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REPORT ABOUT THE ROLE OF DIGITAL COUNSELOUR

Material developed by the "CRAS" Association - Center for the Development of Social Activity



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INTRODUCTION

Economic, technological and social changes taking place in the world constitute a major challenge for individual countries and societies and result in significant consequences in the area of work, professional and personal development of individuals.

The decisive factor influencing contemporary everyday life is the knowledge-based economy. This term refers to both scientific research, expert opinions, patents, data and information, as well as the education, skills and competences of working people. Therefore, a knowledge-based economy is, to a large extent, an economy based on the individual resources of employees.

This means significant changes in the area of professional functioning. The „one job for life” model is being replaced by a career model based on several professional experiences combined with periods of study or family responsibilities. Knowledge and skills no longer constitute a once-learned and closed set of competences, usually acquired in early youth. On the contrary, people active on the labor market should be ready to constantly update, supplement, expand and acquire new skills.

The development of technology results in the elimination of many jobs and entire professions, related not only to simple physical activities, but also to mental activity and skills previously attributed only to people. These changes result in a transformation of the career model, which until recently was based on a predictable and vertical promotion path within a permanent place of employment. Currently, it is characterized by a discontinuous horizontal path, associated with moving from one place of employment or job position to others.

This is accompanied by uncertainty and instability of employment, changes in the demand for new skills and professional roles, the need to change job positions, scope of responsibilities and tasks, and often also the need to retrain and continue a career in an environment different from the previous one. In such conditions, professional development takes the form of increasingly irregular and individualized paths. Individual responsibility for the quality of education, knowledge, competences and the need to constantly adapt one's skills to the challenges of the labor market are increasing.

The phenomena described are often associated with an increased feeling of pressure to succeed. The modern world requires making optimal choices and taking responsibility not only for shaping and leading a successful life in the professional context but also in the private and social context. This may cause a feeling of mental overload and living in the shadow of excessive demands.



Therefore, taking care of one's own mental well-being, developing self-awareness and motivation to act becomes particularly important.

In view of the numerous denominations related to functioning in modern timesworld, the importance of counseling should be emphasized. The support of advisors can significantly contribute to increasing the ability of people of active age, especially those with low qualifications and disadvantaged situations, to cope with professional life and to develop personalized new strategies coping with difficulties.

It can also be positive impact on improving resilience and adaptability to the changing requirements of the modern world.

Consulting is a key element of a modern support system for acquiring 21st century skills. It is treated as a tool for personal and professional development because it allows you to expand your awareness and choices, and engages you in searching for solutions. It affects the motivation process and the full use of opportunities of the people using it. Modern consulting is understood as a process focused on professional, emotional and psychological support in order to meet personal challenges, during which hidden opportunities and knowledge are brought to light.

Advanced digitalization influences changes in the way advisory support is provided. Modern technologies, AI and other ICT solutions are increasingly used to provide services.



1. CONSULTING CONCEPTS IN EUROPE

1.1. CONSULTING IN EUROPEAN UNION POLICY

Lifelong Guidance (LLG) remains a matter of interest at European level. It is considered the main element of the idea of "lifelong learning" (LLL). This idea is defined by the European Commission as: "all lifelong learning activities aimed at improving the level of knowledge, skills and competences from a personal, civic, social and/or employment perspective" (Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality, Communication from the European Commission, COM (2001)). The main assumptions of the lifelong learning policy concern:

- considering the learning process from the perspective of the learner and not the entities/people providing education,
- enabling every interested person to learn in various forms, places and periods of life,
- equal treatment of different learning paths, thanks to embedding programs in learning outcomes and procedures for validating the achieved learning outcomes,
- implementation of procedures and processes for recognizing learning outcomes outside the formal system (RPL – Recognition of Prior Learning),
- measuring the quality of education using changes in the level of knowledge and skills of learners, rather than the characteristics of educational institutions (inputs, programs, textbooks, quality of staff),
- creating learning opportunities closer to home (among the local community, using IT technologies).

In the area of counseling, it is considered necessary to provide every interested person with access to this form of support.

Including the idea of counseling in the assumptions of „Lifelong Learning" means changing thinking from the system of providing counseling/career guidance services to lifelong counseling.

Two resolutions of the Council of the European Union on Education were devoted to the idea of lifelong guidance: „Resolution on lifelong guidance" of 2004 and its consequence „Resolution on better integration of lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies" from 2008.

The documents indicate that counseling is:

„an ongoing process that enables citizens, regardless of their age and at any point in their lives, to identify their skills, competences and interests, to make decisions about education, training and



employment, and to manage their personal lives in education, training, work and other situations, in which it is possible to acquire or use these skills and competences. Guidance includes individual and collective activities in the field of information, advice, competence assessment, support and teaching skills necessary to make decisions and manage one's career”.

Understood this way, Mrlifelong guidance covers many areas: education, training, employment, life in society and personal life.

The documents specify four priority areas:

1. Rdevelopment ucareer management skills that enable you to independently shape your educational path, tailored to your professional career.
Skills in this area are based on key competences such as "learning to learn", social and civic competences, intercultural competences, initiative and entrepreneurship.
The ability to manage one's own career involves the ability to learn about the labor market and professions, having self-knowledge, the ability to define one's competences acquired through formal, informal and non-formal learning, as well as understanding the education, training and qualification systems.
2. Availability of services.
Access to advisory services should be provided to everyone, regardless of age and education. In particular, care should be taken to ensure that groups most in need of this type of support can benefit from counseling.
3. Ensuring quality and substantive basisdevelopment politician and systems counseling support.
The quality of counseling services should be reflected in the provision of objective information that would take into account the expectations of people using counseling and the realities of the labor market. It is also necessary to ensure the educational preparation of advisors and to set standards for their work in order to better respond to the needs and expectations of people using their services.
4. Coordinationservices.
Guidance should take into account the needs of different target groups. Care should be taken to improve the complementarity and coordination of services. For this purpose, a cooperation network should be created between national and local governments, companies, relevant agencies, social partners and local communities, working together to provide all interested parties with better access to advisory services.



The provisions of the Resolution resulted in the creation of the European Lifelong Career Guidance Network (ELGPN) by EU member states in 2007. The aim of the network was to support Member States and the European Commission in developing cooperation in the field of lifelong guidance in both the education and employment sectors. The ELGPN consisted of 30 member states and Switzerland as an observer.

From 2007 to 2015, the network promoted lifelong guidance. ELGPN was coordinated by a team from Finland. The network's work resulted in numerous publications and reports on counseling, containing practical tips on developing this form of support.

In 'Guidelines for the Policy and Development of Lifelong Guidance Systems. Reference framework for the EU and the Commission', developed by ELGPN, indicates that guidance is provided to help citizens make informed and important decisions regarding career, educational, training, employment and life management choices. These services are provided directly (individual and group) or remotely via the Internet or telephone. Counseling includes support that can help individuals clarify what they know about themselves, their capabilities and their approach to decision-making. Guidance services help citizens use professional resources in a way that suits their needs.

The document lists the following services as good practices in the implementation of counseling:

- citizen-friendly, i.e. delivered using appropriate media, at a time tailored to the recipients' needs. They can be provided remotely, e.g. using ICT (telecommunications support tools), as well as during personal meetings,
- have a clearly defined scope, adapted to the aspirations and needs of recipients, taking into account their living and working environment, as well as their cultural preparation to use the services (this especially applies to users with a migrant background),
- are also addressed to groups at risk of social and economic exclusion,
- are based on a partnership approach, using non-formal and informal partnerships to provide counseling to disadvantaged communities, groups and people,
- promote open access to information resources, especially using the potential of ICT.

In order to identify potential areas for EU intervention in the area of lifelong guidance, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion commissioned research on lifelong guidance (LLG) in the EU. In 2020, the report "Lifelong guidance policy and practice in the EU: trends, challenges and opportunities" was created. The report



published the following conclusions and recommendations for EU countries after 2020 regarding the implementation of Lifelong Guidance (LLG) solutions:

- To improve LLG systems, the European Commission should explore with Member States how to give new political impetus to the development of LLG in education, training, youth and employment policies.
- The Commission should promote coordination and cooperation at national, regional, local and sectoral levels in the provision of LLG by establishing an effective means of communication between all stakeholders. It should optimize mutual learning within the LLG network (the aim would be to improve the quality of LLG services).
- The Commission, in consultation and cooperation with Member States, should examine whether innovative LLG initiatives could help create coherent LLG systems available to all citizens throughout their lives.
- The Commission, together with Member States, should explore opportunities to empower citizens to develop career adaptability learning outcomes and enable them to navigate the ever-changing labor market.
- The Commission should, in cooperation with Member States, support investments in IT technologies and the development of e-guidance services.

According to the recommendations of the European Lifelong Perspective of Guidance Network (ELGPN, 2015), counseling leads to the development of management competences, which include: self-management, learning management and career management.

Examples of self-management competencies include awareness of one's own resources and interests, the ability to self-reflect, social competences and planning. Examples of learning management competencies include participation and engagement in learning and understanding the relationship between self, learning and work. Examples of career management competencies include obtaining, assessing and analyzing information about educational and job offers and their accompanying requirements, relating this information to self-knowledge and making career decisions and coping with transitions.

To sum up, it can be said that lifelong guidance (LLG) is an important element of EU policy related to the development of the idea of lifelong learning.



1.2. THE FIGURE OF A COUNSELOR IN LIFELONG COUNSELING

The consequence of the change in needs in the field of counseling, mainly from assistance in choosing a profession or changing the place of employment to lifelong support, is a different perception of the role of a counselor. The change concerns the relationship between the counselor and the counselee. While earlier ways of working positioned the counselor as the one who provided specific instructions, the contemporary understanding of counseling emphasizes the autonomous attitude of the person seeking help. The new role of an advisor, in this context, comes down to a person who does not impose his or her opinion, does not provide ready-made solutions, does not replace the person being advised in making decisions, but strives to help him or her make the most appropriate choice. The change can be described as a transition from a directive counseling model to a supportive counseling model.

Directive counseling focuses mainly on assistance in choosing an educational and professional path, and its goals are related to matching human capabilities to the requirements of the labor market. Popular in this approach is the use of tests and questionnaires and proposing standard solutions. In this approach, the advisor is an expert in the profession, knows the trends and realities of education/labor market - knows which paths are valuable and the best. He expresses his opinions by assessing, instructing, suggesting, giving tips and specific advice.

The essence of supportive counseling is to accompany the person seeking help in discovering and developing their potentials, resources, strengths, deepening self-reflection (self-insight, strengthening self-knowledge).

The advisor relies primarily on communication competences, i.e. active listening, dialogue, negotiation and interpretation of meanings. The aim of his work is to provide knowledge and skills helpful in self-creation, constructing one's own professional/life path, encouraging the development of skills and competences useful in the modern world and taking responsibility for the decisions made. The emphasis is on a partnership and participatory approach, a focus on cooperation, and respect for the autonomy of the seeker. The advisor is open to other perspectives and alternative choices of the people he supports. The supporting advisor is an expert in the counseling process (he has a workshop and tools), but he presents the attitude of "not knowing" about the life/professional decisions of the people he works with. He pays particular attention to respecting the freedom and decision-making of other people.

The advisor is not so much an expert or informant, but a supporting person who opens the field



for self-reflection, gives space to set personal life and professional goals, supports the independent search for solutions and stimulates continuous, conscious education and choosing one's own life path. Cares about the well-being of the person he supports. The advisor's task is to build relationships, cooperation and internal motivation, stimulating reflectivity and critical thinking.

1.3. CONTEMPORARY CONSULTING CONCEPTS

The change in the role of the counselor can be seen in contemporary counseling theories. Researchers from the Life Designing Counseling group, such as Maria Eduarda Duarte, Jean Guichard, Salvatore Soresi, Raoul Van Esbroeck, Mark Savickas, Laura Nota, Jerome Rossier, Jean-Pierre Dauwalder, Annelies van Vianen, are leaving from traditional forms of counseling. According to scientists, the role of the counselor is to support the counselee in defining his or her identity and in self-improvement, which can be combined with lifelong learning.

Mark Savickas, an American psychologist, believes that individuals construct their own careers by assigning meaning to professional and social behaviors and experiences. In counseling, he proposes the use of narrative methods, enabling individuals to work through their problems thanks to the ability to think reflectively and construct a goal that is important for themselves and society. He defines counseling as a process in which a professional path is built through narratives and stories, which are tools for constructing identity. The researcher proposed a list of five issues around which biographical work should focus during counseling:

After the opening question: "How can I be useful to you as you build your career?", you can ask supporting questions:

- 1) Who did you admire growing up? Tell me about him.
- 2) Do you read any magazines or watch TV programs regularly? What magazines/programs are these? What do you like about them?
- 3) Do you have a favorite book or movie? Tell me what's going on in her/him.
- 4) What is your favorite saying or motto?
- 5) What is your earliest memory? Tell three stories about something that happened to you when you were aged 3-6.

As you can see, the questions asked and the problems considered concern the past, present and future, but they are far from tests of knowledge or measurements of the characteristics or



predispositions of people seeking help, which dominated the counseling of the past era. These are also not questions typical of traditionally understood adult teaching, but rather related to lifelong learning from biography.

Savickas's theory is complemented by Jean Guichard's theory of life construction. The researcher based his concept on the assumption that in the modern world, constructing a career cannot be limited to planning life only in the professional sphere, because this sphere is only an element of human activity. Guichard emphasizes that the choices a person makes depend on career capital (competence) and identity capital. To give direction and meaning to your life and work, you need to know both of these capitals. The most important thing in this process is the help of professional advisors.

The researcher distinguishes three types of consulting work:

- Information: consisting of support in finding necessary and reliable professional information and obtaining answers to basic questions (what can increase the chances of employment, what are the employment prospects, etc.).
- Guidance: useful in mapping out a plan for your own professional development. Its aim is to help in self-esteem through reflection on oneself and one's own experience (competences and experiences shaped in life and useful in work, needs and values, resources).
- Dialogue: useful in life design. Dialogues are conducted in such a way that the person receiving support can define their value system and what is most important to them in life, what gives it meaning and direction. For this purpose, three time perspectives are used: past, present and future, which are interdependent and form a whole. Referring to past events and reflecting on the present enable clients to develop awareness of their own Self and create a structure for their lives and professional careers.

An approach that emphasizes the new role of the advisor, which does not focus only on professional activity, but applies to all areas of life, is crucial from a sociodynamic perspective. The sociodynamic concept has been used for many years, including: before Scandinavian advisors. Its creator is Vance Peavy. The researcher talks about a holistic approach to people and the roles they perform, as well as creative stimulation of people using advisory support for individual development.

In this concept, counseling is primarily a learning process. Both the advisor and the person seeking help actively participate in the learning process, which affects the effectiveness of activities.

The sociodynamic approach assumes that:



- Counseling is a process of building capacity and supporting a person's freedom of choice.
- Learning is best when it is "directed" rather than imposed.
- Cooperation between the advisor and the person receiving help takes place in an atmosphere of trust and respect.
- Counseling is a general method of life planning, it does not only concern the professional aspect.
- The most effective tools for helping others build a better life and achieve their chosen goals are linguistic/communication tools, i.e. words, meanings, metaphors, symbols, stories and mapping.
- The principle of readiness for action and change is important in the consulting process. The concept of "resistance" is not used, but the process is co-created to help the other person become ready.
- Current life experiences are the central issue and starting point for counseling.
- Perspectives have a key impact on our actions, they direct and organize the decisions we make. They are the basis for interpersonal communication and change.
- Personal meaning enables action. Only activities and concepts that are meaningful to us open us to true commitment and commitment and provide deep motivation to act.
- Counseling supports you in reshaping your identity, reinterpreting and creating personal goals. It triggers a proactive and creative attitude.
- The narrative 'I' reveals a new perspective, contained in the words: we live the stories we tell.
- "Polyphonic I" - I is a polyphonic and dialogical project, referring to the multiplicity of experiences, aspects of our identity and ways of seeing things.
- It is impossible to provide a specific conversation pattern or appropriate counseling intervention, as there are no universal principles of action in this area. Each contact is individual and unique. Ready-made patterns and pre-established procedures have limited usefulness. Nothing can replace the attentiveness, sensitivity and searching attitude of a consultant. His creative approach to solving problems.

A sociodynamic counselor is open to changing the plans of the person being counselled. It supports her in changing her current life order in order to see new meaning and previously unnoticed development opportunities. This type of approach to the counseling process places new competence

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requirements on the counselor, who must be ready at any time to change the current arrangements with the person being counselled, as the counselee gains more and more insight into himself. This requires a great deal of flexibility and the ability to "follow the client" for the advisor.

Advisors must keep the following points in mind:

1. What are the real abilities of the supported person - what knowledge does he/she have and how can he/she act on it?
2. What are this person's potential abilities - what could he/she do if he/she had the opportunity to learn or develop this ability?
3. Is there a social order that supports this person in exercising or learning to use these abilities? If the answer is negative, we have identified a block or obstacle in the development of the individual's abilities, i.e. we have indicated a limitation of his or her personal freedom.

Another thesis that is used in contemporary counseling is the theory of learning from coincidences and the ability to learn from them by John Krumboltz and Al S. Levin (happenstance learning theory). Its assumptions focus on developing in people using counseling openness to unplanned coincidences and the ability to include and use these events in their careers. The essence of the theory of learning from coincidences is to sensitize counseling clients to happy coincidences that repeatedly change the course of life.

According to Krumboltz, the key to a person's success is adopting an active attitude in life, understood as: facing difficulties, taking risks and making mistakes, and above all, learning from unplanned events. It shows that we lose many life opportunities by not following current events, which are one-time, fleeting and will never happen again. These are our opportunities, which, combined with personal opportunities and talents, contribute to achieving happiness, both professional and personal. Krumboltz emphasizes the importance of openness to experiences, attentiveness to what is happening around us and flexibility in changing plans or paths leading to a goal.

Based on the indicated contemporary theories related to lifelong counseling, it can be concluded that counselors are expected to be deeply reflective, fully focused on the client and be able to treat counseling as a process. Important recommendations regarding changes in the implementation of consulting services concern:

- Emphasizing the subjectivity of the person using the advisor's support.
- Transitions from the perspective of the advisor to the perspective of the counselee.



Counseling should be conducted with a full understanding of the needs, possibilities and way of interpreting reality by the person using it.

- Transition from the responsibility of the advisor to the co-responsibility of both parties to the meeting for the process (advisor) and effects (counselee). This encourages the user to fully engage in the counseling process.
- Emphasizing the activity of the seeker. Moving from passivity understood as receiving advice to full participation in the process, encouraging people to take the initiative at various stages of the counseling process, both in terms of interpreting their reality and operationally determining subsequent actions for individual development.
- Cessation of using questionnaire tools and the need to leave the person seeking advice the space necessary to present a story about their life.
- Moving from the "test and tell" assumption to the active involvement of the counselor and the counselee in the counseling process - moving away from the directive style of counseling to a process in which the user takes an active part.
- Moving away from cyclical moments of choosing the path of professional activity in favor of developing the ability to constantly plan and monitor one's lifelong career.
- Focused on increasing the reflection of the person using support, insight into themselves and the development of their analytical skills, necessary for consciously creating their own development path.
- Moving away from categorizing people using support in favor of a truly individualized attitude of the counselor towards the people he works with.

The main assumptions of modern counseling concern:

1. Helping people recognize their achievements, personal strengths and potential.
2. Supporting and guiding people to develop their personal abilities to enable them to succeed in life by expanding the choices, skills and goals they consider valuable.
3. Paying more attention to the context, social activities and dependencies in creating social and individual relationships.
4. Using descriptions of meaning and experience as elementary sources of motivation. Ideas, perspectives and meanings have a huge impact on our actions and provide the basis for negotiating and communicating with other people.



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To sum up, in contemporary theories, advisors do not position themselves as an all-knowing mentor but focus on activities that increase the self-activity of the people they work with. They inspire action, ensuring that the counseling process and the relationship with the advisor are inspiring and uplifting for the recipient.

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1.4. COUNSELOR COMPETENCES IN MODERN COUNSELING

Changing the role of the counselor in new counseling concepts from directive to supportive requires reflection on his competences. The modern advisor is becoming the main counseling tool. The success of working with a person in need of support will largely depend on his attitude, interpersonal skills and creativity. In the light of the various approaches presented above, the advisor should be able to meet a number of requirements both in terms of personal characteristics and competences.

The main areas of contemporary competence include:

- The ability to conduct a diagnosis based mainly on capabilities, in accordance with the so-called positive counseling (focused on good life and improving the quality of life, using methods and techniques that allow the individual to notice what is positive in life).
- Mediation skills, due to the fact that people seeking help function in environments on which they are largely dependent.
- Networking, understood as the ability to establish contacts and use the knowledge and skills of other specialists and institutions that are key in the counseling process.
- Self-organization, the ability to independently organize the counselor's own work, use secondary and primary sources of knowledge important for counseling.
- An ethical approach to the counselee, in line with the Ethical Standards of the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG), which read, among others: about respect for the dignity of every person who uses educational and career counseling services (respect for the human right to make independent choices, take responsibility for decisions made, engage in self-direction and independent development, maintain discretion, knowledge of applicable regulations protecting client rights) .

In the context of the sociodynamic approach, additional competencies desirable in advisors appear:

- Reflectivity and self-awareness, understood as the ability to ask questions that expand the self-awareness and perspective of the person seeking help.
- Openness to changes and the process of mutual learning in the relationship of a counselor seeking support (moving away from the expert style of the counselor).
- Creativity, readiness for creative and committed improvisation (advisor creating original work methods, generating non-standard ideas and solutions).



- Interest in narrative, biographical, intercultural approaches and lifelong orientation.
- Effective use of skills: listening, negotiating and interpreting meanings, using metaphors, narratives and memories of life experiences.
- Focus on acquiring counseling competences in the process of mutual learning, e.g. through supervision.

The report "European reference competence profile for PES and EURES advisors" prepared by the EURES network defines a number of detailed competencies that a modern advisor should have. The following were distinguished: ethical conduct, continuous professional development, responsibility and discretion, communication competences, ability to adapt to various needs of the recipient, resistance to stress, ability to plan and organize work, flexibility, practical knowledge of individual action planning and support career management competences, ability to advise (patience, understanding, ability to listen without judgment), digital and information management competences.

In addition, the advisor should have the skills to: motivate, focus on the resources of the person he or she works with, solve problems, select appropriate work tools, monitor individual action plans and implement them. Recommended competencies of people providing counseling services include an approach based on acceptance and respect, the ability to develop a supportive relationship, non-directive support, an individual approach, and focus on achievements.

The competences of a counselor are defined in the document "International Competencies for Educational and Vocational Guidance Practitioners" developed by IAEVG - the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance.

The competencies were developed on the basis of an international study conducted in 2003. It was updated in 2018.

The IAEVG Competency Framework includes core competencies and specialized competencies. Core Competencies are the skills, knowledge and attitudes required of educational and career advisors, regardless of their work environment or specialization. Specialist competencies recognize the diverse nature of counselors' work across client groups and workplaces and reflect competencies that may be required for some, but not all, educational and career counselors.

Core competencies include:

1. Ethical behavior and professional conduct in fulfilling roles and responsibilities.
2. Demonstrating support and leadership in supporting clients in their academic, career and



personal development.

3. Demonstrating awareness and respect for clients' cultural context, concerns and strengths in order to effectively engage with all people in need of support, regardless of their communities.
4. Integrating theory and research into practice in guidance, career development, counseling and consulting.
5. Having the skills to design, implement and evaluate guidance and counseling programs and interventions.
6. Demonstrating awareness of one's own capabilities and limitations.
7. Communicating effectively with colleagues or clients, using appropriate language.
8. Demonstrate knowledge of current information on education, job training, employment trends, labor market and social issues.
9. Demonstrating social and intercultural sensitivity.
10. Demonstrating the ability to work effectively in a team of professionals.
11. Demonstrate knowledge of the lifelong career development process.
12. Demonstrating skills and knowledge related to the effective and appropriate use of technology.

The consultant's specialist competences have been defined for various areas of his work, i.e.: diagnosis, educational consultancy, career development, counselling, information management, consultation and coordination of activities, research and evaluation, delivery of programs and services and their evaluation, building community capacity, supporting employment, administration and management of educational and vocational guidance services, marketing and promotion of vocational and educational guidance, working with immigrants, refugees and geographically displaced people.

1.5. COUNSELING PROCESS FOR A GROUP OF ADULTS WHO ARE IN A DISADVANTAGED SITUATION AND WITH LOW QUALIFICATIONS

Taking into account the nature of the project's target group, i.e. disadvantaged and low-skilled adults aged 25 to 64, it is possible to define important issues that should be taken into account when providing advisory support to this group.

The issues described below are important in the consulting process.

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1. Research shows that this group has limited awareness of their own resources. Most show low ability to identify potential, especially soft skills. People from this group do not appreciate the importance of soft resources, "hard" skills are more important to them. In the consulting process, it is important to pay attention to identifying your own potential in the area of soft skills.
2. The difficulty in this group is the low ability to independently map their own formal, non-formal and informal skills. In the counseling process, it is worth paying attention to support in learning about the skills of people using the advisor's services.
3. Characteristic of the target group, especially people with a low level of education, is the belief in limited opportunities for personal and professional development. These people often do not see the benefits of the changes they can implement. On the one hand, they get used to the situation they are in, not seeing the possibility or need to change it. On the other hand, they doubt the effects of the actions they could take for their own development. In consulting work, it is important to increase awareness of the possibility of change, participate in development activities, including educational ones, and thus take care of improving one's professional and personal well-being.
4. The difficulty in the target group is low own skills regarding insight into one's personal and professional situation, determining strengths and areas requiring strengthening. It is important in consulting work to increase the ability to gain insight into oneself, one's own limitations and possibilities.

In counseling work with the target group, it is important to establish a positive relationship with the person receiving support. It is a condition for the effectiveness of the aid provided in accordance with the so-called approach. positive counseling. Participants should be supported in independently discovering their own potentials, development areas and needs. By asking appropriate questions, create an opportunity to reflect on your own life. It is important to remember that the counselor should focus on the lifelong well-being of the counseling recipient, both in a professional and personal context. You should give space to make your own decisions and avoid forcing the recipient to look at the situation from the perspective of an expert advisor.



2. NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN CONSULTING

2.1. CONTACT WITH A CAREER ADVISOR ONLINE (REMOTE CONSULTING)

In this form of work, services are provided via ICT tools. In such consulting, synchronous and asynchronous communication can be used. Synchronous communication involves contact between the advisor and the client via the Internet or telephone in real time (communication takes place at the same time). Synchronous communication tools include, for example, telephone, text or voice communicators (audio/video), chat, IRC. In asynchronous communication, online contacts do not take place at the same time (each participant contacts at a time convenient for him). Asynchronous communication services include, for example, e-mail, discussion forums, comments and discussions systems on the website.

The right combination of online communication channels depends on the needs of service recipients. In the case of advisory communication in written form, techniques are used to compensate for the lack of non-verbal messages and voice tones by adding special elements. This procedure is known as presence communication techniques. Techniques for communicating presence in written counseling follow the idea of "here and now" counseling through description: emotional, direct, visualizing and updating.

Emotional description involves providing information about emotions and feelings in brackets, usually square brackets, in which we express thoughts and feelings, e.g. [I wonder how you understand this], [I'm looking for it in my memory], [I'm a little happy, but also a little worried] Such a description allows the person using counseling to be provided with information about the advisor's observable, but non-verbal behavior towards the client, e.g. "you have my welcome smile", "then I congratulate you and shake your hand tightly".

The visualization description consists in presenting the person using the support with the characteristics of the counseling environment, details of the counselor's office, and the weather outside. Typical messages that can build a sense of presence include: "everything is in the sun now because my windows face west and it's already late afternoon", "I'm sitting at my desk and looking through notes from what we discussed recently" , "I'm drinking coffee, as you probably are at this time, and..."

The updating description involves presenting the interaction between the advisor and the person using the support as if everything was happening now, e.g.: „you say that this point of the plan didn't quite work out for you, but I will tell you now that...", „I am surprised by what you are telling me

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now”. This technique is especially important in asynchronous counseling.

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GOOD PRACTICE

eGuidance Denmark was launched by the Danish Ministry of Children and Education with the aim of providing guidance to as many people as possible using modern technologies, for example web chats, text messages and Facebook, as well as more 'traditional' communication via email or telephone. This service is part of the national guidance portal containing complete information about the labor market throughout Denmark - this information is the basis for effective guidance. The service is intended for anyone who wants information and guidance about education and employment. Users can contact eGuidance during the day and evening, as well as on weekends. Many people appreciate the fact that they can contact an advisor, e.g. on Tuesday evening or Saturday afternoon.

Computer games

Computer games are an increasingly common tool used in consulting. The player can participate in a game that simulates professional work in a specific profession. It is also possible to prepare the game's plot in such a way that the player - a person benefiting from counseling - develops specific competences, e.g. communication. Management games can be used to develop career management skills. Based on the registration of players' behavior, information can be collected that will be used by advisors in the support process, as well as provide opinions and help determine career development activities.

GOOD PRACTICE

The Youth@ Work game, created by a team of international specialists, aims to increase knowledge about professional careers and motivate them to think positively and realistically about their educational opportunities and career prospects. The game's creators identified the necessary professional competencies and implemented them in the game as learning outcomes. They used player feedback to characterize the desired learning outcomes and determine actions in different game zones. The game is based on two theoretical systems:

- the Skills Development Scotland career management skills model (the model supports the identification of current skills and the setting of necessary learning goals to improve employability and adapt to change),
- John Holland's career interest model.



The game was created in the Unity editor as an open source project. It is supported in Safari and Firefox browsers.

Augmented and virtual reality.

Augmented Reality-AR combines the real world by adding elements of the virtual world. It provides real-time interactivity and allows the user freedom of movement.

Virtual reality (VR) is an image of artificial reality created using information technology. It involves the multimedia creation of a computer vision of objects, spaces and events. It can represent elements of both the real and completely fictional worlds.

AR and VR can be used e.g

- Virtual visualization of workplaces. Users have the opportunity to be in a virtual work environment without having to be physically present, they can: "walk" through offices, factories or other workplaces.
- Simulation of interactions with customers, colleagues, etc. Users can practice conversations, deal with difficult situations and improve communication skills in a controlled virtual environment.
- Personalizing career advice. Using data and algorithms, AR can provide personalized career advice. Users can receive individualized recommendations regarding directions of professional development, training or acquiring specific skills.
- Virtual simulation of recruitment interviews. Candidates can participate in virtual recruitment interviews, where they are assessed in terms of competences, answers to questions and communication skills. This allows for a realistic recruiting experience, which can minimize the stress of actual interviews.
- Soft skills training. VR can be used to train soft skills such as interpersonal communication, conflict resolution and teamwork. Virtual social interaction scenarios allow users to practice these skills in a controlled environment.
- Virtual workshops and training: Organizing virtual workshops and training allows you to provide specialized knowledge and skills in an interactive way. Participants can take part in simulations, solve professional problems and learn in a practical way.



GOOD PRACTICE

Pilot project "I see myself in this profession.Modern technologies in career counseling. is implemented by public employment services in Poland. As part of the project, 45 films were created in augmented reality with the ability to look around the visited place during a short, virtual journey, during which you can experience the work of specialists in their everyday surroundings, as well as 7 specialized applications showing professions in a 100% virtual space, where the user, thanks to special controllers, will be able to independently perform activities typical of a given profession. The whole thing was installed on specially prepared software in 10 professional VR goggles.

Artificial intelligence

The development of the modern world, especially computer technology and its new applications, also affects modern consulting. Thanks to innovative tools, greater data availability and artificial intelligence, modern consulting solutions are becoming more and more common.

AI can be used to support both career counselors and people receiving counseling. Artificial intelligence can analyze labor market trends, predict future demand for various professions and identify the skills that will be most in demand. It can also help job seekers identify careers that best suit their skills, interests and values. Thanks to machine learning algorithms, AI can tailor its recommendations to each person's unique characteristics and situations. AI can support in identifying skill gaps and recommend appropriate educational resources, such as online courses, workshops and training materials. It can also adapt training materials to the user's learning style, which increases learning efficiency.

Artificial intelligence used by advisors can be useful in the recruitment process and automation of certain processes related to it, such as viewing CVs, analyzing job offers or communicating with clients. This can significantly increase the efficiency of advisors' work, allowing them to focus on more complex and demanding tasks.

Some AI systems are designed to offer psychological support, motivating users to continue developing and helping them cope with the stress of job change or unemployment. AI can analyze a person's professional experience and achievements and, on this basis, help plan their further career development path, suggesting what steps should be taken to achieve the set goals.

AI tools and applications that can be used in consulting

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Artificial intelligence offers many tools and applications that have the potential to significantly improve consulting processes.

Below are some examples of such tools and applications.

Text generation

- ChatGPT, in the form of a chat available from the browser. This form allows you to obtain content through conversation, with the possibility of specifying the desired result. ChatGPT can write emails, suggest code, assume roles, present a list of ideas, aggregate information and much more.
- Bing chat, developed as part of a partnership between Microsoft and OpenAI, has more restrictions on the generated content, but can search the Internet for information and provide sources with links in its text.
- Copy.ai is a platform that uses deep learning to automatically generate content. Copy.ai offers a wide range of customization options, which means the tool will work exactly the way you want it to. Copy.ai's ability to create content in multiple languages, it is one of its most notable features (the app currently supports English, Spanish, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Dutch), so you can choose languages and templates, and even images and graphics.
- Genai – generative artificial intelligence – is a type of artificial intelligence that uses machine learning algorithms to generate new, original and human-like content. This is possible thanks to two neural networks that create GANs (generative adversarial networks). Traditional AI models are predictive in nature and are used to recognize patterns in data and make predictions. Unlike traditional models, generative artificial intelligence goes beyond prediction and pattern recognition to generate new content.
- Jasper – previously known as Jarvis, is an advanced instrument designed to optimize the process and speed of content creation. It is one of the most comprehensive tools supporting content creation. It is characterized by the ability to learn the user's individual style using the "Jasper Brand Voice" function. Jasper is trained on a huge data set of text and code and can learn to perform many types of tasks, including generating content for official documents.

The practical use of large language models through tools called content generators can be used, among others, for: to generate text content such as educational materials, tests, exercises and homework.



Voice generation

Voice-generating AI tools, often called text-to-speech (TTS), convert written text into spoken words using advanced machine learning techniques.

- ElevenLabs a tool that can transform any text into speech with a delay of less than 1 second using synthetic voices, cloned voices or creating completely new artificial voices that can be adjusted to gender, age and accent preferences. The platform also provided access to Eleven Multilingual - a speech synthesis model that can also be used in seven new languages. The creators of the tool emphasize that it will be ideal for creating authentic voiceovers in the following contexts: stories, news and articles, newsletters and blogs, audiobooks.
- Murf is an AI voice generator that can provide voices of real people. There are over 125 voices to choose from. You can also choose from 20 languages. Moreover, these voices can be used for various applications including YouTube podcasts, e-learning, generating audiobooks, videograms and movies. This app can also be used by teams as it has a feature that allows them to collaborate with colleagues from around the world to create voiceovers. Research confirms that, depending on the user's individual preferences, the voice of the person imparting knowledge also influences the acquisition of knowledge.
- Resemble AI is an advanced artificial intelligence tool that revolutionizes the way we generate speech and sound. Thanks to innovative algorithms and advanced language models, Resemble AI allows you to create authentic sound based on texts or other content sources. The generated speech not only sounds natural, but can also be adapted to different contexts, styles and preferences. Voices created using Resemble AI, in addition to conveying the meaning of the text, also convey emotions, intonations and accents, creating the impression that we are listening to a human being. Moreover, Resemble AI allows you to create clones of existing voices. Thanks to this, if there is a need to maintain consistency and authenticity in audio communication, the tool can be used to reproduce the characteristic voice of a given person (e.g. a consultant).
- WellSaid is an AI tool that uses machine learning to convert text to speech, designed to be easy to use for people who are not familiar with AI and machine learning. The service produces natural-sounding language that is almost indistinguishable from the natural human voice. Voice generators can be used, among others: to adapt content to different



learning styles, help conduct classes in various areas of education. Voice generation technology can be used to create audiobooks and other forms of audio educational materials, which is beneficial for audiences with dyslexia, visual impairments or other reading difficulties.

Voice generation can be used to create interactive advisory meetings, where the system can respond to participants' questions and comments, adapting the content of the presentation in real time.

Video generation

AI video generation tools use advanced machine learning and artificial intelligence techniques to create, edit and enhance video content. They can generate synthetic video content, automate video editing processes, apply effects or enhancements, and even animate static images.

- Bongo allows individuals to showcase their knowledge through video. However, what sets this platform apart is the ability to receive constructive feedback not only from human instructors, but also from an artificial intelligence-based system. In this way, users have the opportunity to improve their skills and receive tips that help them achieve high-quality presentations and speeches. Additionally, BongoLearn.com offers a variety of feedback options that allow instructors to deliver personalized coaching. This aims to improve the learning process through targeted mentoring and tailoring materials to the individual needs of the audience.
- Synthesia is an AI video generator that lets you create professional-looking videos in minutes. There are over 85 AI avatars available in Synthesia, and you can also create your own avatar. Additionally, over 55 ready-made templates streamline the video creation process, allowing you to compose content in a professional and visually attractive way. The platform supports 120 languages. Works great for any videos, including instructional videos and courses.
- Papercup is an AI tool for video dubbing and translation. It can help various industries and content creators. Its features include AI voiceover, professional translation, video editing, and additional services such as distribution and subtitling.
- Papercup is an AI tool for video dubbing and translation. It can help various industries and content creators. Its features include AI voiceover, professional translation, video editing, and additional services such as distribution and subtitling.
- Descript is a comprehensive audio and video editing tool that uses cutting-edge artificial intelligence algorithms to enable users to quickly and easily change media assets. Descript



technology provides a set of tools for producing and editing high-quality audio and video materials. Waveform and timeline editors, as well as sophisticated speech-to-text transcription and automatic captioning features are just some of the powerful tools available for manipulating audio and video on the Descript platform.

Generating presentations, infographics, websites.

Presentation, infographic and website generation tools use artificial intelligence to automate and streamline the creation of visually appealing and effective digital content. These tools can generate high-quality presentations, infographics, and websites with minimal user input, handling aspects such as layout design, color scheme selection, and typography. They can also incorporate data visualization elements and transform complex data into easy-to-understand visualizations. These AI tools help streamline the content creation process and make it accessible to users without specialized design knowledge. These include: o Beautiful, o Canva, o Durable.ai, o Microsoft Designer, o Miro.

Generating images.

AI-based tools for generating, enhancing and personalizing visual content, including digital images and graphics, are becoming increasingly popular. These advanced solutions have the ability to automate design processes, generate original visual content or adapt existing images to specific requirements. They often use machine learning technology to understand aesthetic principles and create visually appealing and contextually compatible images. By using these tools, the graphic design process becomes easier and users with limited or little design skills can create professional-quality images. These tools include: o Artbreeder o Midjourney o Booth.ai o Daz 3D o Runway ML o This person does not exist.

Learning Experience Platforms (LXP).

These platforms can create adaptive learning paths and help deliver personalized, engaging and self-directed learning experiences to employees or learners. They can also recommend educational materials based on user behavior and preferences, thus promoting continuous learning and development. Learning experience platforms enable self-directed learning by providing a variety of materials such as videos, interactive lessons and educational games. Participants in the educational process can actively engage in the learning process through various forms and content. The platforms provide instant feedback on learners' progress and share the results of various tasks and



tests. Moreover, they enable following the latest educational trends and support the development of soft skills, such as communication skills, teamwork and creativity. Essentially, these AI tools help create a more engaging, personalized and effective learning environment. o 360 Learning o Degreed o Openlearning.

Virtual career advisor

One of the most popular applications of AI in consulting is the form of a virtual advisor (conversational chat bot). Virtual advisors are the most advanced type of chat boot. This type of boot is able to learn based on interactions with users and thus improve the quality of the next conversation. The operation of a chat bot can imitate a human in terms of conducting an interactive conversation using natural language, so as to create the illusion of a conversation with another human. In most cases, this process is to be carried out through the image of the person speaking (avatar).

A virtual advisor is an application or platform based on artificial intelligence technology that helps users plan their career path, search for a job, prepare CVs and cover letters, as well as prepare for job interviews. It can also fulfill other functions, tailored to the group of recipients it works with. Such systems use advanced algorithms to analyze labor market data, user skills and professional experience, job offers and industry trends to provide personalized advice and recommendations.

The functions of a virtual assistant - career advisor may include:

- Analyzing skills and qualifications. The assistant can help identify the user's strengths and areas that require development, based on previous professional experience and education.
- Information about the profession/labor market. Providing knowledge about work requirements in various professions.
- Career path suggestions. Based on the analysis of the user's profile and market data, the assistant can propose appropriate career paths and necessary qualifications or certificates.
- Assistance in creating application documents. Some systems offer functions for generating or correcting CVs and cover letters and adapting them to specific job offers.
- Preparation for job interviews. The assistant can offer tips on answering common interview questions and how to best present your experience and skills.
- Search for job offers. Integration with job portals allows you to present offers to the user that best suit your profile and preferences.



A virtual assistant - career advisor is a tool that can significantly contribute to increasing the efficiency of job search and career planning, personal and professional development, offering access to personalized advice based on extensive data analysis.

The advantages of artificial intelligence in the field of career counseling are related to:

- scalable – information and advice based on artificial intelligence can reach a wider audience,
- personalization – artificial intelligence can offer personalized recommendations based on interests, skills and professional preferences;
- using data-based information - artificial intelligence can easily use large data sets and provide real-time access to job offers and labor market trends, supporting making informed choices,
- profitability – artificial intelligence can quickly respond to frequently asked questions and, if necessary, direct them to appropriate advisors, which saves time and money.

GOOD PRACTICES

Jobbli

Jobbli is an automated career guidance platform using AI technology.

The platform enables contact with a conversational bot based on artificial intelligence.

Jobbli functionalities enable you to define your professional profile, determine your strengths and development directions. The platform can also support users in coping with the feeling of being lost while looking for a job and help with difficulties related to burnout.

On the platform, you can take a professional test for free, the result of which is a detailed report prepared using artificial intelligence, specifying:

- recommendations of the three most suitable career directions for the user from the database of almost 300 professions of the future developed by the creators of Jobbli,
- user profile, individual predispositions, areas requiring development along with an indication of how to work on them,
- advice on how to translate this information into your CV.

The platform will also include online courses recommended for work in a selected profession and a description of skills required in specific professions. The tool offers support in the form of available articles and guides on the labor market.

The platform is adapted to the needs of people with disabilities and neurodiverse people.



CiCi

CiCi is a tool developed in Great Britain, dedicated to both young people and adults, giving access to current and relevant information about professional careers.

On the platform, you can use the services of a bot that acts as an advisor. The bot's information complies with the National (English) School Qualifications Framework and quality standards. The platform gives you the opportunity to increase your skills by participating in webinars.

CiCi is equipped with a personalized dashboard using application program interfaces (APIs) and machine learning. The solutions used enable comprehensive data analysis, resulting in the adaptation of the services provided to actual types of searches and professions.

The tool works on all devices and enables accurate comparison of data with local, regional and national labor market information (LMI). It also uses the UK LMI for All widget.

COACH

An AI-powered platform designed to help people of all ages advance educationally and professionally.

The content available on the platform concerns descriptions of professions, predispositions and requirements related to them, as well as qualification paths that must be followed in a given profession.

With the help of the bot, users can identify their own skills and educational needs in the context of both hard and soft skills.

Conversation with a bot is used to make informed decisions about the path that best suits a given user, their goals and personal preferences.

The coach supports users in preparing cover letters and CVs, as well as in mapping support networks and preparing for job interviews.

Careerspro.

An artificial intelligence-based platform that supports users in identifying their most important professional characteristics and helps them make career choices.

Users answer a series of questions, based on which they receive feedback about their own predispositions and preferences.

The platform has been designed to match users' skills and qualifications to specific professions. The



tool generates a list of professions individually selected for the user. Users receive information about the professions selected for them. They concern the specific nature of the job, requirements, remuneration and demand. These types of solutions are intended to support recipients in making informed career decisions and preparing effective job applications.

2.2. CONCEPT OF THE FUNCTIONING OF A VIRTUAL ADVISOR IN THE PROJECT

Based on the analysis of contemporary concepts of counseling in Europe and good practices in the use of modern ICT and AI technologies in counseling, it seems justified to introduce the form of a virtual advisor -chatboot as part of the "INTRA - Innovative Technologies of Responsible Automation" project.

Chatboot will act as a guide for people who are interested in their own personal and professional development, especially disadvantaged and low-skilled adults.

The tool will answer questions from a predefined field in natural language. The chatbot will draw the resources necessary for training from a prepared corpus (or corpora) of texts, which will include, for example, descriptions of courses, training, professional predispositions, skills, strengths and areas of improvement.

The work of a chatbot involves collecting the User's information/preferences. On their basis, further dialogue is directed and information is provided to the User regarding the question asked or a reference to the topic raised.

The purpose of the conversation with the chatbot will be simple advice on career development opportunities. The user is to be presented with the professional/educational development paths available to him. The selection of possible development paths is to be based on the input data obtained by the system entered by the User, such as: current education, age, skills, health preferences, interests and talents, etc.

The chatbot should be a dialogue system capable of "learning" based on Deep Learning, natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning (ML) mechanisms, so that it does not require a full list of possible variants of User questions.



Conducting a dialogue should not be linear. The tool can be created in a form combining a conversational approach (NLP et al.) with a process approach (selection scheme), which will be subordinate to the conversational one. The process approach can be used when the chatbot is unable to correctly identify the User's intentions. It is recommended that the decision path as it was the fastest way to return to a conversation based on natural language processing.

There will be a chatbot answer the questions asked, he will be able to generate the answer on his own.

Based on the information provided by the User about his/her preferences, abilities and interests, the Virtual Assistant will indicate the best profile of the User's professional personality. It will summarize your resources and indicate possible development paths.

After the User finishes working with the tool, the chatbot will collect information about the accuracy of reading the User's intentions.

As part of career counseling, the chatbot will assess the probability of correct interpretation of the User's intentions and, depending on this assessment, it will:

In the first scenario variant: :

- identify, based on the answer to the question, the stage of the User's professional career (unemployed person, working person, person entering the labor market, etc.),
- depending on the identified stage, launch a further conversation scenario,
- give one specific answer when it recognizes the intention,
- suggest asking a new question,

In the second scenario:

- ask whether he understood the intention correctly and wait for additional information entered by the User;
- provide the User with several possible intentions to choose from if, despite being asked, he or she cannot narrow down the scope of the answer (selection tree),
- depending on the identified stage, launch a further conversation scenario,
- give one specific answer when it recognizes the intention,
- suggest asking a new question,

In the third scenario variant:

- inform about misunderstanding of the question when the User's questioning or failure to select an option makes it impossible to recognize the intention,



- suggest asking a new question.

At the end of the conversation in each variant, the Virtual Assistant may ask the User for an opinion on the quality of the information provided, accuracy, etc. In such a case, the Chatbot will provide a link to survey the User's level of satisfaction with the service or will have a module enabling the User to assess the effectiveness of solving his problem. .

The chatbot may be able to display: text responses, responses in the form of decision path selection keys, graphics, documents and links. The Virtual Assistant can generate a report for the User with qualifications found for him (pdf file, e-mail, shared on social media).

It is important that the chatbot understands some general expressions from everyday language, but the dialogue will be limited to the mentioned topics. The chatbot will gradually learn to understand everyday language expressions based on the questions and statements entered from Users.

The chatbot can be installed in a cloud environment, but located in the European Union. It can work in Chrome, Chrome Mobile, Firefox, Safari, Safari Mobile, Opera, Microsoft Edge, Internet Explorer 11 browsers. It would be good if the effectiveness of the chatbot in accurately answering the User's queries was at a level not lower than 70% of the questions from error limit max. 10%.

Non-functional requirements for the Virtual Assistant include compliance of the tool's operation with legal provisions, in particular with the provisions on the protection of personal data. The Virtual Assistant should also meet accessibility requirements for Users with various needs or disabilities, e.g. for visually impaired people. This means introducing a minimum of basic contrast display options, changing the size of displayed fonts and, possibly, accessibility for web page reading tools.