

Session 5

Implications for capacity-building, research, the frontlines and policy: different perspectives

Chair: *Jaana Kettunen*, President, International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG), Professor of Lifelong Guidance and Vice Director, Finnish Institute for Educational Research (FIER), University of Jyväskylä, Finland, CareersNet expert

Speakers:

- *Daniel Reumiller*, President, Swiss Career Guidance Conference (KBSB), Switzerland, CareersNet expert
- *Jennifer McKenzie*, Lifelong Guidance Specialist, McKenzie Guidance Solutions, Ireland, CareersNet expert
- *Margit Rammo*, Euroguidance programme manager, Agency for Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps, Department of Youth Affairs and Internationalisation, Youth Education Board, Estonia, CareersNet expert
- *Tibor Bors Borbély*, Associate Professor, ELTE University, Hungary, CareersNet expert



- **Rapporteur:** *Wolfgang Bliem*, Senior researcher, ibw Austria – Research & Development in VET, CareersNet expert, Austria, CareersNet expert



Highlight relevant theme:

The session focused on how the new Lifelong Guidance Framework can be turned from a policy document into a practical toolbox that strengthens lifelong guidance systems across policy, practice, research and capacity-building in different countries, sectors, and institutional contexts.

‘The framework is a toolbox that helps countries and regions to build and check up their own lifelong guidance system.’ (Jaana)

Summary of the panellists’ views

Jaana Kettunen (Finland; Chair): Jaana frames the discussion by recalling that effective lifelong guidance systems are built on legislation, strategic leadership, cooperation, professionalisation, and evidence of impact, all embedded in the new framework. In her conclusion, she presents the framework as a practical toolbox for building and reviewing lifelong guidance systems through shared concepts, outcomes, and indicators. Strategic leadership and professionalisation are highlighted as key enablers of quality and sustainability. She also links the framework to wider EU initiatives such as VET 2030 and the Youth Guarantee and concluded that lifelong guidance is an ecosystem, not a stand-alone service, and the framework helps making that visible.

Jennifer McKenzie (Ireland): *‘For too long we have had an expectation that you go to the careers practitioner, teacher, advisor, ... and that person will tell you what to do, what job to get, what course to go to. That is not what guidance does and that is not what guidance is.’*

Jennifer highlighted professionalisation as the cornerstone of the framework, arguing that it provides a clear definition of the guidance profession, strengthens its legitimacy, and supports recognition, quality assurance, and sustainable funding. She stressed that guidance should be embedded across education and training systems through whole-institution approach, rather than being the responsibility of individual practitioners alone. She also underlined the importance of accountability, evidence generation, and outcome measurement to demonstrate impact and secure political support and funding. She emphasised that success should be measured by individuals’ readiness to navigate their careers and lives, not solely by immediate placement outcomes. Finally, she described the framework as an objective, evidence-based reference point that can guide practitioner training, policy development, and long-term system improvement across Europe.

Margit Rammo (Estonia): *'The real work begins when a framework meets practice... Policy, research and practice, they need to meet to be able to make a difference. ... I would also like to have one more corner: it's internationalisation.'*

Margit emphasized that the true value of policy frameworks lies in their implementation: guidance becomes effective only when it is embedded in everyday routines, institutional structures, and decision-making processes. Drawing on Estonia's experience she highlighted the critical role of leadership, particularly school leaders, in integrating lifelong guidance into daily practice. She stressed the importance of peer learning, practical tools, and collaboration between schools, municipalities, and other stakeholders to build shared understanding and consistent approaches. Lifelong guidance is a professional field in its own right, requiring structured initial training, continuous professional development, recognised competence frameworks, and strong national support systems. She also underscored the value of European cross-country cooperation in creating a common language. The framework, she noted, is strongest where it helps countries transforming fragmented services towards coherent systems.

Daniel Reumiller (Switzerland): *'Only together we can ensure the highest possible quality.'*

Daniel highlighted that the Lifelong Guidance Framework is especially valuable in highly decentralised systems such as Switzerland, where it creates a shared vision, common language, and strategic direction while preserving regional autonomy. He stressed that frameworks only become meaningful when translated into concrete actions, joint projects, and shared tools that foster collaboration, professionalisation, and quality development across diverse contexts. By enabling practitioners and policymakers to compare approaches, develop common standards, and learn from one another, the framework strengthens guidance systems without imposing uniformity. He also emphasised the importance of systematic research at national level. Evidence and evaluation are essential for improving services, demonstrating outcomes, and securing long-term political support and investment in lifelong guidance.

Tibor Bors Borbély (Hungary): *'Look at lifelong guidance as an ecosystem, as a shared responsibility of the whole government, whatever government we are talking about.'*

Tibor presented the framework as a practical 'cookbook' for turning the European vision of lifelong guidance into effective systems. He emphasised that its value lies in establishing a shared understanding of lifelong guidance as an ecosystem across sectors, helping stakeholders move beyond fragmented perspectives (using the metaphor of blind people touching and describing different parts of an elephant). He

argued that guidance should not be seen mainly as a tool for labour market matching or problem-solving, but as a means of developing individuals' self-awareness, competencies, attitudes, and career management capabilities throughout life. A key challenge is educating policymakers and senior administrators, so they understand the realistic aims and outcomes of guidance. He stressed the importance of cross-sectoral governance, shared ownership, and lifelong guidance councils that bring ministries and institutions together around the same 'elephant'.

- **Professionalisation and Capacity Building:** The discussion highlighted a growing gap between rising expectations for guidance professionals and the training opportunities available to them. Sustained investment in professional qualifications, competence frameworks, recognised standards, and continuous professional development, alongside ongoing capacity building, were considered essential prerequisites for quality services.
 - **Leadership, Governance and Cross-Sectoral Cooperation:** Successful implementation depends on strategic leadership at institutional, local, regional, and national levels. Different stakeholders play a pivotal role in embedding guidance into organisational structures, planning processes, and everyday practice. Guidance should be understood as an ecosystem requiring coordinated governance and strong cooperation across sectors, supported by shared objectives, common ownership, and effective collaboration mechanisms.
 - **Evidence, Accountability and Continuous Improvement:** Stronger evidence bases are needed to demonstrate the value and impact of lifelong guidance. Evaluation, research, impact measurement, and user feedback should focus on meaningful outcomes such as career management skills, informed decision-making, and readiness for change, rather than solely on labour market indicators. Evidence should serve both accountability and learning purposes, supporting policy development, continuous service improvement, and the long-term legitimacy of guidance systems.
 - **Common Frameworks, Shared Language and System Development:** The framework was described as a practical toolbox that translates policy ambitions into concrete system-building components. By providing a shared vocabulary, common concepts, indicators, and reference points, it supports cooperation across sectors, institutions, and countries while respecting diverse national and regional contexts. It enables mutual learning, strengthens policy dialogue, and serves as a benchmark for reflection, and continuous development.
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Key Takeaways

1. **Lifelong guidance** should be understood and governed as a **coherent ecosystem** connecting education, employment, and social sectors through coordinated policies, structures, and services.
2. **Professionalisation** is a **cornerstone of quality**. Defined roles, recognised competencies and structured professional development are essential for high-quality provision, political recognition, and sustainable funding.
3. **Effective implementation** depends on mandated **strong leadership, governance, and cross-sectoral cooperation**. Success requires translating policy frameworks into everyday practice, fostering shared ownership, and common goals.
4. A shared framework and common language enable **collaboration and mutual learning**. By providing common definitions and reference points, the framework supports national ownership while facilitating international exchange.
5. **Guidance systems** should be both **outcome- and evidence-oriented**, focused on empowering individuals while using evidence to improve practice, demonstrate impact, strengthen accountability, and support policymaking.
6. **The Framework** serves as a **practical toolbox** for system development. It translates policy objectives into operational components to design, implement, evaluate, and improve lifelong guidance systems.