



Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Hungary

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Introduction

Career guidance and counselling has traditions of long standing in the Hungarian public education system, dating from before the change of the economic and political regime. The National Career Orientation Network was established by Government Decree No. [1029/1971](#) (VII.3.) in the era of the 'existing system of socialism'. It was pursuant to that legal regulation that the National Career Guidance Institution (OPTI) and the National Career Guidance Council (later, Committee) were set up under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour (MüM). Service delivery was assigned to the county institutions. The system gradually lost its autonomy in the early eighties, and the county institutions merged into the institutes of pedagogy. Schools had to have their own orientation counsellors. Teachers fulfilling that role were partially exempted from their 'normal' lessons to carry out the orientation work. By the time of the change of regime, there was no independent orientation institution and expert network in Hungary any more. In the period of the change of regime, in 1988-93, the orientation tasks were left without a real owner, and this circumstance has marked the Hungarian system to the present day. The two competent ministries did not conclude a long-term strategic agreement concerning the deployment, operation and evaluation of the orientation services. The public employment service (PES) instituted by the Employment Act of 1991 initially employed many professionals who had worked in orientation and considered it a personal matter to carry on with their profession and tasks (Borbély-Pecze, 2008).

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Coronavirus Update

The Hungarian national guidance services have been developed for in person

services; however, there are segmented individual-professional or school-based useful approaches, since mid-March 2020 the whole system crashed. The very promising idea of the development of the [counsellors' virtual community](#) was never fulfilled (Watts & Borbély-Pecze, 2011); therefore, currently there is no national infrastructure available to move to e-guidance services.

See dedicated sections below:

- [Access to guidance](#)
- [ICT in lifelong guidance](#)
- [Training and qualifications](#)
- [Guidance for school pupils](#)
- [Guidance for higher education students](#)
- [Guidance for the employed](#)
- [Guidance for unemployed adults.](#)

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Watts, A.G. & Borbély-Pecze, T. (2011). The development of a lifelong guidance system in Hungary. *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 11(1), 17-28. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10775-010-9187-7>

Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders

The National LLG Council (NPT) was founded in 2008 and abolished in 2012. Its responsibilities were assigned to the National Employment Office (NMH), the organisation which played a key role in National Employment Service (NES). In January 2015, the National Employment Office was also abolished and the [Ministry of National Economy](#) (NGM) took direct charge of NES. Since the Hungarian LLG Council was dismissed in 2012 there is no national coordination in this field. Ministries run their own systems. After the latest general elections (April 2018), the Ministry of National Economy was transformed back to [Ministry of Finance](#) (MoF) and being still responsible for employment policy as well as supervising the Public Employment Service of the country as part of the government territorial government offices. MoF runs the Youth guarantee initiatives at national level and is also responsible for labour market services, including career guidance ([30/2000](#), Edict of the Ministry of Economy).

The [Ministry of Human Capacities](#) (MoHC) is responsible for higher and public (primary) education, youth and culture policies. A newly formulated [Ministry of Innovation and Technology](#) (MoIT) is responsible for higher (after 1st of September 2019), vocational and adult education including vocational and adult career guidance. Under the ministries there are currently two national authorities: the Education Authority (EA) is under the Ministry of Human Capacities, responsible for career education in primary school and higher education as well as higher education alumni and guidance projects. A separate Government Committee, [Oktatás 2030](#), was commissioned to draft the new country national core curriculum (NCC), the fifth since 1995, chaired by Prof. Valéra Csépe. The new NCC will regulate career education in schools but is not yet approved by the national government. The daily management and maintenance of primary and general secondary schools is run by the [Klebersberg Központ](#) (Klebersberg Centre School District Offices). The school system is under the new [National Public Education Act](#) (2011 CXC).

Secondary vocational education schools are managed by the Ministry of Innovation and Technology via a [National Office of Vocational Education and Training and Adult Learning](#) (NOVETAL). This office supervises the 44 VET training centres in the country, including any career guidance related activities of these centres. The VET system is under the new [Vocational Education Act](#) (2011 CLXXXVII). The NOVETAL is also responsible for

adult education; the policy of adult education is being regulated by the [Adult Education Act](#) (2013. LXXVII.). The newest Vocational Education Act was just passed the Parliament (2019. LXXX.) in late November 2019 and the draft of a new Adult Education Act is under policy circulation this institutional settings and management is due to change again in the near future. A brand new national closed LTD. was already set up under the command of the MoIT. IKK (Innovative Education Support Centre: [IKK Innovatív Képzéstámogató Központ Zrt.](#) (IKK).

The national vocational qualification registry (VQR) had been changed as well recently (229/2019 (IX.30.) Gov. Decree. The new legislation will come into force from 1st of September 2019.

The New Vocation Act and the new legislation about the VQR rearrange the structure of the I-VET system of the country as well as the structure of the VQR (further information can be found [here](#)).

An additional but highly important stakeholder is the [Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#) (HCCI) and the county chambers. HCCI operates the network of vocational career advisers through the country and is also deeply involved in the Euro/World Skills movement.

Regional, county level or local coordination and cooperation are based on projects and the different managerial structures. Key initiatives in career guidance methodological developments have been targeting the popularisation of STEM occupations and VET more generally, as well as drop-out prevention.

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Access to guidance

In Hungary, each school class has a homeroom teacher who is responsible for a class of 24 to 30 pupils. The compulsory primary education has eight school years from age 6 up to 14 and is divided into two parts; 1 to 4 and 5 to 8; usually the form teacher is the same from 1 to 4 and from 5 to 8. Every school week they have at least one hour for the class, including career education. Secondary education usually lasts for four years and starts at the age of 14. Few pupils go to six or eight-year general secondary schools, which start at the ages of 12 and 10 respectively.

Thus, the first key career decision point, for most pupils, is at the age of 14. Parents play an important role in making such choices, on the basis of information provided by the school. Within the school, the form teacher performs a key role, usually meeting students for one hour per week and is responsible for collecting information about their progress from other teachers. Those who enter trade schools (secondary VET schools for students 14 to 18) are usually required to have chosen their vocational pathway on entry: this means that any career education and guidance to support their choices needs to have been provided early on in primary schooling. The provision of career education is part of the national core curriculum but systematic implementation has been missing since the change of regime.

The [Act on Public Education](#) (2011) reorganised the lifelong guidance-related tasks of public education institutions. County pedagogical institutions/centres (*Megyei Pedagógiai Intézetek*), based on the [48/2012](#) (XII.12.) and [15/2013](#) (II. 26.) 26. para. Edicts of the [Ministry of Human Capacities](#), have to provide career guidance, whereas this was an optional task beforehand. These pedagogical institutions primarily support schools, students, teachers and parents.

According to a survey (2015) commissioned by the [Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#) (HCCI), 92% of schoolchildren in grade 7 (age 13) had been thinking about/discussing their choice of secondary school and career before the survey was administered; 69% of these pupils said that the issue had come up in a class discussion with their form teacher, 24% had participated in a career event organised by their

school and 11% had participated in an event organised by the HCCI. The Chamber provides vocational guidance and counselling to students, teachers and parents with a main focus on skills shortages and advice on STEM occupations (GVI 2018, [Primary school children's further career choices 2018](#)). Since 2015 the 44 state VET centres in the country are also responsible for career education and recruitment of secondary VET students.

The current system of IVET is referred to as VET inspired by the dual principle, with students participating in technical education and training at the same time as studying 'general' subjects. Technical training starts in the first year of trade school (grade 9 at the age of 14) rather than in grade 11 as in the former system. County-level development and training committees (MFKB) have been set up to coordinate VET provision according to the forecast needs of the county-level labour market. The county level chambers of commerce and industry are key participants in these committees. Another amendment of the Vocational Education Act (2011) in 2018 has been replacing the county-level development and training committees with newly established sectoral skill councils. The secretariat duties of the new councils are managed by the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MKIK). The amendment came into force on 1 July 2018 but there will be a step-by-step development of the new councils; IT was the first one established. The MKIK in-house research unit is also responsible for the short-term labour market prognosis as this activity was taken from the PES. Currently the Ministry of Finance shares the responsibility for the yearly labour market prognosis. Longer term, demographic forecasts have been carried out by the [National Statistical Office Demographic Research Institute](#) (KSH NKI). Since the 1990's the most important research institute in this field is the Hungarian Academy of Science, [Institute of Economics Centre for Economic and Regional Studies](#) (MTA KTI). The centre has produced the [Hungarian labour market yearbook](#) since 2000 and has a capacity for macroeconomics and growth modelling with a special research focus on labour market, education and human development. The centre developed a well-established, user-friendly online system for career planning, *Pályasúgó*, based on different administrative datasets. The development was part of the Social renewal operational programme (SRÖP) 2007-13 and has not been updated since the close of the project. As was originally planned under the SRÖP, this labour market prognosis site should work together with the national guidance portal, [Nemzeti Pályorientációs Portál](#) developed by the PES, but these plans were never fulfilled under the 2014-20 programming period.

Similarly to the Higher Education Act (2006) (further information can be found [here](#) and [here](#)) and the [new Act on National Higher Education](#) (2011) states that the institute will help students to plan their careers during and after their studies, and that students have the right to counselling/guidance; however, no further details are provided. The quantity and quality of career education and guidance services within higher education institutions is based on the decision of the Senates at the institutional levels. There are no compulsory central quality criteria or monitoring system in place.

According to the [Employment Act](#), as amended in 2000, every Hungarian citizen has the right to approach the National Employment Service (NES) for access to human services; the services specified include career counselling as well as employment counselling and job-search counselling for the unemployed. The NES also participates in career guidance offered to students studying in public education, particularly VET students (Hughes, 2015). Labour departments of the county government offices provide career guidance, helping individuals – primarily registered job-seekers – to become more employable, through training and access to information and job-search strategies. The target group includes employed but mainly unemployed individuals.

Hungary has also private employment services, but their main focus is on head-hunting and job-brokerage.

PES also provide free phone guidance, mobile phone texts to communicate job vacancies, webcam consulting, and videoconferences by request.

A network of Employment Information Centres (FIT) within the NES county offices was developed in 1994. Having as a model the German Biz system, the FIT centres are currently integrated within the county government services and provide access to video guidance information and data on occupations. *E-guidance* is an online national portal created in 2010 which provides access to labour market information, career orientation quizzes, career-videos and career questionnaires and studies.

Special vulnerable groups may receive services from the Ministry of Human Capacities, as the Human Resources Development OP (HRDOP/EFOP) is under the responsibility of this Ministry, though systematised information is lacking. The Equal Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities Non-profit Ltd. (FSZK) supervised the MoHC and also runs special projects for disabled groups. Different churches also develop and run career guidance projects; for example, the Piarist currently develops a career guidance project for special education student groups.

There is no national data gathering or analysis about LLG service access as such. The State Employment Agency collects but does not really evaluate data about employment services, including different forms of career guidance.

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Coronavirus Update

As different guidance services are under the different sectors and since the abolishment of the National Lifelong Guidance Council in early 2012, there are no reports publicly available and therefore it is very hard to predict the consequences of the epidemic. Surely most of the services were delivered face-to-face in the PES and in the education and social systems therefore currently (since mid-March) most of these are either not available or are available but the clients are trying to avoid face-to-face meeting. For example, the Capital City Youth Guidance Centre only set an e-mail address on its [website](#) where parents and students may send their inquiries since 16th of March 2020. The New Generation Centre of the government also advertises [on-line guidance service via e-mail](#) and it offers an answer within four working days. The Democratic Union of Teachers (PDSZ) already urged the government on the 16th of March, the day schools were closed, that pedagogical services, including career guidance, must be available from home office (further information can be found [here](#)). The Hungarian Chamber of Craft and Industry, responsible for youth vocational guidance since 2013, also [offers only face-to-face services](#).

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Quality assurance

There are different state regulations for guidance providers; the employment administration [30/2000](#) edict of the Economy Ministry describes these requirements. In education, the Education Act describes school-based guidance activities without commissioning the collection of data. The annex of the above edict describes the qualification criteria for career counsellors regarding the employment sector, listing the following qualifications: sociologist, social worker psychologist, special teacher, career counsellor, and school counsellor (see section [Training and Qualifications](#)).

There is no national, cross-sectoral credential system for guidance practitioners, though the country has a well-established higher education institutional background in the field. The Eotvos Lorand University in Budapest and St. Stephan University in Godollo have long-standing tradition in professional training. After the Bologna system was introduced, another five universities (Pécs, Debrecen, Győr, ELTE Budapest, Metropolitan University Budapest) became trainers in career guidance. National or sectoral quality assurance has been missing.

Under the Ministry of Human Capacities another Ministerial Edict ([13/2013](#) (II.23.)), annex No. 6. describes the qualification criteria. According to this regulation any psychological or pedagogical degree is adequate.

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Career management skills

National core curriculums (1995, 2003, 2007, 2012, 2019* (*under discussion) describe CMS but focus more on the content of the French word *l'orientation* and the secondary school choosing mechanism. In the current context, the regulations of the [National Education Act](#) and [Vocational Education Act](#) together provide understanding on the country's CMS development concept in childhood. The Education Act covers the age group 6 to 16 and the Vocational Act covers age group 14 to 18. There is overlap in the legislations as usually grade 8 (age 14) is a turning point in pupils' life; enrolment in secondary education is a must at this early age. Currently two thirds of those enrolled in Hungarian secondary education, by number of students,

are in vocational education.

The first national core curriculum (Hungarian abbreviation: NAT) issued in 1995 (restructured in 2003 and in 2007) specified pedagogical development in grades 1 to 10 in terms of 10 cultural domains, one of which was the teaching of way-of-life and practical skills, including career orientation. The first NAT defined a growing proportion of way-of-life and practical skills in the school curriculum according to level: 4 to 7% in grades 1 to 4, 5 to 9% in grades 5 to 6, 6 to 10% in grades 7 to 8 and 5 to 9% in grades 9 to 10. Parallel with the release of the core curriculum, teaching staff came to face a new challenge: they had to work out the corresponding local curricula.

The cultural domain in question integrated three subjects: technology, domestic science and, career orientation (Borbély-Pecze, 2008). The phrase '(career) guidance' in use before the change of regime (1989), gave way to '(career) orientation'. According to the relevant legislation, its general objective was to help pupils/students choose a career. Specifically, this included the following components: self-knowledge development based on the identification of individual's abilities and skills; experiential familiarisation with the content, requirements and access pathways, possibilities and alternatives of the most important careers, occupational branches; reconciliation of the possibilities with reality, of aspirations with the realities.

Pupils must be made aware of the prospect of repeated career changes during their working life. Schools must provide a comprehensive overview of the world of labour, matching the age of their students and their own potential. Consequently, it is necessary to provide for such conditions and activities as may help the pupils test their capabilities and become absorbed in the areas capturing their interest, in order to develop their self-knowledge and career knowledge. Orientation can only be effective, if it is implemented over a longer period of time and if it exploits the possibilities inherent in the various subjects, lessons and extracurricular areas and activities in a cohesive way (NCC/ NAT 1995, [130/1995](#) (X.26) Gov. Decree).

Also, the ELGPN resource kit and the glossary were translated to Hungarian, but they were rarely used.

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Evidence, monitoring and assessment

There is no systematic monitoring or evaluation of the guidance programmes, though the [Ministry of National Economy](#) as the supervisor body of the Hungarian State Employment Service collects yearly statistics. A few evaluation studies were carried out in recent years, e.g. (Berde, 2010). Kiss and Borbely-Pecze (2009)

also provided a SROI (social return on investment) estimation of the career guidance related interventions in the Hungarian context. Kiss and his colleagues (2010) evaluated the impact of the SROP 2.2.2. (Social renewal operational programme 2007-13, New Széchenyi Plan's) national programme. The study produced relevant insights on the groups of clients serviced:

“According to the analysis of interviews four categories of clients can be identified based on their career development strategies. Conscious career developers only require the advice of counsellors to fine-tune their plans. The second group can be described with the need for security. Individuals belonging to this category would like their less definite goals to be approved of by experts, hope for affirmation and require further information. Those clients in need of intense emotional support should be regarded as a separate group. They view counselling as the first step in organising their mental hygienic state. Finally, the fourth group of clients can be described as initially being reluctant and unwilling, so-called ‘sent’ people. What characterises them is little expectation, low motivation, but their attitude can be changed during counselling. Often unexpected revelations help them view their career development in a different way” (Kiss et al, 2010).

Lisznyai, Ritoók and Vajda (2009) have developed a possible indicators system for a national LLG service provision (the full report is available [here](#)). These were never tested out. Six indicators were suggested:

- a. decision making;
- b. coping;
- c. life skills;
- d. self-evaluation;
- e. career maturity, career transition making skill;
- f. control and self-direction.

Kiss and his colleagues (2010) carried out the qualitative analysis using 45 in-depth interviews, while for the quantitative analysis 300 on-line questionnaires were answered.

As a summary of the qualitative analysis it can be stated that the basis for an effective career orientation counselling system is that through primary preventive interventions (such as reach-out services), it should support citizens in realising that changes are needed to develop their career. Regardless of any given professional status, career development can sometimes cause people to face unexpected, occasionally embarrassing and pressing, or beneficial and constructive tasks. It would be useful to spread the word of a network of competent experts ready to help. Regardless of what characterises the method of counsellors, a key indicator of the effectiveness of counselling is the support given to alter ideas about the future.

Redefining and reinterpreting the problem situation proved to be a key element from the interviewees’ point of view. According to Heidelberg’s model, following the synchronising of the counselling relationship, adjustments to the advice seeker’s systems can be made (Kiss et al, 2010).

Separate research (Hárs & Tóth, 2009) addressed the economic returns of career guidance services and a long-term empirical pilot was suggested under the second phase of the SROP 2.2.2. Measure (2012-2015) though it was never carried out.

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ICT in lifelong guidance

During the last decade different web-based LLG tools were developed. The most promising practice was the national LLG portal [Nemzeti Pályorientációs Portál](#) (NPP) (Watts, Borbély-Pecze, 2011) which was deactivated. As a successor the [Nemzeti Pályorientációs Portál](#) all-age portal was launched and currently maintained by the NOVTEL; however, it is not complete and thus not yet fully functional. It is planned to be finalised under the EIDOP Measure 6.2.4. The national [Euroguidance website](#) was also deactivated recently. The portal was originally designed as a single access point for lifelong guidance services for all age groups. A special entry channel was also designed for career guidance professionals from different sectors. Later (2012-15) a Moodle online in-service training tool was added.

In 2008, a publication described the contemporary national LLG website and also provided a comparison with the international best examples. The book is available only in Hungarian (Juhász, Kovács & Kunos, 2008). The study comprised the analysis of 15 Hungarian and 28 foreign language (English, German, French, Dutch, Danish and Swedish) websites. The main criteria for selecting the websites was their coverage as well as the data and service scope, but smaller sites with special features were also included to present good practices. The websites were analysed and evaluated according to standardised criteria from the point of view of an average user, but the study also points out professionally interesting solutions, such as user channelling, searching methods, data hierarchies, data integration, interactivity, distance counselling and other online personal services. During the evaluation, special emphasis was put on defining the individual positive or negative elements that should be assessed or avoided while planning the renewed national website.

A [national guidance portal](#) was created in 2010. This is an online career tool which provides access to information on education and labour market, career videos and career questionnaires. In addition, a network of employment information centres (FIT) was developed in 1994. Having as a model the German Biz system, the FIT centres are currently integrated within the county government services and provide access to video-guidance information and data on occupations.

The [Hungarian Association for Counselling](#) in Higher Education (FETA) also provides career and psychological counselling for students, with access to an online synchronous counselling service and to a forum. Furthermore, *e-guidance* is an online national portal which provides access to labour market information, career orientation quizzes and career studies.

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Coronavirus Update

The National Lifelong Guidance Portals ([NPP1](#), [NPP2](#)) were not maintained since the end of the second project phase in 2015. The [third version](#) of NPP has been launched during the Covid-19 period. The questionnaires are on-line and available after registration, but the school-vocational and occupational databases are not updated; therefore, they cannot be used for real-time searches. Another new national development that has been addressing STEM and career orientation, [is not ready yet](#). The [online career surveys](#) of the higher education information portal (FELVI) are available, but mainly without additional distance guidance services.

Updated and accurate labour market intelligence on-line systems are not available in the country. There are a few developments such as the [FELVI data set](#) about graduate tracking surveys but these can be considered mostly as pieces of information.

Some [private companies](#) have been trying to fill in the gaps in online service delivery. Most of the private companies have been offering distance guidance services for adults, via Skype or other platforms, but these are also available at [NGOs](#) as well as for-profit firms. Most of these providers set up their professional protocols for on-line services.

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PályaNET pályaválasztási tanácsadó portal.

<http://palyanet.kontaktalapitvany.hu/palya-kalauz-kerdoiv/>

Training and qualifications

Careers professionals working in public employment services hold a BA degree from Szent István University, Gödöllő, and a part-time postgraduate course in employment and career counselling from Eötvös University, Budapest. All Hungarian initial and continuing teacher training programmes for primary and secondary school teachers include CMS development courses and modules.

The continuous training of career guidance professionals is done through participation at national and international workshops and conferences on guidance, education, entrepreneurship and employment. The career training events are organised by public and private providers. Due to the involvement in EU guidance structures, such as Euroguidance and ELGPN, career professionals can participate in study visits and cross-border initiatives.

Most of the continuous training is provided by different ESF-financed projects at temporary bases. Currently, the Economic Development Innovation and Operational Programme - EIDOP (*GINOP: Gazdaságfejlesztési és Innovációs Operatív Program*) central project measure 6.2.4. run by the [National Office for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education](#) (NOVTEL) will provide short (maximum 90 hrs) training for the teaching staff of the State complex vocational training centres (44) between 2018 and 2021. Another central project run by the National Education Authority will provide short training exercises for teachers and will develop a syllabus for the State schools.

An MA in human resource counselling is also available in five different universities, which partly focus on career counselling and guidance. The curriculum includes modules on guidance in EU, career-planning, career theories, counselling techniques, conflict management, problem solving, employment policy, ICT and research methodology. Relevant issues related to social inclusion are also taught, addressing disadvantaged groups, andragogy, equal opportunities adult education services, and ethics. The MA programme has duration of four semesters.

A PhD programme in Education and Psychology includes career counselling and guidance topics. Since

1999, there has been a full degree offer for teachers for school career counselling/education (post-graduate teacher training). Currently, it lasts three semesters and only available at the University of Gödöllő. Within the psychological post-MA specialisation career counselling is available as a minor for professionals. Short-term training (30 to 90 hours) is widely available and jeopardises the 'brand' of career guidance and education interventions. There are practitioners without proper training.

The [Young Enterprise Alliance](#) (*Fiatal Vállalkozók Országos Szövetsége*, FIVOSZ) organisation created a network of entrepreneurship teachers focused on exchanging good practices about teaching of entrepreneurship. The European Business Association and the Shell Foundation collaborate on developing entrepreneurship training programmes for career guidance professionals. The Hungarian National Institute of Vocational and Adult Education (NOVTEL) has also developed an entrepreneurship training programme for VET teachers. The curriculum includes courses on entrepreneurial competences, business planning and didactics.

[KONTAKT Foundation](#) provides access to data on careers and labour market for all guidance professionals from schools, universities and PES. Information on how to develop career guidance activities for ESL, NEETs, people from disadvantaged groups, and older workers is also included.

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Coronavirus Update

Career Counsellors have no standardized knowledge and skills on how to use ICT in LLG services. There are several independent, often individual professionals-driven or separated individual [school-based initiatives](#).

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Funding career guidance

There is no single budget line for career guidance in the Hungarian State budget. Some of the activities are

covered by the funding of the PES, school system or others are project-based (often European Social Fund, ESF) and provide temporary service availability only.

Career guidance for school pupils

Compulsory education starts at the age of three with three-year compulsory kindergarten. At age six primary schooling starts and schooling then lasts until the age of 16. Following general (primary) school or, in the case of eight- or six-year secondary programmes starting from the fifth or the seventh year, all children can continue their studies in secondary education according to their capabilities, aspirations and knowledge, as well as the secondary school entrance requirements. In the new system, vocational training starts at the age of 15 and lasts until the age of 17. In general, secondary schools, however, there will be the possibility to guide 16-year-old pupils not motivated to continue their studies in higher education to pursue vocational education. Pupils may decide whether they want to obtain a secondary-school leaving certificate or enter vocational training or seek employment in the labour market (Bodó, 2014).

According to the relevant legislation (two Acts ([Public Education Act 2011](#), [Vocational Education Act, 2019](#)) for VET between grades 9 to 12/13 covered by the national core curriculum, general secondary grades 9 to 12 and VET Act grades 9 to 12 for two types of I-VET covered by the national public education), its general objective was to help pupils/students choose a career, in terms of the following components:

- a. self-knowledge development based on the identification of the individual's abilities and skills;
- b. experiential familiarisation with the content, requirements and access pathways, the most important careers and occupational branches;
- c. reconciliation of the possibilities and aspirations with reality.

The legislation foresees that pupils must be made aware of the prospect of repeated career changes during their working life. Accordingly, schools should provide a comprehensive overview of the world of work, matching the age of their students and their own potential. Students are expected to have access to the activities that may help them test their capabilities, as well as develop their self- and career knowledge. The legislation laid down the principle that orientation can only be effective, if it is implemented over a longer period of time and if it explores the potential of subjects, lessons and extracurricular areas (NCC).

Self-assessment tools are used by career counsellors during competence check-ups on students between grades 1 to 12. The aim of the competence assessment is to help them become aware of their strengths and make informed decisions about their educational path. These check-ups aim to assess the following skills: verbal and numerical aptitudes, spatial, interpersonal and manual skills, creativity, learning capacity.

Hungary has used the Human Resources Development Operational Programme funds (granted by the European Social Fund) to transform the curriculum for grades 1 to 12, by including the career-building competency. The project was coordinated by EducatioKhT and involved 8,000 teachers and 105,000 students from 600 schools. Completed in March 2008, the project used the *Real Game*, a career application adapted from Canada. The career building competence has six main principles:

- a. process principle: takes into consideration the life-path of an individual, supports the increased socialisation of students, and encourages self-development;
- b. development principle: the career competence is enhanced by taking into account personal and biological development;
- c. periodicity principle: supports repetition as an essential process in enhancing career awareness and

career development;

- d. consolidation principle: career building competence uses the consolidated personality traits of each individual;
- e. the principle of taking positive circumstances into account: helps self-assessment and self-confidence by highlighting the qualities and the strengths;
- f. support principle: career building is seen as a supportive task where individuals are presented with a range of career options but have the freedom to choose what fits best their interests, strengths and needs.

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Coronavirus Update

The National Education Authority issued a [methodological recommendation](#) on the 30th of March for the schools and teachers proposing the *Kréta system* (Chalk-system) for the management of digital learning, mainly usable as an e-diary²⁴. However, there seems to be no actual national protocol, so different institutions, universities and professors have been following their own implementation process. Google Classroom and Microsoft Teams had become the main platform for digital learning in compulsory schooling.

Based on the previously available background questionnaire (2017) of national skills survey a [researcher from the Centre for Economic and Regional Studies](#) noted that one-fifth of the Hungarian students may have no adequate access to digital distance learning. He also noted that based on these figures, students will be subjected for early drop out (Hermann, 2020).

On the Internet, in social media groups, there are lively discussions about the effect of the pandemic on the education system in Hungary. One group with more than 4,000 members ([Oktpol Café](#) -Education Policy Café), has been following the developments closely. Users concluded that current situation is not a distance education nor a Learning Management System-based education but one that is ad hoc, mostly improvised and based on individual teacher solutions. It is best described as an emergency digital schooling solution and hence, guidance must follow a similar approach. Therefore, parents are being forced to act as teachers at home. However, the national government has a [national digital education strategy](#) (so-called DOS) from 2016, but main elements are not yet in place.

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Guidance for VET participants

The institutional settings of the Hungarian VET system went through significant changes in recent years. Since July 2015, the responsibility for more than 300 vocational education and training (VET) schools that train around 200,000 students has been gradually transferred to the Ministry of National Economy (NGM). Hungary has around 700 to 800 VET schools, and eventually each will have their training profile reviewed and some will be closed. This will result in a major transformation of Hungary's institutional structure of education; at present, many VET schools are part of mixed-profile public education institutions which also offer grammar school (and even primary school) programmes (Eurofound) (further information can be found [here](#)).

These VET centres will host career guidance units as an outcome of the EIDOP Measure 6.2.4. project (further information can be found [here](#)).

The [National Institute of Vocational Education](#) (*Nemzeti Szakképzési Intézet*) implemented the first and second vocational school development programmes (SZFP: *Szakiskolai Fejlesztési Programme*). Both programmes involved 160 schools. According to the Hungarian Public Education Law, VET schools have the autonomy to decide whether they would like to teach two hours/week of career orientation for ninth grade pupils. The programmes increased career competences of 100 teachers, contributed to the development of a career orientation network and of a digital career guidance programme, *SzakmaInfo. Diákvállalkozás - A versenyről* (Business competitions), a four-phase competition involving students from secondary schools and VET schools. During the first phase, participants are required to pass an economic test on business development. The second phase challenges them to create a business from scratch, presenting business idea, name, slogan and logo. During the third phase, participants have to write a business plan, mentioning the goals of their activity, a review of the market research and the financial planning. The last phase includes the assessment of the proposal, judging and establishing the winner.

Please see the description of VET system in Hungary [here](#).

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Guidance for higher education students

The national higher education system refers briefly to the operation of existing career guidance offices, all decision based on the Senate: *'with their information giving and counselling system they help students find their places during their studies and after graduating'*. The association of career guidance providers from higher education institutions, [FELVI](#), focuses on providing access to course-data, admission requirements, career guidance services available in different universities, a forum, and information for foreigners.

Corvinus University organises business plan competitions where the winner will be paired with a mentor to help implement an idea. This enterprise-start-up support enhances career management skills, promotes entrepreneurship and encourages collaboration. Regional authorities have developed business incubators to support the development of entrepreneurship skills.

[A graduate career tracking system](#) started being implemented in Hungarian universities in 2015. It links the databases from the labour office, the higher education information system, and the student loan centre. Its aim is to improve the HEI's education policies and support prospective students to make informed decisions regarding their educational and career path. Financial resources have been allocated to develop mentoring programmes for students from disadvantaged families and for potential drop-outs.

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Coronavirus Update

The first cases of Covid were reported on the 4th of March 2020. Hungary [declared state of emergency](#) on the 11th of March and higher education was required to move to distance teaching/ learning a week later as the Easter break in higher education was moved to a week earlier. There are mainly no well-established national Learning Management Systems with content (LMS), therefore most of the higher education institutes have started using Canvas, Moodle, Microsoft Teams, Neptun Meet Street and other applications. There is no national protocol, different universities and professors have been following their own implementation process.

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Guidance for adult learners

The complex VET centres also serve adult learners and there are private adult educators (see Guidance for VET participants).

Guidance for the employed

According to the [Employment Act](#), as amended in 2000, every Hungarian citizen has the right to approach the National Employment Service (NES) for access to human services; the services specified include career counselling as well as employment counselling and job-search counselling for the unemployed. The NES also participated in the career guidance offered to students studying in public education, particularly VET students (Hughes, 2015). Labour departments of the county government provide career guidance, helping individuals to become more employable, through training and access to information and job-search strategies. The target group includes both employed and unemployed individuals.

The public employment services also use call-centre technology to reach a higher number of clients and to provide more individualised support to at-risk clients. Hungary also has private employment services, but their main focus is on private recruitment agencies. PES provide free-phone guidance, mobile phone texts to communicate job vacancies, webcam consulting, and videoconferences. According to the Employment Act employed adults can assess PES guidance services without registration.

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Coronavirus Update

At a very early stage of the crisis, the national government released the [works protection](#) and made the dismissal notice delivery almost unconditional. The government [Economic Protection Plan](#) (EPP) was introduced on the 7th of April. The [size of the Plan](#) could be around 2-20% of the national GDP. It also consists of a wage subsidy for 3 months, the national modified version of the German *Kurzarbeit*, for companies that lost 15 up to 50% of their orders. In these cases, maximum 70% of the wages can be subsidized from the government's budget. However, the main elements of the Plan do not address directly the workers, but offer either relief of the social contribution payments or access to 0 % interest rates for the companies. The National Central Bank will act directly as a creditor and increase the [central bank base rate](#). The EPP also includes a few adult education incentives such as;

- a. the state agrees to cover 95% of training fees, while jobseekers are entitled to interest-free adult training student loans;
- b. university students will be able to apply for a one-time, any-purpose, interest-free student loan of the amount of HUF 500,000.

There are only speculations about the coming unemployment as the [National Employment Agency](#) of the government produces monthly newsletters. By April 2020 330 thousands registered-jobseekers were [reported](#), it was 69 thousand more than a year earlier (April 2019). According to the [National Central Statistical Office](#), based on the Labour Force Survey the standardized unemployment rate was 3.8% in the period of February-April 2020. The lowest level was 3.3% in October-December 2019.

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Guidance for unemployed adults

According to the [Employment Act](#), as amended in 2000, every Hungarian citizen has the right to approach the National Employment Service (NES) for support, independently of being registered. The services specified include career counselling as well as employment counselling and job-search counselling. The NES also participate in the career guidance offered to students studying in public education, particularly VET students (Hughes, 2015). Labour departments of the county government provide career guidance, helping individuals to become more employable, through training and access to information and job-search strategies. The target group includes both employed and unemployed individuals.

The public employment service (PES) instituted by the Employment Act of 1991 initially employed many professionals who had worked in orientation and considered it a personal matter to carry on with their profession and tasks. Later, the labour legislation identified career guidance and orientation as functions of the employment service. The employment service tried to satisfy the relevant school demand mainly through the establishment of the vocational guidance centres (VGCs) (modelled on the German *Berufe Information Zentrum system*), and the development of the related service contents (films/folders presenting occupations and self-evaluation methods).

The Public Employment Services also use call-centre technology to reach to a higher number of clients and to provide more individualised support to at-risk clients. Hungary also has private employment services, but their main focus is on private recruitment agencies. PES also provide free-phone guidance, mobile phone texts to communicate job vacancies, webcam consulting, and videoconferences

The Springboard programme, [Dobbanto](#), developed by the Equal Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities Non-profit Ltd. (FSZK) uses competence assessments, work-based training and mentorship support to provide an individualised and personalised guidance approach for unemployed adults. The programme is the result of collaboration between regional national institutes, NGOs, local authorities and social partners.

Competences required to find a job, as well as skills and knowledge to make career choices and obtain a vocational qualification, are acquired on a continuous basis. For those who cannot keep up with the pace set by the system, the BRIDGE programmes, introduced two years ago, offer individuals up to age 23 the option to progress at a slower pace, with different learning methods.

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Coronavirus Update

At a very early stage of the crisis, the national government released the [works protection](#) and made the dismissal notice delivery almost unconditional. The government [Economic Protection Plan](#) (EPP) was introduced on the 7th of April. The [size of the Plan](#) could be around 2-20% of the national GDP. It also consists of a wage subsidy for 3 months, the national modified version of the German *Kurzarbeit*, for companies that lost 15 up to 50% of their orders. In these cases, maximum 70% of the wages can be subsidized from the government's budget. However, the main elements of the Plan do not address directly the workers, but offer either relief of the social contribution payments or access to 0 % interest rates for the companies. The National Central Bank will act directly as a creditor and increase the [central bank base rate](#). The EPP also includes a few adult education incentives such as;

- a. the state agrees to cover 95% of training fees, while jobseekers are entitled to interest-free adult training student loans;
- b. university students will be able to apply for a one-time, any-purpose, interest-free student loan of the amount of HUF 500,000.

There are only speculations about the coming unemployment as the [National Employment Agency](#) of the government produces monthly newsletters. By April 2020 330 thousands registered-jobseekers were [reported](#), it was 69 thousand more than a year earlier (April 2019). According to the [National Central Statistical Office](#), based on the Labour Force Survey the standardized unemployment rate was 3.8% in the period of February-April 2020. The lowest level was 3.3% in October-December 2019.

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Guidance for older adults

No special services are provided for older adults.

Guidance for early leavers

In 2016, the Hungarian Government set up a Medium-term strategy against leaving school without qualifications (*A végzettség nélküli iskolaelhagyás elleni középtávú stratégia*) to tackle early school leaving and to increase employment. Cross-sectoral cooperation between education, training, employment, health care, law enforcement and social policy is a key element. The strategy also defines individual, institutional and system-level tasks (*feladatok*); its main goals at the individual level are:

- a. person-oriented, differentiated education and support;
- b. encouraging learning, and disappointment;
- c. appropriate intervention;
- d. creating incentives for institution financing.

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Guidance for NEET

Active labour market programmes targeting young people have been successful in Hungary. Central Government School District offices (*KLIK: Klébersberg Központ*) order and monitor the provision of compulsory schooling. Municipality clerks submit records of drop-out students of compulsory school age to the school district centres creating a tight 'net'.

The employment services of the district offices and the job centres of the County Government offices try to integrate young people not in education, employment or training into the labour market. Methods employed include face-to-face sessions, group dialogue, distributing leaflets, screening professional videos, presenting role-models from professional fields, providing information on skills shortages, administering tests (skills, preferences and attitudes, making presentations, site visits and organising forums, exhibitions and competitions).

The Youth Guarantee (YG) and the Youth Employment Initiative, supported by the European Social Fund, are delivered via the network of Public Employment Services (PES), providing country-wide coverage. These programmes involved more than 74,000 young people between January 2015 and November 2017; in 2016, most of the participants received training or an employment offer within four months of registering with the PES. [Recent government legislation](#) from 2017 (20/3/2017) extends further the outreach of the YG by imposing stricter limitations for young people to be involved in the Public works scheme. Under the age of 25 young job-seekers can entry the Public Work Scheme (PWS) only by their own initiative. PWS cannot be offered by the PES or any other public authority. On the back of these initiatives the youth unemployment

rate and the share of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) have been decreasing.

Since 2017, it is possible to apply for the programme online, through *Fiatal vagyok*. The website also offers information on career related areas by making available sections such as 'I want to work', 'I want to start a business', 'I want to learn a profession' and 'I do not know what to do'. One of the key aspects of the programme is mentoring support to enrolled individuals (EACEA, Country Report Hungary 2019).

Star of the trade (*Szakma Sztár Fesztivál*) is a series of education competitions with the motto 'A good profession worth as much as a degree!', which aims to ensure that regional chambers are able to arrange for the highest number students living in rural areas and facing career choices to see the national competition of the best vocational students and gain insight into each vocational qualification.

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Guidance for other groups

The [Your tale project](#) (also known as MESED) targets Roma mothers with low qualifications, their children and pre-service teacher training university students. Roma mothers are involved in reading activities with the aim of improving their literacy, parenting, and employability skills, and improving their children's education prospects. University students develop their practical activities and learn more about the diversity of education paths. The project started in 2010 and is coordinated by the [Roma Education Fund](#) (REF), an organisation which develops activities for Roma people with the aim of reducing discrimination, segregation and increasing the quality of the educational activities and training programmes.

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