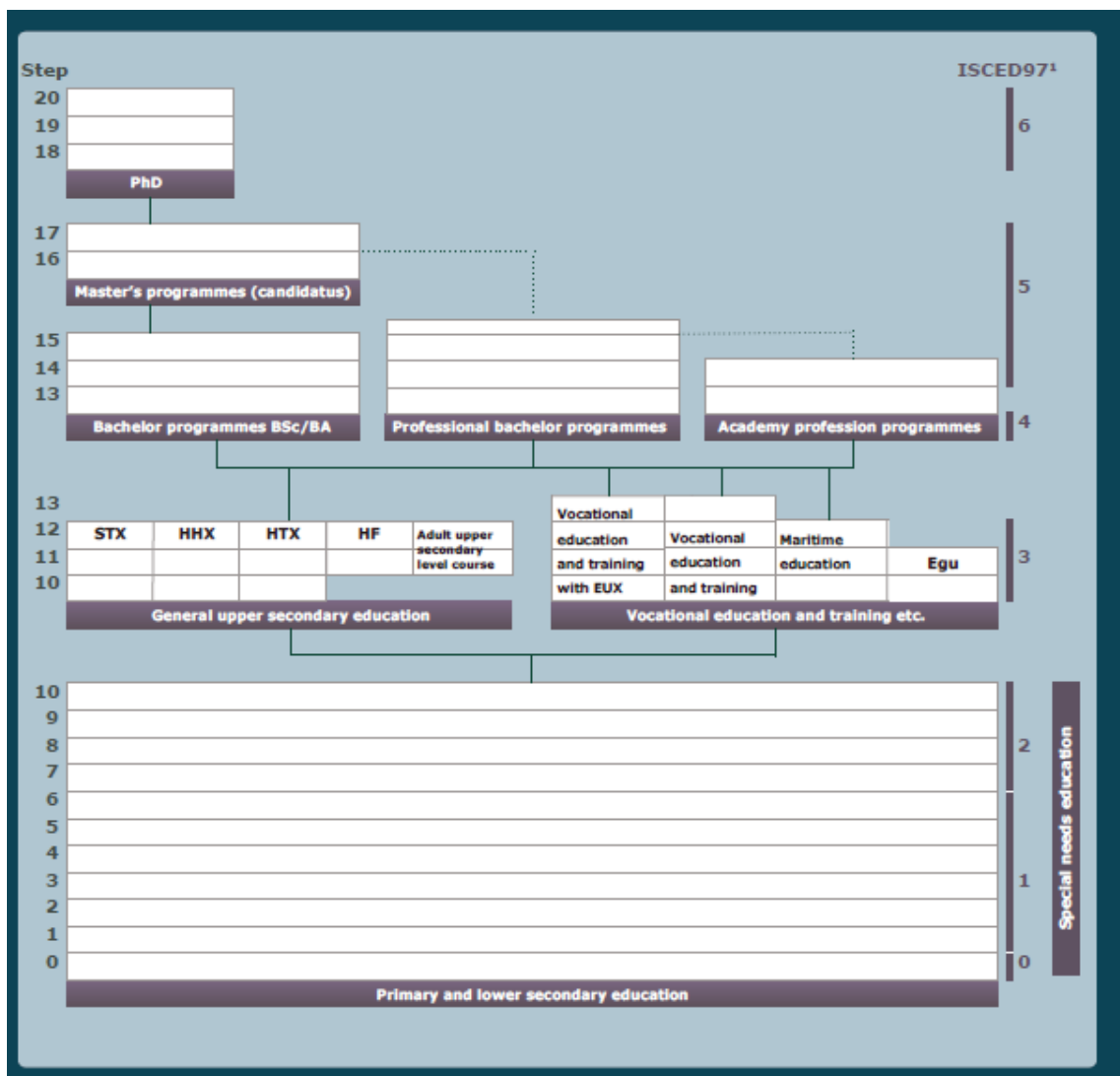


Figure 5: The Danish educational system (2 of 2)



I.2 Governance and funding

In Denmark the central responsibility for education is divided between **four ministries**. First, there is the **Danish Ministry of Children, Education and Gender Equality** which is responsible for policy making of education on ISCED level one, two and three, along with adult education and continuing training. There is also the **Danish Ministry of Higher Education and Science** which is responsible for the higher education area and handles tasks related to policies, administration, operation, coordination and interaction in this area. In addition, the **Danish Ministry of Culture** is responsible for higher education and training within the performing arts, music, and theatre. The number of students is small compared to the overall field of higher education and the conditions of the institutions are highly diversified. Finally, there exists the **Danish Ministry of Defence** which is responsible for military education.

Education policy is **decentralised** and delivered by **municipalities**. The Ministry of Education establishes goals and content, and 98 municipalities manage overall quality of their schools, setting local objectives and conditions and supervising them. There is much **parental engagement**, as schools are run by a **board of governors of elected parents, teachers and student representatives**. School boards implement education policies within the central and municipal framework. Private schools are usually governed by parent-elected boards that have more responsibility to oversee school quality than boards in public schools. **Post-compulsory schools** have autonomy to develop educational opportunities and pedagogy. They are self-governing, although they operate under rules established by the Ministry of Education. **Upper secondary schools, social and health programmes and adult education centres** are funded by the state. School boards in self-governing institutions are responsible for administrative and financial management. At the **lower secondary level**, 44% of decisions are made by the school, while 34% are made by the local government and 22% are made by the central or state government. Finally, **universities** have a high degree of autonomy and self-governance. The University Act (2003) introduced boards composed of a majority of external members as the university's highest authority.

The Danish education system is **financed** by the state or the municipalities. Some institutions are **self-governing**, while others are **owned by the state or the municipalities**. The **self-governing educational institutions** have two sources of revenue for financing their educational programmes; state grants and their own income from income-generating activities, participant fees and fees paid for unemployed people in activation programmes etc.

Annex II – Agenda of the field-visit

Day 1 – Monday 7 September 2015	
10.00 - 12.00	<p>Interviews and joint discussion at the Division for Guidance, Department for Youth Education and Vocational Adult Education and Training of the Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Steffen Jensen, Head of Division - Jørgen Brock, National Adviser - Hanne Woller, Consultant <p>Venue: <i>Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality, Frederiksholms Kanal 25, 1220 København K</i></p>
12.00- 12.45	Lunch at the Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality
13.00 - 14.00	<p>Interviews and joint discussion with management level executives at the National Agency for IT and Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kirsten Hahn Larsen, Manager - Elsebeth Nygaard, Deputy Manager <p>Venue: <i>National Agency for IT and Learning, Vester Voldgade 123, 1552 København V</i></p>
14.00 - 15.00	<p>Interview with editor of the national guidance portal of Denmark, the “Education Guide”, at the National Agency for IT and Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dorit Priisholm Andersen, UddannelsesGuiden Editor <p>Venue: <i>National Agency for IT and Learning, Vester Voldgade 123, 1552 København V</i></p>
15.00 - 16.00	<p>Interviews and joint discussion with career guidance practitioners at the National Agency for IT and Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tinne Mette Kronborg, eVejledning Consultant - Bo Svane Møller, eVejledning Consultant <p>Venue: <i>National Agency for IT and Learning, Vester Voldgade 123, 1552 København V</i></p>
Day 2 – Tuesday 8 September 2015	
9.00 - 10.45	<p>Interviews and joint discussion with management level executives and career guidance practitioner at the Youth Guidance Centre of Copenhagen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peter Schantz, Head Manager - Ulrick Moesgaard, Deputy Manager - Jørgen Christensen, Consultant <p>Venue: <i>UU København, Korsgade 30, 2200 København N</i></p>
10.45 - 12.00	<p>Interview with career guidance practitioner working with individuals from 18 to 25 years old at the Youth Guidance Centre of Copenhagen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Benedicte Ott, Guidance counsellor <p>Venue: <i>UU København, Korsgade 30, 2200 København N</i></p>
12.00 - 12.45	Lunch at the Youth Guidance Centre of Copenhagen
12.45 - 13.45	Interview with career guidance practitioner working with individuals from 15 to 17

	<p>years old at the Youth Guidance Centre of Copenhagen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mette Sun Nygaard, Guidance counsellor <p>Venue: <i>UU København, Korsgade 30, 2200 København N</i></p>
14.00– 15.00	<p>Interview with user of career and education guidance services at the Youth Guidance Centre of Copenhagen</p> <p>Venue: <i>UU København, Korsgade 30, 2200 København N</i></p>
Day 3 – Wednesday 9 September 2015	
9.00–10.00	<p>Interview with management level executive at the Regional Guidance Centre of Copenhagen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Torben Theilgaard, Head of Centre <p>Venue: <i>Studievalg, Valhalsgade 5, 2200 København N</i></p>
10.00–11.00	<p>Interview with career guidance practitioner at the Regional Guidance Centre of Copenhagen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kristina Bæk Oldrup, Guidance counsellor <p>Venue: <i>Studievalg, Valhalsgade 5, 2200 København N</i></p>
11.00–11.30	<p>Lunch at the Regional Guidance Centre of Copenhagen</p>
12.30– 13.00	<p>Interview with career guidance practitioner and observation of the information and guidance activity “Further education – any interest for you?” at the Copenhagen Hospitality College</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joan Bak Lorenzen, Guidance counsellor <p>Venue: <i>Hotel- og Restaurantskolen, Vigerslev Allé 18, 2500 Valby</i></p>
14.00– 15.00	<p>Debriefing at the Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Steffen Jensen, Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality - Jørgen Brock, Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality - Iakovos Delioglani, Q-PLAN INTERNATIONAL LTD - Kostas Giagtzoglou, Q-PLAN INTERNATIONAL LTD <p>Venue: <i>Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality, Frederiksholms Kanal 25, 1220 København K</i></p>

Annex III – References and sources of information

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