

Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Serbia

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Introduction

The legislative framework of the national system of career guidance and counselling was enacted in 2010 in the [National strategy for career guidance and counselling](#), (*Strategija karijernog vođenja i savetovanja u Republici Srbiji*, Official Gazette of the RS, No. 16/2010). This was a joint effort of a multi-sectoral working group that included the [Ministry of Youth and Sports](#) (MoYS), the [Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development](#) (MoESTD), the former [Ministry of Economy and Regional Development](#), the [National Employment Service](#) (NES), the [Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#) (CCI) and supported by the NGO [Belgrade Open School](#) (BOS). The result was a strategy with a corresponding action plan for the four-year period (until 2014) that was adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

The strategy was enacted after a public consultation which involved all key stakeholders from relevant sectors: education, employment and youth. The main focus of the strategy was on coordinating activities from the mentioned sectors. This led to new developments in each of the sectors, as well as to the recognition of the importance of guidance within the legal documents relevant for particular sectors in the subsequent policies developed after the strategy. Currently, MoESTD, the [Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs](#) (MoLEVSA), and MoYS, are responsible for providing guidelines and general objectives for guidance in the education, employment and youth sectors, respectively.

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Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders

In the education sector, the Law on the Foundation of the Education System, Official Gazette of the RS, No. [88/2017](#) and its subsidiary Laws on Primary Education, Official Gazette of the RS, No. [27/2018](#), Secondary Education, Official Gazette of the RS, No. [27/2018](#), and Adult Education, Official Gazette of the RS, No. [55/2013](#), recognise career guidance and counselling as a part of schools' activities and introduce career guidance programmes and the role of career guidance teams within primary and secondary schools. The laws prescribe that teams should consist of teachers and professional associates while the schools themselves are in charge of defining the school's career guidance programme as a part of the school's work programme, in accordance with the corresponding laws. The laws prescribe that schools should cooperate with relevant institutions in the area of career guidance according to students' needs, promoting inter-sectoral cooperation and coordination of guidance activities at local level.

Although presently a multisectoral working group or a similar body with formal legal authority to coordinate the development of guidance system no longer exists, since its mandate correlated with the length of the action plan, a similar approach continues to be used in drafting new policies and monitoring their implementation. One such example was the new Youth strategy, Official Gazette of the RS, No. [22/2015](#) enacted in 2015, for the period 2015-25. It was developed by a multi-sectoral working group with representatives of all key stakeholders and it includes one specific aim relating to the development of a functioning and sustainable system of career guidance and counselling. This is in accordance with the Law on Youth, Official Gazette of the RS, No. [50/2011](#), which emphasises the importance of career guidance for young people and defines its aims and activities. According to this Law, individuals aged 15 to 30 years are defined as young.

In the employment sector, the Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance, Official Gazette of the RS, No. [113/2017](#) (see section [Access to guidance](#)) defines the role of the [National Employment Service](#) (NES) and [employment agencies](#) and their responsibilities within active employment policies measures and concrete services provided to clients. The Government, upon a proposal of the [Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs](#) (MoLEVSA), adopts an annual National action plan of employment and the ministry coordinates and monitors its implementation (an example of the National employment action plan for 2018 can be found [here](#)). Regional and local authorities can adopt regional and local action plans, in accordance with the National action plan after obtaining the opinion of regional and local councils, respectively. Regional centres and branch offices of NES are responsible for implementation of the National action plan based on the Agreement on the performance of the National Employment Service, signed by the designated Minister and the director of NES.

One of the latest initiatives regarding policies in the area of career guidance was launched in 2016 by the [Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development](#) (MoESTD), that nominated the [Institute for Improvement of Education](#), which is a public body founded by the government, as the coordinator of a working group dedicated to the development of career guidance quality standards. The mandate of this group began in September of 2016 and its members were representatives of all relevant ministries (MoESTD, MoYS, MoLEVSA), NES, CCI, partners

such as Euroguidance centre, Belgrade Open School, German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), as well as career guidance experts from schools, university, employers' union and others. The working group for development of the standards finished their work in October 2017 and the draft document was enacted in June 2019 as Regulation on Standards of Career Guidance and Counselling Services (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 43/2019). This document presents guidelines for service providers in the education, employment and youth sectors and aims at improving the system of career guidance at national level.

Another policy initiative is the development of the Regulation on conditions, methods, activities and composition of career guidance teams in secondary schools that implement dual programmes, Official Gazette of the RS, No. 2/2019. This document sets guidelines for career guidance teams in secondary schools: including forming a team, its members, and main activities.

In addition to the cooperation between different institutions and bodies at local and national levels defined by the National career guidance strategy and laws in the sectors of education, employment and youth, in the previous period there were many initiatives in the non-governmental sector dedicated to the promotion of cooperation between these sectors and also between different stakeholders at regional level.

One of the bigger initiatives is the project Youth employment promotion, launched in 2015 for a period of four years, coordinated by German Organisation for the International Cooperation (GIZ). The project is supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development in partnership with Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Serbia. The aim of the project is to support improvement of the position of youth in the labour market. The project gathered key stakeholders at national and local levels, such as professional associations, social enterprises, schools for adult learners, and the business sector.

The WEB4YES, Western Balkan Civil Society Organisations for Youth Employment Support, is a regional initiative aimed at empowering civil society organisations to participate in decision making and advocacy for changes in youth employment policies in Western Balkan countries. The project will be implemented during 2017-20, coordinated by Belgrade Open School in partnership with associations and institutions from other Western Balkan countries and Sweden and with the support of the European Commission. Within the project, it is planned to establish national and regional forums, provide training on policy advocacy methods, financially support a programme for civil society organisations, and design and launch an internet platform for job search for young people in the region.

VIVET, Virtual internships for vocational education and training, is a project aiming to develop a model for virtual internships in VET and promote strategic cooperation between education institutions and the business sector. The project is funded with support of the European Commission and is implemented by Belgrade Open School, a non-governmental organisation from Serbia, Technical School from Užice, Serbia, and Interprojects, a consulting and training provider from Bulgaria. The project's outputs include a virtual platform, as well as the model for virtual internships in VET.

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Access to guidance

Within all sectors providing career guidance services (education, employment and youth) universal access to services is provided according to national legislation, as indicated below. These sectors provide specialised services to relevant target groups, particularly at specific stages of their educational and occupational careers: primary school pupils (typically 15 years of age) entering lower secondary school; upper secondary school students (typically 19 years of age), especially those in their final year, in preparation for further education or entry to the labour market; the young (aged 15 to 30 according to the [Law on Youth](#)); and unemployed adults.

Services and career education are provided by schools, universities, [National Employment Service](#) (NES) offices, and youth offices, as well as by private- and project-funded organisations.

In the education sector, according to the Law on the Foundation of Educational System, Official Gazette of the RS, No. [88/17](#), every pupil is entitled to adequate career guidance and counselling services. By the Laws on Primary Education, Official Gazette of the RS, No. [27/18](#), Secondary Education, Official Gazette of the RS, No. [27/18](#) and the latest Law on Dual Education, Official Gazette of the RS, No. [101/17](#), schools are obliged to promote and monitor pupils' career development and provide guidance programmes for them. Career guidance services in adult education (Law on Adult Education, Official Gazette of the RS, No. [55/13](#)) are prescribed in a similar manner.

Access to career guidance services in schools has been improved in the last decade through the major nationwide project [Professional orientation](#) in primary schools (2011-15) implemented by [German Agency for International Cooperation](#) (GIZ) and other initiatives that involved provision of continuous professional development (CPD) programmes for teachers and professional associates in schools. The growing number of trained staff in combination with the policy stipulating mandatory provision of school guidance services and the organisation of school guidance teams, have made guidance services more available and accessible to pupils.

Secondary school curricula include civic education as an optional subject, in which, among other, topics related to career planning and entering the world of work, including subtopics such as self-assessment and presentation of personal characteristics, career information, job searching and interviews, are included.

At University level, the Law on Higher Education, Official Gazette of the RS, No. [27/18](#) recognises centres for career guidance and counselling and student support as integral parts of universities which should be accessible to all university students.

In the employment sector, the right of individuals to guidance services is stipulated in the Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance No. [113/2017](#), which enumerates the activities that support employment; these include providing information about employment opportunities and conditions, intermediation in employment, professional orientation and counselling. All these services and information are provided by the National Employment Service (NES) and employment agencies and they are mainly targeted at unemployed adults outside of the education system. The [Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs](#) (MoLEVSA) is responsible for establishing political guidelines and strategic goals for employment, implementing strategies for increasing the employment rate, and prevention of long-term unemployment.

One of the latest initiatives of NES to improve the availability and accessibility of guidance services is the establishment of [Centres for Information and Professional Guidance](#) (CIPS) in many cities and towns across the country, as well as broadening their activities with a set of professional rehabilitation and employment activities for those with disabilities. These activities are not new but, in recent years, NES activities have been focused on providing a set of services to persons with disabilities: retraining programmes, active job-seeking workshops, and affirmative employment actions in accordance with the Law on Professional Rehabilitation and the Employment of Persons with Disabilities (Official Gazette of the RS, No. [32/2013](#)).

Professional orientation and counselling are provided to individuals of all ages in transitional periods deciding on future occupation, education or training pathways. For this target group (individuals in key transitions), NES offers support in personal assessments, acquisition of information on learning pathways, and establishment of individual career plans (further information can be found [here](#)).

With the aim of increasing access for primary school students to guidance activities, in 2011, NES developed a practical guide and website, [Guide for primary school students](#), which contains questionnaires for self-assessment of traits, interests and skills, as well as information on different occupations.

Within the youth sector, The Law on Youth, Official Gazette of the RS, No. [50/2011](#), recognizes [local youth offices](#) (*Kancelarije za mlade*) as a mechanism for increasing access and establishment of targeted services to all young people at local level. Youth offices are especially important for targeting young people who dropped out of school and/or belong to the NEET category (individuals aged between 15 and 30 years are defined as youth, but policies in this area do not specify the specific age for the NEET category). Youth offices are founded by local governments, which enable them to develop targeted activities in accordance with specific local contexts. Local governments oversee the development of the Local youth plan (in accordance with the current [National youth strategy](#), Official Gazette of the RS, No. [22/2015](#), for 2015-25) which includes activities aimed at supporting and empowering the young.

The newest policy document - the [Standards of Career Guidance and Counselling Services](#) (2019) - sets as one of the primary principles, the accessibility of guidance services to all. The purpose of this document is the provision of guidelines for service providers from different sectors regarding the development and implementation of quality, targeted and accessible services (see section [Quality assurance](#)).

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Quality assurance

The **Standards of Career Guidance and Counselling Services** (2019) is the key document for future improvement of guidance provisions and services in all sectors. The general aim of the framework is to provide quality improvement guidelines to providers of services in all sectors, according to four areas where standards were developed:

- career management skills (CMS) for relevant outcomes of guidance services for users;
- guidance practitioner competences have two main objectives: to serve as guidelines for self-assessment of guidance practitioners, their own planning and to monitor their professional development; and to guide providers of education and training programmes for guidance practitioners towards improved quality programmes;
- organisational standards outline ethical and quality principles that organisations should adhere to, in order to provide accessible and targeted services to all;
- standards of career guidance programmes specify and explain the main elements of good quality programmes such as defined goals, outcomes, targeted and timed activities.

These standards were developed by the multi-sectoral working group in 2017 and they were officially enacted by the **Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development** (MoESTD) in 2019. These standards may be used by schools, university centres for career development, **National Employment Service** (NES) and youth offices as guidelines in their work, as well as bases for accreditation of organisations providing adult education programmes which are specialised in providing guidance services.

Development of these standards was preceded by the development of quality standards for university career centres, as part of the project **Careers - development of career guidance aimed at improving higher education in Serbia** (2011-2014). These standards were not enacted as a legal document but served as guidelines for self-evaluation of established career centres.

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Career management skills

Although the term career management skills is rarely made explicit, the development of such skills is recognised as an objective in all relevant national legislation. In education policies, the Law on the Foundation of the Educational System, Official Gazette of the RS, No. **88/17**, defines the implementation of guidance activities that are aimed at personal development, in an educational and professional sense, as one of the main principles of the education system. The Law on Primary Education, Official Gazette of the RS, No. **27/2018**, and the Law on Secondary Education, Official Gazette of the RS, No. **27/2018**, define educational goals such as the development of responsibility and autonomy of pupils in the decision-making process. The Strategy of education 2020, Official Gazette of the RS, No. **107/2012**, defines the development of school career guidance programmes towards objectives which include pupils' proactive and responsible career planning and development of a realistic attitude to career development. Career-oriented skills, recognised as important objectives in the policies mentioned, are usually recognised as a part of CMS, although they are not specifically defined as such in these documents. The recent Law on Dual Education, Official Gazette of the RS, No. **101/17**, however, defines the development of CMS specifically as a key principle of secondary dual education.

In the employment sector, the main goal of professional orientation and counselling according to the Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance, Official Gazette of the RS, No. **113/2017** (see section **Access to guidance**) is to support individuals in career planning, finding and changing jobs, and decision-making related to career development.

The **Standards of Career Guidance and Counselling Services**, which features standards in four areas, is the first national policy document that defines key knowledge, skills and attitudes that constitute CMS (see section **Quality assurance** for information on the other three standards areas). These include:

- competences for self-assessment in the context of personal and professional development;
- formation of a holistic picture of self in the context of personal and professional development;
- selection of relevant sources of information on education and career opportunities;
- active and continuous information on education and career opportunities;
- using relevant information in decision-making processes;
- career planning;
- monitoring and evaluation of career plans;
- management of career development in transitional periods.

The CMS standards in the framework will be used for development and improvement of existing services towards more comprehensive, targeted and outcome-based services.

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Evidence, monitoring and assessment

The monitoring of guidance activities is performed within each sector (see section [Access to guidance](#)). Currently there is no nationwide system for collecting information, assessing the effectiveness and producing the evidence base for monitoring career guidance.

For the employment sector, the [National Employment Service](#) (NES) produces annual reports, including information on guidance activities, which is publicly available [here](#).

In the education sector, school guidance teams have the obligation to produce reports on their work at the end of each school year and submit it as an annex to the school's annual report. The activities of [local youth offices](#) (see section [Access to guidance](#)) are monitored by local governments, as well as by the [Ministry of Youth and Sport](#) (MoYS), which collect data on their work. During the period of implementation of the action plan of the [Strategy for career guidance and counselling](#) (2010-14), annual reports on its implementation were compiled by MoYS and effectiveness was monitored by the intersectoral working group. Such a mechanism is not in place at the moment (2019), but the data on guidance services and their impact is collected within the sectors themselves (for example, annual reports for the implementation of the Youth strategy, Official Gazette of the RS, No. [22/2015](#) which have one goal on career guidance).

There are several studies on the guidance system generally and provision of services in specific sectors. One of them, [Feasibility study for the establishment of the national resource centre for career guidance and counselling in Serbia and further development of career guidance and counselling system in Serbia](#), was conducted in 2014 as a part of the project funded by the European Delegation to the Republic of Serbia. There have been several other research studies conducted mostly in the NGO and academic sectors. One example is [Effects of career guidance in relation to youth employability](#) (2015) by Belgrade Open School aiming to create the basis for an evidence-based approach in planning and implementation of guidance interventions. [Belgrade Open School](#) also conducted several studies related to guidance in secondary schools, which aimed to investigate types of activities represented in school career guidance programmes and their effects. A study from 2016, [Research on schools' career guidance and counselling programme](#), shows that in three years from adoption of the [Law on Secondary Education](#), schools improved career guidance and counselling services. The vast majority of schools, 64%, have plans for career guidance and counselling, which is the first and basic step, while numerous career guidance activities are planned and may enable a large number of students and parents to have access to a variety of quality career guidance services.

The monitoring, evidence-base and assessment of guidance services are addressed in the newly-developed [Draft of standards of career guidance and counselling services](#) (see sections [Quality assurance](#) and [Career management skills](#) for details on the Framework), as one of the organisational standards.

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ICT in lifelong guidance

Online services in the Republic of Serbia are mostly for provision of career and education information in guidance. The national system-wide guidance portal has not been yet developed; however, there are several portals that offer career information and additional services, such as e-counselling and tests, such as:

- career guidance portal for secondary students **BOŠ Karijera** (BOS Career);
- national learning opportunities database **Obrazovanje.rs**;
- public **portal** for job seekers providing vacancy information and career advice, managed by the **National Employment Service** (NES) (*Nacionalna Služba za zapošljavanje*, NSZ). NES also uses this portal to publish an annual report on employers' needs that provides labour market information and projections of employment needs in the coming period;
- private websites with vacancy ads and career information of which the most popular is **Poslovi.infostud.com**;
- career centers' websites for university students, such as the website of the **University of Belgrade Centre for Career Development and Student Counselling** that also provides online counselling service and a tool for self-assessment Profil+;
- a **website** for primary school students, managed by the NES, providing guidance for enrolment in secondary education and basic information on all occupations.

In recent years the use of ICT has become a top priority on the national policy agenda, which is demonstrated by the establishment of the Government Office for IT and e-Government and the growing number of publicly available open datasets. In accordance with global trends, it can be expected that the number of ICT tools in guidance will increase in the coming years.

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Training and qualifications

All counsellors working in the **National Employment Service** (*Nacionalna služba za zapošljavanje*) have qualifications in psychology and counselling. This is in line with the regulation on special and technical conditions for work of employment agencies, conditions regarding professional competencies of employees, and programme and methods of obtaining working license (*Pravilnik o prostornim i tehničkim uslovima za rad agencije za zapošljavanje, uslovima stručne osposobljenosti zaposlenih, programu, sadržini i načinu polaganja ispita za rad u zapošljavanju*), Official Gazette RS, no. **98/2009**, which defines conditions regarding professional competences of employees in employment agencies.

However, the qualifications of practitioners working in other sectors vary substantially. As there is not a single university course aimed at becoming a career guidance counsellor, these services are provided by andragogues, pedagogues or psychologists, and in many cases by teachers, youth workers and other related professions. The initial training in related disciplines (andragogy/psychology) is provided by the Faculty of Philosophy and the Faculty of Teacher Education. Teachers mainly obtain guidance-related knowledge and skills through their continuous professional development (CPD) courses, since there is still little guidance-related content in their initial training at university. These CPD trainings are provided either within project-led initiatives such as **Professional orientation** in primary schools (2011-15) implemented by **German Agency for International Cooperation** (GIZ) that trained teachers and pedagogues/psychologists in all primary schools in 2011-2015, or by non-governmental sector such as **Euroguidance centre, Belgrade Open School** and other similar organizations. CPD programmes are accredited by the **Institute for the Improvement of Education** (*Zavod za unapređivanje obrazovanja i vaspitanja*). There are 10 seminars in providing guidance-related content for teachers that have obtained this accreditation for the 2018-21 period.

The newly-adopted **Standards of Career Guidance and Counselling Services** serve as guidelines for improvement of existing CPD programmes as well as for the development of new training programmes. They offer the list of competences that a guidance practitioner should obtain, such as:

- general competences related to organization of work such as planning, communication and cooperation with individual users and other organisations, as well as monitoring and improving service quality;
- specific competences related to career counselling services including client assessment, providing support to client in goal-setting and decision-making;
- competences related to provision of career information; and
- competences related to provision of career education, such as design and implementation of career education programmes that develop career management skills in students.

Sources

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Funding career guidance

Guidance services at the primary and secondary schools are financed through the budget of the [Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development](#) (MoESTD). Since the services are provided by professional associates (psychologists and pedagogues) and teachers within the budget for all educational activities it is not possible to provide precise estimates of the amount allocated to guidance services specifically (in relation to teaching, educational support and other roles provided by the same staff). However, it should be noted that the [Regulation on the criteria of financing of primary education institutions](#) (2016) gives exact details as to how many professional associates will be financed depending on school size. Schools that have more than 15 groups (classes) have one associate (either psychologist or pedagogue). Smaller schools can have only 50% of full-time equivalent, while schools with more than 23 groups can have more than one associate; namely:

- a. 24 to 31 groups: 1.5 associates;
- b. 32 to 39: 2 associates;
- c. 40 to 47: 2.5 associates;
- d. 48 to 55: 3 associates;
- e. 56 to 63: 3.5 associates;
- f. 64 to 71: 4 associates;
- g. 72 to 79: 4.5 associates;
- h. 80 groups and more: 5 associates).

In practice this means that, in some cases, one counsellor works in several schools. Career centres at universities are funded by universities and in some cases, there is a small fee (EUR 1/year) that is financed by each student that studies at the faculties of the university.

[Local youth offices](#) (and the guidance services they provide) (see section [Access to guidance](#)) are financed by local government budgets, as they are public; there is great variation between the municipalities in the funds allocated. Funds are usually allocated for the functioning of the youth office as such, and not specifically for the guidance services. In some cases, the guidance services were supported through projects by external donors. One example of such projects is the local youth office in Sremska Mitrovica which implemented a project No barrier to developing my career (*Nemam barijeru da gradim svoju karijeru*) that was funded by the [Provincial Secretariat for Sport and Youth](#) (*Pokrajinski sekretarijat za sport i omladinu*).

The [National Employment Service](#) is financed from the State budget through the [Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs](#) (MoLEVSA). The [National employment action plan for 2018](#) provides information on the total budget for active employment measures from the unemployment insurance fund, but without specific amounts for guidance activities. Additional funds are allocated from the [IPA](#) (Instrument for pre-Accession Assistance) funds that have been used to establish [Centres for Information and Professional Guidance](#) (CIPS) in many cities and towns across the country.

The [World Bank Delivery of improved local services programme](#) was implemented during 2009-12 with the aim of improving education and social protection services through decentralisation and efficiency of public financing, by improving access to social services and the infrastructure and by providing support.

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Career guidance for school pupils

Career guidance for school pupils is provided by professional associates (psychologists and pedagogues) and teachers in schools.

Career guidance is recognized in all relevant laws since 2013 when the Law of the Foundation of Educational System (further changed in 2017, Official Gazette of the RS, No. [88/2017](#).) defined the role of guidance in education. This was in accordance with the Education Development Strategy (Official Gazette of the RS, No. [107/2012](#)) that set the goal to develop a system of career guidance at all educational levels until 2020.

The legislation relevant for the particular educational levels defines in more detail the role of guidance services. For example, the Law on Primary Education (Official Gazette of the RS, No. [27/2018](#)) obliges schools to provide help to pupils and their parents in the process of selecting secondary education programmes and future occupations. The law states that this should be done in cooperation with institutions or organizations providing professional orientation and that schools should have school teams consisting of teachers and pedagogues/psychologists. The Law on Secondary Education (Official Gazette of the RS, No. [27/2018](#)) obliges secondary schools to form teams, define schools' guidance programmes and provide guidance services to students.

According to the national education policy both primary and secondary schools are responsible for the formation of career guidance teams (teams for professional orientation, as it is called in primary schools) and establishing an annual career guidance (professional orientation) programme and plan of activities. Schools detail the implementation of career guidance activities in annual reports, together with other curricular and extracurricular activities. Although all schools are obliged to implement career guidance and counselling activities, not all are active enough when it comes to this; activities may vary from school to school. Schools usually recognise career counselling as an important activity and usually

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see the school psychologist as key carrier of these activities. Schools may also organise other activities such as CMS workshops and career information activities, but the type and scope of the activities vary from school to school. Some schools build strong relationships with local [National Employment Service](#) (NES) offices and/or NGOs which are used as a partner in provision of career guidance activities to students and parents.

The access to career guidance services in schools has been improved in the last decade through the major nationwide project [Professional orientation](#) in primary schools (2011-15) implemented by [German Agency for International Cooperation](#) (GIZ). This project focused on introducing the '5-phases' model of career guidance to primary school teachers and professional associates. The result of the project included a comprehensive programme of career guidance services for primary school students as well as trained school staff prepared for implementation of this project. Many schools also underwent the whole cycle of the 5-phase programme during the project implementation.

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Guidance for VET participants

A key recent development in the VET sector was the introduction of dual education. The Law on Dual Education, Official Gazette of the RS, No. [101/17](#), defines development of CMS (see section [Career management skills](#)) specifically as a key principle of secondary dual education.

The Law on Secondary Education, Official Gazette of the RS, No. [27/2018](#), (see section [Guidance for VET participants](#)), providing for career guidance programmes and mandatory school guidance services, also applies to secondary VET education and training.

Secondary schools provide different services to students depending on their annual programmes and plans. In VET education, services provided revolve around organisation and provision of internship programmes to students, building strong relationships with social partners. The policy basis for this was provided recently with the development of the Regulation on conditions, methods, activities and composition of career guidance teams in secondary schools that implement dual programmes, Official Gazette of the RS, No. [2/2019](#). This document sets guidelines for career guidance teams in secondary schools, including forming a team, its members, and main activities.

In secondary schools, guidance activities are focused on supporting pupils in making decisions about further education but also on providing students with employability skills needed for entering the labour market.

Since the competences of teachers and schools' associates in provision of career guidance are necessary for providing quality career guidance activities, there have been several initiatives to provide school staff with skills, tools and methods to implement career guidance activities in their work, organise school teams for guidance, and develop annual plans. These initiatives include the development of a guidebook for secondary school teachers [Career guidance and counselling](#) in 2014, joint publication of the Euroguidance centre and Belgrade Open School. This publication was followed by a series of [Euroguidance centre](#) accredited seminars, and an online course with the aim of providing basic training in career guidance for secondary school teachers. [Belgrade Open School](#) established an annual career guidance teams' fair which promotes improving the work of school career guidance teams; the Euroguidance centre Serbia established the National career guidance awards with the aim of promoting good guidance practices.

In addition to the activities planned and provided by the school career guidance team (mandatory for all secondary schools by the Law on secondary education, 2013), many projects and initiatives from NGO sector are dedicated to improving employability skills for secondary school students ([virtual internships](#) implemented by Belgrade Open School, [Youth employment project](#) implemented by GIZ are examples). [Foundation Tempus](#), through the activities of Europass and Euroguidance centres, also supports the improvement of employability skills of secondary school students. Workshops for CV writing, organised by the Europass centre as a monthly activity since the beginning of 2018, have been attended by around 50 secondary vocational school students. This three-hour workshop presents guidelines for writing CV focusing specifically on how to present skills in the Europass CV format, which is a common CV format at European level.

Activities organised in the scope of the of Euroguidance centre in Serbia, during the spring of 2017 and 2018 and again with the beginning of the new school year in September of 2018, included webinars, presentations and individual consultations for primary and secondary school students on topics of making career choices, gathering information about career opportunities, self-evaluation of knowledge, interests, and skills. More than 200 students from secondary vocational schools around Serbia attended one or more activities.

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Guidance for higher education students

Unlike in many other European countries, in which university career services have a long tradition, the opening of the first career development centres at Serbian universities started only in the last 15 years. The first [Centre for Career Development and Student Counselling](#) (Centar za razvoj karijere i savetovanje studenata) was established at the University of Belgrade in 2006, followed by the establishment of career centres at the University of Kragujevac, University of Novi Sad and University of Niš in 2007. Until the Law on Higher Education (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 27/18) was revised, these centres were not recognised in policy documents. This new law recognises centres for career guidance and counselling and student support as integral parts of universities, which should be accessible to all university students.

In addition to the central career centres of universities, some of their faculties have also started to establish their own career centres. Currently, there is an initiative to develop similar centres at colleges (NQF level 6 or level 7 depending on the academic or professional studies of the beneficiary).

One of the most significant contributions to the development of guidance in higher education in the past decade was a joint Tempus project Development of career guidance aimed at improving higher education in Serbia ([Careers](#)) that was implemented from 2011 to 2014. This project's consortium, that included several Serbian and European universities and other national partners, was led by the University of Belgrade Centre for Career Development and Student Counselling. Apart from developing career information tools aimed at student population, the project also initiated cooperation between academic and business community, as well as developed the framework for quality standards for career guidance of young people aged 19 to 30. Another notable development has been the use of the model initially developed by the the University of Belgrade Centre for Career Development and Student Counselling, city government and employers as the basis for the development of the future national model of higher education student internships.

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Guidance for adult learners

The Law on Adult Education (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 55/2013) recognises the importance of guidance in this sector. The by-law, Regulation on conditions in regard to programme, staff, space and equipment for receiving the status of the publicly recognised organiser of activities of adult education, Official Gazette of the RS, No. 89/2015 defines the conditions that a publicly recognised provider of adult education must fulfil; this set the basis for the establishment of the working group for the quality of guidance services.

Available career guidance and counselling services for adult learners depend on the planned activities of each service provider and may include career counselling, information and/or education services. At the moment, there are no system-level activities provided to all adult learners.

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Guidance for unemployed adults

Unemployed adults in the Republic of Serbia can access numerous services provided by [National Employment Service](#) (NES) and by [Centres for Information and Professional Counselling](#) (CIPS). Individuals' rights related to career guidance are stipulated in the Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance, Official Gazette of the RS, No. 113/2017. The [Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs](#) (MoLEVSA) is responsible for establishing political guidelines and strategic goals for employment, increasing the employment rate and prevention of long-term unemployment.

Services provided by NES and the above centres targeted at unemployed adults include professional counselling, career information, intermediation in employment, and training programmes for active job seeking. Also, some categories of unemployed individuals are entitled to financial support provided through NES. The measures implemented by NES periodically include different retraining programmes in accordance with labour market needs as well as support for young people looking for internship programmes.

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Guidance for young people at risk

Additional support to the young at risk is provided within the education and youth sectors as well as the employment sector. According to laws on education, career guidance services are to be provided to all students, alongside additional educational and psychological support to students at risk. Within the youth sector, services including career guidance are provided to general population, with few specifically targeted activities; this is well recognised in the Youth strategy, Official Gazette of the RS, No. 22/2015. The strategy defines specific goals for this period that include development of systematic preconditions for identification and provision of support for active participation of young people at risk of social exclusion as well as increased availability and scope of preventive activities for young people at risk. Within the employment sector, the Strategy and Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance, Official Gazette of the RS, No. 113/2017 recognise those with handicap and hard-to-employ persons as important vulnerable groups, defining specialised services for them.

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Guidance for special needs and disabilities

The Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities (Official Gazette of the RS, No. 32/2013) defines conditions, criteria and standards for implementation of specific services and activities targeted to those with handicap. The aims of services are increasing the level of employability or employment of the unemployed, which includes assessment of skills, knowledges and abilities and defining individual plans for the improvement of competences and general employability of those with handicap. These services are provided within [National Employment Service \(NES\)](#).

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Guidance for immigrants

There are no specific regulations at national level defining guidance services targeted at immigrants and refugees. NGOs are very active providing different services to refugees transiting through Serbia, but most of these activities consist of only psycho-social support in a crisis.

Guidance for other groups

There are no specific regulations at national level defining guidance services targeted at ethnic minorities or inmates or other specific groups. Where services are provided they are sporadic activities of specialised NGOs.

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Coronavirus Update

One of the key providers of career counselling in Serbia are schools, since each school is obliged to form career guidance and counselling teams in charge of planning and monitoring career guidance and counselling activities such as career information, counselling services, workshops for self-evaluation, etc. One of the first measures regarding the prevention of Corona virus spreading included closing the educational institutions at all levels of education and this measure started on 16th of April. For primary and secondary schools' students, distance-learning opportunities were introduced immediately after the closing of the institutions and included online classes via TV channels and sharing different resources for teachers, students and parents who were instructed to provide additional classes, homework assignments, assessment etc. At that moment, it was not clear how different schools provide career guidance and the emphasis was still on teaching and learning regular subjects. In this way during the initial period of adaptation to the new situation teachers deprioritized guidance, as they needed to quickly adapt to new modes of teaching their subjects. However, as time passed it was expected that more and more of them would include guidance activities in their online education as well.

Regarding online guidance, there were several existing tools, but some additional local initiatives from different NGOs appeared in this period dedicated to online counselling. Several existing active providers of career guidance and counselling offered more online services in this period. One example is the Career Development and Students Counselling Centre of the University of Belgrade, which offered online services such as [online counselling](#). The centre has also developed a new [website](#) for sharing inspiring stories and experiences in order to support youth. Furthermore, the Euroguidance center, which has been already offering webinars on career guidance topics as well as online counselling to students, continued with these activities and offered additional topics relevant in the context of better self-organisation in the times of distance learning.

In Serbia, many resources, mostly initiatives of individual coaches or guidance practitioners were published online to help employees organise their work process and support them in managing multiple roles in these changed circumstances. Furthermore, the government-run [Digital Solidarity portal](#) contains a series of resources that are directed to digital end-users to overcome difficulties in these times. Most of these resources are not guidance related, but there are some instructional and educational materials, platforms that guidance practitioners can use in this period, as well as guidance services.

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