



ROMANIA

Reimbursable Advisory Services Agreement on Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA)
III: Strengthening the capacity of the Romanian administration to carry out impact
studies for better regulation - P167906

IN-DEPTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT STUDY ASSESSMENT OF THE CAREER COUNSELLING AND GUIDANCE SYSTEM IN PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN ROMANIA



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ACRONYMS LIST

| | |
|--------|---|
| ARACIP | Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education |
| CJAP | County Centres for Psycho-pedagogical Assistance |
| CJRAE | County Centre for Educational Resources and Assistance |
| CMBAP | Bucharest Municipal Centre for Psycho-pedagogical Assistance |
| CMBRAE | Bucharest Municipal Centre for Educational Resources and Assistance |
| CMC | Career Management Skills |
| CNEI | National Centre for Inclusive Education |
| COC | Career Counselling and Guidance |
| ELGPN | European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network |
| GL | Working Group |
| GSG | General Secretariat of the Government |
| IBRD | International Bank for Reconstruction and Development |
| MATE | Early Warning Mechanism in Education |
| ME | Ministry of Education |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OSP | School and Vocational Guidance |
| PNRAS | National Programme for Reducing School Dropout |
| PNRR | National Recovery and Resilience Plan |
| RIA | Regulatory Impact Assessment |
| WB | World Bank |

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SUMMARY

This report was prepared under the Reimbursable Advisory Services Agreement on "Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) III: Strengthening the Capacity of the Romanian Administration to carry out impact studies for better regulation", signed by the General Secretariat of the Government with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and implemented in partnership with the Romanian Ministry of Education (MoE).

The objective of the technical assistance is twofold: (i) to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Education, in the quality of central institution that elaborates and implements policies in the field, to use RIA as a tool for decision-making; and (ii) to develop clear recommendations on career counselling and guidance in the pre-university system. Thus, the technical assistance aimed at creating an organisational culture in which decisions are made on the basis of information, data and analysis of the issues concerned. Secondly, the assistance leads to clear recommendations on the area under analysis.

This report focuses on the system of career counselling and guidance provided within the Romanian pre-university education system, at the end of two cycles of education, and in particular on the activity of the County Centres for Educational Resources and Assistance and the Bucharest Municipal Centre for Educational Resources and Assistance (CJRAE/CMBRAE) as providers of career counselling and guidance services for students. Therefore, the analysis is also partly focused on the estimated effects of career counselling and guidance on the labour market. However, the main dimension of analysis is focused on the set of interdependencies of career counselling within the pre-university (gymnasium and high school) education system.

The report used the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) methodology on career counselling and guidance activities, in particular on CCG activities and services for all gymnasium and high school students, and with a special focus on pupils from marginalised areas. Thus, the analytical steps specific to the RIA methodology were followed: (i) stakeholders with influence and interest in the career counselling and guidance activity were analysed; (ii) different levels of problems were identified which were then prioritised based on cause-effect linkages, and the central problem requiring resolution was determined; (iii) different levels of objectives were identified which were prioritised based on logical linkages means – ends, and the general objective and two specific objectives were determined; (iv) alternative scenarios were identified and analysed and pilot interventions were proposed; (v) a detailed analysis for Botoşani County was carried out and recommendations were made; (vi) an initial monitoring and assessment plan was proposed; (vii) consultations were carried out throughout the project.

The main conclusions of the RIA highlight the following:

The central problem identified in the analysis in this report relates to the fact that the career counselling needs of pupils at the end of a level of education are not being sufficiently met by the class master and school counsellor.

The problem thus identified is a root-cause problem for the educational, social and economic effects listed, and is in turn a summary expression of the set of 24 system-level causes that contribute to CCG activities.

The general objective of the public policy intervention is to meet the CCG needs of pupils at the end of one level of education (gymnasium and high school), while the specific objectives are: to (i) strengthen the CCG system and (ii) ensure access to CCG for all pupils, including those from marginalised areas.

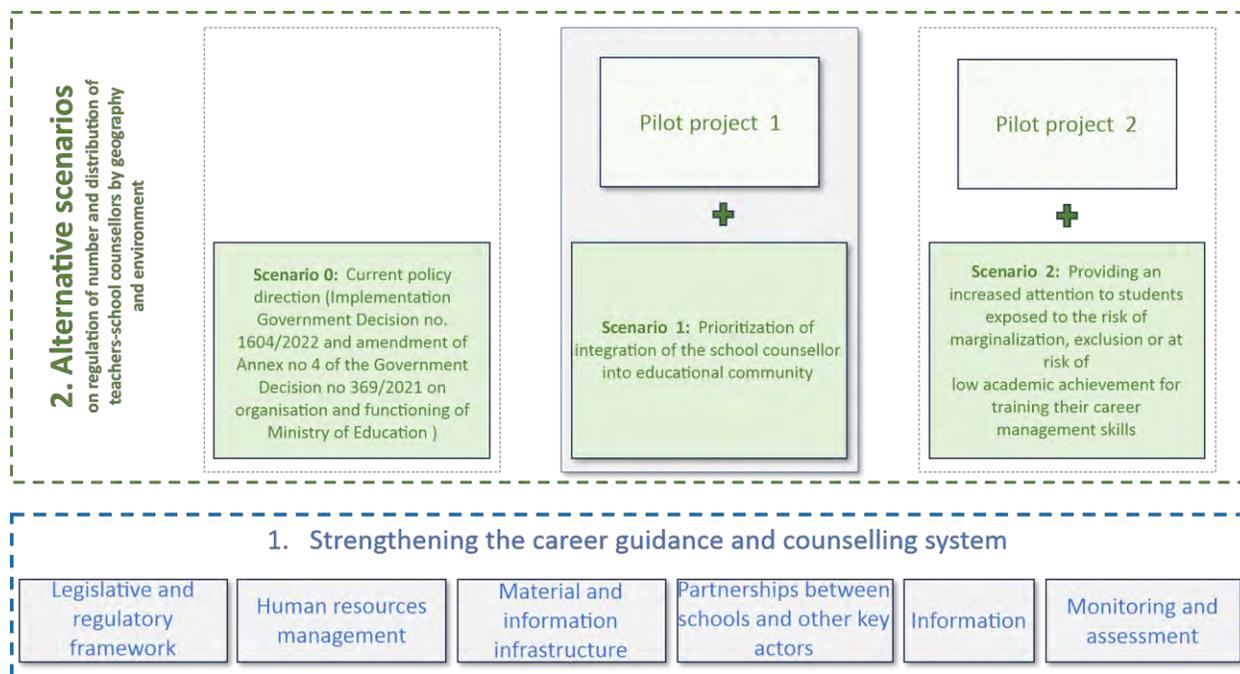
The objectives identified are aligned with previous approaches in the documents on career counselling and guidance services (presented in Chapter 2) and are hierarchised into the following categories: educational, social and economic impact objectives, central objective and specific objectives.

Overall objective: The career counselling and guidance needs of pupils at the end of gymnasium and high school are met.

Specific Objective 1 „Strengthening the CCG system” aims to ensure the following six systemic components: legislative and regulatory framework for CCG services; management of human resources involved in CCG activities and services; material and information infrastructure; partnerships between schools/educational units and other key actors; outreach on CCG services; monitoring and assessment of CCG services.

A mix of policies, institutional reforms and investments relevant to the six systemic components is proposed in order to achieve this objective, and directions for action and international examples of good practice are provided.

Specific Objective 2 „Ensure access to counselling and guidance for all pupils, including those from marginalised areas” aims to: increase the coverage of counselling and career guidance services for pupils from marginalised areas; expand the provision of an integrated and individualised response for pupils from marginalised areas. In order to achieve this objective, three scenarios have been identified: the baseline scenario and two alternative scenarios that facilitate the integration of educational interventions into the case management method.



The baseline scenario aims at maintaining the current policy direction (GD No 1604/2022 and amendment of Annex No 4 to Government Decision No 369/2021 on the organisation and functioning of the Ministry of Education), i.e. implementation of the maximum limit for the number of pupils for whom counselling is provided under a counselling load, staggered allocation of additional posts, mainly in rural areas.

Scenario 1: Prioritise the integration of the school counsellor into the educational community and adopt a whole-school-approach to the deployment of the CCG;

Scenario 2: Paying special attention to pupils at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or low academic achievement in order to build their career management skills.

For the alternative scenarios, pilot projects have been proposed, which are recommended to be implemented in a sample of MATE schools, following analyses of the local context and in compliance with the technical requirements for setting up intervention and control groups. These pilot projects aim to assess the educational and social impact and the cost-benefit ratio of implementing comprehensive and complex interventions over a minimum cohort.

The analysis of the proposed scenarios was illustrated by the case of Botosani County. The data available for this analysis did not allow a sufficiently comprehensive analysis at national level. The selection of the preferred option was based on a multi-criteria analysis matrix. Thus, although the baseline scenario has the lowest budgetary costs relative to load decrease, Scenario 1 turns out to be the preferred one, given the expected benefits, which are estimated to be the highest in this scenario (medium and long term). Moreover, Scenario 1 combines the benefits of this collaboration (prioritised in Scenario 2) with a focus on career management skills training at school level. Scenario 1 also has the lowest risks, mainly

concentrated towards the implementation of the whole-school approach for which countermeasures are available through the development of procedures and training, modalities under government control.

The report provides methodological guidelines and examples of good practice for implementing a monitoring and assessment system, and makes an initial proposal for monitoring and assessing the proposed mix of initiatives. It needs to be discussed and agreed with all stakeholders for detailing and finalisation.

Finally, the report presents the main findings of the analysis and provides a set of recommendations for implementation.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report was prepared under the Reimbursable Technical Assistance Services Contract for "Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) III: Strengthening the Capacity of the Romanian Administration to carry out Impact Studies for Better Regulation", signed by the General Secretariat of the Government with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and implemented in partnership with the Romanian Ministry of Education (MoE).

Technical assistance aims to develop the capacity of public administration to develop impact assessments to inform regulations, strategies and policies. As defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) „is a systemic approach to critically assess the positive and negative effects of proposed and existing regulations and alternatives, including non-intervention through regulation”¹ and is therefore a tool used to improve evidence-based decision-making.

This report focuses on the system of career counselling and guidance provided within the Romanian pre-university education system, at the end of two cycles of education, and in particular on the activity of the County Centres for Educational Resources and Assistance and the Bucharest Municipal Centre for Educational Resources and Assistance (CJRAE/CMBRAE) as providers of career counselling and guidance services for students. Therefore, the analysis is also partly focused on the estimated effects of career counselling and guidance on the labour market. However, the main dimension of analysis is focused on the set of interdependencies of career counselling within the pre-university (gymnasium and high school) education system.

The report is organised in five chapters as follows:

Chapter one – introduction presents the structure of the report.

Chapter two defines the work and services of lifelong career counselling and guidance and discusses the goals and desirable outcomes of public policies that support career counseling and guidance (CCG) services within the education and employment systems.

Chapter three narrows the field, and presents the legislative and institutional framework for CCG activities in Romania at pre-university level, the approaches practiced, as well as the strategic programmes focused on pupils from areas at risk of marginalisation.

Chapter four „Regulatory impact assessment” presents the analysis of the impact of CCG activities and services in gymnasium and high school education, with reference also to pupils enrolled in schools and high schools in marginalized areas. Thus according to the RIA methodology, section 4.1 presents the organisation of the effort to prepare this report; section 4.2 identifies and analyses the roles and issues of the main stakeholders; section 4.3 identifies the different levels of issues affecting the career counselling and guidance activity, organises them based on logical cause-effect linkages, and identifies the central issue that needs to be addressed. Subchapter 4.4 identifies the objectives, determinants and their expected impact. Thus, the objective of Subchapter 4.5 analyses alternative scenarios for optimising the allocation of counselling resources available through the CJRAE/CMBRAE system, starting from the

current legal context of the implementation of Government Decision No. 1604/2022 and the amendment of annex no. 4 to Government Decision no. 369/2021 on the organisation and functioning of the Ministry of Education. A detailed analysis of the developed scenarios is carried out for the CCG activities carried out in Botosani County. Section 4.6 proposes a monitoring and assessment system.

The fifth chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of the analysis.

Finally, 15 appendices provide additional information on the process and the analysis carried out.

2. CAREER COUNSELLING AND GUIDANCE – OVERVIEW

This chapter defines and discusses the policy objectives that support lifelong career counselling and guidance (CCG) activities and services in the broad context of education, social service delivery and employment systems and the interfaces between them relevant to this subfield.

In the OECD’s view, career counselling and guidance are “services and activities that assist individuals of all ages and at all stages of their lives to make choices about education, training and occupations and to develop their own careers” (OECD, 2004b). The most relevant aspects - such as the purpose, the setting, the delivery method, the content and the types of programmes used – are covered in this comprehensive OECD definition (Box 1).

Box 1 OECD - Definition of career counselling and guidance

„These services can be organised in schools, universities, training institutions, public employment services, in the workplace, in the voluntary and community sector, as well as in the private sector. Activities can be carried out with individuals or groups, face-to-face or at a distance (such as those offered over the telephone or web-based services on the Internet). These services provide career information(in print, electronic or other formats), assessment and self-assessment tools, counselling interviews, education programmes for career development (to help individuals develop self-awareness, awareness of opportunities and career management skills), taster programmes (to sample options before actually choosing them), job search programmes and transition facilitation services” (OECD, 2004b).

According to this definition, CCG is about lifelong services so that people of all ages can make informed choices about education, occupation and career choices. Table 1 summarises the determinants that define career counselling and guidance activities according to the OECD (Table 1).

Table 1 OECD - Determinants of CCG

| CAREER COUNSELLING AND GUIDANCE | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Purpose | Supporting and empowering individuals of all ages and at all stages of their lives to make their own choices in education, training and occupation and to develop their own career. |
| Where it takes place | In schools, universities, training institutions, in public employment services, in the workplace, in the voluntary and community sector and in the private sector. |
| How it works | At individual and group level Face-to-face or by electronic means of distance communication, social networking, other ICT means Information activities, teaching, psychological assessment, counselling and guidance, etc. |
| What it offers | Career information Assessment and self-assessment tools Programs to practice career options before the actual choice Job search programmes Transition facilitation services |

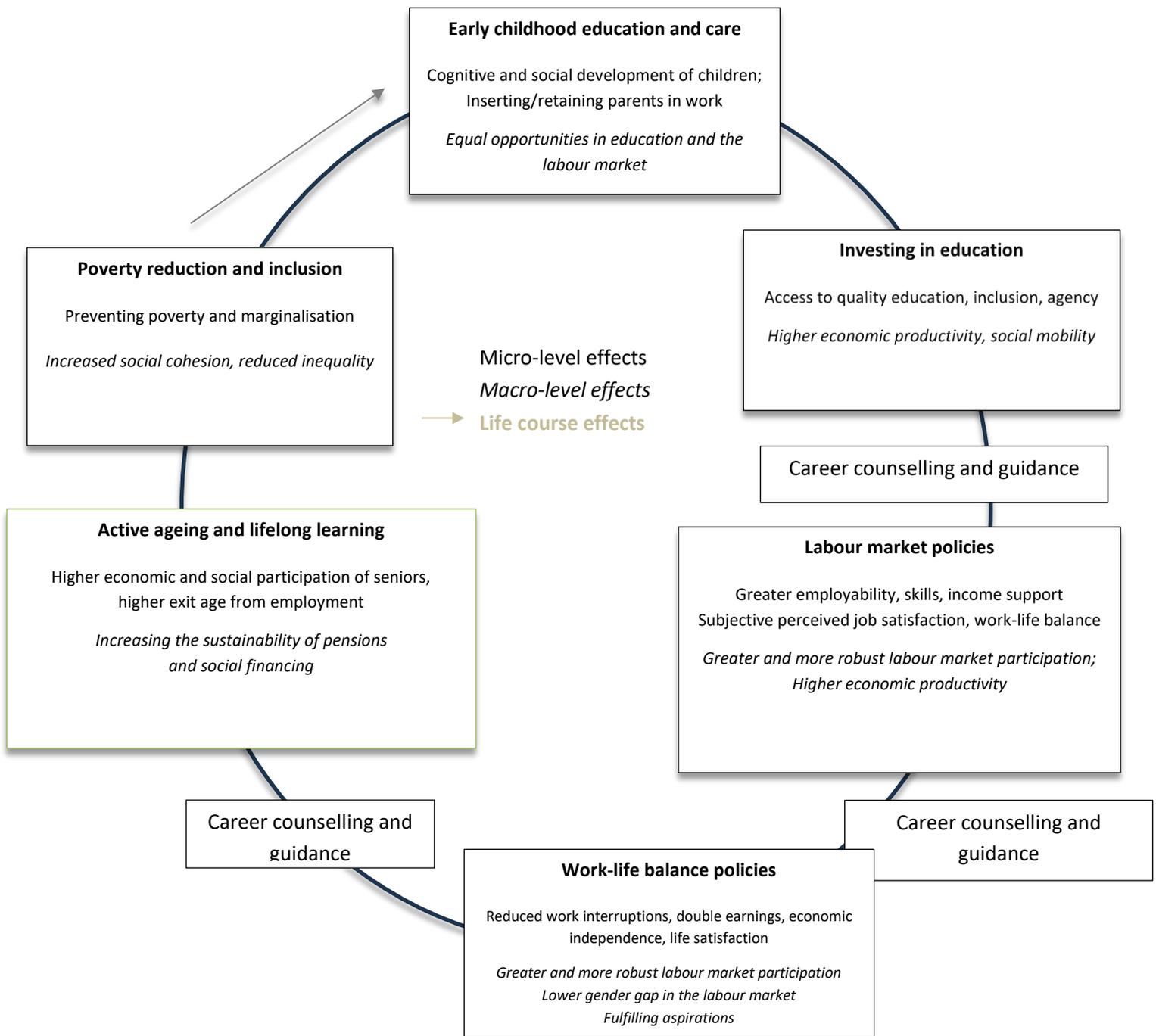
Source: Adapted from OECD, 2004b

Similarly, in the view of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN), career counselling and guidance is “a range of activities that enable citizens of all ages and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests; to make meaningful decisions about education, training and occupation; to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other situations where these capacities and competences are learned and/or used” (European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, 2014). This definition refers to the stages of the career counselling and guidance process, covering aspects such as (Lemeni and Miclea, 2010):

- *self-knowledge* - exploring and structuring information about oneself (personality characteristics, skills, abilities, interests, values, aptitudes, etc.);
- *educational, occupational and labour market exploration* - collecting information on educational opportunities (types of educational institutions, streams, profiles, specialisations), occupational opportunities (types of occupations, nature of work, educational requirements to enter a job, employment prospects, work environment, salary, etc.) and the labour market (the specific configuration of job supply and demand existing at a given time);
- *career decision-making* - choosing one option from the options available at a given time (1. content of the decision: What decision am I going to make?, 2. decision-making process: How will I make this decision?, 3. context of the decision: What factors influence my decision?), e.g. developing a career plan (goal, objectives, achievement strategies, deadlines, resources, possible obstacles, solutions);
- *personal promotion* - systematising and presenting information about one’s own abilities, interests, educational and occupational experiences.

These comprehensive definitions show the importance of career counselling and guidance activities for the education and employment systems, and the interface between them. These definitions are particularly relevant to the situation in Romania, where the social worker has the task of co-ordinating interventions at local level for children in disadvantaged situations. Thus, CCG multiplies social investment in the education system and active labour market policies and is a bridge between key stages in the course of an individual’s life, with empowering effects at both macro and micro levels. From this perspective, investment in career counselling and guidance can be circumscribed in the set of social investments with multiplier effects, provided that investments in related systems are also properly realised (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Social investment as a multiplier effect on the life course



Source: Adapted from Hemerijck, A., Ronchi, S., Plavgo, I. (2023). Social investment as a conceptual framework for analysing well-being returns and reforms in 21st century welfare states, *Socio-Economic Review*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwac035>. Note: Box 'Career Counselling and Guidance' added by authors.

Within the education system, both as part of the compulsory school curriculum and beyond, CCG plays an important role in acquiring career-relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes, as well as making informed decisions to make changes in one’s educational and professional life according to one’s interests and abilities. International research in the field identifies positive effects of CCG, such as: reducing school drop-outs, increasing educational participation rates, improving overall educational outcomes, facilitating transitions between different levels of schooling and into the labour market.

Within the employment system, the CCG supports young people to access available information on employment opportunities, both short and medium to long term, so they can make informed decisions about training and employment. In this way, they contribute to a better match of available skills with labour market requirements, but also to addressing labour market distortions and fluctuations between supply and demand, caused by the dynamics of technological development and/or the existence of special conditions in marginalised areas.

Thus, the public policy objectives associated with CCG can be organised into four categories: improving CCG for young people and adults, improving access to CCG, and making the systems that support CCG more effective, and are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2 Objectives and key dimensions of CCG

| Objectives | Key dimensions |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Improving CCG for young people | Career education and guidance in schools |
| | CCG for at-risk/marginalised pupils |
| | CCG in tertiary education |
| Improving CCG for adults | CCG for unemployed adults |
| | CCG for employed adults |
| | CCG for older adults |
| Improving access to CCG | Extending access to CCG services |
| | Provision of CCG services for marginalised groups |
| Improving systems supporting CCG | Improving career information |
| | Training and qualifications |
| | CCG funding |
| | Coordination and strategic management of the CCG services |
| | CCG quality assurance |
| | CCG effectiveness assessment |

Source: OECD (2004b).

Regional and national policies take these objectives into account and benefit from multiple international research to increase their effectiveness. Policies and practices in the field of CCG have been addressed in specialised reports, undertaken by international organisations such as: European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop); European Commission; European Training Foundation (ETF); International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (ICDPP); International Labour Organisation (ILO); Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); United Nations

Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)¹. Some of these examples of policies and practices have been selected and presented to support the rationale throughout this report.

1. Resolution of the Council of the European Union on the integration of lifelong CCG in lifelong learning strategies (European Union Council, 2008), the European Union proposed to Member States to incorporate the following **objectives** into public policies:

- a. encouraging the development of career management skills (CMS)² throughout life, by:
 - carrying out teaching-learning activities at all levels of education that contribute to the development of CMS;
 - teacher training on CMS issues;
 - encouraging parents to know about and support career counselling and guidance activities;
 - involving civil society organisations and social partners in career counselling and guidance activities;
 - facilitating access to information about training opportunities and their relationship to professions or information about local skills needs.

- b. facilitating access to CCG services for all citizens by:
 - transparency – increasing the visibility of CCG services;
 - closeness and empathy –the counsellors provide a pleasant and understanding atmosphere for clients;
 - continuity – CCG services support people in the transitions they make in education, work, society and their personal lives;
 - availability – all people have the right to CCG at any time of their lives;
 - accessibility – CCG services are provided to the beneficiary in a flexible and appropriate manner, such as: face-to-face, by telephone, by e-mail, remotely and are available at the times and places requested by clients;
 - responsiveness – counselling is carried out in a variety of methods that respond to clients' needs.

- c. quality assurance in the provision of CCG services by:
 - focusing on customer needs and expectations;

¹ Cedefop; European Commission; ETF; ICCDPP; ILO; OECD; UNESCO (2020). Career guidance policy and practice in the pandemic: results of a joint international survey – June to August 2020. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union
Cedefop, European Commission, ETF, ILO, OECD, UNESCO (2021). Investing in career guidance. Summary Notes. https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-09/investing_in_career_guidance.pdf
European Commission (2020). Lifelong guidance policy and practice in the EU: trends, challenges and opportunities. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8284&furtherPubs=yes>
International Labour Organization and European Training Foundation (2021). Developing national career development support systems. Pathways to enhance lifelong career guidance, career education and career development support for workers, Geneva: International Labour Office / Turin: European Training Foundation
UNESCO (2002). Handbook on career counselling: a practical manual for developing, implementing and assessing career counselling services in higher education settings, Paris

² Career management competences are „a whole range of skills that provide individuals and groups with structured ways of collecting, analysing, synthesising and organising information about self, education and occupations, as well as the ability to make and implement decisions and make transitions" (European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, 2012).

- matching counselling to economic reality and the labour market;
- the appropriateness of counselling methods, which have a theoretical and/or scientific basis relevant to the purpose for which they are used;
- ongoing improvement – counselling services are improved by integrating feedback from clients and creating continuous training opportunities for staff providing services;
- right of reply – customers have the right to make formal suggestions and complaints if they have received unsatisfactory services;
- competent staff – the counsellor has national accreditation to identify and address the needs of citizens and, where appropriate, to recommend access to other services;
- increasing the quality of initial and continuous training of counsellors;
- referring to quality standards in the services provided.

d. encourage coordination and cooperation between national, regional and local decision-makers in the field of career counselling by:

- cooperation and coordination between national and local levels;
- networking;
- exchange of good practices;
- initiating projects and working partnerships.

2. **Research by the international network of ELGPN experts** has identified ten **principles** that increase the effectiveness of public policies that supports CCG, namely those focused on the individual, on providing support for learning progression and quality assurance. The research data (Hooley, 2014) are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 ELGPN: Principles underpinning public policy design for CCG

| Individual | Support for learning progress | Quality assurance |
|---|--|--|
| 1. develops progressively over a lifetime; | 4. combines different types of interventions (e.g. individual counselling and online support); | 8. is provided by qualified, properly trained and motivated practitioners; |
| 2. significantly connects to the experience and lives of the individuals who participate; | 5. encourages the acquisition of career management skills; | 9. is based on quality career information; |
| 3. recognise the diversity of individuals and provide services relevant to their needs; | 6. are holistic and properly integrated into other support services; | 10. quality is assured and evaluated. |
| | 7. involves employers and employees by providing active workplace experiences; | |

Source: Hooley, T. (2014)

The impact of these goals and the application of these principles is mainly associated with three types of outcomes: (i) educational, (ii) economic and related to employment, along with (iii) social (Hooley 2014 and Hughes et al., 2016, Table 4). Annex 1³ presents the results of relevant research conducted over the last 20 years.

Table 4 Types of results and impact of CCG activities

| Types of results | Impact |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Educational outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ increasing participation in education and training; ▪ improving attainment rates |
| Economic and employment outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ increasing salary; ▪ improving employee retention in the same job; ▪ increasing the likelihood of finding a job; ▪ improving the transition from education to the labour market; ▪ improving social mobility; ▪ reducing the number of young people not engaged in education, employment or training (NEETs); |
| Social outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ reducing the likelihood of engagement in criminal activity; ▪ community involvement; ▪ developing confidence, resilience, self-esteem; ▪ improving non-cognitive skills; ▪ maintaining well-being, mental health. |

Source: Hooley (2014) and Hughes et al (2016).

³ A review of the international literature, including recent OECD research, highlighting the positive impact and benefits that can be achieved at an individual and social level as a result of implementing career guidance and counselling programmes can be consulted in Annex 1.

3. CAREER COUNSELLING AND GUIDANCE IN ROMANIA

The chapter presents the legislative and regulatory framework and the CCG models used in Romania for counselling and career guidance of pupils. It also presents some strategic programmes that directly or indirectly influence the effectiveness of CCG in marginalised areas.

3.1 Legislative and Regulatory Framework

The legislative framework governing career counselling and guidance in Romania is in the process of change, following the entry into force of the new Law on pre-university education 198/2023 (Romanian Parliament, 2023) on 4 September 2023.

The main legislative provisions introduced by Law 198/2023, relevant to the work of the CCG are the following:

- **The right of primary beneficiaries of pre-university education** (e.g. preschoolers and pupils) **to have access to free quality education** in the State education system **also includes access to information and school counselling, vocational and psychological services** related to educational activity (Chapter VIII);
- **the methodology** for the consistent **provision of career counselling and guidance** throughout lower secondary education (*gymnasium*), with a view to facilitating the transition from lower secondary education to upper secondary education, **is to be regulated by an order of the minister of education** (Chapter VII, Article 100);
- **the school counsellor and the class master are obliged to issue customized recommendations** on the choice of school/occupation for pupils at the end of a cycle of lower secondary education (*gymnasium*) and upper secondary education (e.g. enrolment in a higher education institution or labour market placement in the case of high school graduates); these recommendations are consultative, are issued on the basis of the specific methodology and are included in the pupil's educational portfolio;
- **In each educational establishment, the functioning and appropriate equipment of the school counselling office will be ensured** (Section 1, Art. 19);
- **the didactic norm of the teacher-school counsellor** corresponds to one post of teacher- school counsellor and **is determined by reference to a maximum of 500 pupils, a maximum of 500 pupils and preschoolers or a maximum of 300 preschoolers** (Chapter XIII, Article 202(9));
- **The methodological coordination of the County Centres for Educational Resources and Assistance (CJRAE) and the Bucharest Municipal Centre for Educational Resources and**

Assistance (CMBRAE) - institutions with legal personality, subordinated to the Ministry of Education – **will be ensured by the National Centre for Inclusive Education (CNEI)**. The structure, organisation and functioning of CJRAE/CMBRAE will be established by regulation approved by order of the Minister of Education (Art. 120, item 1);

- **CJRAE/CMBRAE** are integrated special education institutions specialised in providing, coordinating, monitoring and assessing specific educational services to children/pupils, teachers, parents and community members, in order to ensure access to quality education for all, and the necessary assistance in this respect (Art. 120, item 2), CJRAE/CMBRAE **develop, coordinate, monitor and evaluate career counselling, educational and vocational guidance services** (Art. 120, item 6);
- **the conditions for occupying the post of teacher-school counsellor** (Chapter VI);
- the specific activities of the teacher-school **counsellor** will include **working with the social worker and the community health nurse/health mediator** in the integrated community teams to combat poverty and social exclusion (Chapter XIII, Article 207, item 9).
- **Inclusive education** takes into account the following aspects (Chapter V, Article I 67):
 - **State guarantee of the right to inclusive quality education** for all primary beneficiaries of education;
 - **giving special attention** through inclusive education **to children at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or low educational achievement**;
 - **definition of children at risk of school exclusion**: “primary beneficiaries who are at risk of stigmatisation, discrimination, disregard of their cultural identity, segregation, school drop-out and school failure due to their belonging to one or more categories: social, economic or cultural status, national minority, remigrants, refugees, from rural or urban marginalised areas, children with special educational needs, children with disabilities, children temporarily or permanently separated from their parents, pregnant women and underage mothers, children and young people from vulnerable Roma communities, children and young people in prisons, educational centres and detention centres, child victims of violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation and of any form of violence against them, children and young people who use drugs”.

Following the entry into force of Law 198/2023, several Government Decisions and Orders of the Minister of Education will have to be reviewed/amended/elaborated, namely:

The current framework methodology (M.E.C.T.S.- M.M.F.P.S. 2012) on lifelong career counselling and guidance services defines two of the basic concepts used in the education system: *psycho-pedagogical counselling* and *educational and vocational guidance*.

- *Psycho-pedagogical counselling* is „a qualified approach, organised on scientific principles, which allows the provision of specialised assistance to those persons involved in the

educational process (pupils, students, teachers, parents, class masters, directors of educational institutions, etc.), who encounter certain difficulties.

- *Educational and vocational guidance* aims at „the personal development and equipping of pupils with the knowledge and skills necessary for the management of their own educational and professional pathway, representing a process of preparation and career counselling and guidance of pupils towards subjects and fields suited to their personality structure”.

According to the same *Framework Methodology* (M.E.C.T.S.- M.M.F.P.S. 2012), career counselling and guidance services include **five main types of interventions**, detailed in Annex 2, which are carried out according to the **specifics and needs of the target group** (pupils, students, job seekers, etc.). Among the five main types of interventions, **career education and career counselling** are highlighted and are covered by the regulatory impact assessment presented in this report. In this report, we have opted to use the term “**career counselling and guidance (CCG)**” and **the types of interventions** are:

- career information;
- career education;
- career counselling;
- employment counselling;
- placement.

The Order of the Minister of Education 5555/2011 approving the Regulation on the organization and functioning of the County / Bucharest Municipality Centres for Educational Resources and Assistance, with subsequent amendments and additions is also to be amended by the establishment of the CNEI.

Amendments to the number of pupils/preschool children allocated to a post of teacher-school counsellor –were introduced by Law 133/2020, supplementing Article 83 of the National Education Law No. 1/2011, with subsequent amendments and additions, applicable from the 2021-2022 school year. This law provided for **a decrease in the number of pupils/preschoolers allocated to a teaching post in a psycho-pedagogical assistance office (previously 800 pupils and 400 preschoolers were allocated)**, with the following clarifications:

- **Psycho-pedagogical assistance offices** operate in pre-university educational establishments and provide psycho-pedagogical assistance to at **least 600 pupils or 300 preschoolers (from the 2021-2022 school year)**;
- educational establishments with fewer than 600 pupils benefit from the psycho-pedagogical assistance services of an **inter-school psycho-pedagogical assistance office**;
- **the inter-school psycho-pedagogical assistance office** provides psycho-pedagogical assistance services to at **least two educational establishments** with a combined total of 300 preschoolers or 600 pupils.

Government Decision no. 1604/2022 approving the Methodology for the organisation and functioning of complementary early education services and amending Annex no. 4 to Government Decision no.

369/2021 on the organisation and functioning of the Ministry of Education provided for the creation of **1200 new posts of school counsellors-teachers, which were tendered in the school year 2023-2024.**

The same Government Decision No. 1604/2022 specifies that according to milestone 490 I11 the provision of equipment for classrooms and laboratories/school classrooms in pre-university education units, under Component No. 15 - Education of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), the Ministry of Education must provide **equipment, including for psycho-pedagogical assistance offices** for which it is necessary to supplement the number of teachers- school counsellors for State pre-university education units that do not have posts.

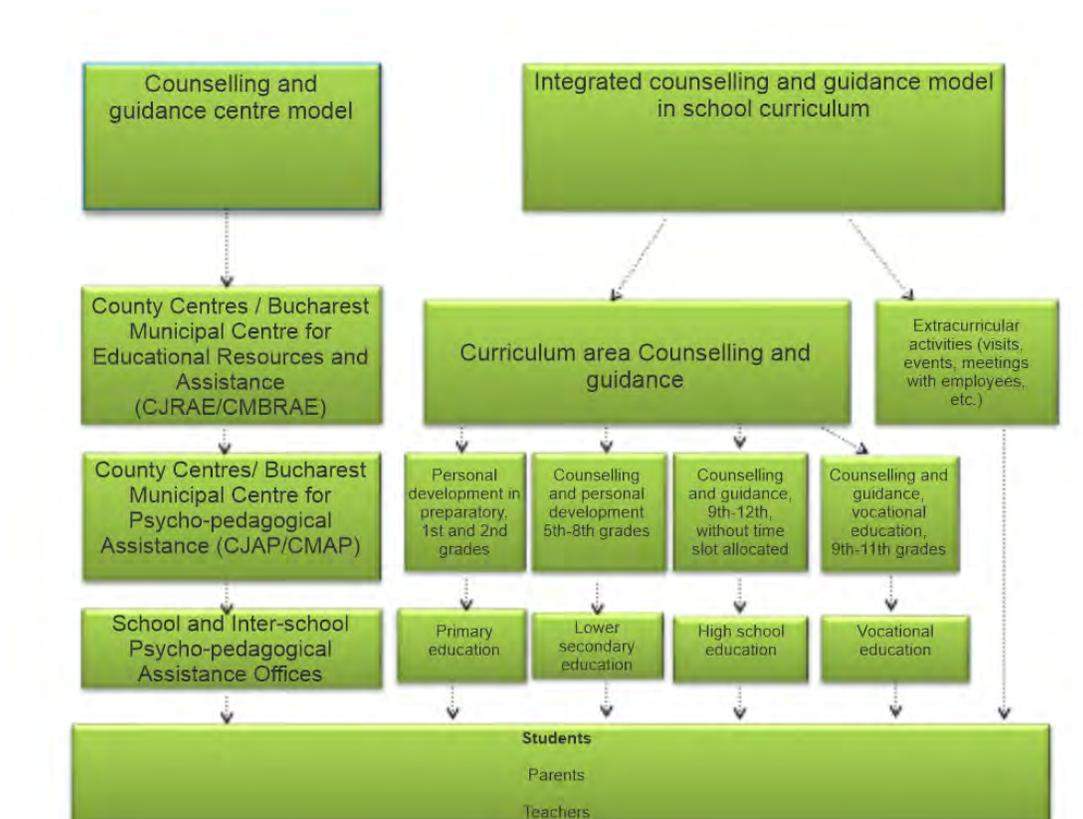
3.2 Career Counselling and Guidance Models in Romania

In the Romanian education system, according to the taxonomy of intervention models in career counselling and guidance, the **counselling and guidance model integrated in the school curriculum and the counselling centre model** are mainly used (Zelloth, 2014).

As an educational approach and educational practice, **counselling and guidance activities** are carried out in the following **ways** (Figure 2):

- across the curriculum, through compulsory and optional lessons and extra-curricular activities within the Counselling and guidance curricular area, carried out by class masters in collaboration with other key actors;
- within the school psycho-pedagogical assistance offices, through individual and/or group counselling activities carried out by teachers -school counsellors ;
- through projects developed by various educational institutions in partnership with the community, represented by non-governmental organisations and/or local and national authorities and institutions, which take on the role of career counselling for pupils.

Figure 2 Modalities of career counselling and guidance in Romania



Source: authors

3.2.1 The model of counselling and guidance integrated into the school curriculum

The national curriculum in Romania has included the curricular area Counselling and Guidance since 2006, and nowadays, counselling and guidance in primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and vocational education is carried out: within a **separate curriculum area/ subject** in the common core and as an **optional subject** (curriculum at the school's decision). There are **curricula** in force for school subjects within the curriculum area Counselling and guidance in primary education (Ministry of National Education, 2013), lower secondary education (Ministry of National Education, 2017) and vocational education (Ministry of National Education, 2014), and **examples of how career management competences** are formed⁴ within the school subjects of the Counselling and Guidance curricular area in pupils at different

⁴ Career management competences are „a whole range of skills that provide individuals and groups with structured ways of collecting, analysing, synthesising and organising information about self, education and occupations, as well as the ability to make and implement decisions and make transitions" (European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, 2012).

levels of education can be found in Annex 3 (primary education), Annex 4 (lower secondary education), Annex 5 (vocational education).

Framework plans for high school education have not been developed, so there are no curricula for high school school pupils to ensure continuity in the development of **career management competences**. However, there are methodological benchmarks (Ministry of Education, National Centre for Policy and Assessment in Education, 2021 and 2022) to support teachers-class masters.

The lessons in the Counselling and Guidance curriculum area are taught by primary school teachers in the preparatory class - 2nd grade and by the class masters in lower secondary education . A teacher-class master in lower secondary education (Țibu et al, 2018b; Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation, 2009) is responsible for educational and career guidance activities for the pupils of the class, educational and counselling activities, as well as collaboration with the school counsellor in counselling and guidance activities for pupils and activities with parents. At high school, the class master provides educational support, counselling and guidance for the pupils of the grade he/she is in charge of, according to the provisions of the framework plans, this activity being carried out outside school hours, by setting up a time slot available to pupils in a space designated for this activity (Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation, 2009).

In Romania, the **initial psycho-pedagogical training** of teachers currently includes **Counselling and Guidance**, only as an optional subject within the **Psycho-pedagogical Module, which can be taken in the Departments of Teacher Training in universities**. **In-service training** of primary and lower secondary education teachers has been taking place within the CRED project^{5,6}, in the period 2017-2023, for the classroom application of the primary and lower secondary education curriculum, including the teaching of school subjects within the curriculum area Counselling and Guidance (Ministry of National Education, 2013; Ministry of National Education, 2017). Support resources for the implementation of school curricula in the Counselling and Guidance curricular area have been produced: textbooks for students, including **digital textbooks, open educational resources**⁷, within the CRED project⁸ and various **guides for teachers** (Țibu et al, 2018a; Andrei et al, 2020; Lițoiu, 2020), to support the teaching of school subjects in the Counselling and Guidance curricular area.

⁵ CRED Project Relevant Curriculum, Open Education for All – SMIS code 2014+:118327, Project co-funded by the European Social Fund through the Human Capital Operational Programme 2014-2020, <https://www.educred.ro/>

⁶ <https://www.educred.ro/formarile-cred/harta-formarilor/>

⁷ RED links for the subject Personal development, preparatory grade, 1st and 2nd grade
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLPqxJohrSi8kkPjxz5dCDaj062dXzkLqG>

RED links for the subject Counselling and personal development, grades V-VIII
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqle1aQarAtikeVUR7EISFZAiw-JMvV1M>

⁸ CRED Project Relevant Curriculum, Open Education for All – SMIS code 2014+:118327, Project co-funded by the European Social Fund through the Human Capital Operational Programme 2014-2020, <https://www.educred.ro/>

3.2.2 The counselling centre model

In Romania, the **counselling centre model** (Zelloth, 2014) is illustrated by the activity of the County/Municipal Centres for Educational Resources and Assistance (C.J.R.A.E./C.M.B.R.A.E.), which we describe in terms of the following aspects: specific, history, normative framework, organizational structure, educational services offered, types of counselling programmes, teaching functions, didactic norm, specific duties of the CJRAE/CMBRAE in career counselling and guidance, duties of the teacher-school counsellor, documents used by teachers- school counsellors- for monitoring and evaluation, quality assurance, professional competences of the teachers - school counsellors, initial and in-service training of teachers - school counsellors, ARACIP assessment standards, resources and examples of good practice of CJRAE/ CMBRAE and other institutions with a role in counselling students. Detailed information can be found in Annex 6.

The County/Bucharest Municipality Centres for Educational Resources and Assistance (C.J.R.A.E./C.M.B.R.A.E.) are **related units of pre-university education**, with legal personality, subordinated to the Ministry of Education, coordinated by the County/Municipality School Inspectorate and financed by the County/Bucharest Municipality Council. C.J.R.A.E./C.M.B.R.A.E. develops horizontal/network relations with **educational institutions at all levels**.

The new Education Law (Romanian Parliament, 2023)⁹ specifies as a novelty, in Article 120, that the C.J.R.A.E./C.M.B.R.A.E. will be methodologically coordinated by the National Centre for Inclusive Education (CNEI), which is to be established.

CJRAE/CMBRAE are institutions that coordinate, monitor and evaluate, at county / Bucharest municipality level, the activity of the County Centre for Psycho-pedagogical Assistance (CJAP)/Bucharest Municipality Centre for Psycho-pedagogical Assistance (CMBAP) and of the Psycho-pedagogical assistance offices, the inter-school speech therapy centres and offices, collaborates with school centres for inclusive education to provide specialised educational services, coordinates, monitors and evaluates specialised school mediation services.

The aim of the CJRAE/CMBRAE activity is to ensure the quality of educational services in the above mentioned areas. Among the educational services offered by CJRAE/ CMBRAE (Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport, 2011a) and targeted by the EIR project are: psycho-pedagogical counselling services and educational and vocational guidance, provided by teachers - school counsellors within the **County Centres for Psycho-pedagogical Assistance (CJAP)** and the **Bucharest Municipal Centre for Psycho-pedagogical Assistance (CMBAP)**.

CJAP/ CMBAP are **structures** within CJRAE/ CMBRAE, which provide psycho-pedagogical/psychological assistance services, based on the provisions of art. 99 (6) (a) of the National Education Law no. 1/2011, which operate in each county and in the municipality of Bucharest and are financed, coordinated,

⁹ Romanian Parliament (2023). *Law on pre-university education*. Official Gazette of Romania, Part I, No. 613/5.VII.2023.

monitored and evaluated by the CJRAE/CMBRAE (Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport, 2011a).

Psycho-pedagogical assistance offices operate in pre-university educational establishments and provide psycho-pedagogical assistance to at **least 800 pupils or 400 preschoolers**. Educational establishments with fewer than 800 pupils benefit from the psycho-pedagogical assistance services of an **inter-school psycho-pedagogical assistance office**. The **inter-school psycho-pedagogical assistance office** provides psycho-pedagogical assistance services to at **least two educational establishments** which together have 400 preschoolers or 800 pupils.

CJAP/ CMBAP implements counselling programmes for pupils and parents, and targeted by the RIA project, such as: **career guidance programmes for pupils; self/ inter-knowledge programmes**, etc., and for parents **individual and group counselling activities** on issues related to: knowing the child's age particularities, **parental support for children in career choices**.

Within the County/Municipal Centres for Psycho-pedagogical Assistance (CJAP/CMAP), which are part of CJRAE/CMBRAE, work teachers-school counsellors (Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport, 2011a), classified as teaching staff, according to their initial training: psycho-pedagogical teacher, psychologist teacher, sociologist teacher, pedagogical teacher. The post of **teacher- school counsellor** is filled through a tenure competition, based on a specific theme in the field of psycho-pedagogical counselling¹⁰.

The diactic norm for the position of teacher-school counsellor at CJAP/CMBAP (Romanian Parliament, 2011) comprises 40 hours/week, broken down as follows:

a) 18 hours/week consisting of: psycho-pedagogical assistance activities, carried out individually and collectively with pre-schoolers/pupils, counselling, guidance, educational and vocational reorientation, counselling activities for parents and teachers; of the 18 hours/week, teaching activities (teaching obligation) are 2-4 hours/week;

b) 22 hours/week consisting of: methodological-scientific and complementary preparation activities, establishing measures and drawing up intervention and psycho-pedagogical assessment programmes, scientific documentation activities, collaboration with local communities, participation in meetings with parents, methodological committees and pedagogical councils on specific subjects, centralising data for the development of information materials on **educational and vocational guidance at county level, drafting and implementing information and career counselling programmes, developing socio-pedagogical studies** (Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport, 2011a).

The **teachers-school counsellors** in the school counselling offices and the inter-school counselling offices have numerous **tasks** (Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport, 2011a), among which those concerning **career counselling and guidance** stand out (**Annex 7**): they propose and organise programmes for pupils' career guidance in schools; they coordinate projects/programmes, internal or international

¹⁰ <https://www.titularizare.eu/legislatie-examen-titularizare/programe-titularizare-consiliere-psihipedagogica.html>

educational partnerships, carried out at local level, on the issue of counselling, educational and vocational guidance and pupils' career counselling, in partnership with education authorities, local authorities, associations and foundations, etc..

Details of the **duties of the teacher- school counsellor** as mentioned in the Job description (Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport, 2011a), the documents used in the CJRAE/CMBRAE for **monitoring and evaluation, quality assurance** (activity plan, activity register, counselling/psycho-pedagogical sheet, career guidance sheets, job description, assessment sheet), as well as the **initial and in-service training of teachers-school counsellors**- can be found in Annex 7.

The new Education Law (Romanian Parliament, 2023)¹¹ states in Section 1, Art. 19 that each educational establishment shall ensure the functioning and appropriate equipment of the school counselling office.

3.3 Strategic Programmes Directly or Indirectly Supporting CCG

Programme documents in the 2021-2027 programming period address a broad set of objectives and key themes considered relevant to career counselling and guidance. These are focused in two strategic documents financed by European funds: the Education and Employment Programme (EEP) and the Inclusion and Social Dignity Programme (ISDP). Table 5 shows the correspondence between the key dimensions from the OECD (2004b) study and the specific objectives/priorities selected for funding in Romania, in the context of the funds programmed for the new period. It shows key investments planned in the following types of strategic objectives:

- Improving systems that support career counselling and guidance – training and qualifications component, by training CJRAE/ CMBRAE staff, improving information on CCG, but also by providing integrated support in response to different risk situations of target groups, including pupils.
- Improving access to CCG – mainly through the provision of CCG services for disadvantaged groups/at-risk pupils, including by strengthening the link with Second Chance Remedial Education (SRE) programmes. Measures target different types of groups – NEET and non-NEET, Roma women, pupils leaving/leaving the special protection system, but also for people with disabilities.
- Improving CCG for adults, especially for the inactive, unemployed and long-term unemployed.

Career counselling and guidance is part of an integrated and individualised approach to working with disadvantaged groups. This usually takes the form of the case management approach and is emphasised in the configuration of Measure 2.a.1 (Youth network for NEETs), the creation of mobile teams under the Education and Employment Programme and Action 4.2 (Development of primary social services on the community model in rural communities), Action 5.3 (for young people in the social protection system) and Action 8.2. Integrated services for other categories of vulnerable groups under the Inclusion and Social Dignity Programme.

¹¹ Romanian Parliament (2023). *Law on pre-university education*. Official Gazette of Romania, Part I, No. 613/5.VII.2023

Table 5 Objectives and key themes for career counselling and guidance in the EU-funded programme documents for the programming period 2021-2027

| | Dimensions/ Key themes | Programme document | Specific Objective | Measure/ Action |
|----|--|------------------------------------|--|---|
| 1. | CCG services for disadvantaged groups/ CCG for young people at risk | Education and Employment Programme | ESO4.2 Modernise labour market institutions and services to assess and anticipate skills needs ¹² | Creation of joint mobile teams with a role in providing integrated identification, guidance and support services, as well as by tailoring customized interventions within case management – identification, information and counselling , profiling of non-NEET beneficiaries. |
| 2. | | Education and Employment Programme | Priority: 2. Harnessing the potential of young people in the labour market (Youth employment) | 2.a.1. Develop a youth network providing quality and personalised services to young people, especially NEETs. The Public Employment Service (PES) will play an active role in providing personalised information, counselling, profiling, case management and career guidance services. |
| | | Education and Employment Programme | | 2.a.4. Development of social insertion enterprises to support young people with a focus on NEET, inactive, unemployed and long-term unemployed young people, women by: covering the costs of on-the-job training, counselling and career guidance ¹³ |
| 3. | | Education and Employment Programme | Priority: 6. Preventing early school leaving and increasing access and participation of disadvantaged groups in education | 6.f.5 Develop and expand the Second Chance Programme (Socrates) to facilitate the completion of compulsory education by early school leavers and encourage participation in Lifelong Learning (LLL) by expanding/diversifying training opportunities, including information, counselling and educational and vocational guidance to identify, develop career counselling systems ¹⁴ . |
| 4. | Improving career information/ Extending access to CCG services | Education and Employment Programme | Priority: 7. Increasing the quality of education and training provision to ensure equity in the system and better adaptation to the dynamics of labour market and to the challenges of innovation and technological progress | 7.e.2 Facilitate informed access to and active participation in education programmes, in line with pupils' interests and skills and with labour market needs, development and expansion of CCG services , offered by CJRAE/ CMBRAE/Counselling and Guidance Centres/Counselling and Guidance Offices at school level; provision of CCG services by involving employers, social partners and NGOs; development and provision of information, counselling, individual coaching, guidance and vocational assessment services for pupils and their families , for a realistic identification of pupils' interests and skills, further education options and career planning ¹⁵ |

¹² Alongside providing prompt and customized assistance and supporting matching supply and demand, transitions and labour market mobility.

¹³ The same measure also includes subsidising employment contracts and placement on the labour market at the end of the support period, including the provision of socio-occupational and social support services.

¹⁴ By building on/implementing studies to identify current needs, developing/adopting/adapting counselling tools and using information technology alternatives for action upon completion of the SDA programme.

¹⁵ The same measure also includes the encouragement of 1-1 exchanges/mentoring with graduates in relevant fields, particularly those from disadvantaged or Roma backgrounds.

| | | | | |
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| 5. | Improving career information / Expanding access to CCG services / Training and qualifications | Education and Employment Programme | Priority: 8. Increasing the accessibility, attractiveness and quality of vocational and technical education | 8.e.6. Develop capacity for career information and counselling through: (1) training of staff involved (CJRAE/CMBRAE, counselling centre staff, classmasters); (2) national information-awareness campaigns for the whole society; (3) informing target groups and supporting the provision of career counselling services ¹⁶ |
| 6. | CCG services for disadvantaged groups/ CCG for young people at risk and | Inclusion and Social Dignity Programme | Specific objective: ESO4.10 Promote the socio-economic integration of marginalized communities such as Roma | Information actions, specific and permanent registration in the database of inactive persons according to the provisions of Law no. 76/2002, counselling, aimed at increasing employability among the Roma population, in the period 2022-2027 , with a focus on the young and Roma women segments |
| | Unemployed adults/ Improving career information | Inclusion and Social Dignity Programme | | Information and CCG actions ; mediation and facilitation of employment, including campaigns among employers to promote the advantages of employing young people ¹⁷ . |
| 7. | CCG for young people at risk/ Expanding access to CCG services / Career education and guidance in schools | Inclusion and Social Dignity Programme | ESO4.11. Expand equal and timely access to quality, sustainable and affordable services ¹⁸ | Action 4.2 ESF+ Develop community-based primary social services in rural communities, increase educational attainment, reduce early school leaving and low school participation, access to school counselling and career guidance . |
| | | Inclusion and Social Dignity Programme | ESO4.11. Increasing equal and timely access to quality, sustainable and affordable services | Action 5.3.ESF+ Supporting young people leaving/have left the special protection system. Integrated services: counselling, career guidance , personal and independent living skills development, post-intervention follow-up, provision of free housing through rent and utility support. |
| | | | ESO4.11. Increasing equal and timely access to quality, sustainable and affordable services | 7.5.2 Provide medical rehabilitation services for people with disabilities and disabled veterans and people with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Counselling and socio-occupational integration , independent living skills rehabilitation services will be provided ¹⁹ . |

Source: Synthesis by the authors, based on documents published by the Ministry of European Investment and Projects (2022 a, b).

¹⁶ For the choice of vocational pathways through VET, to improve informed access to vocational education and training programmes, in line with both pupils' interests and labour market needs, with the involvement of employers and/or non-governmental organisations.

¹⁷ Campaigns to encourage Roma parents to participate in the educational process in and outside school. The same programme also includes information and awareness-raising campaigns to encourage the participation of young Roma in the vocational and dual vocational education system, especially in the field of vocational and dual vocational education in agriculture and related branches.

¹⁸ Including services that promote access to housing and person-oriented care, including healthcare Modernisation of social protection systems.

¹⁹ The same measure also includes disability adjustment and the provision of skills and emotional support for participation in community life, together with Action 8.2 Integrated services for other vulnerable groups.

Similarly, **counselling is integrated as a particular support activity within a systemic activity to reduce school drop-out.** The National School Dropout Reduction Programme (NSRDP)²⁰ is funded from the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) and bases its interventions on the Early Warning Mechanism in Education (EWM). The programme funds counselling and career guidance and vocational coaching activities for children/young people not attending any form of education, as well as the setting up of counselling offices as eligible works in educational establishments.²¹

Counselling and career guidance is one of the responsibilities of the integrated community team, which works mainly in marginalised rural areas. This is the job of the school counsellor, part of the Integrated Community Services (ICS) pilot project team. The effectiveness of the work of education specialists is again linked to an integrated response: "Interventions with an impact on education can only be effective if they are analysed and accompanied by interventions that address the family's economic situation, housing conditions, health status, social situation, etc."²² The project has been implemented in 139 marginalised communities in the 2018-2023 period through a joint effort of the Ministries of Labour and Social Solidarity, Health and Education. In particular, Action 4.2 of PIDS continues the methodologies and working procedures developed in the SCI project and will develop the platform for case management from the perspective of integrated community teams. The composition of the integrated community team will be established on the basis of the needs identified through social diagnosis at rural community level. The responsibilities of the school counsellor in the integrated community teams are: evaluates the interests, abilities and values of children, students and young people and prepares their aptitude and vocational profile; proposes and organises educational, vocational and career guidance programs for students; advises students and their families on school/career options. It carries out an activity complementary to the activity of the school mediator.

²⁰ PNRAS is funded with €543 million.

²¹ Applicant's Guide, PNRAS, Round II, https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/fi%C8%99iere/Minister/2023/PNRR/PNRAS_II/Consultare_publica/Ghidul_solicitantului_PNRAS_Runda_II.pdf.

²² Source: Integrated services from an education perspective, <https://serviciicomunitare.ro/metodologii>.

4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This chapter presents the steps and results of the application of the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) methodology on career counselling and guidance activities, in particular on CCG activities for the lower and upper secondary education students and pupils in marginalised areas.

The chapter is organized into seven sections as follows: (i) Organization of Effort; (ii) Stakeholder Mapping and Analysis; (iii) Problem Analysis; (iv) Setting Objectives and Overall Goal; (v) Options Analysis; (vi) Impact Analysis for Botosani County; (vii) Monitoring and Evaluation. The information and analyses presented in this chapter also comply with the requirements set out in Government Decision No 443/2022²³ for the approval of the content of the presentation and motivation tool.

4.1 Organisation of the effort

The objective of the technical assistance provided is twofold: (i) to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Education, as a policy maker, to use RIA as a tool for decision-making; and (ii) to develop clear recommendations on career counselling and guidance. Thus, technical assistance aims to create an organisational culture in which decisions are made on the basis of information, data and analysis of the issues concerned. Secondly, the assistance is expected to lead to clear recommendations on the area under analysis.

To achieve these objectives, technical assistance has gone through four main stages in terms of organising the effort. First, the beneficiary organized a working group (WG) composed of members nominated by the Ministry of Education and the GSG (Annex 8). Second, WG members participated in a general training on RIA organized by the World Bank (WB) team on 21 June 2022. Third, WG experts, supported by the WB team, held a series of meetings during 2022-2023 to discuss the topic selected for analysis following the RIA methodology. Finally, a Conference was organised on 12 September 2023 with the participation of various stakeholders to present the conclusion of the assessment and receive comments. The WB team provided expert assistance throughout the process.

Data was collected by the WB team from various official sources such as the Ministry of Education, the National Institute of Statistics (NIS), Eurostat, OECD, World Bank, etc.

The analysis methodology used in this report follows the steps of the regulatory impact assessment. A summary of the main analytical steps of the RIA methodology is presented in Box 2.

²³ Government Decision No 443/2022 approving the content of the presentation and motivation tool, the structure of the report on the implementation of regulatory acts, the methodological instructions for carrying out the impact assessment, as well as the establishment of the Advisory Council for the impact assessment of regulatory acts.

Box 2 RIA analytical steps

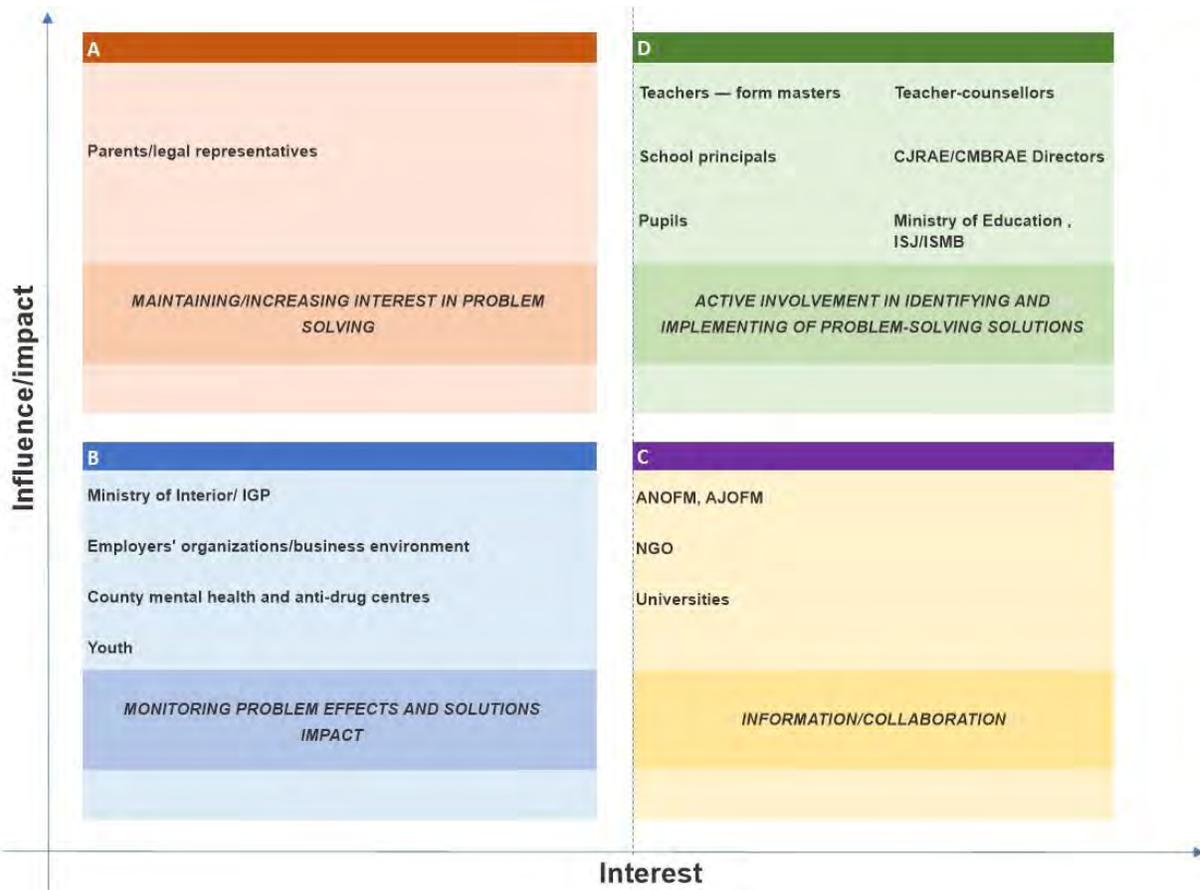
- Identification and definition of the problem.
- Stakeholder analysis.
- State the desired objective(s).
- Development of different regulatory and non-regulatory options (including the “no action” option).
- Open and public consultation of stakeholders and external experts.
- Assessment of likely costs, benefits and distributional effects (wherever possible in quantitative terms);
- Recommendation of the preferred option; and
- Guidance on monitoring, assessment and reporting requirements.

4.2 Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder analysis is an iterative process. The objectives, issues, influences and linkages of key stakeholders relevant to the career counselling and guidance activity were discussed during the WG meetings and further analysed by the WB team. As both the issues and potential objectives of the activity were analysed in more detail, the stakeholder analysis was also reviewed and updated to take into account information that became **known during the meetings**.

The stakeholder analysis identified a large number of categories of individuals, institutions and other segments of society with influence and interest in career counselling and guidance. The stakeholders presented below have been selected to cover a non-exhaustive but representative cross-section. The roles, interests and issues of: students, parents/legal representatives, school principal, class master, school counsellor, CJRAE, CMBRAE, CJAP/CMAP are analysed below. Detailed information on other institutions involved is given in Annex 9.

Figure 3 Stakeholder analysis



Source: authors

Pupils and the education system are the actors most impacted and interested in career counselling actions. They are the ones who will be directly involved in solving problems, through both identifying solutions as well as through implementing them.

The subject of collaboration/information activities are those actors who, by institutional mandate, vocation or responding to direct needs, carry out similar, complementary or adjacent activities to career counselling in schools. The main issues in relation to these actors are clarifying the procedures governing the interaction, sharing good practice and encouraging social innovation. In this analysis, in quadrant C we have included only those actors who carry out direct counselling actions. To these can be added many others, from the institutional sphere, who have attributions directly or indirectly related to the counselling activity and who are included in the analysis of the system (such as the Association of Counsellors in Romania, or various research institutions).

The analysis shows that parents, although they should be directly interested in counselling, in reality they are not, thus being in the category of actors whose interest must be maintained, if not increased,

because by simply positioning themselves in relation to pupils they have a very strong influence on the success of the counselling process.

From the basic paradigm of this analysis, but also of the concept of career counselling, which starts from the premise that this activity facilitates professional achievement, in quadrant B there are institutions that counteract the negative effects of professional failure from the perspective of mental health and criminality, but also segments of society whose success is influenced by the success of career counselling carried out in schools, namely young people and their employers.

Table 6 below highlights the roles of the key actors involved/affected by the counselling process and the difficulties encountered.

Table 6 Stakeholder analysis

| Key actors involved/affected by the advice | Roles and difficulties encountered in the counselling process |
|--|--|
| Pupils | <p>Pupils are the primary beneficiaries of pre-university education and the main beneficiaries of counselling services and are consulted in major decisions through their representatives, i.e. the National Pupil Council or other representative pupil associations.</p> <p>However, pupils do not benefit adequately from the CCG activities included in the school curriculum and the services provided by the teacher-school counsellor at the school's psycho-pedagogical assistance office.</p> <p>In the case of CCG activities included in the school curriculum, there is 1 compulsory hour/week of Counselling and Personal Development for gymnasium students, but within this there are combined both administrative-organizational aspects, specific to the management of the class of pupils (the class master hour), as well as learning activities, included in the school curriculum for the subject Counselling and Personal Development, grades 5 to 8, in force, with 1 compulsory hour/week. For high school pupils, both the Guidance and the Counselling and Guidance hours have been removed from the framework plans, as there is no time allocated for them.</p> <p>Gymnasium and high school pupils do not benefit adequately from the services offered by the teacher-school counsellor at the school's psycho-pedagogical assistance office because of the busy school schedule (high number of hours included in the curriculum and the degree of school curriculum load). It is often necessary for pupils to be excused from other classes to attend counselling sessions, as there is no institutional mechanism for marking counselling activities in pupils' timetables.</p> <p>Another problem concerns the fact that the counselling programmes and activities proposed for pupils in schools by the teachers-school counsellors in the Psycho-pedagogical Assistance Offices are not carried out systematically, but are in response to specific requests or are dealt with as one-off events at the end of an educational cycle.</p> <p>Differences in student access to services offered by counselling centres and offices are found, with socio-economically disadvantaged pupils at risk of being deprived of relevant information about future education and career choices. According to</p> |

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| | <p>the PISA 2018 analysis (OECD, 2019), the gap in access to career counselling for pupils in schools in advantaged and disadvantaged areas is more than 40 percentage points for Romania.</p> |
| <p>Parents/legal representatives</p> | <p>Parents/legal representatives are secondary beneficiaries of pre-university education and are consulted in major decisions through parent representative association structures. The educational establishment concludes an educational contract with the parents/legal representatives at the time of enrolment of pupils in the single register, which sets out the mutual rights and obligations of the parties. The standard education contract is approved by order of the Minister of Education and is individualised at the level of each educational establishment by decision of the Board of Directors.</p> <p>Parents/legal representatives are beneficiaries of counselling services. However, in Romania, there is a low level of parental education/information on the role of career counselling in supporting their child. Research data (Cognitrom, 2022) show that a low level of involvement and an inhibiting role of parents, who ignore the teacher-counsellor’s recommendations and may have unrealistic expectations, imposing their point of view in the student’s choice of future school/occupation are obstacles to the implementation of CCG activities in schools. OECD research shows that parents are not always aware of the range of career options available to their child, often preferring theoretical high school education to vocational education, even though for some pupils the latter may be a more suitable alternative (Musset & Mýtna Kureková, 2018).</p> |
| <p>Class masters</p> | <p>Class masters coordinate the work of the class of pupils. The class masters carry out educational support, counselling and career guidance activities for the pupils of the class, the themes being established in accordance with the specific age, interests or requests of the pupils, based on the school programmes in force drawn up for the curriculum area "Counselling and guidance".</p> <p>A form master in gymnasium (Țibu et al, 2018b; Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation, 2009) is in charge of educational and cvocational guidance activities for the pupils of the class, educational and counselling activities, as well as collaborating with the school counsellor in counselling and guidance activities for pupils and activities with parents. Athigh school , the class master provides educational support, counselling and guidance for the pupils of the class he/she is in charge of, according to the provisions of the framework plans, this activity being carried out outside school hours, by setting up a time slot in which he/she will be available to the pupils in a space designated for this activity (Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation, 2009).</p> <p>Class masters can be beneficiaries of counselling services by working with school counsellors in the psycho-pedagogical assistance centres and offices.</p> <p>However, not all class masters in Romania are trained in career counselling and guidance, and when they do attend courses, the quality of the training is not appropriate and/or monitored. Data from the Ministry of Education (2022) show that an insufficient number of accredited free continuos professional training courses are available for teachers (e.g. 8% in the school year 2021-2022, addressing CCG), and their initial training includes only an optional Counselling course (psycho-pedagogical module).</p> <p>By 31 August 2022, the CRED project had trained 52,723 primary and lower secondary school teachers, but only <u>91 teachers</u> participated in the training programmes for teaching school subjects in the Counselling and Guidance curriculum area (Ministry of Education, 2022).</p> |

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| | <p>Cognitrom research (2022) shows that in educational practice the collaboration of the class master with the teacher-counsellor is missing or insufficient for the effective implementation of CCG activities.</p> |
| <p>Teachers-school counsellors</p> | <p>Within CJAP/CMBAP/psycho-pedagogical assistance offices, the didactic position is that of school counsellor, by which is meant: psycho-pedagogical teacher, psychologist teacher, sociologist teacher, pedagogical teacher, with specializations according to the centralizer, approved by order of the Minister of Education.</p> <p>They are employed as teachers in psycho-pedagogical assistance centres and offices, work in the offices of educational establishments and assist pupils in one or more schools, which sometimes have several levels of education. The work of psycho-pedagogical assistance is complex: information, prevention and intervention, in a team with teachers, auxiliary staff, school management, working with parents/legal representatives, but also with various specialists (doctors, clinical psychologists, social workers, police, etc.) from different governmental and non-governmental institutions involved in the protection and education of children.</p> <p>Even in schools where there are offices, the share of career counselling activity is low because CAPP counselling teachers do not focus enough on career counselling and guidance responsibilities for students, but carry out a variety of tasks, according to the organisation and functioning regulation in force (MECTS, 2011). The delivery of CCG programmes and activities in schools by CAPP counselling teachers is not mandatory, but depends on requests from school management, class masters, parents and pupils. There are no allocated hours for CCG included in the teacher –school counsellor’s timetable and the students' timetable.</p> <p>Other obstacles in the implementation of CCG by teachers-counsellors refer to: insufficient equipment of CAPP (specialised, scientifically validated tools, standard methodologies, methodological guides and other unavailable/ insufficient/ inappropriate resources), lack of appropriate spaces for CCG in schools, teaching time (2-4 hours); teaching time allocated in 2-3 schools, depending on the number of pupils; low quality of in-service training of teachers-counsellors.</p> |
| <p>Principal of the educational unit</p> | <p>The principal is the legal representative of the educational unit, he/she carries out its executive management and organises all educational activity in the school. The principal supports, monitors and collaborates with the teacher-counsellor in the implementation of the CCG in the school.</p> <p>Research data (Cognitrom, 2022) show a low involvement of school principals in monitoring and supporting career counselling and guidance activities in schools. Among causes: lack of information, awareness and ongoing training of principals on CCG issues, non-inclusion of CCG activities in the Institutional Development Plan of the school, lack of procedures and criteria for the selection of partners involved in CCG (economic agents, AJOFM, universities, NGOs), as well as a set of indicators for monitoring and assessment of CCG activities carried out in schools, low collaboration of school principals with CJRAE/CMBRAE principals in coordinating the monitoring and assessment process of CCG activities carried out by counselling teachers in schools.</p> |
| <p>Director of CJRAE/ CMBRAE</p> | <p>The Director carries out the executive management of the CJRAE/CMBRAE and organises all its activities. The Director draws up and approves the job descriptions and staff assessment sheets respectively on an annual basis, with the approval of the Board of Directors. The annual assessment of the Director of the CJRAE/CMBRAE shall be made by the Board of Directors of the CJRAE/CMBRAE on</p> |

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| | <p>the basis of a job description and a specific assessment sheet drawn up by the Director.</p> <p>The Director of the CJRAE/ CMBRAE collaborates with the CJAP/CMBAP coordinator and the directors of the educational units where the counselling offices operate.</p> <p>Among difficulties: insufficient collaboration and poor coordination of the monitoring and assessment process of career counselling and guidance by school principals, CJAP/ CMAP coordinators and CJRAE/CMBRAE directors.</p> |
| Coordinator of CJAP/ CMBAP | <p>The CJAP/CMBAP Coordinator and the CJRAE/CMBRAE Director are responsible for the work of the CJAP/CMBAP, which are financially, methodologically and organisationally subordinated to the CJRAE/CMBRAE.</p> <p>CJAP/CMBAP methodologically coordinates the activities of the psycho-pedagogical assistance offices operating in the educational units.</p> <p>CJAP/CMBAP collaborates within CJRAE/CMBRAE with educational units and institutions, with the general directorates of social assistance and child protection, with county employment and vocational training agencies, with other governmental and non-governmental organisations, with the county police inspectorate - prevention department, as well as with other legal entities with responsibilities in the field of education.</p> <p>Difficulties include: insufficient collaboration and poor coordination of the monitoring and assessment process of career counselling and guidance by school principals, CJAP/ CMBAP coordinators and CJRAE/CMBRAE directors.</p> |

Annex 9 provides information on other key actors for career counselling and guidance activities, namely:

- Ministry of Education
- County School Inspectorates and the School Inspectorate of the Municipality of Bucharest
- Universities
- Youth
- Bucharest Municipal Agency for Employment/ County Agencies for Employment (AJOFM)
- Civil society organisations
- Employers' associations/business community
- National Prison Administration
- National Anti-Drug Agency
- National Centre for Mental Health and Drug Abuse Control
- Romanian Police.

In the absence of government action to support the development and implementation of comprehensive and effective career counselling programmes and activities by teachers-schoolcounsellors in Romanian schools, it is expected that the transition rate from one level of education to another and the early school leaving rate (ESLR) will not show significant and sustainable improvements, with structural limitations on efforts to reduce the number of young NEETs.

Pupils will not have sufficient and accurate information about occupations, they will not have expert support to make realistic choices about education, training and occupations and to develop their own

careers. Pupils' career aspirations will become increasingly focused, they will have limited information and will choose occupations that are at risk of automation. Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. rural) will continue to be at risk of confusion about how education and qualifications relate to jobs and careers. They will continue to have fewer opportunities to understand the value of school and to participate in career counselling and guidance activities.

Parents/legal guardians will not know the specifics of career counselling programmes and activities, will not have accurate information about the educational, occupational and career opportunities available to their children and will not be aware of the importance of support from educational/counselling institutions to support their children in making career decisions.

Class masters will continue to deal with administrative-organisational issues of the class of pupils in the Counselling and Personal Development class (in lower secondary education), will not have appropriate professional skills and sufficient time for the implementation of the current curriculum and for the development of career management skills in students, and their collaboration with the teacher-counsellor will be reduced.

Teachers-school counsellors will continue to work with large numbers of students, failing to meet the needs that exist in the education system. Free access to career counselling services would not be ensured for all students, not allocating a sufficient number of teachers-**school counsellors** according to the number of students, not ensuring the quality of career counselling services based on ARACIP indicators.

4.3 Analysis of Issues Affecting CCG Activities

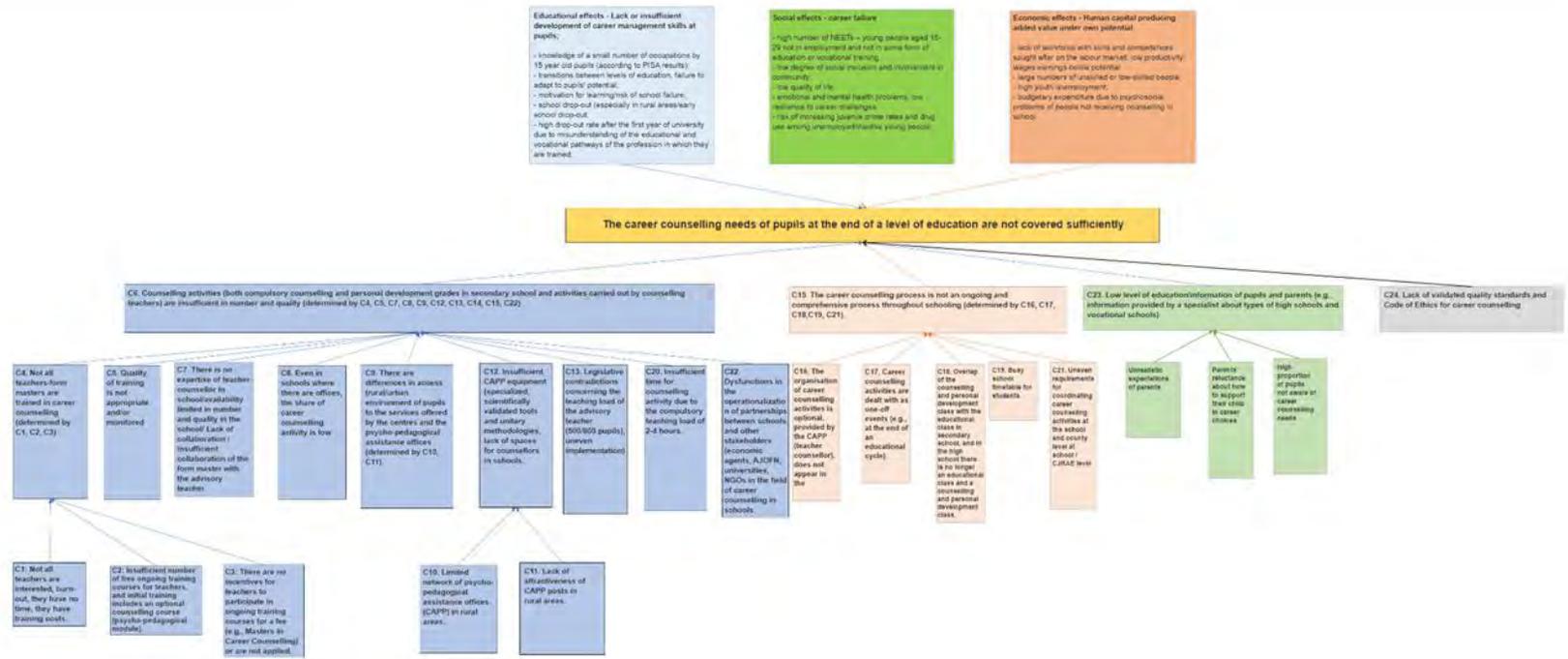
This section identifies the different levels of problems affecting career counselling and guidance in Romania and organises them on the basis of logical cause-effect links. The resulting problem tree (Figure 4) visually maps the logical cause-effect linkages. The different problem levels and the core problem were identified during discussions with the working group and other stakeholders and were further validated through quantitative and qualitative data/information. Causes and determinant effects are described below.

4.3.1 Problem tree

The main problem identified in the analysis in this report relates to the fact that the career counselling needs of pupils at the end of a level of education are not sufficiently being met by the class master and school counsellor.

The problem thus identified is a root-cause problem for the educational, social and economic effects listed, and is in turn a synthetic expression of the set of causes at the level of the systems that contribute to CCG activities. (Figure 4).

Figure 4 Problem tree



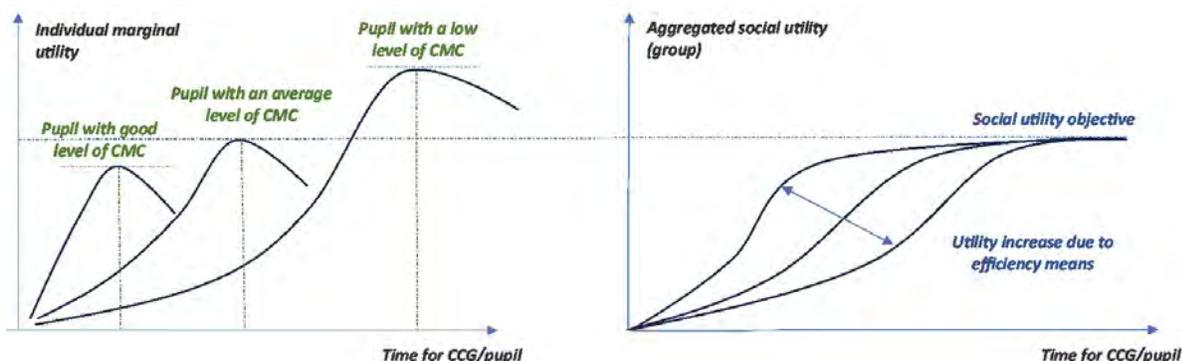
We start from the presumption that **the level of a teacher counsellor's load above the standard is inversely correlated with the attention paid to each individual student, and thus with the counsellor's ability to meet the counselling needs of pupils at the end of a school cycle.**

Setting the standard is based on an optimal time allocation. The usefulness of time spent in counselling is positive up to the inflection point. The law of diminishing marginal utility is also at work here, all the more so since the pupils' time budget is limited (see Figure 5, left).

The maximum usefulness is different for different categories of pupils, corresponding to their concrete need. This explains the current practice in which large high school offices operate at high load, but also the clear need for individualised attention to pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds (see Figure 5, left).

At the aggregate level, the resulting S-curve leads to the conclusion that there is a maximum amount of attention that pupils can receive from the teacher-counsellor with strictly positive social utility (impact) (see Figure 5, right).

Figure 5 Individual marginal utility vs. aggregate (group) social utility²⁴



Source: authors

The strength of the correlation between time for CCG/student and social utility depends in turn, and differently at each point of the graph, on actions and good practices such as the existence of a national portal, the use of digital tools and better equipped offices, all of which can be **seen as means of efficiency that increase the capacity of counsellors to provide quality services to more pupils.**

²⁴ Career management competences are "a whole range of competences that provide individuals and groups with structured ways of collecting, analysing, synthesising and organising information about self, education and occupations, as well as the ability to make and implement decisions and make transitions" (European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, 2012).

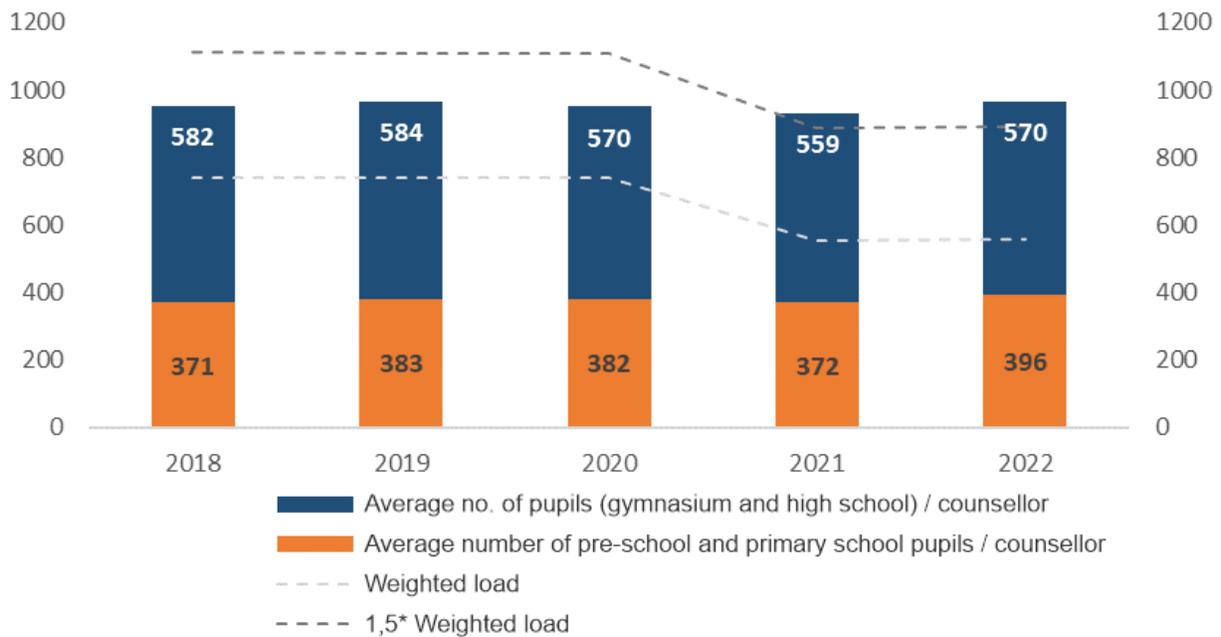
Box 3 Counsellor workload as a key conditional factor in meeting pupils' counselling needs

The job description of the teacher-school counsellor in centres and offices of psycho-pedagogical assistance – the teacher-school counsellor allocates between 14-16 hours (out of the 18 hours of the teaching norm) per week for psycho-pedagogical assistance activities, carried out individually and collectively with preschoolers/pupils, counselling, guidance, educational and vocational reorientation, counselling activities for parents and teachers (see also chapter 4.2). The activities carried out include: intervention programmes and individual counselling sheets offered to pupils on different types of problems, including career guidance, guidance of parents to other specialists for problems that do not fall within the competence of the school counsellor.

If the number of pupils counselled is an indicator of the counsellor's individual performance, the number of pupils and preschoolers to be counselled, relative to the scientifically established norm, is an indicator of the counsellor's workload, and therefore of the counsellor's ability to carry out the work to the expected quality standards.

So at the current norm of 500 students, the counsellor can interact weekly with all pupils if the allocated hours are used for group actions (33 students). At the same time, at a load of 2,000 students, procedures to prioritise access to counselling become necessary. Prioritisation is carried out on two dimensions. On the one hand, immediate, serious problems are prioritised in counselling, e.g. those related to anti-social behaviour or drug use, on the other hand group counselling is prioritised over individual counselling.

Figure 6 Average number of pupils/counsellor



Source: authors' calculations based on MEN data

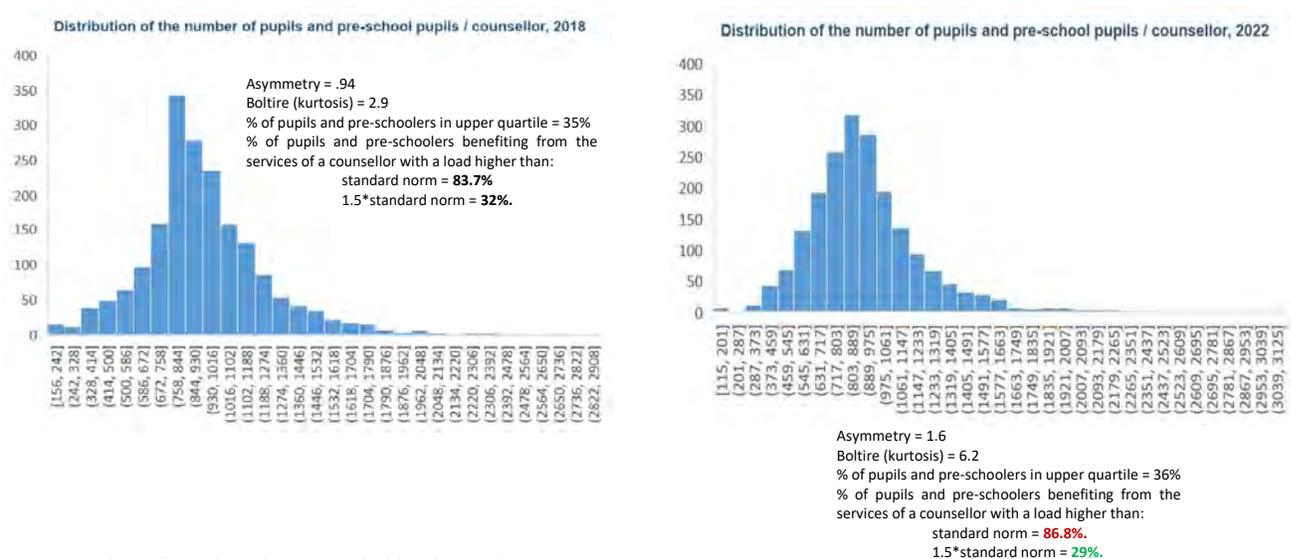
Thus, in the school year 2022-2023, an average of 966 pupils and preschoolers will be assigned to a counsellor, of which 570 in lower secondary and upper secondary schools and 396 preschoolers and primary school pupils. The workload for pupils and preschoolers, weighted according to the latest amendments to the National Education Act No. 1/2011, art. 83 (11) introduced from the school year 2021-

2022 was of 555 pupils and preschoolers, and the maximum workload (1.5 workload) was 890 pupils and preschoolers. Although the average remains relatively constant, from the school year 2021-2022, it is no longer in the range between one and one and a half workload.

The distribution of counsellor load and its evolution reveal important features. For example, even excluding the impact of the change in the teaching norm from 2021-2022 (i.e. assuming that the norm was maintained at 800 pupils / 400 preschoolers), the share of pupils and preschoolers receiving the services of a counsellor with a load higher than the standard workload increased, but the share of pupils and pre-schoolers receiving the services of a counsellor with a workload higher than 1.5 workload decreased. Nevertheless, both shares remain very high (Figure 7).

If we refer to the caseload standard introduced in 2020, in 2022, more than half (56%) of the pupils and preschoolers receiving counseling services in the school in which they are enrolled are counseled by a counsellor with a caseload of more than 1.5 workload (91% are advised by a full-time adviser).

Figure 7 Distribution of the number of pupils and preschoolers /counsellor (2018-2022)



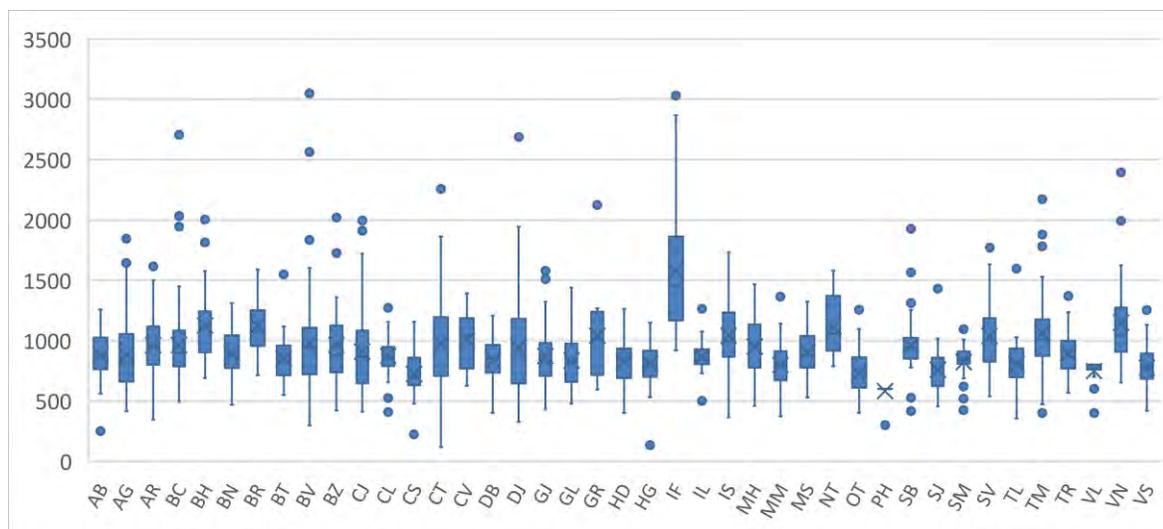
Source: authors, based on data provided by the MoE.

Note: 7 observations from Brasov county have been removed because they were identified as outliers with major distorting impact.

At the county level, the conclusion of asymmetric distributions with many outliers is maintained, which, being sufficiently different from the normal distribution, limit the relevance of some analyses on averages²⁵ (Figure 8).

²⁵ The “box and whiskers” graph shows the distributions by category as follows: x for mean, “box” represents the quartile distribution and “whiskers” the maximum values. The dots are statistically identified outliers that are excluded from the analysis and distribution.

Figure 8 Distribution of school counsellor workload by county, 2022



Source: authors, based on data provided by the MoE.

Note: 7 observations from Brasov county have been removed because they were identified as outliers with major distorted impact.

4.3.2 Causes giving rise to the central problem

The problem tree identifies 24 causes that contribute to the central problem, at different cause-effect logic levels. For easier location in the problem tree, the causes presented below are discussed using the numbering in Figure 4. However, those causes (C4, C6, C9 and C15) that aggregate lower level causes have been marked in bold. Thus:

C1: Not all class masters/teachers-counsellors are interested in career counselling training, are overloaded with bureaucratic tasks/ suffer from burn-out, do not have time for in-service training and may have costs for in-service training courses.

Overload with bureaucratic tasks in teaching (e.g. administrative obligations, tasks to complete working documents, statements and reports) was mentioned by 43% of the teachers surveyed in the 2016-2017 research (Horga, 2018), conducted within the CRED project²⁶, and by participants in the Cognitrom research (2022). Teachers mentioned that these tasks consume a large amount of their energy and time, which can no longer be dedicated to continuous professional development.

²⁶ CRED - *Relevant Curriculum, Open Education for All* - SMIS code 2014+: 118327, Project co-funded by the European Social Fund through the Human Capital Operational Programme 2014-2020, <https://www.educared.ro/>

C2: Insufficient number of accredited free continuing professional development courses for teachers, and initial training includes only one optional Counselling course (psycho-pedagogical module).

A total of 11 (8%) of the 134 accredited programmes (offered by associations, training centres, foundations, CCD's, universities and CJRAE) in the 2021-2022 school year for pre-university education staff (Ministry of Education, 2022) addressed the topic of school and career counselling and guidance.

Under the CRED project, 52,723 primary and gymnasium teachers received in-service training, including on Counselling and Guidance, of which 48,477 were certified by 31 August 2022 (Ministry of Education, 2022). Of these, only 91 teachers have taken the courses for teaching school subjects in the curriculum area Counselling and Guidance under the CRED project.

Initial psycho-pedagogical training includes counselling and guidance as an optional subject, which can only be studied by future teachers if they choose it within the psycho-pedagogical module.

C3: There are not enough incentives for teachers to participate in cost-effective in-service training courses (e.g. Masters in Career Counselling) and/or they are not applied).

Working group discussions and consultations with key stakeholders carried out in the framework of this project mentioned the lack of incentives for teachers to participate in in-service training courses, some of which are counter-cost or not applied. In Romania, all teachers are required to participate regularly in accredited in-service training programmes so that they accumulate, at each consecutive 5-year interval, considered from the date of passing the final exam in teaching, a minimum of 90 transferable professional credits (Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport, 2011b).

C4. Not all class masters are trained in career counselling and guidance (determined by C1, C2, C3)

Approximately 40% of teachers who participated in a 2016-2017 research (Horga, 2018) aimed at identifying training needs, as part of the CRED project),²⁷²⁸ requested a training module on how to use the school's Counselling and personal development curriculum in gymnasium (2017), and 15% of them mentioned that they needed training to improve their ability to support and guide pupils in making the best educational pathway decision.

C5. The quality of in-service training of class masters and teachers-school counsellors is not appropriate and/or monitored

²⁷ CRED - *Relevant Curriculum, Open Education for All* - SMIS code 2014+: 118327, Project co-financed by the European Social Fund through the Human Capital Operational Programme 2014-2020. The CRED project is coordinated by the Ministry of Education, with the involvement of the National Centre for Educational Policy and Evaluation - Education Research Unit in Bucharest, 3 County School Inspectorates and 8 Teaching Staff Houses. <https://www.educared.ro/>

²⁸ The research was carried out nationally in 2016-2017 and investigated the training needs of teachers. Using questionnaire survey and focus group discussions, the training needs of primary and secondary school teachers in the field of curriculum empowerment were surveyed with the participation of 12,233 respondents, representing 10.5% of all teachers in the Romanian primary and secondary school system in the 2016-2017 school year, with 47% of respondents teaching in rural schools and 53% in urban schools. An above-average participation rate in recent training courses was found for teachers teaching the subject Counselling and Personal Development in secondary schools, by subject taught.

Discussions with the working group revealed a lack of tools to measure the quality of in-service training and to check how class masters and teachers-school counsellors have used the new professional competences in their current professional work, although these aspects are mentioned in a recent framework methodology of the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 2022a). According to it, monitoring of the impact of teachers' continuous professional development on the quality of the educational process should be carried out by professional development mentor teachers, by subject/area through classroom inter-assistance, exchange of good practice, application of parent and student questionnaires, focus groups, information dissemination sessions (Ministry of Education, 2022a).

Apart from regulations covering all teachers, there are no national regulations on the continuous professional development of teacher-counsellors.

C6. Counselling activities (including the compulsory Counselling and Personal Development class at gymnasium) are insufficient in number and quality (synergistic effect determined by C4, C5, C7, C8, C9, C12, C13, C14, C15, C22).

C7. Lack of expertise of teacher-school counsellor in the school/ Limited availability in number and quality in the school/ Lack of collaboration/ Insufficient collaboration of the class masters with the teacher-school counsellor.

The lack of collaboration/insufficient collaboration of the class master with the teacher-counsellor was reported by the Cognitrom research (2022), carried out with the participation of CJRAE Covasna, Mures and Sibiu, as this type of collaboration is not regulated by the legislation in force.

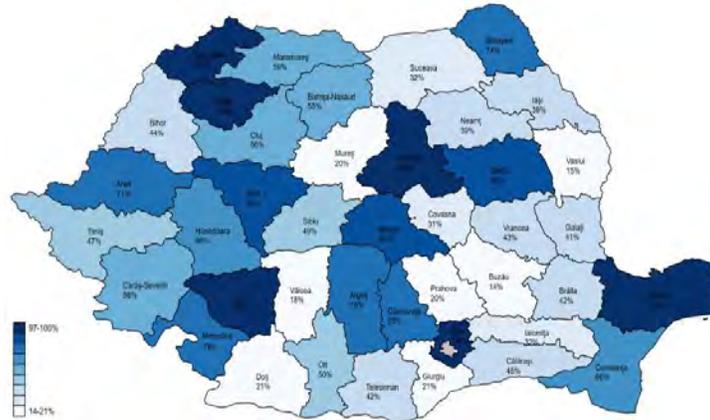
The specialized psycho-pedagogical counselling services provided by the CJRAE/CMBRAE psycho-pedagogical assistance centres and offices are insufficient to meet the needs of the education system, and there is a **shortage of** positions in the CJRAE/CMBRAE in all Romanian counties. In the school year 2020-2021, 2180 out of 2495 available posts were occupied at national level in the psycho-pedagogical assistance offices²⁹, and in the school year 2022-2023, 2,288 teachers were employed in psycho-pedagogical assistance offices (school counsellors) for a total of 2,751,233 pupils and preschoolers in mainstream public education (Romanian Government, 2022).

As a result, although it is a right regulated by law, not all lower secondary and upper secondary pupils are enrolled in educational units where a counsellor is working, so they have only occasional access to counselling. This problem is more pronounced in rural areas, and there are large variations between counties, Figures 9 and 10 illustrate bi-dimensional this variability based on the formula:

$$\%access = \frac{\text{number of students from the lower secondary and upper secondary school units with a school counsellor}}{\text{number of students registered in the schools in the county}}, \text{ by area}$$

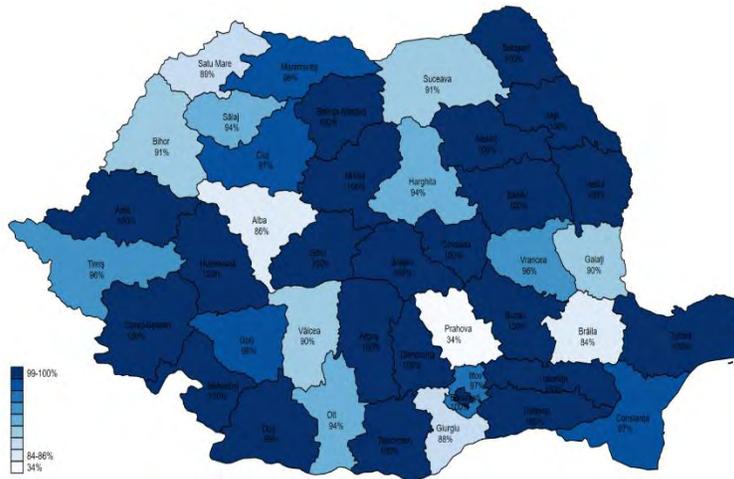
²⁹ Data provided by the Ministry of Education, school year 2020-2021

Figure 9 Share of lower secondary and upper secondary pupils who have a counsellor in their school, school year 2022-2023, rural area ³⁰



Source: authors' processing based on data provided by the MoE, applying the methodology described in the footnote 29. Although the data have been subjected to extensive cleaning and verification, the authors cannot warrant for their accuracy. National Institute of Statistics for data on pupils from lower secondary and upper secondary schools.

Figure 10 Share of lower secondary and upper secondary pupils who have a counsellor in their school, school year 2022-2023, urban area



³⁰ Methodological note on the urban-rural split: In the files used for data collection in the territory, information was collected on the area of residence in which the different units of the educational structures where school counsellors work are located. These data were used to estimate the number of rural and urban pupils who have access to school counselling. In the case of structures with only one school unit, the situation was relatively clear. If the structure is recorded as rural or urban, then the pupils and pre-school children attending the structure will be considered to be from the same environment. If an educational structure has 2 units and each of them is in a different environment of residence, the estimate of the number of pupils in rural and urban areas respectively was made by dividing the number of pupils and preschoolers by 2. For structures with 3 or 4 units, we considered the proportion of pupils in a residential environment to be equal to the proportion of units of that structure in the residential environment considered. For example, if a structure has 3 units in an urban environment and 1 in a rural environment, we consider that 75% of the number of pupils in that structure with access to school counselling services are in the urban environment and 25% in the rural environment.

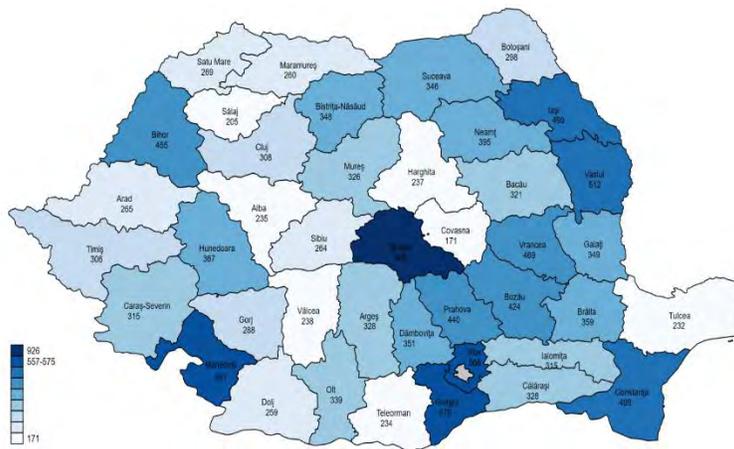
Source: Authors' processing of data provided by the MoE, applying the methodology described in footnote 29. Although the data have undergone extensive cleaning and verification, the authors cannot warrant for their accuracy. National Institute of Statistics for data on pupils from lower secondary and upper secondary schools.

The current situation of workload of the teacher-school counsellor, working with at least 800 pupils/400 pre-schoolers results in low capacity to meet needs and delays in counselling interventions. The large number of preschoolers and pupils assigned to a school counsellor was also identified by the counselling teachers from CJRAE Covasna, Mures and Sibiu, participating in a research in 2022, as one of the obstacles encountered in the career counselling process (Cognitrom, 2022). The average number of children allocated per teacher - school counsellor in the 3 counties ranged from 900 - 1000/1.

Again, there is significant variability both between counties and between environments. The load is higher in urban areas, facilitated by the existence of larger school units, and is rightly motivated by the additional need for pupil attention in rural areas. The rural-urban difference is also explained by the higher share of primary school and preschoolers in total pupils in rural areas³¹. Unlike Figures 9 and 10, which address the problem of access, Figures 11 and 12 illustrate bi-dimensionally the variability in the level of counsellors' workload based on the formula:

$$\%_{\text{access}} = \frac{\text{number of students from the lower secondary and upper secondary school units with a school counsellor}}{\text{number of counsellors who are working in the corresponding county}}, \text{ by area}$$

Figure 11 Average counsellor load (average number of pupils/counsellor) for lower secondary and upper secondary pupils with a counsellor in their school, school year 2022-2023, rural area



Source: Authors' processing of data provided by the MoE, applying the methodology described in footnote 29. Although the data have undergone extensive cleaning and verification, the authors cannot warrant for their accuracy. National Institute of Statistics for data on pupils from lower secondary and upper secondary schools.

³¹ Note: Total workload level influences the attention level for each student, this is why in this case an analysis focused only on students from lower and upper secondary levels has not been considered as relevant.

The analysis of the CJRAE Cluj annual activity report 2021-2022³⁴ **shows low shares of educational and vocational guidance activities (EVG) carried out by teachers-school counselors in individual sessions (12%) and group sessions (11%) with pupils.** In contrast, EVG-themed counselling programmes with pupils accounted for 50% of the total number of programmes implemented, and EVG-themed group counselling activities/workshops conducted with parents accounted for 81% of the total number (More information can be found in Box 3).

*Box 4 Case studies CJRAE Cluj and CJRAE Botosani*³⁵

In Cluj county, in the school year 2020-2021, 646 pupils were individually counselled on educational and vocational guidance (EVG) issues, representing 12% of the pupils who received individual counselling. The issues most frequently addressed in individual counselling activities were: management of emotions (1855 pupils/ 34%), followed by learning management (923 pupils/ 17%), violence prevention (820 pupils/ 15%) and self-awareness (758 pupils/ 14%), with EVG ranking 4th. 6 768 pupils, representing 11% of the total number of participants, took part in group counselling on EVG issues in classroom activities and were involved in 432 activities.

On the other hand, the EVG counselling programmes, carried out in the classroom, targeted 20,351 beneficiaries, representing 50% of the total number (the highest frequency) and had a total of 2,199 hours allocated. The largest number of group counselling/lectures, representing 81% of the total number, conducted with parents of pupils at all levels of education in the 2021-2022 school year, had the EVG as their theme. They had a duration of 424 hours and a number of 8,053 beneficiaries.

In Botoşani county, the average number of pupils and preschoolers/counsellor in the 2021-2022 school year was 783. In the same year, 4,764 pupils and preschoolers were involved in individual counselling activities, of which 3,684 were pupils in gymnasium and high school, and 1,294 parents. Of these, 945 pupils and 190 parents benefited from career counselling and guidance. 7,670 pupils benefited from group activities/actions aimed at educational and vocational guidance and motivation for further studies. As a proportion of the total number of pupils with access to counselling (45,422 at pre-school, primary, gymnasium and high school level, or 25,118 at gymnasium and high school level), CCG beneficiaries cover 17% of the total and more than 30% of pupils from lower and upper secondary levels, but those receiving individual CCG counselling only 2% and 4% respectively.

Source: annual activity reports of CJRAE Cluj and CJRAE Botosani, school year 2021-2022

C9. There are differences in the access (rural/urban) of pupils to the services offered by the centres and the psycho-pedagogical assistance offices (synergy effect determined by C7, C10, C11).

C10. Limited network of CAPPs in rural areas (see also C7)

C11. Lack of attractiveness of CAPP posts in rural areas.

In the school year 2020-2021, 2180 teachers-counsellors were employed nationally, out of 2,495 available posts. This shows that 315 posts were unfilled for various reasons. According to discussions with the

³⁴ <https://cjraecluj.ro/cjrae/rapoarte-de-activitate-cjrae/raport-cjrae-2021-2022/>

³⁵ Data extracted from the Annual Activity Report of CJRAE Cluj, school year 2021-2022: <https://cjraecluj.ro/cjrae/rapoarte-de-activitate-cjrae/raport-cjrae-2021-2022/>

working group, one of the reasons for non-occupation could be linked to the fact that posts in rural areas are more difficult to be filled in, are unattractive and there are no incentives to do so.

The limited network of CAPPs in rural areas is demonstrated with data from the 2022-2023 school year, when **349 posts (about 15%)** were available in schools from rural areas out of a total of 2,288 teacher-school counsellor posts filled nationally. Thus, significant discrepancies are observed in terms of providing pupils with access to counselling services according to their area of residence, a point also demonstrated by other research in the field of education (Apostu et al, 2015).

The Ministry of Education has decided to increase by 1200 the number of school counsellors in psycho-pedagogical assistance offices in December 2022, in order to **expand the network of school psycho-pedagogical assistance offices in rural areas**, to be implemented from the school year 2023-2024 (Romanian Government, 2022).

C12. Insufficient CAPP equipment (specialised, scientifically validated tools, standardised methodologies, and other unavailable/ insufficient/ inappropriate resources), lack of appropriate space in schools

There are gaps in the provision of goods/services to the psycho-pedagogical assistance offices in schools, depending on the involvement of local/county authorities (e.g. County Councils / Bucharest Municipality) and the resources attracted from European funding of CJRAE/CMBRAE. There was only one endowment of these offices with government funds, in 2007, carried out by the Ministry of Education, through the County/Municipal Centres for Psycho-pedagogical Assistance, the coordinating institution of these offices at that time.

The lack of standardized, scientifically validated, specialized tools recommended by a central forum (Ministry of Education) and of methodological guidelines for career counselling was identified as an obstacle in the career counselling process by the teachers-school counsellors from CJRAE Covasna, Mures and Sibiu, who participated in a research conducted in Romania (Cognitrom, 2022), as well as by the CJRAE/CMBRAE directors, who participated in the consultations organized in the framework of this project.

The lack of functional spaces in schools, suitable for the work of the psycho-pedagogical assistance office, was reported during the consultations with key actors carried out within the framework of this project.

In December 2022, during the course of our project, the Ministry of Education decided that according to milestone 490 I11. "Ensuring the equipment of classrooms and laboratories/school classrooms in pre-university education units", under Component No. 15 - Education of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), equipment must be provided, including for psycho-pedagogical assistance offices, offices for which it is necessary to supplement the number of school counsellors for state pre-university education units, which do not have posts provided (Government of Romania, 2022).

C13. Legislative contradictions concerning the teaching norm of the teachers-counsellors (500/ 600 pupils), uneven implementation

According to the Regulation on the organisation and functioning of the County/Municipality Centres for Educational Resources and Assistance (OMECTS no. 5555/2011), the psycho-pedagogical assistance offices functioned in pre-university educational establishments and provided psycho-pedagogical assistance to **800 pupils or 400 preschoolers**. The psycho-pedagogical assistance offices operated in educational establishments with at **least 800 pupils** enrolled. Educational establishments **with fewer than 800 pupils** benefited from the psycho-pedagogical assistance services of an inter-school psycho-pedagogical assistance office.

As regards the number of children allocated to a school counsellor, in 2020 there were **inconsistencies in the legislation**, namely in the National Education Law No.1/2011 (Romanian Parliament, 2011), with subsequent amendments and additions:

- according to Law No. 133/15 July 2020³⁶ to supplement Art. 83 of the National Education Law No. 1/2011, Art. 83, para. 11: "A school counsellor's post is allocated to a maximum of **600 pupils** and a maximum of **300 preschoolers**, respectively, in a psycho-pedagogical assistance office or in an inter-school psycho-pedagogical assistance office";
- according to Law no. 185/20 August 2020, art. 262, para. 7³⁷, amending and supplementing the National Education Law no. 1/2011: "The didactic norm of the school counsellor corresponds to a post of school counsellor in the psycho-pedagogical assistance office or in the inter-school psycho-pedagogical assistance office and is established by reference to a number of **500 pupils, 500 pupils and preschoolers or 300 preschoolers**. The specific activities of the didactic norm are established by regulation approved by order of the Minister of Education and Research", the provisions of this law entered into force on 1 September 2020, starting with the school year 2020-2021.

During the course of our project, the new Law on Pre-University Education was debated and approved in July 2023 (Romanian Parliament, 2023), which provides in chap. XIII, art. 202, point 9 that the didactic norm of the teacher - school counsellor corresponds to one post of teacher - school counsellor and is established by reference to **a maximum of 500 pupils, a maximum of 500 pupils and preschoolers or a maximum of 300 preschoolers**.

C15. The career counselling process is not an ongoing and comprehensive process throughout schooling (synergistic effect determined by C16, C17, C18,C19, C21).

Consultations carried out in the framework of this project with the CJRAE/CMBRAE principals revealed that there is a lack of a **uniform methodology** on the conduct and reporting of career counselling and guidance activities, and that the teacher- schoolcounsellor **does not carry out mandatory career counselling programmes and activities in the schools in the district, as these are not included in the**

³⁶ Romanian Parliament (2020) Law no. 133/15 July 2020 on the completion of Article 83 of the National Education Law no. 1/2011, <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliuDocumentAfis/227842>

³⁷ Romanian Parliament (2020) Law No. 185/20 August 2020 to supplement Article 83 of the National Education Law No. 1/2011, Official Gazette No. 762 of 20 August 2020, <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliuDocumentAfis/229277>

teacher counsellor's timetable and the students' timetable. The CJRAE directors also pointed out that it is important to specify in the methodologies what the **purpose of** these career counselling activities is (e.g. to produce a written recommendation to the student at the end of the career counselling process) and also **who should be involved** in the career counselling process (teacher-counsellor, class masters, the pupils' parents) and to specify their **roles**.

In Romania, there is no research measuring the **impact of the implementation of school programmes** in the Counselling and Guidance curriculum area (primary, lower and upper secondary education) on the development of students' career management skills.

C16. Career counselling activities organization is optional, provided by the CAPP teacher-school counselor , but do not appear in the pupils' timetable.

Existing legislation mentions career counselling as one of the duties of the teacher- schoolcounsellor, but **does not make it compulsory to carry out this activity**, which is left to the teacher- school counsellor or decided by the CJRAE/CMBRAE depending on demand, as highlighted by a Cognitrom research (2022).

The counselling activities and programmes offered by the Educational Psychological Assistance Centres and Offices are **not carried out systematically and do not appear in the pupils' timetable**, but meet specific requests from students, parents and teachers on various issues (e.g. learning problems, problems of integration and interpersonal relationships, emotional difficulties, self-awareness and personal development, career choice, healthy lifestyle). Consultations carried out in our project with key stakeholders also revealed that **pupils do not have time allocated in the timetable** for counselling sessions carried out by teachers- school counselors and need to be excused by teachers from other classes. Teacher-counsellors, participants in the above mentioned research (Cognitrom, 2022) reported the **lack of an institutional mechanism for marking counselling activities in the pupils' timetable**.

C17. Career counselling activities are addressed as one-off events (e.g. at the end of an educational cycle).

Career counselling activities are carried out in a **discontinuous and heterogeneous** way, as demonstrated by the results of a research carried out in Romania (Cognitrom, 2022), with the participation of CJRAE Covasna, Mures and Sibiu. The responding teacher-counsellors provided arguments in this regard: no mention was made of invitations of teacher-counsellors to collaborate with teachers in Personal Development classes (compulsory subject, included in the common core of the school curriculum) in primary education, lack of continuity in the teaching of Personal development as a compulsory subject in grades III and IV of primary education, not being proposed as an optional subject in the curriculum at the decision of the school (Ministry of Education, 2021b) in the three counties involved in the study.

The **lack of continuity** is also found at high school, where the new framework plans have not been approved and new curricula and textbooks have not been developed to ensure continuity with the school programmes of Counselling and Personal Development at gymnasium , while a series of methodological

guidelines and a guide are available for class masters (Ministry of Education, National Centre for Policy and Assessment in Education, 2021 and 2022; Lițoiu, 2020).

C18. Replace the Leadership (*dirigenție*) class with Counselling and Personal Development class in gymnasium and eliminate both Leadership (*dirigenție*) and Counselling and Guidance classes in high school.

According to the Framework Educational Plan for Lower Secondary Education (Ministry of Education, 2016), the Counselling and Personal Development class has replaced, since the 2017-2018 school year, the Leadership (*dirigenție*) class, which usually dealt with a series of administrative-organizational issues, specific to the management of the class of students, managing the relationship with the parents of the students, but also with the other teachers of the class, completing specific documents (reports, psycho-pedagogical sheets), managing problem situations that arise in the class of students. Therefore, a large number of tasks is observed, which the class master is responsible for in a single hour allocated for this purpose, so that he/she does not have enough time to carry out the learning activities, included in the School Curriculum for the subject Counseling and Personal Development, grades 5 to 8, in force with 1 compulsory hour/week (Ministry of National Education, 2017).

The renaming of the Leadership (*dirigenție*) classes as *Counselling and Personal Development* classes and the overloading of class master teachers with administrative and class management tasks (e.g., motivating absences, scholarship files, managing current class issues) within the same class were also pointed out by the Cognitrom research results, a situation that led to the neglect by class masters of the counselling and career guidance activities that should be carried out with pupils according to the School curricula for the subject Counselling and Personal Development (Ministry of National Education, 2017).

C19. Students' busy school schedule.

The high number of hours included in the framework curriculum plans and the degree of overload in the school curricula were reported by the participants in the Cognitrom research (2022), and were also mentioned by the representatives of the National Pupil Council during the consultations carried out in our project.

C20. Insufficient time for counselling due to the compulsory teaching time of 2-4 hours.

The 2-4 hours of compulsory teaching activities (classroom teaching) in the teacher-school counsellor's timetable often results in the teacher-school counsellor being dispersed between several schools, creating an additional administrative burden and resulting in insufficient time for career counselling for students, issues highlighted by Cognitrom research (2022).

C21. Uneven requirements for coordination of career counseling activities at the school and county level at the school/CJRAE level.

Consultations carried out in the framework of this project with the directors of CJRAE/CMBRAE revealed that, although there are assessment standards of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education (ARACIP) (Romanian Government, 2020) for the provision of guidance and counselling services for pupils in schools, in practice there are uneven requirements for the coordination of career counselling activities at school and county level at the school/CJRAE level.

Consultations in this project also highlighted the lack of a uniform methodology for conducting and reporting career counselling and guidance activities. The analysis of the annual activity reports of the CJRAE/CMBRAE shows that reporting on the activities carried out differs from one county to another, with no uniform tools for monitoring and regulating the activities carried out, as confirmed by the results of the Cognitrom research (2022), carried out with the participation of the teachers-counsellors, who mentioned the reduced involvement of class masters in monitoring and supporting the career counselling and guidance activities carried out in schools.

The lack of a unified tool for evaluating and monitoring the work of the teacher-counsellor prevents the development of a systematic vision of the activities carried out, the identification of trends, weak performance or obstacles in the system, and the identification of examples of good practice.

C22. Dysfunctions in the operationalisation of school-other stakeholder partnerships (economic agents, AJOFM, universities, NGOs) in the field of career counselling in schools.

The lack of clear regulations/criteria for the selection of partners by schools to carry out career counselling activities for pupils and their parents was pointed out during consultations with key actors (CJRAE, AJOFM, universities, ACROM, NGOs) carried out within the framework of this project.

C23. Low level of parental education/information (e.g. information provided by a specialist about types of upper secondary and vocational schools), unrealistic expectations of parents, reluctance of parents about how to support their child in career choice, high proportion of pupils not aware of career counselling needs.

- **Low level of parental education/information (e.g. information provided by a specialist about types of upper secondary and vocational schools)**

Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are at greater risk of confusion about how **educational attainment and qualifications relate to jobs and careers**, and are more likely to need support from a teacher- school counsellor, as demonstrated by international PISA results, 2018 (OECD, 2019; Mann et al., 2020). This inconsistency is explained by a lack of accurate information, with family being the main source of advice and influence on career plans for these students. Parents are not always aware of the range of career options available to their child, often preferring general theoretical education to vocational education, even though for some pupils the latter may be a more suitable alternative (Musset & Mýtina Kureková, 2018).

According to the **parents' level of education**, children whose parents have primary and lower secondary education say that they have enough information in about 70%, unlike those whose parents have post-school education, who say they have enough information in about 80-90%, aspects highlighted by a

research conducted in Romania (Apostu et al, 2015), which showed that the degree of information of pupils on the possibilities of access to post-school education is also influenced by some characteristics of the family environment. **In high-risk families, the proportion of children who consider themselves sufficiently informed is lower** (about 67%) than in those from low-risk families (84%).

Other research, conducted in Ireland (Indecon, 2019), on the factors influencing pupils' career choices has shown that family socio-economic status plays an important role, demonstrating that pupils **from low-income families were less likely to consult with their parents about career choices** than pupils from high-income families. Also, pupils from low-income families are more likely to need support from their school counsellor, with career counselling intended to reduce intergenerational disadvantage.

- Unrealistic expectations of parents, parents' reluctance about how to support their child in career choices

Low involvement and the restraining role of parents, who ignore the teacher-counsellor's recommendations and may have **unrealistic expectations**, imposing their views on the student's choice of future school/occupation, were indicated as barriers to career counselling activities in a Cognitrom survey (2022). Respondent teacher-counsellors mentioned situations such as: parents not participating in counselling activities, not giving informed consent for the child's participation in counselling or ignoring the counsellor teacher's recommendations, enforcing to the child the school desired by the parents.

Family's lack of involvement, disorganised family environment, parent's refusal to accept the child's participation in counselling are specified in the annual reports of the CJRAE³⁸ as causes of unresolved individual counselling cases.

- A high proportion of pupils are not aware of the need for counselling

A small proportion of pupils from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds (around 5%, with no significant differences by background of residence), who participated in a research conducted in Romania, (Apostu et al, 2015) were aware that they needed support from the school counsellor (e.g. for learning efficiency, preparation for national assessment, educational and vocational guidance).

According to PISA 2018 results (OECD, 2019), socio-economically disadvantaged pupils are often most at risk of being deprived of relevant information about future education and career choices. However, in most of the countries involved in PISA 2018, **schools with socio-economically disadvantaged pupils were less likely, on average, to provide opportunities for pupils to discuss career plans with a specialist counsellor**. In only ten of the countries participating in PISA 2018 were pupils in disadvantaged schools significantly more likely to benefit from career counselling and guidance from a dedicated counsellor. In 29 countries, the opposite was true, i.e. pupils from disadvantaged schools had fewer opportunities to discuss their future with a specialist. The difference in **access to career counselling for pupils from schools in advantaged and disadvantaged areas is more than 40 percentage points**, including Romania.

³⁸ CJRAE Cluj. *Annual Activity Report 2021-2022*: <http://ciraecluž.ro/cjrae/rapoarte-de-activitate-cjrae/raport-cjrae-2021-2022/>

C24. Lack of professional quality standards and code of ethics in career counselling, validated and institutionalised in the education system

Although in Romania there is a **proposal for a Code of Ethics and Quality Standards in Career Counselling** (Jigău et al, 2004), based on a research conducted at national level by a team of researchers from the Institute of Educational Sciences in Bucharest and validated at the time by the teacher-counsellors of CJAP, they have not been institutionalized in the Romanian counselling system. **The quality standards and code of ethics** address the main issues: relations with the counselee, training and professional development of the counsellor, assessment of counsellors, scientific work, relations with third parties and institutional management.

Representatives of the Association of Counsellors in Romania (ACROM)³⁹, who participated in the consultations carried out in the framework of this project, also mentioned the existence of the **ACROM Code of Ethics**, which provides minimum ethical standards regarding the professional conduct of counsellors who are members of the association. These **ethical standards** include: general issues, the counselling relationship, counsellor supervision, measurement and evaluation, research and publication, consultancy, and free practice.

³⁹ ACROM: <http://www.acrom.org.ro/>

4.3.3 Effects of the problem

The main impacts of the problem are grouped into three categories: educational, social and economic, and these are briefly presented in this section based on research evidence.

Educational effects - Lack of or insufficient development of career management skills in pupils

Pupils' knowledge of a small number of occupations (low occupational thinking) is demonstrated by PISA (2018) results (OECD, 2019)⁴⁰, which show that:

- Young people's career aspirations have changed very little and have become even more concentrated, as the world of work has undergone major changes since the 2000s;
- 30% of 15-year-olds globally participating in the 2018 PISA test are interested in only 10 occupations (teacher, doctor, business manager, engineer, lawyer, police officer, ICT specialist, nurse, designer, psychologist);
- Many young people aspire to occupations that are at risk of automation.

Romania is slightly below the OECD average, which means that Romanian teenagers are aligned with trends in developed countries in terms of occupational thinking. Moreover, unlike the OECD average, there are no statistically significant differences between advantaged and disadvantaged students. Interestingly, when tested for understanding of the educational pathway to a labour market position requiring advanced skills, the difference between the two categories of pupils is not only statistically significant, but also among the highest among the participating countries.

Just over 7% of pupils from advantaged backgrounds in Romania who aspire to a high-skilled profession believe that they do not need to go on to tertiary education (compared to 9.5% OECD average), while 46.3% of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds in Romania with the same aspirations believe the same (compared to 34.5% OECD average).

These statistical observations can help refine the objectives of counselling towards understanding the educational pathway needed to achieve one's aspirations.

Transitions between levels of education, not adapted to the potential of the pupils: The transition rate from lower secondary education to upper secondary education (high school and vocational school) is calculated by relating the number of pupils enrolled one year ago in grade VIII to the number of pupils enrolled in grade IX (high school and vocational school) in the current school year. The indicator is relevant for analysing access to upper secondary education and the capacity of the education system to reach pupils at this level.

⁴⁰ A total of 32 countries, including Romania, out of the 79 countries participating in the PISA test distributed the optional career questionnaire to 15-year-old pupils, asking them to provide information about the factors that influenced their decisions about their future occupation.

Over the last 10 years, the **transition rate** from lower secondary to upper secondary (high school and vocational education) has remained relatively constant, with fluctuations resulting from the dynamics of transition to high school versus transition to vocational schools, which is more pronounced for male students.

Table 7 Transition rate in high school and vocational education, 2012/13-2021/22

| | | 2012/ 2013 | 2013/ 2014 | 2014/ 2015 | 2015/ 2016 | 2016/ 2017 | 2017/ 2018 | 2018/ 2019 | 2019/ 2020 | 2020/ 2021 | 2021/ 2022 |
|--------------------------------------|--------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| High school and vocational education | Total | 96,7 | 96,7 | 94,4 | 93,9 | 93,7 | 94,9 | 94,3 | 95,3 | 97,3 | 95,8 |
| | Female | 94,4 | 94,6 | 93,4 | 93,9 | 93,8 | 94,7 | 94,5 | 95,4 | 97,1 | 95,8 |
| | Male | 98,8 | 98,7 | 95,4 | 93,8 | 93,6 | 95,2 | 94,2 | 95,1 | 97,5 | 95,7 |
| High school education | Total | 92,2 | 91,9 | 79,6 | 78,0 | 77,4 | 77,8 | 77,1 | 73,2 | 75,9 | 76,5 |
| | Female | 92,3 | 92,4 | 84,9 | 84,0 | 83,4 | 83,5 | 83,1 | 79,5 | 81,8 | 82,5 |
| | Male | 92,0 | 91,5 | 74,4 | 72,3 | 71,7 | 72,3 | 71,4 | 67,1 | 70,3 | 70,9 |
| Vocational education | Total | 4,5 | 4,8 | 14,9 | 15,9 | 16,3 | 17,1 | 17,2 | 22,1 | 21,4 | 19,3 |
| | Female | 2,1 | 2,2 | 8,5 | 9,9 | 10,4 | 11,2 | 11,4 | 15,9 | 15,3 | 13,3 |
| | Male | 6,9 | 7,2 | 20,9 | 21,6 | 21,8 | 22,9 | 22,8 | 28,0 | 27,2 | 24,8 |

Source: Ministry of Education (2022)

The transition to vocational education is stimulated by the labour market context and the internal and external demand for labour, and in this context, the response of the education system appears to be a positive development. The exact extent to which the response and demand from pupils are sufficiently connected to the labour market, and especially to the skills and aspirations of individual students, and thus the extent to which the school counsellor successfully fulfils his/her role in this process, cannot be assessed (Ministry of Education, 2022).

What can be concluded is the persistence of a rather large percentage of pupils who continue to miss this transition by international comparison.

In the 2021/2022 school year, 4.2% of pupils enrolled one year ago in the eighth grade did not continue their studies in grade 9 (drop-out during the school year, repetition or other causes of school loss), which is 1.5 percentage points higher than the previous year⁴¹ (Ministry of Education, 2022b).

Low motivation for learning/School failure/School drop-out (especially in rural areas)/Early school leaving: A low level of intrinsic motivation in gymnasium pupils aged 12-14 years was revealed by the results of a research (Popa, 2015)⁴², which showed that pupils have low confidence in school success and

⁴¹ The impact of the COVID crisis can also be seen in this development

⁴² The research examined the relationship between self-regulation, motivation and learning performance with 270 middle school pupils aged 12-14 and concluded that academic performance increases if the pupil is aware of the purpose for learning, controls, regulates and directs his/her own impulses, follows rules, plans learning activities and demonstrates perseverance in achieving academic success.

low efficiency in learning, are not aware of the intrinsic value of learning and its usefulness, and are forced to learn by teachers and parents or learn because of fear of school failure.

In the literature (Vrăsmaş and Vrăsmaş, 2008), the concept of „school failure” is discussed, the forms of school failure being: falling behind in learning, specific failure and generalized failure. **Falling behind in learning** is a temporary failure, when a pupil achieves grades below his/her ability or is at risk of failing. **Specific failure** manifests itself in very low grades or temporary (semester) failure in one or some school subjects, while **general failure** refers to repeated or multiple instances of yearly failure and/or repetition.

Other indicators that can provide **information on the level of pupils’ school performance** are: the lower secondary graduation rate, the upper secondary graduation rate, the school results obtained by 8th grade pupils in the National Assessment exam, the baccalaureate exam pass rate, the results obtained by 15-year-old pupils in the PISA international standardized assessment, the results obtained by 8th grade pupils in the TIMSS assessment. For example: the **results obtained by Romanian pupils in international tests** (PISA, TIMSS) are significantly lower than in other countries and are influenced by the socio-economic characteristics of the community of origin (Ministry of Education, 2021a). In the 2018 PISA assessment⁴³, compared to the total number of participants (79 countries), Romania **ranks 52nd in the reading test, 54th in the mathematics test and 48th in the science test** (Ministry of Education, 2021a). The results of 8th grade pupils in the 2019 TIMSS assessment⁴⁴, show that **the level of functional illiteracy in mathematics is 22%**, compared to the **international average of 13%**, and in **science** it is **22%**, compared to the **international average of 15%**.

Early School Leaving (ESL) is an indicator defined at European Union level as the percentage of young people (out of the total population) aged 18-24 who have completed at most lower secondary education (i.e. grade 8) and who are not in any form of education or training in the four weeks preceding the statistical survey. **Early signs of ESL** are: poor academic performance, grade repetition, absenteeism, inappropriate school behaviour (generated by root causes: physical and/or emotional abuse, neglect, violence linked to extreme poverty, homelessness or poor housing conditions, health problems, disability, special educational needs, etc.), and poor school attendance. Romania is among the countries with the highest rate of early school leavers, remaining far from the set national target for 2020 (11.3%), although the value of the ESL indicator has decreased almost steadily over the last four years, reaching 15.6% in 2022 (Ministry of Education, 2021a; Eurostat, 2023⁴⁵).

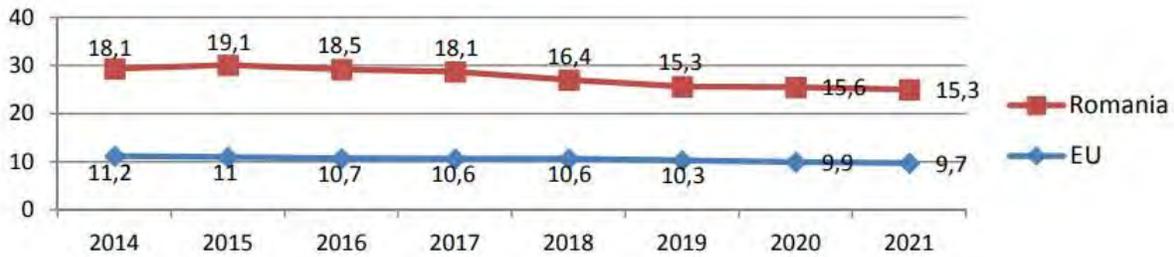
⁴³ PISA (*Programme for International Student Assessment*), coordinated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), is an internationally standardised assessment that aims to measure the skills of 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science, with an emphasis on their application to real-life situations. In 2018, 79 countries, including Romania, participated in the PISA assessment. The PISA 2018 assessment focused on reading literacy (after PISA 2009), with mathematics and science as secondary domains of the assessment.

⁴⁴ *The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS) programme, coordinated by the International Association for Performance Assessment (IEA), aims to measure the traditional subject content taught in the classroom by benchmarking students’ competencies in mathematics and science (biology, physics, chemistry).

⁴⁵ [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Early leavers from education and training aged 18-24 by sex and labour status, 2022 \(%25 of population aged 18-24\).png](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Early_leavers_from_education_and_training_aged_18-24_by_sex_and_labour_status_2022_(%25_of_population_aged_18-24).png)

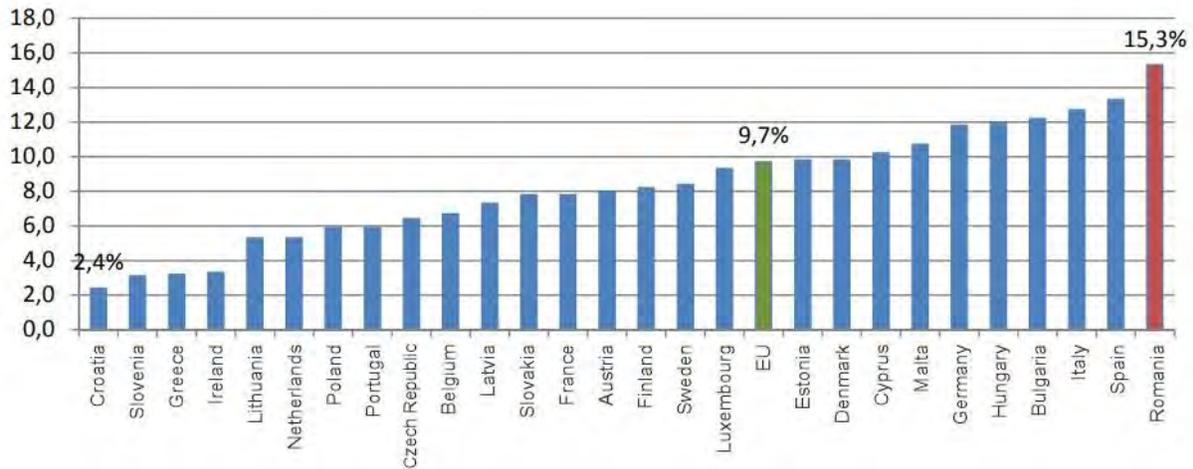
The early school leaving rate stagnated in Romania in 2019 after several years of sustained decline, but at a significantly higher level than the EU average, which has an ongoing downward trend, including during the pandemic. As in the case of the transition rate, these are developments that suggest a need for a paradigm shift in the management of certain segments of the school population, existing initiatives in this direction being presented in the previous chapter (Figure 13 and Figure 14).

Figure 13 Early school leaving rate, 2014-2021



Source: Ministry of Education (2022)

Figure 14 Early school leaving rate, 2021, international comparison



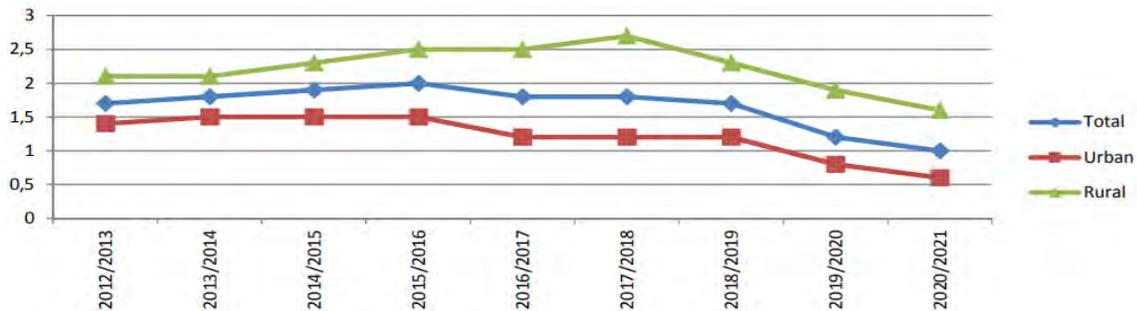
Source: Ministry of Education (2022)

The School Vulnerability Assessment Index on ESL is composed of **five indicators**, which relate to teachers, pupils and learning outcomes (Ministry of Education, 2021c)⁴⁶. Following the application of the School Vulnerability Assessment Index on ESL at national level during the piloting of the Early Warning Mechanism in Education (EWM) by the Ministry of Education, the results showed that **there are four times more schools at high risk of ESL in rural areas than in urban areas**.

Part of the MATE pilot project, applying the questionnaire on school success (SASAT) revealed that approximately 73% of the students have high educational aspirations. This means that they would like to complete upper secondary or higher education, whereas 9% of them intend to complete vocational education school and become employed. Educational interests of students are in accordance with their parents' expectations – almost half of students point out that their parents expect them to complete higher education. Yet, two thirds of the students do not know their colleagues' aspirations. This might suggest that students are not used to share their aspirations and plans for the future, which might also be due to the limited offer for career counseling services or to open discussions with class masters.

School drop-out is an indicator, calculated from official NSI data, as the difference between the number of pupils enrolled at the beginning of a school year and the number of pupils at the end of the same school year, expressed as a percentage of the number of pupils enrolled at the beginning of the year. **Dropping out of school** can be caused by **choosing inappropriate educational pathways** according to the results of a **longitudinal study** involving 80,000 people in the USA (Tracey & Robbins, 2006).

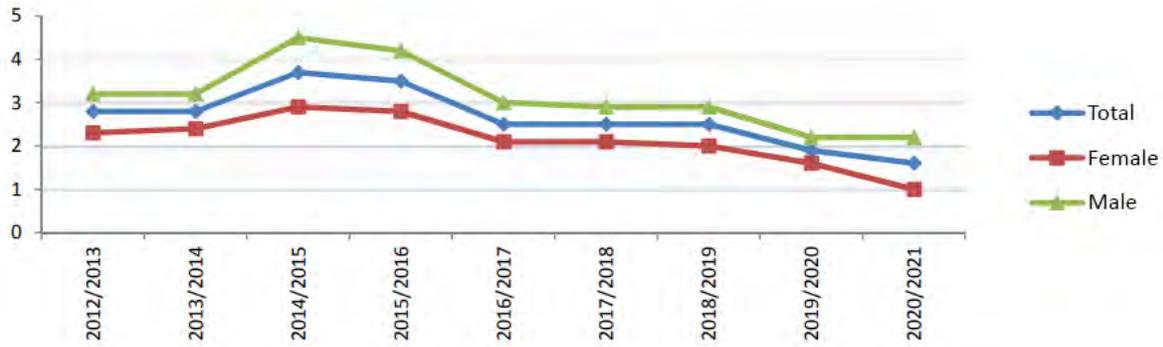
Figure 15 Dropout rate in lower secondary education, by area, school year 2020-2021



Source: Ministry of Education (2022)

⁴⁶The five indicators that are part of the School Vulnerability Assessment Index on ESL are: the proportion of substitute teachers (no. substitute teachers/total no. of teachers, S/T); graduation rates (no. of graduates/no. of students enrolled at the beginning of the school year in grade 8, A/E); percentage of repeaters and dropouts/no. pupils enrolled (R A/E); no. of lower secondary school leavers taking the exam and total no. of lower secondary school leavers (P/T); percentage of lower secondary school leavers scoring below 6 in the national assessment for grade VIII out of total lower secondary school graduates; rural-urban gap.

Figure 16 Dropout rate in upper secondary education, school year 2020-2021



Source: Ministry of Education (2022)

The university dropout rate is calculated as the percentage difference between the number of higher education students at the beginning and end of the academic year, found in an academic year. **Almost half (approx. 44%) of the students who drop out do so after the first year of study** (Ministry of Education, n.d.), and one of the causes of dropout is the **lack of appropriate information about the study programme followed** (Alexe-Coteț et al., 2022). The students participating in the above research mentioned the **lack of career counselling as one of the causes of dropping out**, seen as a result of social, medical and financial factors.

Table 8 University dropouts

| | Drop out | Cumulative drop out | % of total drop out |
|---|----------|---------------------|---------------------|
| No. of pupils dropping out after first year (not enrolled in second year) | 25.385 | 25.385 | 43.99% |
| No. of pupils dropping out after second year (not enrolled in third year) | 8.571 | 33.956 | 14.85% |
| Dropout after the first 2 years | 33.956 | | 58.84% |
| Total pupils dropping out | 57.705 | | 100% |

Source: Alexe-Coteț et al. (2022)

Social effects - Career failure

In the course of a career, situations of dismissal, redundancy, resignation, professional reorientation, etc. may arise. Career failure may also result from a lack of convergence between the professional qualification and the occupational status of the person working in the labour market or from a mismatch of skills at work/employment, with differences between the skills of the employed and the skills needed to perform their job tasks.

High number of NEET young people: NEET young people are defined as people aged 16-25 who are not in employment, education or training,^{47,48}. Eurostat statistics on the NEET situation⁴⁹ in Romania show an increase in the number of NEET young people by 0.8% between 2011 (19.5%) and 2021 (20.3%). Romania has one of the highest percentages of NEETs, the EU target for 2030 being 9%. According to the degree of urbanisation, the data showed in 2021: in urban areas - **small towns and suburban areas (21.4%)**, in **rural areas (27.1%)**, and in **urban areas - big cities (9.4%)**.

Low degree of social inclusion and low community involvement: Inclusion has one of the lowest values (54.69) in Romania's Social Progress Index.⁵⁰

Low quality of life: Based on the Social Progress Index (SPI), which measures the quality of life and social well-being of citizens in 169 countries, Romania ranks 43rd out of 169 countries in 2022, second to last among EU countries.⁵¹

Emotional and mental health problems⁵², reduced resilience to career challenges: About **50% of mental illnesses start in adolescence** and **25% occur between 20-25 years of age**, as shown by longitudinal studies on children's and adolescents' mental health. Less than 25-35% of people diagnosed with mental illness receive specialist support, and there are many more people with psycho-emotional needs in Romania who are undiagnosed and do not receive appropriate mental health treatment and care (Copăceanu and Costache, n.d.).⁵³

⁴⁷ Ministry of Labour (2002) *Law No 76/2002 on the unemployment insurance system and employment stimulation*, as amended and supplemented

⁴⁸ Ministry of Labour (2021). *National Employment Strategy 2021-2027*

⁴⁹ "Not in education, employment or training" is an English acronym for young people aged 15-29 who are not in employment, education or training.

⁵⁰ *Quality of Life and Social Well-being Survey*, conducted by the non-profit organisation Social Progress Imperative with support from Deloitte: <https://www.socialprogress.org/?code=ROU>

⁵¹ *Quality of Life and Social Well-being Survey*, conducted by the non-profit organisation Social Progress Imperative with support from Deloitte: <https://www.socialprogress.org/?code=ROU>

⁵² The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as the emotional and psychological well-being in which a person is able to use his or her cognitive and emotional capacities, function in society, meet the daily demands of life, establish satisfying and mature relationships with others, participate constructively in social change, and adapt to external conditions and internal conflicts.

⁵³ Copăceanu, M. and Costache, I. (n.d.). *Mental health of children and adolescents in Romania. Recommendations for improving their lives*. Policy Brief, Unicef

Risk of increasing juvenile crime and drug use among unemployed/young inactive people: The lack of a career horizon in line with the aspirations and potential of each child and adolescent is a determining factor in increasing juvenile crime. Of the total number of individual defendants sentenced in 2021⁵⁴, **3,285** were **juveniles (5.2%)** and the proportion of **juvenile defendants sentenced on provisional detention** was 12.7% in 2021, up from 10.7% in 2020.

Adolescence is the period with the highest vulnerability to initiate drug use, the lowest age of onset is 12 years, which is declared for the use of new psychoactive substances. Nationally, among 16-year-old students, lifetime use of any illicit drug in 2019 was 9.5%, while past-year use of any illicit drug was reported by 9% of students.⁵⁵

Economic effects - Human capital producing value-added under-own potential

Value added (VA) is the financial surplus formed at company level, from which all segments of the company that contribute to its creation will be remunerated in proportion to their contribution (employees, state, shareholders, etc.). Losses of value compared to potential can also result from human capital that either does not find the right career path. Value added losses can occur if young people are not informed about which sectors add value to the economy (e.g. IT, construction, etc.) and in which of these there will be a need for labour force in the next 5-10 years, what the level of pay will be, what the working conditions will be, etc.

Lack of labour force with skills and competences sought in the labour market: The mismatch between the demand and supply of skills in the labour market, where the skills sought by employers are different from the skills offered by job seekers or workers, leads to economic and social losses for citizens, employers and society. Regular monitoring of labour market demand is essential, and **a system for monitoring areas/occupations for which there are shortages or surpluses** should be a core element of the labour market information system (European Commission, 2017).

Low productivity and low wages contribute most to the **high rate of in-work poverty**, which refers to the situation in which income from work does not allow the person and their family, who are dependents, to escape poverty (Government of Romania. Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and the Elderly, n.d.).

High number of unskilled or low-skilled: Analysis of employment rates of the population aged 15-64 by educational attainment shows that employment rates increase as the level of education of the population increases (Ministry of Education, 2021a). Thus, in 2020, it was found that **less than half of lower secondary school graduates (45.5%)** were part of the employed population, and **people with no more than four grades had the lowest employment rate**, with only **a third** of them **integrated into the labour market**.

⁵⁴ Public Ministry. Public Prosecutor's Office of the High Court of Cassation and Justice (2022), *Activity Report 2021*, Available at: www.mpublic.ro

⁵⁵ National Anti-Drug Agency (2021). *National report on the drug situation. Romania - New developments and trends*. Available at: http://ana.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/RN_2021.pdf

In 2021, the **employment rate of higher education graduates** aged up to 34 in Romania was 83% and 84.9% in the EU27, while the **overall employment rate of higher education graduates** aged up to 34 in Romania was 88.9% and 87.1% in the EU27 (Deaconu and Hâj, 2022). These indicators are relevant from the point of view of **graduates' employability**, as they show their pathway from education to the labour market. These data show that the **employment rate of the population increases as the level of education increases**, and the risk of young people becoming NEETs decreases as their level of education increases.

High youth unemployment rate: In 2022, the **unemployment rate was (22.8%) for young people aged 15-24** (National Institute of Statistics, 2022).

Budgetary expenditure on psychosocial problems of people who have not received counselling in school: About half of European workers consider **stress to be a common factor in the workplace** and the cause of almost half of all lost working days.⁵⁶In addition to **mental health problems**, workers who experience prolonged stress may subsequently develop **serious physical health problems**, for example cardiovascular or musculoskeletal disorders. **Estimates of the costs to business and society of stress at work** are considerable, amounting to billions of euros nationally.

⁵⁶ <https://osha.europa.eu/ro/themes/psychosocial-risks-and-stress>

4.4 Analysis of Objectives and Regulatory Options

This section (i) prioritizes the different levels of objectives and places them in a logical tree; (ii) analyses the central objective through the lens of educational, economic and social impacts; (iii) analyses the two specific objectives identified, for which it proposes a mix of interventions and analyses regulatory alternatives respectively; (iv) presents an analysis of regulatory alternatives using data from Botosani County.

4.4.1 Objectives Tree, General Objective, Specific Objectives

Chapter 4.3 analysed the various problems affecting the effectiveness of career counselling and guidance in Romania and concluded that the central problem relates to the fact that the CCG activities and services provided by the class master and the teacher-school counsellor do not cover the needs of pupils at gymnasium and high school level. The different levels of problems with logical cause-effect relationships are summarised in Figure 4.

The objective tree provides a visual representation of the future/desired situation in relation to solving previously detected problems. Causes and effects in the problem tree become means and ends. Developing the goal tree involved transforming the problem statements into a vision of how things would be if the problems were reduced or eliminated and what will be required to achieve this vision.

The objectives are aligned with previous approaches in OECD documents on career counselling and guidance services (OECD, 2004b), presented in Chapter 1, and are hierarchised into the following categories top-level objectives, core objective and specific objectives (Figure 17).

Overall objective: The career counselling and guidance needs of pupils at the end of gymnasium and high school are met.

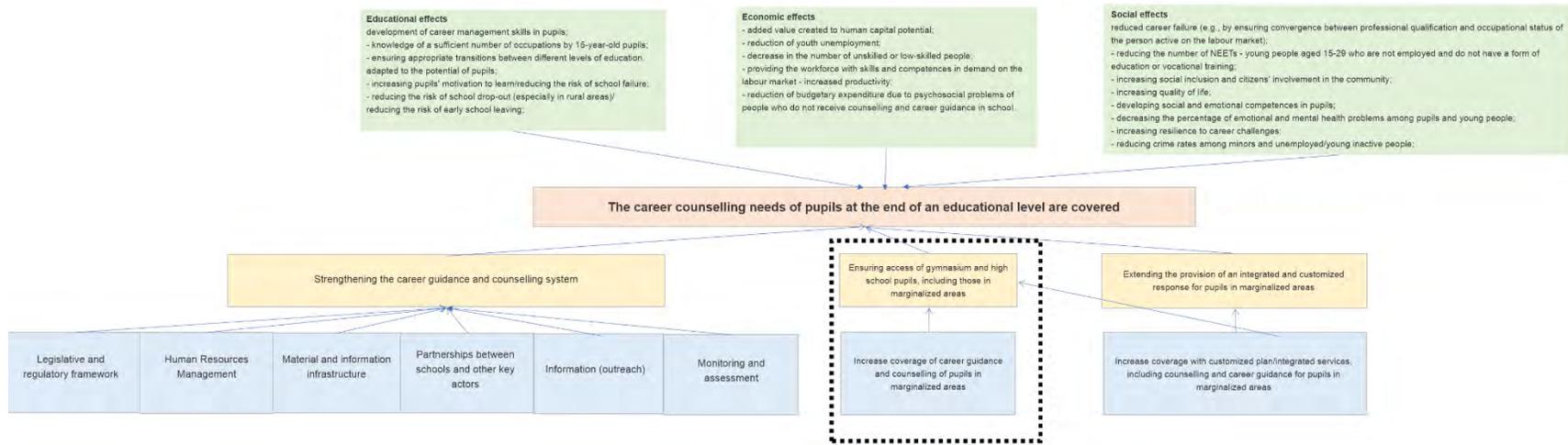
To measure the performance of the system towards the overall objective we propose to track:

- Evaluating service quality and beneficiary satisfaction – a 360 assessment (Oxford)⁵⁷. The development of this tool requires a dedicated study. A methodology proposal has been developed in Romania (LaRoche(coord.), 2006; World Bank, 2020) includes methodological elements relevant to this approach. The research carried out by the Institute of Education Sciences (LaRoche et al., 2006) analysed the needs of lifelong counselling and involved the main actors in representative counselling services in Romania, namely pupils, parents, teachers, educational management staff, students, young graduates or job seekers, young people in employment, HR inspectors in companies, professional counsellors (from pre-university education, higher education, public employment services). The questionnaire-based survey targeted pupils in general schools, theoretical high schools, technological high schools, arts and crafts schools, probing students' career choices and their motivation, their expectations for professional life, students' representations of successful professional skills,

⁵⁷ The 360 evaluation is a component of the performance management process whereby employee performance evaluations are collected from supervisors, subordinates, peers and customers.

students' awareness of education and training opportunities, problems for which they need counselling, and students' expectations of the counselor and his/her work. There is a need to update the questionnaires used to rework this needs analysis in the current context.

Figure 17 Objectives Tree



Impact objectives

The impact objectives are organised in three categories: (i) educational; (ii) social; (iii) economic.

Assessing the correlation between the achievement of the overall objective and the impact objectives is not possible at this stage, due to the lack of specific analytical studies in Romania that could isolate to a sufficient extent the direct effect of CCG activities and services at pre-university level. Until such studies are developed, we suggest using proxy indicators, with the limitation that they measure not only the effects of counselling activities but also of other interventions.

▪ Educational objectives:

- developing career management skills in students;
- knowledge of a sufficient number of occupations by 15-year-olds;
- ensuring appropriate transitions between different levels of education, adapted to the potential of pupils;
- increase pupils' motivation to learn/reduce the risk of school failure;
- reducing the risk of dropping out of school (especially in rural areas)/ reducing the risk of early school leaving;
- lower dropout rates, especially after the first year of university.

Indicators to track: Pupils' school performance (SASAT survey)⁵⁸; Dropout rate (on SIIR pupil-level data)⁵⁹, grade VIII and grade XII; university dropout (dedicated survey)

▪ Social objectives:

- reducing career failure (e.g. by ensuring convergence between professional qualifications and the occupational status of the person active on the labour market);
- reducing the number of NEETs - young people aged 15-29 who are not in employment, education or training;
- increasing social inclusion and citizen involvement in the community;
- increasing the quality of life;
- developing social and emotional skills in pupils ;

⁵⁸[A-Proposed-Methodology-for-Data-Collection-and-Use-to-Support-the-Early-Warning-Mechanism-Implementation.docx \(live.com\)](#)

⁵⁹ idem

- decrease the percentage of emotional and mental health problems in pupils and young people;
- increasing resilience to career challenges;
- reducing the crime rate among minors and unemployed/young inactive people;
- reducing the rate of drug use among minors and unemployed/young inactive people.

Indicators to track: *NEET youth rate; youth poverty rate; in-work poverty*⁶⁰

- **Economic objectives:**

- added value created to human capital potential;
- reducing youth unemployment;
- a decrease in the number of unskilled or low-skilled people;
- providing the workforce with skills and competences in demand on the labour market - increased productivity;
- reduce budgetary expenditure on psychosocial problems of people who have not received career counselling and guidance in school.

Indicators to track: *youth unemployment rate*⁶¹, *duration of transition from school to work*⁶²; *difference in earnings between 25-34 year olds who have completed high school employed full time and those who have not completed high school employed full time*⁶³.

Specific objectives

Achievement of the overall objective is dependent on achieving the specific objectives (SO): (1) strengthening the system, and (2) ensuring access to counselling and guidance for all students, including those from marginalised areas. A monitoring and assessment system for the specific objectives is proposed in chapter 4.4.4.

OS1. Strengthening the career counselling and guidance system

The achievement of this objective is constituted by ensuring:

- legislative and regulatory framework for CCG services
- management of human resources involved in CCG activities and services
- physical and information infrastructure
- partnerships between schools and other key actors
- outreach on CCG services
- monitoring and assessment of CCG services.

⁶⁰ According to NSI/EUROSTAT methodology

⁶¹ According to ANOFM methodology

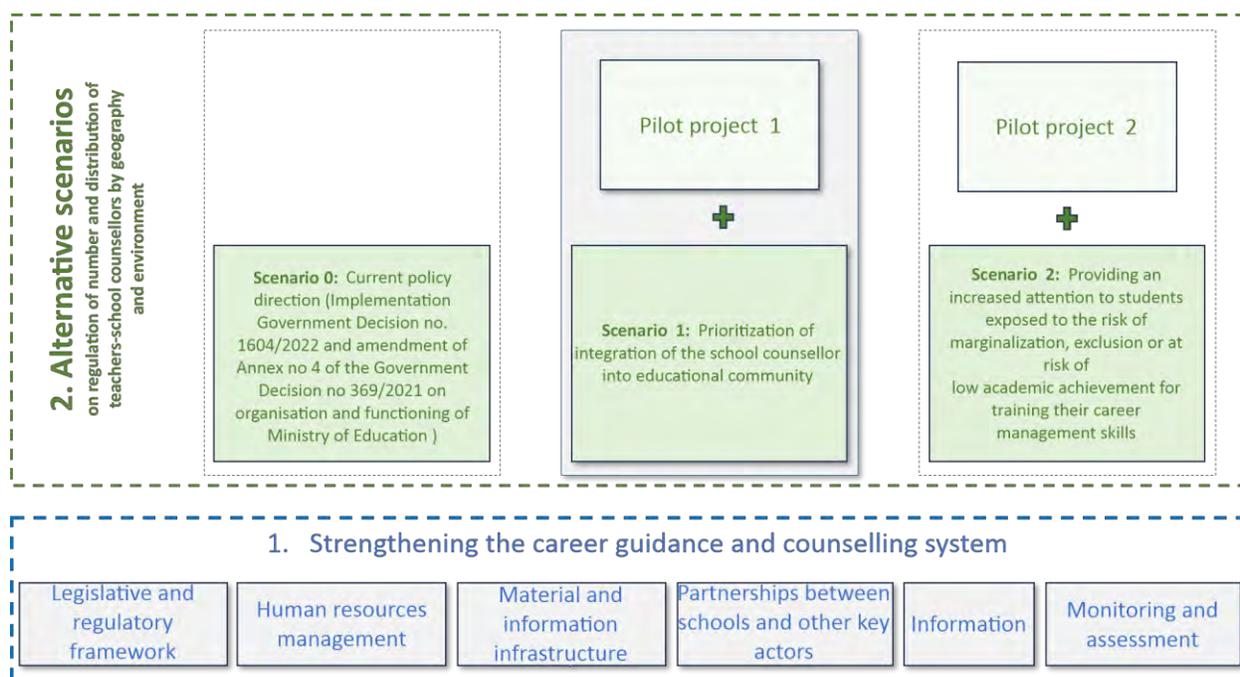
⁶² idem

⁶³ According to OECD methodology (2023)

OS2. Ensure access to career counselling and guidance for gymnasium and high school pupils, including those from marginalised areas, by

- Increase the coverage of career counselling and guidance services for pupils in marginalised areas.
- Extending the provision of an integrated and individualised response for pupils in marginalised areas.

Figure 18 : Conceptual architecture of the analysis



4.4.2 Specific Objective 1: Strengthening the career counselling and guidance system at pre-university level

Strengthening the career counselling and guidance system is the foundation that effectively supports the career counselling and guidance activities and services offered to pre-university, gymnasium and high school students. Its delivery involves a mix of interventions combining public policy and investment.

The analysis below presents strategic directions for intervention, and is not a detailed assessment and impact analysis of this mix of interventions. The analysis considers the following systemic components to support the expansion of general access to careers advice and guidance and provides directions for action and examples from other countries:

- I. Legislative and regulatory framework

- II. Human Resources Management
- III. Physical and information infrastructure
- IV. Partnerships between schools and other key players
- V. Outreach
- VI. Monitoring and evaluation.

I. Legislative and regulatory framework

- **Development and approval of Professional Quality Standards and Code of Ethics in Career Counselling**

The Regulation in force on the organisation and functioning of the County/Municipality Centres for Educational Resources and Assistance (OMECTS no. 5555/2011) contains general provisions (e.g. specific, purpose and objectives, funding) and provisions on: responsibilities and services provided by CJRAE/CMBRAE; human and material resources; staffing, standardisation and salary; staff evaluation. Each CJRAE/CMBRAE has its own rules of procedure.

The county/Bucharest municipality centres and the psycho-pedagogical assistance offices, component structures of the CJRAE/CMBRAE, where school counselors work, are organized and operate on the basis of the Framework Regulation (included in Annex 1 of the CJRAE/CMBRAE Organization and Operation Regulation, OMECTS no. 5555/2011). This regulation does not include mention of quality standards and code of ethics in the activity of CCG.

The new regulation that will regulate, according to the provisions of the Law on pre-university education 198/2023, the structure, organization and functioning of the CJRAE/CMBRAE should contain aspects related to quality standards and code of ethics in CCG activity.

Ensuring good management and strong support at national level increases the autonomy of counselling provision. According to a European Commission report, counselling services can be coordinated at local level, but work better if professional quality standards, monitoring, technical support and quality control are provided/defined centrally (Barnes et al., 2020).

The Code of Ethics and the Quality Standards for Counselling and Guidance are important means and reference tools to provide clients with quality, professionally correct and impactful services for the career development of the beneficiaries. Thus, the adoption of appropriate ethical behaviour and professional attitude in fulfilling the roles and responsibilities of the career counsellor is the first of the 10 general competences, mentioned in the Framework of Competences for Educational and Vocational Guidance Practitioners, developed by the International Association of Education and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG).

Quality Standards are also measurable technical specifications established by consensus and approved by an organisation with recognised and relevant national expertise. The aim of the Quality Standards is to optimise the inputs and outputs of the counselling and guidance system. The standards include quality indicators based on designated evidence that the counselling service meets the agreed criteria. The

quality standards relate to systems and procedures agreed by career counselling and guidance practitioners and stakeholders in the field so that:

- ❖ define the career counselling and guidance sector, the membership of the sector and the services concerned;
- ❖ recognise the diversity of skills and knowledge of practitioners in career counselling and guidance;
- ❖ guides practitioners' access to the field;
- ❖ provides a basis for designing training for practitioners in career counselling and guidance; provides quality assurance services for the public and other stakeholders in the field;
- ❖ creates a common terminology base for the field.

The recommended ethical principles for application in career counselling practice are:

- ❖ autonomy - ensuring clients' independence and self-determination, respecting their freedom to make their own choices and control their lives;
- ❖ duty not to harm others - not to cause harm, not to harm customers, even unintentionally;
- ❖ philanthropy - promoting goodness, mental health and well-being;
- ❖ fairness - fairness in professional dealings, impartial treatment of people;
- ❖ loyalty - honoring commitments made by counsellors to students, parents, teachers or supervisors.

In Romania, there is a proposal for a Code of Ethics and Quality Standards in Career Counselling (Jigău et al, 2004), based on a national research conducted by a team of researchers from the Institute of Educational Sciences and validated by the teacher-school counsellors of CJAP/ CJRAE, but they have not been institutionalized in the Romanian counselling system. Ethical issues and quality standards are addressed in terms of the following sections: relations with counselees, counsellor training and professional development, assessment of counsellors, scientific work, relations with third parties and institutional management.

Another example is the Code of Ethics proposed by the Association of Counsellors in Romania (ACROM), which provides minimum ethical standards for the professional conduct of counsellors who are members of the association. These ethical standards include: general issues, the counselling relationship, counsellor supervision, measurement and evaluation, research and publication, consultancy, free practice.

Competence frameworks, proposed by international and national organisations can be found below as well as in Box 5 below:

- IAEVG – International Association of Education and Vocational Guidance –Framework of Competences for Educational and Vocational Guidance Practitioners (2003, revised 2018);
- CCE – Center for Credentialing & Education – Global Career Development Facilitator (GCDF) – Global Career Development Facilitator Core Competences;
- NICE - Network for Innovation in Career counselling and guidance in Europe - European Competency Standards for the Academic Training of Career Practitioners (2016);

- USA – National Career Development Association – Minimum Competences for Multicultural Career Counseling;
- Australia – Career Industry Council for Australia - Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners; Revised (2018);
- United Kingdom – Career Development Institute (UK) - Learning Outcomes for Professional Roles in Career Development (2021);
- Canada – Canadian Council for Career Development - Canadian Standards and Recommendations for Career Development Practitioners - Core Competencies (2012).

Box 5 Examples of good practice from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

A successful example of professionalisation was initiated by four professional associations in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland of counselors who formed a Careers Profession Alliance. Their key message “One voice: Making an impact” aimed to raise standards for all careers counsellors professionals and ensure the quality of activities and services in the UK. They have created a National Register of Career Practitioners as part of a professional framework, which ensures that they are qualified and working to quality standards.

Also in the UK, a Quality Standards Matrix has been developed, which is a quality assurance framework for the provision of careers information, guidance and advice. Organisations providing these services are assessed every 3 years by external assessors and asked to make improvements to the services they provide.

- **Develop and implement a uniform methodology** on the conduct and reporting of career counselling and guidance activities in schools, specifying: what is **the purpose of the CCG** activities (e.g. the development of a written recommendation to the student at the end of the career counselling process) and also **who should be involved** in the career counselling process (the counselling teacher, the class master teacher, the student’s parents) and their **roles**.
- **Make it compulsory for each school to have an institutional mechanism for allocating career counselling activities in the timetable of pupils** (minimum 1 hour/month).

Career counselling activities will take place outside school hours, in a dedicated space, by setting a timetable, which will be communicated to students, parents and other teachers. The scheduling of these hours will be done on a modular/semesterly/annual basis, with the approval of the class master teacher.

- **Modification of the gymnasium framework plans - elimination of the overlap of the Counselling and Personal Development class with the Leadership (*Dirigenție*) class in gymnasium and introduction of a Counselling and Personal Development class in the high school framework plans, different from the Leadership class.**

It is necessary to eliminate the overlapping of the Counselling and Personal Development class with the Leadership class at gymnasium in the Gymnasium Framework Plans and to introduce in the new Gymnasium Framework Plans the compulsory subject of Counselling and Personal Development, with 1 hour/week, different from the Leadership class.

II. Human resources management

▪ **Providing training for practitioners in the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in career counselling**

The use of the potential of information and communication technologies - as „agents of change” (Watts, 2010) (e.g. websites, interactive programmes) in counselling requires the provision of initial and continuing professional development for teachers- school counsellors. Whiston et al. (2003) compared different career counselling intervention modalities (e.g., one-on-one counselling, career-themed lessons) using meta-analysis and showed that interventions that involved a counselor were significantly more effective than those that relied solely on clients' use of a computerised career counselling system. In order to produce positive results, there is a need for well-trained teachers- school counsellors who are familiar with the use of specialised computer platforms in their current career counselling work, who design online lessons and open educational resources on career counselling topics, develop content for institutional websites, use social media in CCG, etc. It is important that new teachers - school counsellors employed at the CJRAE/CMBRAE participate in a mandatory, intensive continuous training course on the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in career counselling.

Contemporary trends in the use of ICT in career counselling (ETF, 2020) include: implementation of digital career information systems, labour market information systems, interactive web-based systems, use of mobile phone apps or chatbots, etc. (More details can be found in Fig. 18).

▪ **The introduction of a compulsory career counselling module in the initial training of - teachers- school counsellors and fclass masters, starting from the academic year 2024-2025.**

As a rule, this requirement is met in the case of teachers - **school counsellors**, who have a bachelor's degree in: psychology, educational sciences, psycho-pedagogy, special psycho-pedagogy, sociology and a master's degree in school counselling/career counselling/psychological counselling. There is a need for a change, in the sense of **making this compulsory, as universities in Romania have been offering master's programmes in school counselling and career counselling since the 1997-1998 academic year, when the first master's programme in school counselling was initiated at the University of Bucharest.**

The new Law on Pre-University Education (Romanian Parliament,2023) includes this requirement, mentioning that for the position of teacher- school counsellor, at least one of the following conditions must be met:

- (i) graduation with a bachelor's degree in psychology/sociology/social work, graduation in the psycho-pedagogical training module totalling 30 ECTS credits and graduation in a master's degree programme specialising in school and career counselling;
- (ii) graduation with a bachelor's degree in the field of education sciences/pedagogy/school and career counselling and a master's degree in school and career counselling.

In the case of teachers-class masters who teach Counselling and Personal Development in gymnasium (1 compulsory hour/week), it is necessary to **include Counselling and Career Guidance as a compulsory**

subject in the Psycho-pedagogical Module, which can be taken by future teachers in the Teacher Training Departments of universities (initial training). Another solution is the **compulsory inclusion of the subject of career counselling and guidance in accredited in-service training programmes** to be taken by all teachers, so that they can accumulate at least 90 transferable professional credits (in-service training) every five years from the date of passing the final exam.

Box 6 International examples of good practice

To become a guidance counsellor in a -school/educational institution in **Finland** requires an initial teaching qualification, plus completion of relevant master's programmes or work-based -programmes offered by universities (Tibu et al, 2018b).

Becoming a guidance counsellor in **Ireland** requires both an initial teaching qualification and the completion of a specialist programme offered by universities, colleges or other institutions and recognised by the Department of Education and Skills (Tibu et al, 2018b).

In the **US**, school counsellor training requires a bachelor's degree, usually in psychology, counselling, education science or social work, and a master's degree in school counselling. A master's degree is required in most U.S. states in order to obtain a schoolcounsellor position in schools or universities. Some counsellors first work in the education system to gain experience as teachers before specializing in counselling, but this is not a prerequisite for becoming a school counsellor.

Source: Tibu et al, 2018b

The cost of a 40-hour training course (5 days x 8 hours) with 15 teachers is estimated at around **€1000, calculated in consultation with an accountant.**

III. Physical and information infrastructure

- **Provide each psycho-pedagogical assistance office with a basic package of scientifically validated, standardised, culturally adapted specialist tools within 5 years**

A basic package of scientifically validated, standardised, culturally appropriate specialist tools should contain the items listed in the box below.

Box 7 The ideal psycho-pedagogical assistance office

An ideal **Psycho-pedagogical Assistance** Office should include:

- appropriate space in schools: rooms for individual and group counselling, workshops;
- furniture (tables, chairs, cupboards, etc.),
- equipment: computers, Internet connection, printer, photocopier, telephone/fax, video camera, TV, tape recorder, etc.
- methodological guidelines for career counselling,
- uniform working tools for counsellors: activity planning (annual, half-yearly, modular), activity register, individual counselling file, group counselling file, report on the activity carried out (annual, half-yearly), etc.,
- computerised databases (e.g. customer records, activities),
- sets of occupational profiles (paper and electronic), classifications or nomenclatures of occupations,
- batteries of psychological tests and questionnaires in electronic format (for computerized application and scoring) and in pencil and paper format, culturally adapted, validated and calibrated on the Romanian population:
 - personality questionnaires (e.g. Myers-Briggs Typological Indicator)
 - professional interest questionnaires (e.g. Kuder, Holland, Jackson, Strong etc.)
 - ability questionnaires (e.g. cognitive, non-cognitive)
 - aptitude tests (e.g. SkillScan - Beckhusen)
 - values assessment questionnaires (e.g. work-related values - Super)
 - combined interest and ability questionnaires (e.g. Campbell)
 - combined questionnaires measuring academic achievement and professional interests,
 - questionnaires for analysing the client's career needs (e.g. Career Beliefs Questionnaire - Krumboltz, Career Attitudes and Strategies Questionnaire - Holland and Gottfredson, Career Factors Questionnaire - Chartrand, Robbins and Morrill, Career Maturity Questionnaire - Crites and Savickas, Career Thoughts Questionnaire - Sampson et al.);
- digital career information systems:
 - a. Matching systems: e.g. correlation between a student's interests and abilities - school majors and recommended occupations;
 - b. programmes that create a psychological profile of the client based on tests, questionnaires, etc.:
 - c. support programmes for CVs, cover letters or filling in forms/applications;
- Labour market information systems: employment trends (e.g. jobs requested by employers), data on the structure of the labour market, information on occupations and available training courses),
- interactive web-based systems: information about educational and occupational opportunities combined with assessment of client's skills and interests, allowing them to create a personal portfolio, CV, job applications, etc.,
- the use of mobile phone apps or chatbots to provide students, parents, teachers with valid, up-to-date information about educational and occupational opportunities, career choices,
- audio-visual material: CDs, radio broadcasts, TV (used especially in remote areas where there is no Internet).

Source: Authors, adapted from ETF, 2020 and Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2015

- **Establishment of a standardised psycho-pedagogical assistance office in each legally constituted educational establishment, providing career counselling services for pupils, by 2030**

Access to career counselling services for all pupils will be easily facilitated, thus ensuring equity, regardless of the urban or rural setting where the school is located.

The cost of equipping a psycho-pedagogical assistance office is estimated at €24,000, calculated in consultation with an accountant.

Table 9 Estimated costs for equipping educational psycho-pedagogical assistance offices

| Facilities | Costs |
|--|---|
| Furniture (tables, chairs, cupboards, etc.) | 3,000 euro |
| Equipment: computers, Internet connection, printer, photocopier, telephone/fax, video camera, TV, tape recorder, etc. | 3,000 euro |
| Psychological test batteries and questionnaires in electronic format (for application and computer scoring) and in pencil and paper format | This represents an estimation of the costs for purchasing psychological bateries test and questionnaires in electronic format (for applying and computerized cotation) and in pencil-paper format, culturally adapted, validated and calibrated for the Romanian population, according to Box 7. Example: Cost of a specialised educational and vocational guidance platform (CCPintranet): https://www.cognitrom.ro/produs/consiliere-si-orientare-in-cariera/): 8,000 Ron |
| Sanitation | 3,000 euro |

- **Elimination of the 2-4 hours teaching time for teachers-school counsellors**

The elimination of the 2-4 hours teaching norm will be achieved through a national consultation of teachers-**school counsellors** and by amending the legal provisions in force (art. 262 of the Education Law no. 1/2011 and the Regulation on the organization and functioning of the county/municipal centres for educational resources and assistance), related to the post of school teacher-adviser within CJAP/CMBAP (MECTS, 2011).

Eliminating the teaching time will allow this time to be allocated to individual and group psycho-pedagogical support activities with pre-schoolers/pupils, counselling, guidance, including career counselling activities, parent and teacher counselling activities.

IV. Improving the delivery of partnerships between schools and other key actors and expanding existing communities of practice in career advice and guidance

- **Include a plan of activities and a set of monitoring and assessment indicators in the Partnership Agreements between schools and other key actors (economic agents, AJOFM, universities, NGOs) in the field of career counselling in schools**

Partnership agreements between schools and other key actors (economic agents, AJOFM, universities, NGOs) will be designed on the basis of an activity plan (aim, objectives, activities, costs, deadlines, promotion, evaluation, etc.) and a set of indicators for monitoring and assessing activities (signalling achievement of objectives), agreed by both stakeholders.

- **Development of procedures at school level for the selection of relevant partners (economic agents, AJOFM, universities, NGOs) for the implementation of effective career counselling programmes and activities**

The educational establishments will establish **partnerships with public or private economic agents or other institutions** in order to implement career counselling and guidance programmes for pupils on the basis of clear **procedures and criteria** for the selection of partners, mentioning the conditions of collaboration, specifying the coordinating role of the teacher- school counsellor (e.g. collaboration with community organisations that can serve as mentors for students; collaboration with employers - to provide job-shadowing activities and internships for students). In the areas where there are no companies, it is recommended to set up partnerships with the support of CJRAE/CMBRAE. These partnerships can include companies, institutions, NGOs from other localities or the county seat municipality, including usage of informatic platforms where interested companies can collaborate and schools can enroll. An international good practice in this sense is represented by Education and Employers, UK.⁶⁴

A review of the international literature on career education, which looked at research that adopted quasi-experimental and experimental approaches (Hughes et al, 2016) showed that outcomes related to the **provision of career education in schools, including with employer involvement**, are primarily **positive**: this was the case for 60% of studies that identified **educational outcomes** (only 2% primarily negative); 67% of studies that looked at **economic outcomes** (none of these were considered primarily negative) and 62% of studies that looked at **social outcomes** (only 3% were considered primarily negative).

- **Extending existing communities of practice to private providers and other sub-communities of partners**

Extending existing communities of practice to private providers and other sub-communities of partners envisages collaborating public counselling services with private entities to introduce innovations in the system, attract funding, supplement career counselling activities, etc. One solution suggested by participants in the consultations envisages the creation of national/county level databases of institutions/companies/specialists from different fields interested in collaborating with schools on CCG issues.

One limitation in extending this community is the very low number of specialized services providers and another one would be the lack of examples of public-private partnerships at the local level.

⁶⁴ European Training Foundation (2020). *International trends and innovation in career guidance*, Volume II: Country case studies, Turin: ETF

Examples of such collaborations are the counselling projects run by Heks/Eper Romania Foundation in gymnasium and vocational education in schools in Covasna, Mures and Sibiu counties (more details can be found in Box 20 of this report) and the “ Training for the future”project run by Romanian Business Leaders, addressed to gymnasium and high school pupils in Bucharest and Cluj, Constanta and Prahova counties, in urban and rural areas (more details can be found in Box 22 of this report).

V. Outreach

▪ Development of a national portal for career counselling and guidance

The portal will be accessible free of charge and will contain useful information for pupils (e.g. information about educational institutions, occupations, ways to assess skills, aptitudes, interests, personal values, documents needed for enrolment in high school/vocational education/higher education, possibility to talk to a specialist, success stories), parents (e.g. information about educational institutions, occupations, documents needed for enrolment in high school /vocational education/higher education, ways to support children in their choice of studies and future occupation, opportunity to talk to a specialist), teachers (e.g. information on educational institutions, occupations, ways to support pupils in choosing studies and future occupation, open educational resources on CCG topics), teachers/school counsellors (e.g. information on educational institutions, occupations, examples of good practice, news in the field), company representatives (e.g. their responsibilities and obligations as an employer of a pupil at a work experience placement), based on existing national and international examples⁶⁵. The portal can bring together all the CJRAE/CMBRAE websites, existing individually at the moment for each of the 41 counties and the municipality of Bucharest.

The portal can take the form of a web-based information system that offers the possibility of creating a personal learner portfolio (skills, qualifications, experiences, aspirations) in electronic format, as well as a web-based interactive system containing factual information and materials for career development, diagnostic self-assessment and can also offer a helpline or chat contact with CCG professionals (European Training Foundation, 2020). Numerous examples of good practice on the use of ICT in career counselling and guidance can be identified internationally in the work of ETF (2020) and Cedefop (2018), for example: e-guidance, Denmark; e-guidance and integration of counselling services, Estonia; My future, Australia; My skills future and my career future, Singapore etc.,

Box 8 Example of good practice from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Inspiring the Future, developed in the UK, is an innovative online match-making tool that connects schools and volunteer employees via a website, giving pupils the opportunity to talk to employees from different fields.

Source: <https://www.inspiringthefuture.org/>

⁶⁵ e-Platform, CNDIPT: <https://www.alegetidrumul.ro/>; Occupational Guide, ISE: <https://go.ise.ro/>; Cognitrom Career Planner: <https://ccponline.ro/>; Test Central, By Job Service: <https://www.pemeserie.ro/>; Myfuture, Australia: <https://myfuture.edu.au/help-and-support/about-myfuture#/>

Box 9 Example of good practice from Romania (1)

At CJRAE Iasi, the following platforms have been created: the Map of support services for young people and adults platform, a resource for parents and young people to help them in the selection of organisations with specific psycho-pedagogical support; the Helpline platform - The counsellor next to you!, an efficient counselling tool for users in educational establishments without a psycho-pedagogical support office.

Sources: <http://www.cjrae-iasi.ro/>, CJRAE Iasi. Activity Report 2021-2022: <http://www.cjrae-iasi.ro/info/cjrae/documente-interne>

The estimated cost of the proposed portal is **€20,000, calculated in consultation with an accountant.**

- **Promote/ensure better visibility of the career counselling programmes and activities** offered by the school so that pupils are motivated to participate.

Promoting/ensuring better visibility for students, teachers and parents of career counselling programmes and activities will be done by the teacher-school counsellor through the following means: addressing career counselling as the main strategy and responsibility of all school staff, developing a school-wide Career Counselling plan with task allocation to different teaching and non-teaching staff members in the school, raising awareness of the school management of the importance of career counselling for students, designing and rigorous planning of counselling activities and programmes before they are delivered (e.g.. making a clear description of the programme for principals, teachers, parents, students, determining the content of the programme, delivery methods, assessment modalities), putting in place the skills and influence to collaborate with different stakeholders (students, pupils, parents, teachers, principals, etc.), presentation by the teacher-school counsellor of career counselling programmes and activities in teacher councils, pedagogical circles, parent-teacher conferences, classes within the Counselling and Guidance curriculum area, etc., informing parents through letters, leaflets, newsletters, the counselling platform, where they will have access to and be able to monitor the activities carried out by the children, involving pupils and parents in the promotion of career counselling programmes and activities, working with local community representatives in the promotion of career counselling programmes and activities, allocating appropriate spaces in the school for the implementation of career counselling programmes and activities.

Figure 19 Example of good practice in Romania(2)

Examples of ways to promote counselling programmes carried out by CJRAE/ CMBRAE counselling teachers in Romania can be found in a guide for school counselling teachers, produced by the UCE in 2020 at the request of the Ministry of Education.

Source: Andrei, Angela (coordinator) (2020). *Programmes and counselling activities for the development of social-emotional competences of primary/ secondary/ high school/ vocational students. Guide for school counselling teachers*, Volumes I, II and III, Bucharest: Editura Didactică și Pedagogică. Available at: <https://www.ise.ro/consiliere-pentru-dezvoltarea-competentelor-socio-emotionale-ale-elevilor>

- **Conduct national and local campaigns according to an aggregated plan**

National and local promotion and marketing campaigns for services will aim at increasing the visibility of services and will be carried out on the basis of an aggregated plan (e.g. The campaigns will be carried out through print media, radio, TV, online platforms, social networks, etc.

The estimated cost of such campaigns is around €250,000/year and would include: social media content, radio/TV, print. The calculation has been made in consultation with an accountant.

VI. Monitoring and evaluation

At the European level, a recent report by the European Commission (Barnes et al., 2020). indicated **a lack of standardisation and/or coordination in the systematic monitoring and assessment of career counselling and guidance activities in most European Union (EU) Member States**. The data showed that there is a need for improvements in how the outcomes and impact of career counselling and guidance services are monitored. Standardised monitoring of inputs, processes and outcomes will allow for consistent measurement and assessment of how resources and results are used, as well as a sound policy rationale for sustainability and improvement of counselling services. In many European countries, monitoring is based on clients' short-term perceptions of services, but rarely on an understanding of process outcomes. Involving beneficiaries and practitioners in the development and implementation of a monitoring and assessment system is a key issue (Barnes et al., 2020).

The design and operationalization of a unitary monitoring and assessment system for career counselling services in Romania will contribute to obtaining a systematic overview of the activities carried out, identifying trends, weak performances or obstacles in the system, as well as examples of good practices. A well-implemented system for monitoring and assessing career guidance activities will lead to an increase in their quality and impact on beneficiaries. Section 4.5 discusses the steps needed to create a unified monitoring and assessment system and proposes a framework for it.

4.4.3 Specific Objective 2: Ensure access to career counselling and guidance for gymnasium and high school pupils, including those from marginalised areas

For each objective/theme in the OECD studies on career counselling and guidance there are some key challenges, together with a number of policy options and examples of effective responses to the problems identified. For example, for SDG2 Ensuring student access to CCG activities and services, one of the key questions, subsequently translated into policy options, concerns the need to diversify the provision of career counselling and guidance services through Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) (OECD, 2004b: 35-36). The proposals for innovative ICT-based solutions suggested in the OECD report, however, need to be seen in the temporal context in which they were developed and adapted to the processes/tools currently available.

Updated approaches to ensuring access to CCG services and the use of ICT in CCG can be found in ELGPN (2012), Cedefop (2018), ETF (2020) and European Commission & Barnes (2020) reports.

Up-to-date examples of good practice on the use of ICT in the CCG can be found in the international reports on innovative trends in the CCG by ETF (2020) and Cedefop (2018). The use of ICT in the CCG can be achieved through: digital career information systems, digital labour market information systems, interactive web-based systems in the CCG, use of “big data” in the CCG, use of chatbots and apps in the CCG, career simulators with artificial intelligence.

Similarly, improving career guidance for at-risk youth has several key challenges/policy options mentioned. Table 10 shows that most of them are aligned with the specific objectives and action lines/measures already proposed for the context of EU funded programmes in the current programming period.

Table 10 Challenges and key options for career counselling and guidance objectives (selection)⁶⁶

| Objective | Key questions/challenges | Policy options | Examples of effective policy responses |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Expanding access to career guidance | What kinds of resources - including interest/motivation analyses, career navigation tools and checklists, job information videos, digital career information systems, interactive web-based systems, mobile phone apps or chatbots - have been or could be developed to support a ‘self-service’ approach to career advice and guidance? Are these available on the internet or on CD-ROM technology? What kind of changes in staffing structures, and staff training and development initiatives, are needed to support self-service approaches? | National, regional and local mapping/analysis of career guidance provided through a range of media to a range of target groups (young people, employees, unemployed) to optimise future policy options. | Providing career guidance through technology Call-centre |
| | What strategies can be developed to support non-formal and informal career counselling and guidance (e.g. by providing training and information materials to support career counselling and guidance in community and other settings/contexts)? | Develop innovative ways of combining online and offline services to ensure personalised delivery that meets customers’ distinct needs. | Private sector ICT orientation |
| | How can career counselling and guidance services be organised so that they are more easily accessible: outside standard office hours; in a ‘self-service’ mode; in community-based resource centres (community centres)? Do these changes involve renegotiating staff working conditions? | Develop quality assurance mechanisms to realise that the expansion of career counselling and guidance services and products take place within a quality assurance framework. | Mobile Centre |
| | | Contract some career counselling and guidance services to community groups. | |
| Improving career guidance for | If there are no programmes in schools to identify and assist early school leavers, what arguments can policy makers and practitioners in the field | Make career counselling and guidance for potential pupils at risk of leaving | Providing integrated services in the Nordic countries |

⁶⁶ The examples mentioned in the Table are selected by the authors from the text of the whole chapter and do not correspond thematically - the selection of policy options does not necessarily correspond to a particular key question. Similarly, the examples of programmes identified as effective policy responses do not necessarily correspond to a particular challenge or policy option.

| Objective | Key questions/challenges | Policy options | Examples of effective policy responses |
|----------------------|--|--|---|
| young people at risk | of career counselling and guidance use to help create them? What career counselling and guidance should be offered to early school leavers and how? Should they be delivered as part of the curriculum or in addition to it? Should it be delivered by internal or external staff or both? Should it include experiential learning opportunities outside school? | school early a priority in the allocation of guidance resources to schools. Work with education system managers and school principals to demonstrate the value of early intervention strategies for identifying potential dropouts and to demonstrate the role that career counselling and guidance can play in such strategies. | |
| | What kind of training and skills do career counselling and guidance professionals need to work with early school leavers and young people at risk? Do current career counselling and guidance staff have these skills (e.g. appropriate referrals to other services and working in cross-sectoral teams)? How should careers counselling and guidance staff in education and training work with out-of-school staff, such as youth policy workers, social workers, other community workers and other adults, to maximise the impact of both? | Improve initial and in-service training for school principals, teachers and career counselling and guidance staff to inform them on how they can integrate career counselling and guidance into programmes to support potential early school leavers. | Pro-active local governments in Denmark |
| | | Ensure that every early school leaver has an individual action plan for continuing learning, work and other life goals. | Youthreach programme in Ireland |

Source: Authors' selection based on OECD report, 2004b.

4.4.4 Alternative scenarios for ensuring student access to CCG services and activities

Based on and in the context of the implementation of the above proposed mix, regulating the number of teachers-school counsellors and their geographical distribution allows us to develop **scenarios for ensuring quality access to services**⁶⁷.

As discussed in Chapter 4.3.1. the overloading of teachers-school counsellors beyond the established norm will consequently reduce the quality of services provided and de-prioritise the CCG.

In developing and analysing the options, we started from the theory of change articulated throughout this paper, a standard logic model in social impact analysis. The causal sequence and set of assumptions used are supported by the available data and information, but also by a rich and complex battery of good practice cases and papers from the national and international literature.

The scenarios analysed are:

Baseline scenario (SB)

SB: Maintain the current policy direction (GD No. 1604/2022 and amendment of Annex No. 4 to Government Decision No. 369/2021 on the organisation and functioning of the Ministry of Education), i.e. implementation of the maximum limit for the number of pupils for whom counselling is provided under a counselling norm, phased allocation of additional posts, with priority to rural areas;

Alternative scenarios

S1: Prioritising the integration of the school counsellor in the educational community

This scenario assumes:

- strict implementation of a maximum limit for the number of pupils by school counsellor's norm (maximum 500 pupils or maximum 500 pupils and pre-school children);
- a position of school counsellor may cover a maximum of two educational units with legal personality (LP), having defined a maximum distance for counsellor mobility and reimbursement of the transport costs.
- a school unit benefits from the services of more than 1 school counselling office only if there are more than 1.5 norm/counsellor;
- adopting a whole-school-approach to the delivery of the CCG.

⁶⁷ This analysis assumes that for reasons explained in the chapter of the same name, teacher-class masters will continue to deal with administrative-organisational aspects of the pupils' class in the counselling and personal development class (at middle school), will not have appropriate professional skills and sufficient time for the application of the current curriculum and for the development of career management skills among the students, and that their collaboration with the teacher-school counselor will be reduced, i.e. there will be no risk of overlapping activities and skills.

S2: Special focus on pupils at risk of marginalisation, social exclusion or low educational achievement in order to develop their career management skills

This scenario assumes:

- strict implementation of the maximum limit for the number of pupils for whom counselling is offered under a counselling norm;
- the didactic norm of the school counsellor corresponds to one position of school-counsellor and is determined by reference to **a maximum of 500 pupils, a maximum of 500 pupils and preschoolers or a maximum of 300 preschoolers** (Chapter XIII, Article 202(9));
- the counselling norm of the school counsellor working with pupils enrolled in lower and upper secondary education in schools located in marginalised areas is reduced to 300 pupils, with the reimbursement of transport cost.

In addition, pilot projects are proposed for the alternative scenarios, which are recommended to be implemented in a sample of MATE schools, following analysis of local circumstances and in compliance with the technical requirements for setting up intervention and control groups. These pilot projects aim to assess the educational and social impact and the cost-benefit ratio of implementing comprehensive and complex interventions over a minimum cohort interval.

Box 10 Proposed pilot projects

Pilot project - Scenario 1: creation and equipping at the ideal level of the psycho-pedagogical assistance office in the selected schools, which will have a full-time school counsellor assigned exclusively to the respective LP.

Pilot project - Scenario 2: creation and equipping at the ideal level of the psycho-pedagogical assistance office in selected schools, to which pupils from other schools where the school counsellor is in charge, can have access (partly/depending on needs and including through digital means). The school counsellor who will be assigned part of the didactic norm in a school in a marginalised area will also be assigned part of the didactic norm in at least one school in a non-marginalised area and will carry out joint actions.

4.4.5 Case Analysis - Botoșani County

The analysis of the proposed scenarios is illustrated by the case of Botoșani County. The data available for this analysis did not allow a sufficiently comprehensive analysis at national level. Botoșani county covers 2% of the total number of pupils in pre-university education. In the school year 2022-2023, in Botoșani county 60 counsellors are employed, 58 of whom are working in psycho-pedagogical assistance offices.



The choice of Botoșani County⁶⁸ to illustrate the analysis of the options was based on the following criteria:

- It is the Region with the highest relative poverty rate (35.1% compared to 22.5% nationally, 2021), the lowest employment rate and the highest number of NEETs.
- The unemployment rate recorded in Botoșani county is in the upper quartile at national level.
- Botoșani County has the 12th highest dropout rate in gymnasium and the 6th highest dropout rate in high school.
- Botoșani county is ranked 23rd in the baccalaureate promotion rate, i.e. it is the national median. The last two points suggest that the local education system is performing at the national average,

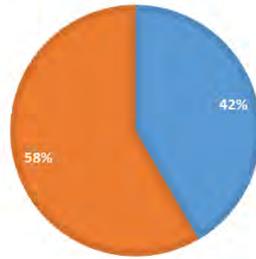
and that dropout rates are probably the result of an unfavourable socio-economic and family context in areas with low human capital, hence the need for additional focus on actions to support motivation for remaining in education.

There is a high proportion of pupils from rural areas compared to the national average (47% in Botoșani county compared to 27% nationally for pupils in all levels of education, respectively 37% in Botoșani compared to 25.7% nationally for pupils enrolled in lower and upper secondary education).

⁶⁸ Map source: [Botosani County - Map of Romania \(pe-harta.ro\)](https://www.pe-harta.ro)

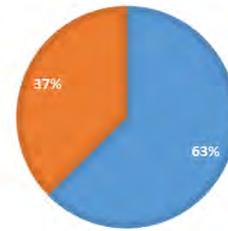
STRUCTURE OF THE NUMBER OF LP BY ENVIRONMENT

■ LP in urban areas ■ LP in rural areas



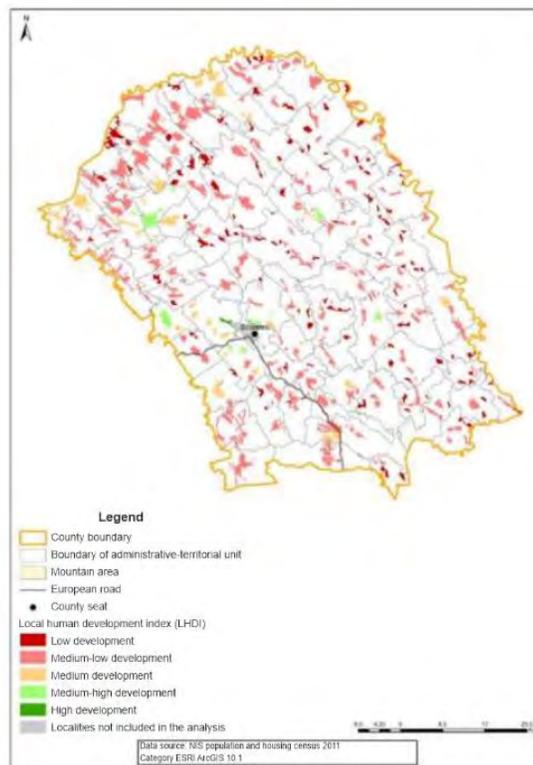
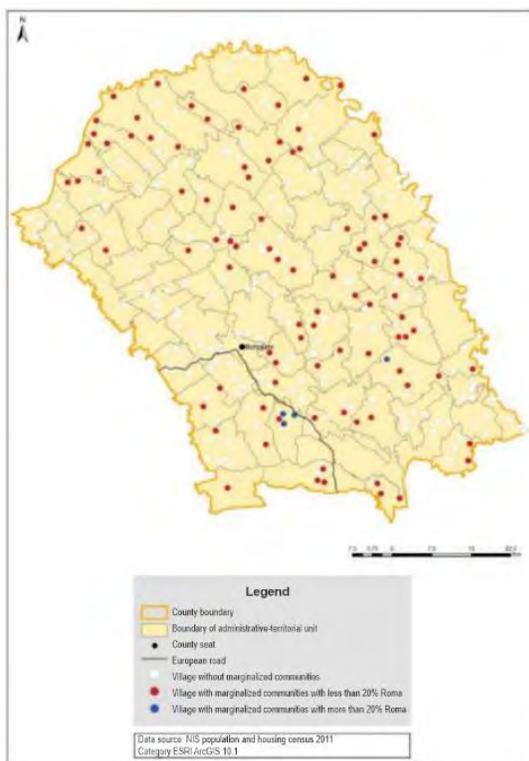
STRUCTURE OF THE NUMBER OF PUPILS IN GYMNASIUM AND HIGH SCHOOL BY ENVIRONMENT

■ Pupils in urban areas ■ Pupils in rural areas



- Botoșani County is among the counties with the highest rate of marginalization of the rural population (9-15%) and among the lowest levels of human development, in turn correlated with a low level of urbanization, distance from large cities and housing/community poverty⁶⁹ (World Bank, 2016).

Rural localities (SIRINF units) with marginalised areas (left) and distribution of SIRINF units by level of local human development (right).



Source: World Bank, (2016)

⁶⁹ "Community poverty" as a high probability of low consumption of public and private goods, as measured by community capital indicators, is a specific measure with local validity, even if correlated with individual or household poverty (World Bank, 2016)

Note: The Information System of the Register of Territorial-Administrative Units (SIRUTA) is a system for registering, recording and updating administrative-territorial units, developed and managed by the National Institute of Statistics. Level 1 of the SIRUTA codes corresponds to counties, level 2 is for municipalities, cities and communes, and level 3 for villages, component localities and districts of the capital.

The share of pupils in lower and upper secondary education enrolled in schools in marginalised rural areas is significantly higher than the general population, reaching almost 30%, with more than 12% (i.e. more than 3500 pupils) in areas with above average and severe marginalisation. 875 pupils were enrolled at the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year in schools in areas with above average and severe marginalisation where a school counsellor is not active (almost 7% of the entire school population in lower and upper secondary educations in the county).

Table 11 Distribution by marginalised areas of pupils in lower and upper secondary education

| Total pupils in lower and upper secondary level | 28.283 | In schools financed through PNRRAS | In other schools | Total | No. pupils |
|---|--------------|------------------------------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Urban areas | | 1,7% | 61,0% | 62,6% | 17718 |
| - in schools with psycho-pedagogical assistance office | | 1,7% | 60,2% | 61,9% | |
| - in schools without psycho-pedagogical assistance office | | 0% | 0,8% | 0,8% | |
| Rural areas with following marginalization level | 14,7% | 22,6% | | 37,4% | 10565 |
| - all marginalized areas | 10,8% | 17,8% | | 28,5% | 7711 |
| - in schools with psycho-pedagogical assistance office | | 7,8% | 14,1% | 21,9% | |
| - in schools without psycho-pedagogical assistance office | | 3,0% | 3,7% | 6,7% | 1887 |
| - above average and severe marginalization | 5,9% | 6,9% | | 12,8% | |
| - in schools with psycho-pedagogical assistance office | | 5,1% | 4,6% | 9,7% | |
| - in schools without psycho-pedagogical assistance office | | 0,8% | 2,3% | 3,1% | 875 |
| - average marginalization | 4,0% | 4,9% | | 8,9% | |
| - in schools with psycho-pedagogical assistance office | | 2,3% | 4,1% | 6,5% | |
| - in schools without psycho-pedagogical assistance office | | 1,7% | 0,8% | 2,4% | |
| - marginalization below average | 0,9% | 6,0% | | 6,8% | |
| - in schools with psycho-pedagogical assistance office | | 0,4% | 5,3% | 5,7% | |
| - in schools without psycho-pedagogical assistance office | | 0,5% | 0,7% | 1,1% | |
| - areas not marginalized | 3,9% | 4,9% | | 8,8% | |
| - in schools with psycho-pedagogical assistance office | | 2,5% | 2,9% | 5,4% | |
| - in schools without psycho-pedagogical assistance office | | 1,4% | 2,0% | 3,4% | |

Source: Authors, based on data provided by MoE and World Bank (2016)

Out of the schools in rural areas with classes of lower and upper secondary education, 50 (or more than 80% of the total) are in marginalised areas. In almost half of them there is no school counsellor. On the other hand, 33 schools in the county are funded by PNRAS, 20 of them in marginalised rural areas. And last but not least, in 9 of them there is no school counsellor.

Table 12 PNRAS-funded schools in marginalised rural areas⁷⁰⁷¹

| Unit name (LS) | Locality | With school counsellor | Size of the locality | Marginalisation level | No. points | Risk of dropout (composite indicator) | Severity index | Priority | Number of units under the LP |
|------------------------|-------------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|----------|------------------------------|
| ȘCOALA GIM ALBEȘTI | ALBEȘTI | Yes | Big | average and | 7 | 4.2 | 105 | High | 0 |
| ȘCOALA GIM CRISTINEȘTI | CRISTINEȘTI | Yes | Big | average and | 7 | 4 | 100 | High | 9 |
| ȘCOALA GIM DURNEȘTI | DURNEȘTI | No | Average | average and | 9 | 4 | 100 | High | 9 |
| ȘCOALA GIM GEORGE ENE | GEORGE ENE | Yes | Average | average and | 7 | 3.8 | 95 | High | 8 |
| LICEUL TEOPOMÂRLA | POMÂRLA | Yes | Average | average and | 9.5 | 4 | 100 | High | 4 |
| ȘCOALA GIM RĂDĂUȚI-PR | RĂDĂUȚI-PR | No | Average | average and | 10 | 3.8 | 95 | High | 5 |
| ȘCOALA GIM ȘTIUBIENI | ȘTIUBIENI | Yes | Average | not marginaliz | 10 | 4.2 | 105 | High | 3 |
| ȘCOALA GIM VIIȘOARA | VIIȘOARA | No | Small | average and | 8.5 | 3.6 | 90 | High | 3 |
| ȘCOALA GIM ADĂȘENI | ADĂȘENI | No | Small | average and | 9.5 | 3.4 | 85 | Average | 3 |
| ȘCOALA GIM ALBEȘTI | ALBEȘTI | Yes | Big | average and | 8.5 | 3 | 75 | Average | 6 |
| ȘCOALA GIM BLÂNDEȘTI | BLÂNDEȘTI | No | Small | Average | 7 | 3.4 | 85 | Average | 2 |
| ȘCOALA GIM CORLĂTENI | CORLĂTENI | No | Small | Average | 8.5 | 2.6 | 65 | Average | 1 |
| ȘCOALA GIM CRISTEȘTI | CRISTEȘTI | Yes | Big | Average | 7 | 3 | 75 | Average | 6 |
| ȘCOALA GIM DOBÂRCENI | DOBÂRCENI | No | Average | Average | 9.5 | 2.8 | 70 | Average | 4 |
| ȘCOALA GIM FRUMUȘICA | FRUMUȘICA | Yes | Big | average and | 8.5 | 3.2 | 80 | Average | 8 |
| ȘCOALA GIM LUNCA | LUNCA | Yes | Average | Average | 8 | 3.2 | 80 | Average | 5 |
| ȘCOALA GIM PRĂJENI | PRĂJENI | No | Big | average and | 9 | 3.2 | 80 | Average | 3 |
| ȘCOALA GIM ROMA | ROMA | No | Average | Average | 6.5 | 3.2 | 80 | Average | 4 |
| ȘCOALA GIM SULIȚA | SULIȚA | Yes | Average | Average | 9 | 3 | 75 | Average | 3 |
| LICEUL "DEMETRIUȘEȘTI | TRUȘEȘTI | Yes | Big | Average | 10 | 3.4 | 85 | Average | 5 |

Data source: Ministry of Education

⁷⁰ Methodological note: The table combines data from different sources of the Ministry of Education 1) National Programme for Dropout Reduction - Round I https://www.edu.ro/PNRAS_runda1_arhiva, 2) List of eligible schools for the National Programme for Dropout Reduction - funded by the National Plan for Recovery and Resilience -, carried out within the pilot project „Developing an integrated system of prevention, intervention and compensation to increase school participation”, beneficiary Ministry of Education, with funding from DG Reform’s Technical Assistance Instrument (TSI) - https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/Lista%20unitati%20invatamant%20eligibile%20PNRAS_PNRR_0.pdf;

3) https://www.edu.ro/comunicat_presa_26_2022_finalizare_selectie_runda_1_PNRAS; 4) data provided by CJRAE Botosani on the number of counsellors. The key to the combination was the SIRUTA code of the locality.

⁷¹ For definitions and the method used to calculate the indicators, see:

<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/611681600840497459/A-Proposed-Methodology-for-Data-Collection-and-Use-to-Support-the-Early-Warning-Mechanism-Implementation.docx>

The basic scenario

Scenario baseline (SB) - Current policy direction

Recognizing the need to increase the number of teachers -school counsellors, the Government approved by GD 1604/2022 the Methodology for the organization and functioning of complementary early education services and the amendment of Annex 4 to Government Decision No 369/2021 on the organization and functioning of the Ministry of Education.

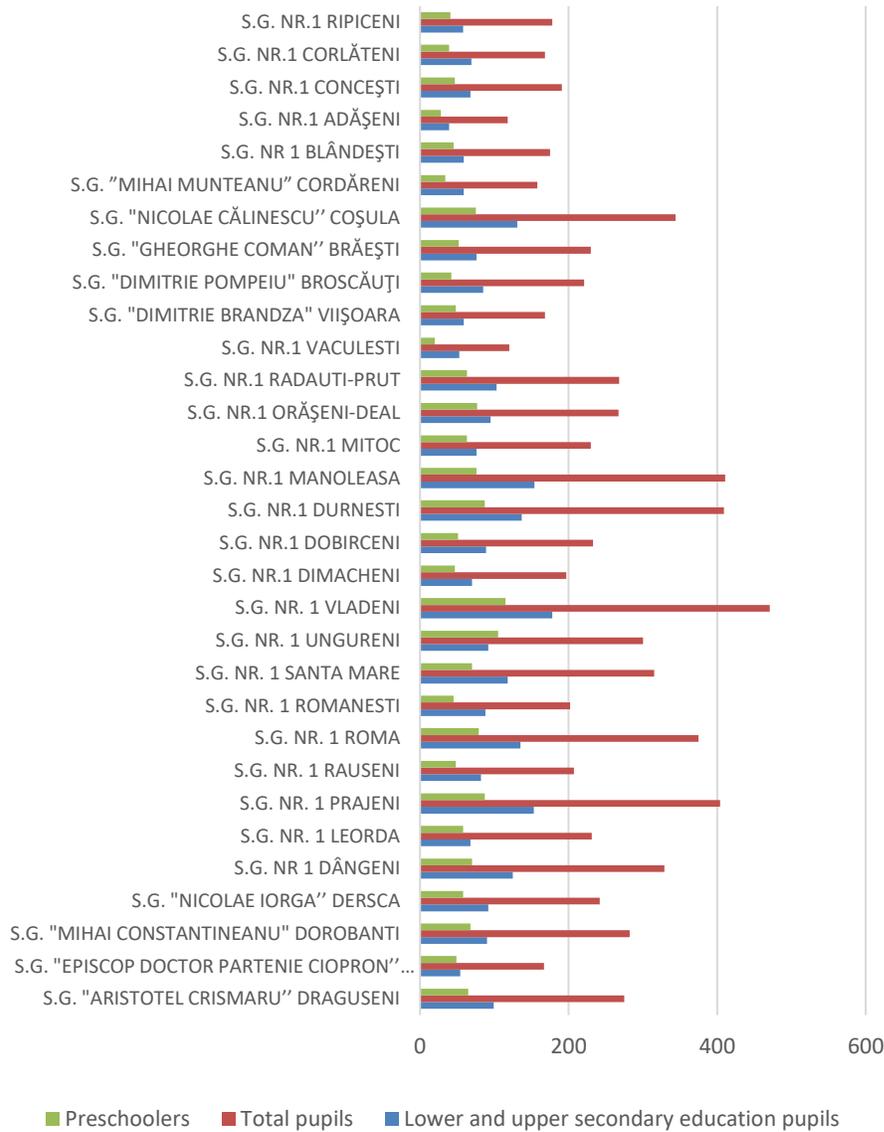
GD 1604/2022 proposes a phased increase of 3.750 posts to the total number of posts in state pre-university education, including special education, County Centres for Educational Resources and Assistance/Bucharest Municipal Centre for Educational Resources and Assistance, so as to enable the expansion of the network of school psycho-pedagogical assistance offices in rural areas and to ensure the improvement of psycho-pedagogical assistance, educational counselling and school guidance services for a greater number of pupils and preschoolers in pre-university education, as well as the organisation and operation of complementary early education services.

The reference scenario in our analysis thus becomes the one in which HG 1604/2022 is implemented according to the principles stated, i.e. with priority in rural areas, phased allocation of posts and with a maximum of 500 pupils or 500 pupils and preschoolers per counsellor, or 300 preschool children per counsellor.

In the example of Botoşani county, we consider that the current practice will be maintained meaning that there are no more than three school LP assigned to an counsellor.

At the time of receiving the data used in this report, there were 31 gymnasium schools that did not have their own psycho-pedagogical assistance offices in Botoşani County (Figure 20):

Figure 20 Gymnasium schools in Botoșani county without psychopedagogical assistance office



All these schools are located in rural areas and had 7,886 pupils enrolled at the reference date of this study, of which 2,854 pupils in gymnasium and high school (10% of the total number of pupils enrolled in these cycles) and 1,852 preschoolers (18% of the total number of preschoolers enrolled).

Under the proposed counselling norm of the new Education Law (2023), Chapter XIII, Didactic Norm, Art. 207, para. 9, a minimum of **18** counselling norms or a minimum of **12 school** counsellors posts (with no more than three locations/norm) is needed to cover these locations.

For all students, the current norming requires **127** norms or a minimum of **85 school** counsellors (with no more than three locations/norm). **15** of the new positions would correspond to school units that would need to be served by more than one school counsellor under the new norming.

This would translate into a decrease in the average number of pupils and pre-schoolers per counsellor from 855 in 2022-2023 to 665. Correspondingly, the proportion of pupils receiving CCG and those who can be counselled individually would also increase. However, without knowing the value of these indicators at school and counsellor level, we do not know the dispersion and therefore the accuracy of any quantitative estimate of this impact.

Under the *ceteris paribus* assumption, in schools where there are currently no psycho-pedagogical assistance offices, under this measure, approx. 900 pupils (30%) of pupils in lower and upper secondary education would benefit from counselling services, of which 100-120 (4%) would benefit from individual counselling.

Through the same mechanism in which the mere presence of the counsellor in the school does not ensure the demand for specialist services among pupils and parents, the opening of new posts does not automatically translate into the filling of these posts and especially with candidates with higher professional skills, necessary to manage the complex caseload. This problem is identified as cause C11 in the Problem Tree. In Botoşani County, there are currently (September 2023) 22 school counsellor posts that have not been filled, even by hourly pay.

Alternative scenarios – facilitating the integration of educational interventions into the case management method

The use of the case management method by different professionals creates the premises for a personalised intervention on pupils at risk: “Case management is a method of coordination and integration of all activities aimed at vulnerable groups, of organisation and management of specific social assistance measures, carried out by social workers and/or different specialists, in accordance with the objectives set out in the intervention plans” (Law no. 292/2011 on social assistance). In this way, the effects of the career counselling and guidance activity produce multiplier effects that address in an integrated manner the risk situations identified at local community level. In addition, this measure would provide time savings for those most in need of career counselling.

Box 11 Examples of good practice

The guidance and counselling system in Denmark (Ministry of Higher Education and Science and the Danish Agency for Science and Higher Education, 2020; Cedefop,2020) includes Municipal Youth Guidance Units, which provide counselling and career guidance at municipal level for pupils’ transition from compulsory to upper secondary (general or vocational) education. Pupils considered unprepared for upper secondary education are recommended to attend group or individual counselling and guidance. All others receive group counselling and guidance (from grade 7 to grade 10) through activities with the class of pupils. As far as relevant, career counsellors direct young people to consult the National Guidance and eGuidance Portal.

Activities include: presentation of the application process for an upper secondary education programme (vocational or general); introduction to upper secondary education programmes (vocational and general); presentation of the national guidance portal and eGuidance, available for students; information meetings for pupils and their parents; taster courses on upper secondary education programmes (in grades 8 and 10); work experience (optional).

In Finland, counselling and guidance is embedded in the work of teachers for grades 1-6. Since August 2016, Counselling and Guidance has been a compulsory element in the upper secondary education curriculum, comprising 76 hours of activities programmed into the students' timetable during classes in grades 7-9. In addition, pupils are entitled to individual and group counselling and guidance as well as periods of work experience. As of August 2021, pupils in grades 8 and 9 are entitled to more intensive personal counselling and guidance, if needed, to prepare for the transition to upper secondary education and further studies. Intensive counselling and guidance is documented in a personal development plan for future studies (Act 1216/2020, para. 11). If pupils are not enrolled in higher education within 12 months of graduation, they are entitled to individual counselling to make personal plans for their future (Cedefop, 2021).

Source: Cedefop (2020) and Cedefop (2021)

Both scenarios 1 and 2 propose to go through some basic steps in the implementation of case management practice. First and foremost both focus on formal, procedural and extensive linkage with integrated community service delivery teams where they exist, and with the social worker where such teams do not.

If integrated community service delivery teams exist at the level of the Territorial Administrative Units (TAU), the counsellor will implement his/her responsibilities as defined by the Integrated Community Services (ICS) Pilot Project⁷². This pilot project implemented the provisions of the Joint Order no. 393/630/4236/2017 of 13 March 2017 for the approval of the Collaboration Protocol for the implementation of integrated community services needed to prevent social exclusion and combat poverty⁷³ which provides for a line of assessment and intervention similar to the principles of case management, in the sense that "the integrated provision of community services is linked to the systemic approach to needs and their effective linkage with service packages from different areas to reduce overlaps, harmonize resources and create a sustainable process of exit from poverty and social and economic integration and covers the following areas: social assistance, health, education, employment, housing and access to identity documents" (art. 1(2)).

Access to school counselling and career guidance services is one of the set of education indicators tracked in the needs assessment by the integrated community teams, along with low educational attainment, drop-out and low school participation, low school performance and access to informal education programmes (Art. 2(2)). The professions represented in the integrated community team are social worker, community health nurse/health mediator (for Roma communities) and school counsellor/school

⁷² "Development and implementation of integrated community services to combat poverty and social exclusion", MySMIS code 122607

⁷³ Order issued jointly by the Ministry of Labour and Social Justice, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of National Education. Available at: <https://www.mmuncii.ro/j33/images/Documente/Legislatie/O393-630-4236-2017.pdf>

mediator. The school counsellor has a number of specified tasks related to counselling and career guidance for pupils.

The role of the school counsellor in the integrated community teams consists of: evaluation of interests, abilities and values of children, pupils and young persons; vocational and aptitude profiling; designing and implementing programs for educational, vocational and career guidance targeting pupils; advising pupils and their parents with regards to educational/vocational options. The role of the school counsellor is complementary with the one of the school mediator.

Box 12 Tasks of the School Counsellor in the Joint Order for implementing integrated community services

Art. 2 paragraph 6

The school counsellor's main duties are as follows:

- a) to assess the **career counselling** needs of students;
- b) to identify and analyse **career-related problems** faced by students: career indecision, anxiety generated by making a career decision, conflicts between students' and parents' choices, etc..;
- c) to determine the resources needed to solve the problems identified and adopt the intervention decision;
- d) to assess the interests, abilities and values of the students;
- e) to draw up the **vocational profile** of pupils ;
- f) to present and explain to teachers, parents and pupils the results of the psychological assessment; to advise pupils in making **career-related decisions** and provide support in the development and implementation of individual career plans;
- g) to assist parents in the **career guidance** of their children;
- h) to assist teachers in the **career guidance** process of children;
- i) other types of interventions that are related to the area of school counselling that are the responsibility of the school counsellor to eliminate the causes that generate and maintain poverty and social exclusion.

Source: Joint Order No 393/630/4236/2017 of 13 March 2017 approving the Protocol of cooperation for the implementation of integrated community services necessary to prevent social exclusion and combat poverty

In addition, the school mediator has tasks related to the optimisation of the relationship between family-school and community and "other types of interventions that are related to the area of school counselling that are the responsibility of the school mediator to eliminate the causes that generate and maintain the state of poverty and social exclusion" (Article 7, paragraph e). It is the social worker who has the role of coordinating the whole intervention through the case management method. At central level, the Ministry of Education is responsible for developing the legislative framework for the work of counsellors in integrated community teams, monitoring and assessing the impact of their work, ensuring the methodological coordination necessary for the work of school counsellors and mediators, and assessing their skills and training needs.

Box 13 The role of the Ministry of Education in relation to the work of integrated community teams

Art. 9

The Ministry of National Education is responsible for:

- (a) participating in the **development of the inter-institutional collaboration mechanism** for the provision of integrated community services;
- (b) nominating experts and relevant staff for the working group to develop procedures for the provision of integrated community services at community level;
- (c) participating in the development of procedures for the provision of integrated community services at community level;

- d) initiating legislation to improve the legal framework for the work of school counsellors and school mediators in integrated community teams;
- e) participating in the *analysis of the impact* of the integrated approach from the perspective of the work of school counsellors and school mediators;
- f) providing, through the county school inspectorates / School Inspectorate of Bucharest, support for the employment of school counsellors and school mediators, within the limit of approved posts;
- g) ensuring the methodological *coordination* of the work of school counsellors and school mediators;
- h) ensuring, through the deconcentrated institutions, the *monitoring, assessment and control of the services* provided by school counsellors and school mediators;
- i) establishing *performance indicators* for school counselling and mediation services within integrated community services;
- j) collecting and regularly analysing data on the work of the school counsellor and the school mediator with a view to continuously improving the quality of these services provided as part of integrated community services;
- k) periodically evaluating, through the county school inspectorates / School Inspectorate of the Municipality of Bucharest, the *skills* of school counsellors and school mediators, as well as *training needs*.

Source: Joint Order No 393/630/4236/2017 of 13 March 2017 approving the Protocol of cooperation for the implementation of integrated community services to prevent social exclusion and combat poverty

The Integrated Community Services (ICS) pilot project defined the education component also by reference to the case management method, in order to best respond to the needs identified through the assessment (Table 4). It is important to note that the interventions of this project were mainly carried out in rural areas (139 villages and small urban areas), and the Social Inclusion and Social Dignity Programme foresees the extension of this project also to 2000 rural areas. Therefore, the two components proposed under the second option may present some overlaps or needs for better linkages at the implementation stage. However, at-risk young people may also be located in disadvantaged urban areas, such as marginalised urban areas included in the National Programme for the Reduction of Early School Leaving (PNRAS) through the Early Warning Mechanism in Education (MATE).

Box 14 Education component of the Integrated Community Team (ICE)

ECI member responsibilities, education component:

- 1) to provide integrated community services through the *case management method*, on the basis of regulated procedures, as well as special ones, developed within the project; the sectoral services provided (from an educational perspective) are part of the *individual intervention plans* and the community action programme, documents developed at the ECI level, *with the contribution of each team member and endorsed by the case manager*;
- 2) field visits to collect data and information relevant to the design of future activities;
- 3) to participate in joint meetings, in the ECI team, in order to develop intervention plans and their evaluation;
- 4) to provide community services through the implementation of individual intervention plans and the community action programme;
- 5) to participate in joint meetings with other public services of local interest;
- 6) *personalised referral* (referral of the case to a specialised service, to which it belongs);

7) to participate in the activities initiated, organised and coordinated by the experts of the county support and supervision units (UJSS) in order to receive technical and methodological support;

8) to collect indicators needed to carry out the assessment process.

The intervention in the community of the school counsellor and the school mediator, members of the ECI, represents the totality of activities that support the direct beneficiaries (children/students, parents, other adults in the community) to develop skills, abilities and behaviours that will function as protective factors in risk situations.

The educational intervention directions are specific to the field of integrated service delivery and involve intervention initiation, implementation, monitoring, re-assessment or termination.

Source: School Counsellor and School Mediator Guide of the Integrated Community Team (ECI).

<https://serviciicomunitare.ro/metodologii>

In situations where these teams are not formed, the school counsellor will be required to consult with medical and social service specialists in cases identified as at risk of dropping out and to develop personalised assistance plans.

Second, the two scenarios also aim to directly implement two of the actions with significant demonstrated international effectiveness that do not require direct budgetary cost, but need additional time and attention from the school counsellor, namely:

- personalised management of the individual development of pupils in the process of building career management skills
- ensuring that final year pupils have access to sufficient career conversations.

Box 15 The importance of career conversations

OECD research on teenage career readiness found that 15-year-old pupils in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States who had career conversations (defined as discussions in which a student talks about his/her career plans) expected to have no difficulty finding a job. According to this research, career conversations provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on future plans, seek opportunities to learn something new and useful for themselves, and access social support for future decision-making.

The 2018 PISA results showed that pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds have fewer opportunities to engage in these conversations, as well as pupils with low academic achievement (OECD, 2021). They would therefore be very useful for these students.

According to Kashfepakdel & Percy 2017:

- Employed young adults (26 years old) who participated in career conversations at the age of 14-15 years receive 0.8% more pay, 1.6% for those who found these conversations very useful;
- Young people who participated in these conversations and found them very useful participated in an average of 3.4 conversations; others in 2.25.

It is recommended for both alternative scenarios to provide a minimum of 4 career conversations per year in each school for pupils in the final years (grade 8/grade 12).

Scenario 1 and 2 differ in the proposed solution to allow the counsellors the necessary time resource and response they provide to Case C11 (counsellor positions are not filled). In both alternative scenarios, however, there is a need to ensure reimbursement of transport costs.

Scenario 1 - Prioritising the integration of the school counsellor into the educational community

Scenario 1 proposes to strictly limit the number of LPs in which the same counsellor works to two and the maximum distance between them. This scenario should also take into account the situation where an educational establishment with legal personality has units attached territorially and ensure that even in this case the counsellor does not have to travel more than the maximum limit set (with rare exceptions).

The main advantage of this approach is that it further facilitates, compared to others, the formation of a quality and long-lasting interpersonal relationship between pupils and counsellors, based on the basic principles of counselling: trust, empathy, respect, collaboration.

In order to achieve the desired results, it is recommended to adopt a whole-school-approach in CGC, coordinated by the teachers-school counsellors with the involvement of all school staff, but also pupils, parents and CCG professionals.

It is important that interventions are well designed and implemented, integrated into the school context and sustained over time, as they have a greater impact on student outcomes than individual components such as stand-alone career counselling programmes⁷⁴.

The school counsellor will coordinate whole-school-approach involvement in the CCG in the following ways (mainly):

- approaching career counselling as the main strategy and responsibility of all school staff,
- the development of a school-wide Career Counselling plan, with the allocation of tasks to different members of the school's teaching and non-teaching staff,
- school management awareness of the importance of career counselling for pupils,
- rigorous design and planning of counselling activities and programmes before they are delivered (e.g. produce a clear description of the programme for principals, teachers, parents, pupils, establish programme content, delivery methods, assessment arrangements),
- use skills and influence to work with different stakeholders (pupils, students, parents, teachers, managers, etc.),
- presentation by the teacher- school counsellor of career counselling programmes and activities in teacher councils, pedagogical circles, parent-teacher conferences, classes in the Counselling and Guidance curriculum area, etc.,

⁷⁴ Cefai, C., Simões, C. and Caravita, S. (2021). *A systemic, whole-school approach to mental health and well-being in schools in the EU' NESET report*, Executive Summary. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. doi: 10.2766/50546.

- informing parents through letters, flyers, newsletters, counselling platform, where they will have access and will be able to monitor the activities carried out by their children,
- involving pupils and parents in the delivery of career counselling programmes and activities,
- working with local community representatives in the delivery of career counselling programmes and activities.
-

Figure 21 Example of good practice from Finland

In **Finland**, in the national curriculum framework, Counselling and Guidance is seen as the **main strategy and responsibility of all school staff**. There is a requirement to develop a **Counselling and Guidance plan** in schools, **with the allocation of tasks to different members of school staff**. For the implementation of the curriculum, the Finnish National Board of Education has developed in 2014, **quality criteria** for *Counselling and Guidance* in schools, which consider the following aspects: sufficient and comprehensive counselling and guidance; support for active involvement and taking responsibility; timeliness to be provided by school staff; competent and qualified staff; promotion of equity and equal opportunities; institutional plan for service provision; intensive support for pupils in transition stages; support in making educational and career choices; employability and life skills; interactive cooperation in service provision; marketing of career counselling and guidance services; integration of quality criteria into the locally implemented quality development framework⁷⁵.

Box 16 The importance of individual counselling and the link between learner and tutor

Mortimer (2017) used data from the U.S. Youth Development Study that tracked a sample of youth in St. Paul, Minnesota through adulthood and found that the influence of a teacher or school mentor in career choice increased a youth's likelihood of becoming "successful" by 44% by age 26-27.

Analysis of the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (Baxter, 2017), which has followed participants since birth in 2003, found that adolescents (14-15 years) have fewer career concerns if they have the opportunity to discuss their plans with a teacher.

Mann et al (2017) analysed data from a longitudinal study of young people in the UK that tracked the progression of 13-14 year olds to adulthood since 2004. It found that young people who had personal conversations with teachers at least once reduced their risk of becoming NEETs at age 19-20 by 13% to 24%.

An additional advantage of this scenario is that by being assigned to a maximum of two LPs, school counsellors have a better opportunity to integrate into the educational and local community context with greater synergistic efficiency. In the Botoşani county, the following localities (Stăuceni, Manoleasa, Mileanca, Răuşeni (rural) and the small town of Ştefăneşti) have been included in the Integrated Community Services (ICS) project⁷⁶.

⁷⁵ Cedefop (2021). *Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Finland*. CareersNet national records. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/inventory-lifelong-guidance-systems-and-practices-finland>

⁷⁶ "Development and implementation of integrated community services to combat poverty and social exclusion", MySMS code 122607

The disadvantage of this scenario is that it does not implicitly provide solutions to exceptional situations - for example when an educational unit has territorial units beyond the limit distance or when there are residual needs that do not cover a workload in this context.

In the school year 2022-2023, half of the pupils in Botoşani county were in units served by psychopedagogical assistance offices with two or three units. 90% of the units in rural areas share the office with at least one other unit.

Table 13 Distribution of pupils and school counsellors by number of LPs assigned to an office

| | 3 Units | 3 Units | 1 unit |
|--------------------|---------|---------|--------|
| School counsellors | 3 | 27 | 30 |
| Pupils | 2,613 | 23,106 | 25,565 |
| Units | 9 | 54 | 30 |

Source: Data provided by the Ministry of Education

In order to implement this scenario across the entire school population, at the current norming, **143** norms or a minimum of **95** counsellors are needed. This would reduce the average counsellor norm to a maximum of 595 pupils and pre-schoolers/counsellor.

Scenario 2 - Paying more attention to pupils at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or low educational achievement to build their career management skills

Scenario 2 proposes adjusting the counselling norm with the objective of favouring categories of pupils who need extra time and attention from the counsellor, i.e. pupils in lower and upper secondary education from marginalised areas. The rural-urban distinction can be an initial proxy for targeting marginalised areas.

Table 14 Distribution of pupils and preschoolers by environment, Botosani county, 2022-2023

| | Preschool | Lower and upper secondary education pupils | Total pupils and preschool children |
|-------|-----------|--|-------------------------------------|
| Rural | 56% | 37% | 47% |
| Urban | 44% | 63% | 53% |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Source: Data provided by the Ministry of Education

The main advantage of this solution is that it allows, in principle, a more precise focus on the situations of pupils who really need extra attention. It is also an organic solution, so will naturally lead to fewer exceptional situations (as the number of locations assigned to a school counsellor is no longer restricted).

On the other hand, if this solution is not accompanied by strict regulation of the time thus gained by the CCG, the desired effect will not be achieved, or at least not directly.

It should also be taken into account that in Botoşani county, 88.7% of the population in rural areas does not live in marginalized areas. Targeting the entire rural school population might actually be an overestimation of the need for additional attention. However, the proposed pilot explores the synergies that may exist when such a scenario is limited to marginalised areas only and additionally results in exchanges and interactions between pupils from areas with different degrees of marginalisation. On the other hand, periodic classification of degrees of marginalisation would automatically lead to changes in norming, which is a factor of uncertainty for both pupils and professionals. Last but not least, marginalised areas may be targeted by many other projects and the need for collaboration and relationship management with other actors is a particular issue in making counselling more effective.

In Botoşani County, implementing this scenario in the rural area as a whole results in **153** norms (or a minimum of **102** counsellors), but results in a decrease in the number of pupils /counsellor to **553**.

Choosing the recommended scenario

As we have demonstrated throughout the paper, **it is expected that school success, dropout and transition rates and early school leaving rates (ESL)**, followed by positive socio-economic impacts, **would benefit from government actions that would support both an increase in the number of school counsellors and the development and implementation of comprehensive and effective career counselling programmes and activities by teachers-school counsellors in Romanian schools.**

The selection of the preferred option was based on a multi-criteria analysis matrix (Table 15). This analysis is conceptually independent of the implementation of the overall system strengthening measures. In particular, the benefits and risks of each scenario can be significantly affected by the concrete mix of consolidation measures implemented. For example, in all scenarios, but especially in scenario 2, if the time allocated by the school counsellor to CCG is not regulated/standardised, the risk of school-level CCG de-prioritisation will be maintained or even increased in marginalised areas, and the direct outcome on career management skills development will be realised to a lesser extent than proportionate to the allocation of counselling resources, and particularly for those pupils who are most in need of counselling support.

Although the baseline scenario has the lowest budgetary costs relative to reducing the load, **Scenario 1 emerges as the preferred scenario, given the expected benefits, which we estimate to be highest in this scenario (medium to long term).**

It is relevant to add in the context of these scenarios that the new Education Law (Romanian Parliament, 2023) provides in cap. XIII, art. 207, point 9 that the specific activities of the school counsellor teacher will include collaboration with the social worker and the community health nurse/health mediator within the integrated community teams for combating poverty and social exclusion.

Thus, Scenario 1 combines the benefits of this collaboration (prioritised in Scenario 2) with a focus on career management skills development at school level. Scenario 1 also has the lowest risks, mainly concentrated towards the implementation of the whole-school approach for which countermeasures are available through the development of procedures and training, arrangements under government control.

Last but not least, the analysis carried out on one of the Romanian counties with a high rate of marginalization allows us to estimate with a very high degree of confidence that this would be the conclusion of a similar analysis at national level. However, we recommend that this analysis be carried out as part of the development of a Strategy, or the development of specific procedures and standards based on nationally consistent and validated data.

Table 15 Multicriteria analysis used for the choice of the preferred scenario illustrating the case of Botoșani County

| | Benefits | | | Costs | | | | Main risk | |
|---|------------|--|--|-----------------|---|----------------------|---|------------|--|
| | Evaluation | Average number of pupils and preschoolers/counsellor | Other qualitative benefits | Budgetary costs | | Administrative costs | | Evaluation | Explanation |
| | | | | Evaluation | Explanation | Evaluation | Explanation | | |
| S0: Maintain the current policy direction | + | -190 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reducing the number of pupils and preschoolers/counsellors acts positively on the main factor of access to quality service; | + | Hiring a minimum 12 counsellors + training costs | + | Recalculating the rules to implement the maximum number of students in counselling imposed by the new regulations; HR and staff costs for new employees up to the limit established by GD 1604/2022 and other regulations in force; Costs of geographic optimization | +++ | Filling the jobs vacancies with qualified staff (high risk) |
| S1: Prioritising the integration of the school counsellor in the educational community | ++ | -260 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reducing the number of pupils and preschoolers/counsellors; - lowering the counsellors stress level by reducing the mobility time; - the active involvement of students, all school staff, parents and professionals in CCG within a systemic approach, from the whole school; - the collaboration of teaching and non-teaching staff from the school for the implementation of the institutional CCG plan; - the creation of a community educational framework, which facilitates the collaboration of CCG beneficiaries with different professionals: school counsellor, social worker, school mediator, etc.; - holistic services and properly integrated within other support services; - developing reflexive and democratic CCG practices; - carrying out some CCG activities adapted to the context (e.g. people in marginalization situations); - the possibility to influence students and their families in their familiar environment; - changing the community's perception of CCG; - the organization of CCG in informal spaces (outside the counselling office): canteens, workshops, libraries, gyms, clubs, tea-houses, cafes, companies, to facilitate effective communication with students, especially with those in marginalized situations; | ++ | Hiring a minimum 35 counsellors + training costs + mobility costs for all eligible counsellors | ++ | Recalculating the rules to implement the maximum number of students in counselling imposed by the new regulations; HR and staff costs for new employees up to the limit established by GD 1604/2022 and other regulations in force; Costs of geographic optimization based on max 21Ps and the maximum distance | ++ | Filling the jobs vacancies with qualified staff (medium risk); risc of exceptional situations in calculating the counselling norms; optimal results depend of successful implementation of the whole-school approach, and might be visible only in medium and long term; risk of deprioritization of CCG if there are no standards/rules regarding the time allocated for various counselling activities (medium risk) |
| S2: Special focus on pupils at risk of marginalisation, social exclusion or low educational achievement in order to develop their career management skills | +++ | -302 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reducing the number of pupils and preschoolers/counsellors; - providing intensive support, personalized services and recommendations according to the needs of the individual; - parallel use of multiple CCG modalities (individual, group, ICT-based counselling, social media, etc.); - better case management and a greater number of individual counselling sessions allocated to a student; - a better connection of the counsellor to the experience and life of the individuals participating in the CCG; - creating the student's individual educational portfolio, which includes personalized recommendations; - encouraging the acquisition of career management skills by each student (e.g. by involving mentors from companies, professionals from different fields, on a voluntary basis); - the creation of a community educational framework, which facilitates the collaboration of CCG beneficiaries with different professionals: school counsellor, social worker, school mediator, etc.; | +++ | Hiring a minimum 40 counsellors + training costs + mobility costs for all eligible counsellors; Mobility costs are potentially higher because there is no restriction of distance | +++ | Recalculating the rules to implement the maximum number of students in counselling imposed by the new regulations; HR and staff costs for new employees up to the limit established by GD 1604/2022 and other regulations in force; Costs of geographic optimization based on the typology of areas where the schools are | +++ | Filling the jobs vacancies with qualified staff (medium risk); risk of over resource allocation towards rural localities; risk of deprioritization of CCG if there are no standards/rules regarding the time allocated for various counselling activities (high risk) |

4.5 Monitoring and Evaluation

The creation of a unified monitoring and assessment system for career counselling services requires a number of **steps**: developing a **methodological framework** for monitoring and assessment of career counselling services; reaching an **agreement among stakeholders** to determine the issues to be monitored and evaluated; identifying **the focus of** monitoring and evaluation; formulating **the design and procedures** for monitoring and evaluation; determining **the modalities of evaluation**, e.g., asking for feedback from beneficiaries (pupils, parents, teachers) about career counselling services and using it to improve services (service-user perspectives); **collecting information** about the programme; **analysing and interpreting information** about the programme; **using information** from monitoring and evaluation of counselling programmes to **make decisions** (Whiston & Buck, 2008).

Box 17 International examples of good practice

An international example of good practice in monitoring state-funded career counselling services has been developed in Berlin, **Germany** (The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, 2015) using an IT portal, where data on the outcomes and effects of career counselling interventions are collected and analysed⁷⁷. In **England**, Gatsby benchmarks⁷⁸ are being adapted to inform service providers how to improve counselling services locally. The achievement of the 8 benchmarks (stable careers advice programmes; learning with careers and labour market information; addressing the needs of individual pupils; ensuring school curriculum - careers links; meetings with employers and employees; workplace experiences; meetings with post-secondary and higher education representatives; counselling and personal guidance) has been evaluated over 4 years and the results have demonstrated their positive impact on pupils' career readiness. PRIME data management and reporting system (**Canada**), e-Guidance (**Denmark**) are other examples of efforts to develop a sustainable online data collection for evidence base. In **Scotland**, evidence base development is linked to the assessment of the impact of counselling on national equity (Barnes, et al., 2020). Other examples from **Germany** (Weber, 2022) and **Poland** (Bielecki, Płachecki & Stasiowski, 2022) can be found in a recent Cedefop paper.

Source: Cedefop et al. (2022)

- **Develop a procedure for centralised collection and analysis of the results of the monitoring and individual evaluation of the work of the counsellors**

The work of counsellors will be subject to regular professional monitoring with a view to ongoing improvement of their work. This process will be carried out according to the objectives set and based on performance indicators (Jigău et al, 2004).

The development of a procedure for centralised collection at the CJRAE/CMBRAE/ County School Inspectorates/ Ministry of Education and analysis of the results of individual monitoring and assessment of the work of counsellors will take into account performance indicators.

Internationally, the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket) has developed an assessment tool with quality indicators for education and career guidance (ELGPN, 2012).

⁷⁷ www.bildungsberatung-berlin.de/nachbefragung/

⁷⁸ <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/focus-areas/good-career-guidance>

- **Adoption and implementation of a methodology linking the educational establishment (not just the legal entity) to geographical location and to areas with different degrees of marginalisation**

This association needs to be made at SIRUTA level 3 code level (SIRINF, at village level), which identifies as accurately as possible the geographical location of the educational unit. This is necessary for: 1) calculating distances between spatial coordinates corresponding to the educational unit, establishing the maximum distance to travel for a full-time counsellor in more than one educational unit and geographic optimisation of the rules; 2) correctly and comprehensively including the marginalisation character of the area and human capital in the assessment of career counselling and guidance activity.

- **Develop procedure for periodic ex-post and ex-ante identification of the impact of career counselling services on the achievement of relevant strategic objectives, formulation of corrective actions and detection of early signals**

There is a need to accurately identify and collect information about the effects of career counselling and guidance in the short and medium term.

Thus, in the short term e.g. the number of pupils who have made a career plan/career conversation, participated in a career fair, etc. the number of pupils who have participated in a career fair etc. are to be tracked and and in the long term e.g. the number of pupils who in grade 8 intended to follow a specific high school school/profile/stream/ specialisation are enrolled in grade 9 in the desired high school/profile/stream/ specialisation; the number of pupils who in grade 12 intended to follow a specific university (mentioned in the career plan) are enrolled the following year in the desired specialisation; the number of pupils who 1 year after graduation from high school are working in one of the occupations mentioned in their career plan.

In this respect, the Quality Assurance Matrix and the input-process-outcome framework indicators developed by the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN, 2015) and the Canadian Research Working Group (Hooley, 2014) can be used. A research (Dodd, Hanson & Hooley, 2021) with implications for policy makers has addressed career readiness, which is seen as an important short-term outcome of career counselling and guidance in England. The relationship between career guidance interventions and career readiness among high school pupils (N = 1508) in England participating in a pilot career counselling and guidance programme was tested. The research results demonstrated that greater participation in career counselling and guidance activities is significantly associated with increased student readiness for career choice.

A mechanism for individual monitoring is needed to assess the medium-term impact of counselling on graduates. Thus, after school leaving and transition to the labour market, a sample of graduates should be followed and their pathway understood in terms of the effectiveness of the career counselling they received. For Romania, a research conducted by the Institute of Education Sciences (Muscă et al, 2007) proposed the conceptual and institutional systemic foundations of this approach. The research findings on piloting a monitoring system on a representative sample of pupils can be used in conducting longitudinal studies in the current educational context.

- **Linking indicator design and monitoring processes with other social and educational initiatives**

There is now a significant interest in both the public sector in Romania and the practitioner community in evidence-based decision making and performance management. As a result there are many initiatives that collect and implement primary data. In order to facilitate findings that transcend the field under investigation, but also to reduce the expense of monitoring and evaluation, it is important for any effort to expand monitoring to scan and harmonise with other similar initiatives. For example, the World Bank (2020) proposes a system of data collection and analysis at the school level as well as at the level of individual educational pathway per student that covers **important information needs for career counselling analysis**.

- **To improve the efficiency of the coordination of the monitoring and evaluation process of career counselling and guidance activities by school principals and directors of CJRAE/CMBRAE by 2026.**

Better information, awareness and involvement of school principals in monitoring and supporting career counselling and guidance activities in schools will be achieved. There is a need to prioritise career counselling and guidance activities by school principals, e.g. by including career counselling and guidance activities in the school's Institutional Development Plan, and to improve schools' collaboration with the CJRAE/CMBRAE in coordinating the monitoring and evaluation process of career counselling and guidance activities.

An example of good practice from Denmark mentions that a School Guidance Scheme is developed in each school to support pupils in their educational and career choices, including individual and group counselling and guidance activities. The programme includes: guidance provided by the class teacher and school counsellor in collaboration with other teachers in the school, linking with other programmes provided by the municipality and informing parents about the educational offer of the schools (Țibu et al, 2018b). Another solution was identified in Estonia by producing a quality manual for career counselling activities with ideas and resources for school principals and teachers (ELGPN, 2012). In Finland, attempts have been made to include aspects of career counselling and guidance in the in-service training programmes for school principals (ELGPN, 2012).

- **Extending the monitoring and evaluation system to include mechanisms for monitoring pre-university graduates**

There is a need for the Ministry of Education to designate an institution as a national reference point for monitoring the career pathways of pre-university graduates. In the case of higher education, UEFISCDI has been designated as the national reference point by OMEd No 5241/2021. Data collection will consider aspects such as: transition rates, number of years before starting higher education, drop-out rates (after 12 months), reported benefits from career counselling received, number of graduates who participated in individual/collective counselling sessions, etc (ELGPN, 2012).

Monitoring the school transition at different levels of education and taking into account the factors that influence the variation in the values of this indicator would facilitate the development of policies and strategies to support pupils' educational pathways in line with their capacities, needs and interests. In

order to improve the transition from gymnasium to high school/vocational school, the career counsellor has the role of guiding the student towards the level of education and profile appropriate to his/her abilities and aspirations (Apostu et al, 2015).

Proposal for a monitoring and assessment plan to operationalise the proposed specific objectives

Table 16 below is an initial proposal for monitoring and assessing the proposed mix of initiatives. It should be discussed and agreed with all stakeholders for detailing and finalisation.

Table 16 Proposed monitoring and assessment plan

| No. | Objective | Indicator | Reference level | Year reference level | Proposed targets | Target year | Data source |
|-----|--|---|---|----------------------|--|-------------|-------------|
| 1. | Improving information on career counselling | National career counselling portal up and running | None | 2022-2023 | No. of users: 100,000 pupils /year 100,000 parents/year 100.000 teachers/year | 2025-2026 | MoE |
| 2. | Improving the material and information infrastructure of the psycho-pedagogical assistance offices | Proportion of psycho-pedagogical assistance offices equipped with a basic package of scientifically validated specialist tools (investigation of aptitudes, interests, values, etc.). | There was only one endowment of these offices with government funds, in 2007, carried out by the Ministry of Education. | 2022-2023 | 100% of the total number of psycho-pedagogical assistance offices , with government funding | 2025-2026 | MoE |
| | | Proportion of educational establishments with appropriate space for career counselling activity in each educational establishment. | No data available | 2022-2023 | 100% of educational establishments with a psycho-pedagogical assistance office, equipped with an appropriate space out of all educational establishments | 2025-2026 | MoE |
| 3. | Improving the legislative framework governing career counselling | Professional standards and code of ethics on career counselling developed | | 2022-2023 | Elaborated standards | 2024-2025 | MoE |
| | | Professional standards and code of ethics on career counselling approved | None | 2022-2023 | Approved standards | 2024-2025 | MoE |

| No. | Objective | Indicator | Reference level | Year reference level | Proposed targets | Target year | Data source |
|-----|-----------|---|---|----------------------|---|-------------|-----------------------|
| | | Mandatory career counselling activities introduced (duties of the teacher-schoolcounsellor in the psycho-pedagogical assistance offices) | None. | 2022-2023 | Regulation approved | 2024-2025 | MoE |
| | | Regulated collaboration of the class master with the school counsellor in the Methodological Framework for the Conduct of Career Counselling Programmes and Activities in Schools | There is as a recommendation in the curricula in the curricular area Counselling and guidance | 2022-2023 | Regulation approved | 2024-2025 | MoE |
| | | Procedures developed at school level for the selection of relevant partners (economic agents, AJOFM, universities, NGOs) in order to implement effective career counselling programmes and activities | None, according to desk research and consultations carried out in the World Bank project. | 2022-2023 | Elaborated procedures | 2024-2025 | Ministry of Education |
| | | Teaching workload of 2-4 hours eliminated for Teachers-school counsellors (by amending the Regulation on the organization and functioning of the | Regulation on the organization and functioning of the County/Municipality Centres for Educational Resources and Assistance (2011) ⁷⁹ | 2022-2023 | Amended regulations with the abolition of the teaching norm | 2024-2025 | Ministry of Education |

⁷⁹ Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport (2011). *OMECTS no. 5555/2011 on the approval of the Regulation on the organisation and functioning of the county/municipality centres for educational resources and assistance*, with subsequent amendments and additions.

| No. | Objective | Indicator | Reference level | Year reference level | Proposed targets | Target year | Data source |
|-----|---|--|---|----------------------|--|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | county/municipality centres for educational resources and assistance) | | | | | |
| 5. | Improving human resources management (providing staff and training on career counselling) | Number of teachers or teacher counsellors trained on the Methodological Framework for Career Counselling, per educational unit | None | 2022-2023 | At least one teacher or a school counsellor trained at the level of the educational establishment | 2025-2026 | Ministry of Education |
| | | Number of class masters who received in-service training in career counselling over a four-year period | CRED project data | 2022-2023 | A minimum of one in-service training course in career counselling for each class master | 2025-2026 | Ministry of Education |
| | | Number of teachers-school counsellors who have completed in-service training in the application of the Professional Quality Standards and Code of Ethics in Career Counselling | None | 2022-2023 | At least one teacher-counsellor /educational establishment who has completed in-service training in the application of the Professional Quality Standards and Code of Ethics | 2025-2026 | Ministry of Education |
| | | Number of specialists employed in teacher-school counsellor posts for posts put out to tender for the school year 2023-2024 | In the school year 2022-2023, there were 2,288 teachers-school counsellors in the psycho-pedagogical assistance offices | 2022-2023 | 52.44% increase (1,200 posts) | 2023-2024 2026-2027 | Ministry of Education |

| No. | Objective | Indicator | Reference level | Year reference level | Proposed targets | Target year | Data source |
|-----|--|---|---|----------------------|---|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | | (Romanian Government, 2022). In December 2022, the Ministry of Education decided to increase the number of school counsellor posts for state pre-university education establishments by 1200. | | Increase by 3750 posts by 2026-2027 ⁸⁰ (of the total number of posts in state pre-university education, including special education, county centres for educational resources and assistance/Bucharest Municipality Centre for Educational Resources and Assistance) | | |
| 6. | Increased coverage of career counselling and guidance services for pupils from rural areas | Number of specialists employed in teacher-school counsellor- posts for posts put out to tender for the 2023-2024 school year for schools from rural areas | In the school year 2022-2023, 2,288 teachers-school counsellors were employed in the psycho-pedagogical assistance offices. In December 2022, the Ministry of Education decided to increase the number of school | 2022-2023 | 52.44% increase (1,200 posts) Increase by 3750 posts by 2026-2027 ⁸² (of the | 2023-2024 2026-2027 | Ministry of Education |

⁸⁰It is intended to increase by 3,750 posts to the total number of posts in state pre-university education, including special education, county centres for educational resources and assistance/Bucharest Municipality Centre for Educational Resources and Assistance, in order to provide a greater number of teachers in psycho-pedagogical assistance offices (school counsellors): 412 from the school year 2023-2024, 500 from the school year 2024-2025, 650 from the school year 2025-2026 and 850 from the school year 2026-2027 (Government of Romania, 2022).

⁸²It is intended to increase by 3,750 posts to the total number of posts in state pre-university education, including special education, county centres for educational resources and assistance/Bucharest Municipality Centre for Educational Resources and Assistance, in order to provide a greater number of teachers in psycho-pedagogical assistance offices

| No. | Objective | Indicator | Reference level | Year reference level | Proposed targets | Target year | Data source |
|-----|-----------|---|--|----------------------|---|-------------|-----------------------|
| | | | counsellor posts for state pre-university education establishments by 1200 ⁸¹ . | | total number of posts in State pre-university education, including special education, county centres for educational resources and assistance/Bucharest Municipality Centre for Educational Resources and Assistance) | | |
| | | Number of psycho-pedagogical assistance centres (CAPP) in rural areas | In the school year 2022-2023, the share of CAPPs in rural areas was 15%. | 2022-2023 | Doubling the proportion of CAPPs in rural areas: 30%. | 2025-2026 | Ministry of Education |
| | | The number of teachers-school counsellors posts in psycho-pedagogical assistance offices in rural areas | In the school year 2022-2023, 349 teacher-School counsellor posts (about 15%) were available in psycho-pedagogical assistance offices in rural areas | 2022-2023 | Doubling the number of school counsellor posts in psycho-pedagogical assistance offices in rural areas | 2025-2026 | Ministry of Education |

(school counsellors): 412 from the school year 2023-2024, 500 from the school year 2024-2025, 650 from the school year 2025-2026 and 850 from the school year 2026-2027 (Government of Romania, 2022).

⁸¹ Romanian Government (2022). *Background note to Government Decision no. 1604/28.12.2022 on the approval of the Methodology for the organisation and functioning of complementary early education services* and amendment of Annex no. 4 to Government Decision no. 369/2021 on the organisation and functioning of the Ministry of Education, published in the Official Gazette of Romania no. 1276 of 2022-12-30.

| No. | Objective | Indicator | Reference level | Year reference level | Proposed targets | Target year | Data source |
|-----|--|---|--|----------------------|---|-------------|-----------------------|
| 7. | Increase coverage with individualised plan/integrated services, including career counselling, for at-risk young people | Number of integrated community teams including school counsellors | 133 community teams in marginalised rural communities ⁸³ | 2022-2023 | 2000 public administrations or rural public services benefiting from community teams ⁸⁴ | 2029 | PIDS |
| 8. | | Number of pupils at risk of early school leaving from rural areas who received career counselling | MATE, Data in SIIR: no. of pupils at risk of early school leaving from rural areas who received career counselling The MATE pilot (2020-2021) ⁸⁵ included 467 schools in 10 counties with 63,510 pupils enrolled in gymnasium of which 74% in rural areas. | 2020-2021 | Currently, 75% of pupils identified as being at risk of leaving school early in schools from rural areas within PNRAS funded projects. The setting of a target will benefit from the findings of the assessment and monitoring of MATE and the application of the methodology for data collection and use to implement the Early | 2026-2027 | Ministry of Education |

⁸³ Based on data from the Integrated Community Services project <https://serviciicomunitare.ro/>

⁸⁴ Target Action 4.2 ESF of PIDS - Under this action, community teams of specialists will be set up, composed of: social worker/social assistance technician, community health nurse and Roma health mediator, in communities where there are at least 700 Roma people, home carer, school mediator/school counsellor, vocational counsellor, according to the needs identified through social diagnosis. The structure of the teams will be flexible, the minimum structure will include professionals from social work, health, education, but can be extended according to the needs identified.

⁸⁵ Ministerial Order approving the MATE-[Order no. 6.000/30.12.2021](https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/OM_6000_30.12.2021) on the approval of the Early Warning Mechanism in Education (EWM) and the Methodology for the implementation and use of the EWM IT module for the prevention of early school leaving and dropout - https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/OM_6000_aprobare_mecanism_MATE.pdf

| No. | Objective | Indicator | Reference level | Year reference level | Proposed targets | Target year | Data source |
|-----|-----------|---|-----------------|----------------------|---|-------------|-------------|
| | | | | | Warning Mechanism in education (World Bank (2020) | | |
| 9. | | Number of young people identified at risk in marginalised urban and rural areas benefiting from integrated interventions/individualised action plans on career counselling (based on needs identified through social diagnosis) | - | 2020-2021 | Share of young people benefiting from integrated services/individualised action plans out of all young people identified as at risk according to social diagnosis ⁸⁶ | 2027-2028 | |

⁸⁶ One of the targets of the corresponding Action 4.2 ESF+ in the PIDS refers to the number of vulnerable people with improved access to health, social and educational services.

5. PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS

The analysis presented in this report has been carried out with the active involvement of relevant stakeholders, whose valuable contributions - which should be duly acknowledged - have been taken into account and included in the analysis.

Between June 2022 and March 2023, **20 meetings of the Working Group**, set up by the Ministry of Education for the purpose of carrying out the RIA exercise, took place within the project. The issues discussed were: identification of the problem, its causes and effects, establishment of objectives and presentation of policy options.

Between October 2022 and December 2023, the project held **6 consultation sessions (2-3 hours each)** of the Working Group, set up by the Ministry of Education and World Bank representatives with relevant stakeholders in the field, who provided expert opinions and significant arguments. The organisations that participated in the consultations are the following:

- CJRAE Covasna, CJRAE Mures and CJRAE Sibiu;
- Heks Foundation/Eper Romania;
- ROSE project representatives, national coordinators and mentors from high schools in Brasov and Constanta counties;
- Association of Romanian Counsellors (ACROM);
- Career Counselling and Guidance Centre of the University of Bucharest;
- AJOFM Olt;
- National Pupils Council
- Romanian Business Leaders, who presented the project “Training for the future”, carried out in high schools in collaboration with CMBRAE.

Details of the consultations can be found in the table below.

Table 17 Institutions represented at the consultations

| No. | Organisation | Date | Representative and function | Topics discussed |
|-----|---|------------------|---|--|
| 1. | Romanian Business Leaders | 21 October 2022 | Irina Munteanu Elena Pâslaru-Hubati Oana Botolan Sonia Rusu | Presentation and discussion of the Problem Tree, causes and effects Presentation of the project “Training for the future”, carried out in high schools in collaboration with CMBRAE. The specifics of the association and the education projects carried out by Romanian Business Leaders. |
| 2. | Association of Romanian Counsellors (ACROM) | 16 November 2022 | Marian Crăciun, President of ACROM and Director of the Department of Career Counselling and Guidance, University of Bucharest Andreea Szilagyí, ACROM vice-president | Presentation and discussion of the Problem Tree, causes and effects Identifying obstacles and solutions to carrying out career counselling activities Addressing issues related to Counselling in universities |
| 3. | Olt County Employment Agency (AJOFM) | 18 November 2022 | Narcisa Șerban, director of AJOFM Olt | Presentation and discussion of the Problem Tree, causes and effects Activities carried out by AJOFM in educational institutions, ways of collaboration between AJOFM, ISJ CJRAE Recommendations |
| 4. | Representatives of the Romania Secondary Education Project (ROSE), Externally Funded Projects Management Unit, Ministry of Education https://www.rose-edu.ro/ | 25 November 2022 | Liliana Preoteasa, Director of the Management Unit for Externally Funded Projects, Ministry of Education Oana Moșoiu, systemic interventions coordinator Laura Popa, Rose mentor, school inspector, Constanta county Carmina Vakulovski, Rose mentor, teacher, Brasov county | Presentation and discussion of the Problem Tree, causes and effects ROSE counselling activities in educational institutions |
| 5. | CJRAE Covasna CJRAE Mures CJRAE Sibiu Heks Foundation/Eper Romania | 9 December 2022 | Levente Szocs, director of CJRAE Covasna Adriana Cerghedi, director of CJRAE Mures Valeria Purcia, director of CJRAE Sibiu Ioana Ardelean, program officer, Heks/Eper Romania Foundation | Presentation and discussion of the Problem Tree, causes and effects Heks Foundation/Eper Romania Presentation of counselling projects in Covasna, Mures and Sibiu counties |
| 6. | National Pupils Council of Romania | 14 December 2022 | Rareș Cotoi, Alexandra Popescu | Presentation and discussion of the Problem Tree, causes and effects Obstacles and solutions, examples of good practice |

Box 18 Views on career counselling activities expressed by participants in the consultations – AJOFM

Consultations with AJOFM representatives revealed the following:

- AJOFM works only with high schools, usually technological high schools (usually graduates who do not enter higher education and more so for senior classes - this is an indicator), with career information and counselling being addressed as one-off events at the end of an educational cycle. Monitoring of graduates of technological high schools is carried out – e.g. how many graduates have taken up employment.
- The activities carried out by AJOFM in high schools take place monthly, at the invitation of the class masters to discuss with the students, for example one of the themes addressed was the Firm Exercise – with questions for a mini-workforce recruitment session. The theme of the activities is not imposed, but is according to the requests of the classmasters and the needs of the class of pupils.
- AJOFM organises a county/national job exchange scholarship, in which pupils participate.
- AJOFM does not work with general schools where there is a great need for career counselling and guidance for pupils.
- Lack of school advisers in rural environment.
- High schools produce graduates with qualifications that are not in demand on the labour market (e.g. mechatronics).
- Pupils choose qualifications by name, but without understanding what they mean, they are not discussed.
- In the activities carried out by AJOFM in schools, pupils are interested in unemployment benefits, in the first phase or in accessing jobs in the EU. Some pupils are interested in training courses, but they do not have the vision of accessing the labour market, using the qualifications acquired in school because they are not prepared for this.
- The AJOFM-ISJ collaboration is based on a collaboration protocol. The activities carried out by AJOFM with pupils are monitored on a monthly basis and reports are sent to ANOFM. The ISJ also mentions in the activity reports the activities carried out in collaboration with AJOFM. Performance indicators are needed to measure the results of these AJOFM-ISJ collaborative activities.
- AJOFM is part of the Local Social Partnership Development Committee (CLDPS) and participates in the discussion of the schooling plan at county level. The accreditation of new specialisations takes too long, a preliminary period of operation with provisional accreditation is needed. The Romanian Classification of Occupations (Ministry of Labour) needs to be aligned with the Romanian Nomenclature of Occupations (Ministry of Education).
- As ways of promoting career counselling activities for pupils they used promotion on social networks, with a doubling of the number of beneficiaries of a European project.
- As future developments, it would be desirable to involve parents in the AJOFM meetings with pupils, by inviting them to schools.

Box 19 Views on career counselling activities expressed by participants in the consultations – Association of Romanian Counsellors (ACROM)

- Consultations with ACROM representatives revealed a number of obstacles in the Romanian counselling system:
- The lack of systemic thinking on the career counselling system in Romania, the lack of correlation of the legislation enacted by the different ministries responsible for counselling (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Youth) has led to inefficiency, confusion of roles.
- Lack of connected IT counselling platforms (between different levels of the education system, between ministries).
- Lack of professionalisation: lack of Quality Standards and Code of Ethics in career counselling.
- Insufficient practice in teaching counselling subjects at university.
- Lack of programmes to prevent pupils' difficulties, lack of multidisciplinary teamwork.

- Lack of studies in Romania on Employers' opinions on the quality of training of high school/vocational/university graduates.
 - Lack of professional accreditation of counsellors.
 - Lack of appropriate space in schools for counselling activities, lack of validated specialist tools.
 - Confusion of the roles of the school counsellor-teacher, lack of efficiency of the work.
- Proposed solutions:
 - The need for a national awareness campaign on career counselling.
 - Thorough preparation of counselling programmes: design, implementation and evaluation.
 - The role of the specialist, definition and delimitation of roles (clarification of the roles of the school counsellor-teacher: school counselling, career counselling, psycho-pedagogical assistance, teaching norm), the need for a specialist approach to career counselling.
 - The certification of career counsellors was carried out by the NBCC- Global Career Development Facilitator, a programme that operated in Romania; there is a competency profile of specialists and the training programme for career counsellors was based on a national research.
 - They considered it a good solution to establish a separate career counsellor post in schools, distinct from the school counsellor- teacher-, which would allow a focus on career aspects only, such a measure would need to be piloted through a study, with supervision.
 - ACROM's role – support for school counsellors in CJRAE, avoid role confusion (career counselling, school counselling, pupils with CES, etc.), quality assurance, development of a Code of Ethics, creation of a Counselling Diary, free continuous training opportunities for counsellors , building a counselling community: case discussion, supervision, etc.
 - The issues related to Counselling in universities were also addressed: it is carried out in the Career Counselling and Guidance Centres (CCGC), which have been set up in all universities (Career Counselling and Guidance Centres in higher education operate on the basis of OMEN no. 650/2014 for the approval of the framework methodology), but they are faced with the lack of attractiveness of the CCGC counsellors ' salaries, the low number of counsellors employed (1 adviser/ 5700 students), there are available positions that are not filled or some are filled with insufficiently trained staff.
 - In relation to the level of graduate preparation, there are studies on the assessment of graduate employability and the importance of soft skills. Student requests to CCGC after the pandemic: 70% of requests are for psychological issues.
 - Regarding a monitoring system for higher education graduates, there are no uniform practices, there is a lack of consistency at national level, the University Statistics Office collects these data (e.g.: share of graduates who have been employed, how many graduates work in the field).
 - Regarding the prevention of dropout, it was found impossible to introduce a counselling session with the student who submits the withdrawal file from the university, due to insufficient staff at the CCGC.
 - Examples of activities carried out at the CCGC were mentioned: maximising impact through group activities, workshops supported by private partners in universities, university collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Consultations with representatives of the Heks/Eper Romania Foundation revealed the following:

- Heks/Eper Romania Foundation presented projects in the field of counselling in lower secondary education and vocational education in Covasna, Mures and Sibiu counties, which have been running for a longer period of time, with the possibility of continuation. Indicators and monitoring and assessment tools were used, but difficulties were encountered in data collection, because not all schools collect information disaggregated by gender, ethnicity or the information received needed clarification or difficulty in receiving the data (especially when not requested through the ISJ).

- **Overall objective of the projects:** to increase access to decent work for young adults from vulnerable backgrounds, including those from Roma communities.

Activities were carried out with pupils and parents: career counselling and guidance (group and individual sessions), use of the Cognitrom Career Planner platform, company visits, tutoring (starting with the 2021-2022 school year) and hot lunch, workshops with special guests, individual counselling with parents, camps.

Human resource development activities have been carried out (Cognitrom training, CCD training in career counselling and guidance, New School Norway course in inclusive education, course in personal development). School staff have been trained or counseled in the areas of career counselling and guidance, inclusive education and specific methods to support pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds (e.g. mentoring, improving contacts with parents).

Topics covered: self-awareness, exploration of school options, high school & vocational school specific activities, career possibilities, employer requirements, entrepreneurship idea, strategies on making the best decision and preventing accidental school choice.

Impact on pupils:

- increased self-confidence;
- increased motivation to continue education (being better informed about opportunities to continue education has given them the courage to continue education, making an informed and responsible decision);
- knowing their own skills and the qualifications in which they would perform well (using CCP);
- counselling, which pupils see as a **safe space** to open up about personal situations;
- company visits - opportunities to learn practical aspects and get to know different career options.

Positive aspects:

- Importance of parent counselling (situations where pupils who wanted to continue their education were unsupported by their parents or there were differences of opinion between the students' and parents' options).
- Carrying out an impact assessment in Sibiu county (the study is at the beginning, data is being collected for the baseline level and will be completed in 2024).
- Collaboration with ISJ since the beginning of the project implementation (Sibiu county).

Activities appreciated by pupils and teachers:

- Visits to companies, other schools, trips, camps;
- Extra-curricular activities – contests, competitions, inter-school raffles, group cohesion activities;
- Counselling meetings, including parent counselling;
- Improving the pass rate in the National Assessment and the transition rate from grade 8 to grade 9;
- Addressing financial education topics;
- Peer support: inviting 9th graders to group counseling meetings with 8th graders and employed graduates to group counseling meetings with vocational school students.

Study „Career Counselling System in Romania. Empirical and legislative analysis, with focus on counties: Covasna, Mures and Sibiu” was carried out in 2022 by SC Cognitrom SRL for HEKS/EPER Romania

Foundation within the project “Labour-market inclusion for disadvantaged young adults in Romania”. The study focused on issues related to: legislation, empirical analysis of the career counselling process, with focus on the counties: Covasna, Mures and Sibiu (qualitative study and quantitative study), recommendations, and structured information about the situation in the system was obtained. It is planned to extend the study to vocational education.

Obstacles

- Vocational pupils are oriented towards working abroad, some of whom are not included in the project for this reason.
- Application of the Cognitrom tool (which is an online tool), in pencil/paper mode, which thus took much longer to apply, due to lack of ICT skills/equipment.
- There were classes where individual application and explanation of each item of the Cognitrom instrument was needed or the Cognitrom instrument had to be adapted into Hungarian language.
- Identification of space in the timetable for counselling, pupils finish classes at 2 or 3pm and cannot stay in school.
- Lack of space in the school for counselling activities.
- Increased absenteeism of pupils, making it difficult to involve them in project activities.
- Lack of communication between vocational education institutions and companies, lack of internships in companies, lack of a business contact person in vocational school/for each qualification.

Proposed solutions:

- Involving parents and class masters in the counselling process (organising company visits).
- In the case of vulnerable pupils (pupils from the Roma minority, pupils from single parent families, pupils with parents working abroad, pupils receiving social scholarships/social vouchers), according to Cognitrom estimates, 1 counsellor would be needed to work with 200 pupils.
- Hot lunch to motivate pupils to participate in counselling activities.
- Pupils appreciated the activities carried out outside school (camps, visits).
- Teachers appreciated the counselling activities in which pupils and parents participated.
- The usefulness of company visits not only for lower secondary education pupils, but also for vocational school pupils, who can be re-oriented as a result of these visits.
- Two interventions were carried out in the schools involved in the project: the school counselor-teacher in the school office and the counsellors in the Heks/Eper Foundation project. The Cognitrom platform is donated to the schools and it is important to have the school counselor-teacher in the school to ensure the continuation of the project.

Consultations with the directors of CJRAE Covasna, CJRAE Mureş and CJRAE Sibiu - issues discussed:

CJRAE Sibiu realizes:

- Annual study of educational and vocational choices of 8th grade students, the results of which are discussed with pupils and parents; undecided pupils are scheduled for individual counselling sessions
- Career guidance projects - addressing group counselling topics for students: self-awareness (personality, values, interests, skills), decision-making, personal marketing, etc.
- Collaboration of CJRAE Sibiu with „Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu: participation in educational fairs, discussions with the Counselling department of the university.

Solutions:

- waiving the teaching norm (2-4 teaching hours) of the school counsellor-teacher.

CJRAE Mures

The Heks/Eper Foundation project was well received by the teachers in Mureş county, training courses were carried out, the material basis was provided.

Obstacles:

- difficulties in counselling rural pupils and lack of information for their guidance towards vocational education.

Box 21 Views on career counselling activities, expressed by participants in the consultations - Representatives of the Romania Secondary Education Project (ROSE), Management Unit for Externally Funded Projects, Ministry of Education

Consultations with representatives of the Romania Secondary Education Project (ROSE) highlighted the following issues:

- The national strategic project, called “Romania Secondary Education Project” – ROSE, was implemented by the Ministry of Education, through the Management Unit for Externally Financed Projects (UMPFE), in the period 2015-2022, benefiting from a loan of 200 million euros from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD).
- The main activities and objectives of ROSE were presented during the consultation with the ROSE project representatives: improving the transition from pre-university to tertiary education and reducing drop-out of first year students. Interventions carried out in universities were funded, e.g. bridging programmes (e.g. university-level summer courses for high school students, high school-university-labour market partnerships, tutoring programmes for students, carried out on the university campus, managed by universities, with tutoring provided by academic staff and final year students) with pre-university education and activities to reduce drop-out, aimed at increasing the retention rate of first year students from a baseline of 82.3% to 84.5%, have been funded. Learning centres for students at high risk of dropping out were funded, as well as sub-projects, which aimed at implementing programmes to improve students’ academic performance, tutoring, **career counselling and guidance**, coaching, social and emotional skills development, awareness campaigns, targeted at students. Learning Centres (38) have been set up in 24 public universities to improve social and academic support mechanisms for students at risk.

In the ROSE project, 50 mentors each supervise up to 15 high schools, with visits to high schools and online visits. The impact assessment will take place over the next 2 years.

The activities consisted of a mix of support activities (e.g. counselling, guidance, personal development, etc.) in addition to remedial activities (at least 50% of the costs had to be allocated to remedial activities). Schools’ approaches differed. At first, they requested more remedial hours, but gradually started to introduce support activities, realising their importance. Schools worked with in-house resources and in some cases with school counsellors from CJRAE/ CMBRAE, rarely employing external staff. Positive effects were observed: impact on learning and development of learning skills, improved teacher–pupil relations, relaxed atmosphere.

Obstacles:

- career counselling is not considered a priority,
- overburdening the schoolcounsellor,
- use of outdated specialised tools,
- large number of pupils allocated to a school counsellor.

Solutions:

- streamlining activities,
- devoting more time to pupils who need the most support,
- involvement of class masters who have received training on counselling in carrying out career counselling activities with pupils (e.g. at least 1/year),
- rigorous planning at the beginning of the school year of a number of career counselling activities,

- inviting specialists to the classroom to talk to pupils,
- positioning of the tutoring (*dirigenție*) class (management of the class of pupils, administrative aspects) and the class of counselling and personal development,
- training of school counsellors-teachers to administer specialist tests and interpret results,
- focus on parent counselling,
- specialisation of some CJRAE school counsellors-teachers on career counselling,
- organising communication campaigns on career counselling, raising awareness of the importance of these activities among pupils, parents, teachers, school principals, employers (e.g. webinars, videos),
- professional approach to the counselling process,
- getting out of the logic of the timetable - space, time and learning activities,
- the development of a national online career counselling platform.

Mentors presented **examples of good practice from high schools:**

- the counsellor spent the breaks with the pupils, creating a bond of emotional closeness;
- the counsellor participates in extracurricular activities;
- the counsellor participates in class with the teacher (*co-sharing*);
- the guides produced in the ROSE project were found useful by teachers;
- the counsellor has identified the needs of the pupils (e.g. the need for valorisation) in order to group and work with them;
- *peer-counselling* activities were carried out;
- creation of a relaxation area in the school - tea room within the school, equipped with games, books, where they are supervised by a teacher, have the opportunity to socialise without using mobile phones; a decrease in bullying has been observed in the school;
- individual counselling meetings were found to be effective;
- training teachers to carry out career counselling activities (semi-specialists).

Box 22 Views on career counselling activities expressed by participants in the consultations – Romanian Business Leaders

Consultations with representatives of Romanian Business Leaders highlighted the following issues: The project “Training for the future” was presented based on the following aspects: aim, objectives, participants, types of activities, stages of the career counselling process, results achieved.

Participants: 700 lower secondary education (*gimnaziu*) and high school pupils (10th and 11th grades) from Bucharest and from Cluj, Constanta, Prahova counties, from urban and rural areas.

Types of activities:

- career workshops for group counselling,
- individual counselling sessions,
- applying psychometric tests (personality traits, professional interests, aptitudes),
- on-the-job visits to companies,
- meetings with specialists in different fields,
- the realisation of the career plan.

Pre-testing of the programme was carried out in 2020-2021 in three types of high schools in Bucharest, classified according to academic performance.

Stages of the career counselling process with students:

- self-awareness and clarification of goals;
- student's choice of 2-3 future directions;
- exploring future directions through meetings with specialists from different fields and working environments;
- elaboration of an individual plan for the future by each pupil.

Results achieved:

- 700 pupils counselled from lower secondary education (*gimnaziu*)(7th and 8th grade, at the beginning of the school year) and high school (10th and 11th grade);
- 2000 hours of individual counselling (2 or 3 sessions/ pupil);
- 60 career counselling workshops (group counselling);
- 50 visits on the job;
- Individual and group counselling sessions took place face-to-face and online;
- 140 specialists from different fields involved (hospitals, courts, banks, embassies, etc.);
- approxim. 20% of the pupils included in the cohort are interested in the career counselling process.

Limits:

Parents have not yet been involved in the programme, only in doing homework.

The discussion with RBL representatives focused on the obstacles encountered and the proposed solutions for the education system.

Obstacles:

- lack of space in schools for counselling pupils;
- lack of resources for career counselling in counselling offices;
- insufficient communication and professional collaboration between career counselling professionals;
- lack of a national computerised career counselling platform for counsellors, teachers, pupils and parents;
- non-existence of a computerised system for monitoring the graduates of the various educational institutions;
- lack of databases of institutions/companies interested in collaborating with schools on career counselling.

Decision making by pupils – difficulties observed:

- lack of autonomy and consistency;
- underdeveloped planning capacity;
- limiting beliefs (prejudices, stereotypes).

Solutions:

- clarification of the counsellor's roles: school counselling, career counselling, psycho-pedagogical assistance, teaching loadwork;
- creation of a career counsellor post in schools, with initial and ongoing training and working with a feasible number of pupils, for career counselling only;
- informing pupils and presenting the benefits of the career counselling programme;
- setting up a computerised graduate monitoring system;
- creating appropriate spaces in schools for counselling activities;
- equipping counselling offices with career counselling resources/kits;
- collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce, employers, local administration, companies in the development of career counselling activities;
- strengthening the role of the professional community of career counsellors: exchange of ideas and best practices;
- the creation of a computerised career counselling platform for counsellors, teachers, pupils and parents;
- creating databases of institutions/companies/specialists in different fields interested in collaborating with schools on career counselling;
- the use of ICT in career counselling activities with pupils.

RBL believes that the measure with the greatest impact on the process is the creation of a separate career counsellor post in schools.

Box 23 Views on career counselling activities expressed by participants in the consultations – National Council of pupils in Romania

Consultations with representatives of the Romanian National Pupils Council revealed the following issues:

Obstacles:

- large number of pupils allocated to a school counsellor;
- the tutoring (*dirigenție*) class is dedicated to other aspects;
- pupils are not aware of the need for counselling.

Solutions:

- every pupil should attend at least one individual career counselling session,
- the importance of extracurricular activities (drama, robotics, debates);
- organising activities such as internships, volunteering placements, talks with career mentors;
- the use of social networks frequently accessed by pupils to promote career counselling activities;
- informing pupils about the school counsellor's timetable,
- collaboration in career counselling activities in schools with NGOs, universities, employers, parents' associations,
- elimination of the teaching workload (2-4 teaching hours) of the school counsellors-teacher.
- Examples of good practice: Top minds association (e.g. career guidance questionnaires, college application), Leaders foundation (career hour), EU Youth Forum.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

The report used the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) methodology on career counselling and guidance activities, in particular on CCG activities and services for all lower and upper secondary education students, and with a special focus on students from marginalised areas.

The stakeholder analysis highlighted different categories of people, institutions and other segments of society (students, parents/legal representatives, school principal, class master, teacher-school counsellor, CJRAE, CMBRAE, CIAP/CMAP, Ministry of Education, ISJ/ISMB, universities, AMOFM/ AJOFM etc.) with influence and interest in career counselling and guidance.

The problem analysis identified different levels of problems affecting career counselling and guidance in Romania and prioritised them based on logical cause-effect links. Thus, 24 causes and 3 categories of effects were identified: educational, social and economic. Discussions with the working group and subsequent analysis by the WB team identified the central problem.

Similarly, different levels of objectives have been analysed. **The general objective of the public policy intervention aims at meeting the CCG needs of pupils at the end of a level of education** (lower and upper secondary education), while the **specific objectives aim at (i) strengthening the CCG system and (ii) ensuring access to CCG for all pupils, including those from marginalised areas**. Thus:

1. **Specific objective 1 „Strengthening the CCG system”** aims to ensure the following six systemic components: legislative and regulatory framework for CCG services; management of human resources involved in CCG activities and services; physical and information infrastructure; partnerships between schools and other key actors; outreach on CCG services; monitoring and assessment of CCG services.

In order to achieve this specific objective, the WB team has proposed a mix of policies, institutional reforms and investments, and has also provided directions for action and international examples of good practice for each of the six systemic components mentioned above.

2. **Specific Objective 2 „Ensure access to counselling and guidance for all pupils, including those in marginalised areas”** aims to increase the coverage of career counselling and guidance services for pupils in marginalised areas; to expand the provision of an integrated and individualised response for pupils in marginalised areas. For this objective, useful directions for action and international examples of good practice have also been proposed, based in particular on the provision of career counselling and guidance services through the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

Three scenarios have been identified to achieve this objective: **The baseline scenario** aims at maintaining the current policy direction (GD no 1604/2022 and amendment of Annex no 4 to Government Decision no 369/2021 on the organisation and functioning of the Ministry of Education), i.e. implementation of the maximum limit for the number of pupils for whom counselling is provided under a counselling workload, staggered allocation of additional posts, mainly in rural areas.

Alternative scenarios facilitate the integration of educational interventions into the case management method and consider:

Scenario 1: Prioritise the integration of the school counsellor into the educational community and adopt a whole-school-approach to the deployment of the CCG;

Scenario 2: Paying special attention to pupils at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or low academic achievement in order to build their career management skills.

For the alternative scenarios, pilot projects have been proposed, which are recommended to be implemented in a sample of MATE schools, following analyses of the local context and in compliance with the technical requirements for setting up intervention and control groups. These pilot projects aim to assess the educational and social impact and the cost-benefit ratio of implementing comprehensive and complex interventions over a minimum cohort.

The analysis of the proposed scenarios was illustrated by the case of Botosani County. The data available for this analysis did not allow a sufficiently comprehensive analysis at national level. Botoşani county covers 2% of the total number of pupils in pre-university education. In the school year 2022-2023, in Botoşani county 60 counsellors are employed, 58 of whom are working in psycho-pedagogical support offices.

The selection of the preferred option was based on a multi-criteria analysis matrix. Thus, although the baseline scenario has the lowest budgetary costs relative to work load, **Scenario 1 emerges as the preferred one**, given the expected benefits, which are estimated to be the highest in this scenario (in the medium and long term). In addition, Scenario 1 combines the benefits of this collaboration (prioritised in Scenario 2) with a focus on career management skills development at school level. Scenario 1 also has the lowest risks, mainly concentrated towards the implementation of the whole-school approach for which countermeasures are available through the development of procedures and training, modalities under government control.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the whole set of conducted analyses, this report recommends a mix of strategic interventions to strengthen CCG, covering the following systemic components: legislative and regulatory framework for CCG services; management of human resources involved in CCG activities and services; material and information infrastructure; partnerships between schools and other key actors; information (outreach) on CCG services; monitoring and assessment of CCG services. Regarding only the current policy direction, in the baseline scenario, this provides improvements regarding human resources management, so that to implement the maximum threshold for which counselling is offered as part of a counselling norm. At the same time, implementation of the provisions of GD 1604/2022 assumes an extension of the material infrastructure and of the number of CCG beneficiaries, alongside an improvement of the psycho-pedagogical assistance services. Recommendations of the report address:

- (1) legislative and regulatory framework for CCG services to link the legislation enacted by the various ministries responsible for the counselling field by developing a national strategy targeting CCG services offered in pre-university education, linked with measures targeting CCG services in higher education, employment services within AJOFM/ AMOFM, social assistance services for pupils and young people from marginalised areas, aiming at multidimensional strengthening of the systems contributing to CCG activities in Romania, with the aim of multiplying social investments in the education system and active labour market policies;
 - drafting and approving Professional Quality Standards and the Ethical Code regarding career counselling and guidance
 - implementation of the whole school approach in the CCG by implementing methodological guidelines/ recommendations developed at national level by the Ministry of Education in consultation with key stakeholders;
- (2) management of human resources involved in CCG activities and services
- to ensure appropriate initial and in-service training of staff of the CJRAE/CMBRAE, as well as class masters, principals of educational units on CCG issues, including the latest innovative approaches in the use of ICT in CCG;
 - to create posts by relating the didactic norm of the school counsellor to a maximum of 500 pupils, a maximum of 500 pupils and preschoolers or a maximum of 300 preschoolers, and a reduction in the number of pupils for counsellors working with pupils in marginalised areas;
 - to issue personalised recommendations, by the school counsellor and the class master, on the choice of school/occupation for pupils at the end of a cycle of lower secondary and upper secondary education;
 - to give priority to CCG services within the duties and tasks of the teacher-counsellor at the psycho-pedagogical assistance offices;
 -
- (3) material and information infrastructure
- to ensure appropriate ICT-based material and information infrastructure for the effective running of the CCG at the psycho-pedagogical assistance offices in each educational unit;

-
- (4) partnerships between schools and other key actors
- to provide CCG services for pupils by co-opting parents and establishing partnerships with employers, AJOFM, social partners, NGOs, etc. to organise visits, internships, work-based learning for pupils;
- to collaborate between the teacher-school counsellor with the social worker and the community nurse/health worker in community integrated teams in the provision of CCG for pupils from marginalised areas;
- to consider CCG services as part of an integrated and individualised approach to working with disadvantaged groups, using the case management method;
-
- (5) information (outreach) on CCG services
- to develop a national CCG portal for pupils, parents, counsellors, teachers, employers, etc., which can take the form of a web-based information system (including the pupil's personal portfolio: skills, qualifications, experiences, aspirations) as well as a web-based interactive system;
- to organize the national information and awareness-raising campaigns on the CCG for target groups (pupils, teachers, parents, employers, etc.) and society as a whole;
- (6) monitoring and assessment of CCG services to carry out a functional analysis of the CJRAE/CMBRAE system;
- to use of comparable data to carry out the impact analysis in all counties/municipality, similar to the one carried out for Botoşani county;
- to use by policy makers of the results of this report in the development of new methodologies governing the work of the CJRAE/CMBRAE and the CCG in pre-university education, in the context of the new law on pre-university education;
- to create a unified and comprehensive system for monitoring and assessment of CCG services based on the set of methodological recommendations in sub-chapter 4.5;
- the Ministry of Education to designate an institution as a national reference point for monitoring the career pathways of pre-university graduates.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1 The positive impact of career counselling – examples of international research

Recent research (Mann et al., 2020) on pupils' career aspirations conducted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) following the PISA test highlighted the importance and demonstrated the needs of pupils for career counselling:

- pupils' career aspirations have changed very little and have become even more focused;
- 30% of 15-year-olds globally are interested in only 10 occupations;
- many pupils aspire to occupations that are at risk of automation;
- pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to be confused about how education and qualifications relate to jobs and careers (according to PISA 2018 results);
- pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to participate in career development activities, e.g. job fairs, job shadowing and to talk to a career adviser;
- pupils' participation in career counselling activities leads to positive attitudes towards the usefulness of school.

Other OECD longitudinal research (OECD, 2021; Mann, Denis & Percy, 2020; Covacevich et al., 2021a; Covacevich et al., 2021b; have internationally confirmed a number of indicators related to teenage career readiness, relevant in the context of our study, mentioned in Figure 22 below. Data sets from eight countries (Australia, Canada, China (People's Republic), Germany, Korea, the United Kingdom, the United States and Uruguay) were analysed and evidence was found for the three thematic areas in the lives of adolescents aged 14-16: exploring, experimenting and thinking about the future and about outcomes in adult life, usually ten years later. Evidence of better employment outcomes was found in three areas: NEET status, salary (if they were employed full-time), satisfaction with career progression/job satisfaction.

Figure 22 Indicators of teenage career readiness

| Exploring the future | Experiencing the future | Thinking about the future |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Pupils' interaction with employees through career conversations or attendance at career/job fairs | Part-time work | Career certainty |
| Job visits or <i>job shadowing</i> | Volunteering | Career ambition |
| Activities to develop skills to apply and participate in an interview | | Career alignment |
| Career talks, including with teachers | | Instrumental motivation for school |
| Programmes with a short focus on an occupation | | |

Source: OECD (2021). *Indicators of teenage career readiness: guidance for policy makers*. OECD Education Policy Perspectives, no. 43

Longitudinal research in Australia, the UK and the US has shown that teenagers who combined part-time employment with part-time study had better transitions from school to work.

Career development programs that include a work-based learning component run in schools benefit students, such as the opportunity to apply the skills and knowledge they have acquired in less familiar situations or to understand what it means to be effective in the workplace (Mann et al., 2020).

A review of the international literature on career education, which looked at research that adopted quasi-experimental and experimental approaches (Hughes et al, 2016) showed that outcomes related to the provision of career education in schools, including with employer involvement, are primarily positive: this was the case for 60% of studies identifying educational outcomes (only 2% primarily negative); 67% of studies examining economic outcomes (none of these were considered primarily negative); and 62% of studies examining social outcomes (only 3% were considered primarily negative).

In measuring the impact of career counselling programmes, it is essential to consider how the programmes are delivered, for example: through individual or group counselling, face-to-face or distance.

Whiston et al. (2003) compared different intervention modalities (e.g., individual counselling, career lessons) using meta-analysis and showed that interventions involving a counsellor were significantly more effective than those that relied solely on the use of a computerised career counselling system. Access to online career information produces positive results when combined with discussions with professionals to help interpret the information.

Whiston (2002) pointed out from research that the most effective ways of delivering career interventions are one-to-one counselling and career lessons.

Brown & Ryan Krane (2000 apud Whiston & Buck, 2008) have indicated among the most important career intervention methods and techniques: written exercises, individualized interpretations, occupational information, career modelling, support building.

Another research (Choi, Kim & Kim, 2015) examined the influence of 2-year participation in career education interventions on career development skills and school success among high school pupils in South Korea. The research found that pupils who participated in six different types of career education had the most significant gains in career development skills and improved academic achievement.

Annex 2 Main types of interventions carried out in career counselling and guidance services

| Main types of interventions | Definitions |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Career information | Provides information on different occupations, skills, learning opportunities, labour market trends, educational programmes, educational and training institutions, government or non-government programmes, job opportunities, etc. with the aim of planning, obtaining and maintaining employment. |
| Career education | It is a long-term educational approach aimed at developing the skills and attitudes needed for career planning and development, both in the area of self-awareness and personal development and in exploring educational and professional opportunities. It is carried out in educational establishments and institutions by teachers and school advisers. |
| Career counselling | It supports individuals to clarify their goals and aspirations, to understand their own identity, to make informed decisions, to be responsible for their own actions, to manage their career and transition from school to work, from one job to another. |
| Employment counselling | It helps individuals to clarify their immediate employment goals, to understand and access a job, to develop the skills needed to look for and get a job (CV writing, interview skills). |
| Placing | It is the support given to individuals to find a job, which is the responsibility of both governmental institutions with responsibilities in this field and private institutions. |

Source: M.E.C.T.S. and M.M.F.P.S. (2012) and Romanian Parliament (2011)

Annex 3 Curriculum for the subject Personal Development in preparatory grade, 1st and 2nd grade

The curriculum for the subject Personal Development in preparatory, first and second grades was approved by the Order of the Minister of Education 3418/19.03.2013 (Ministry of National Education, 2013). In the Curriculum Framework, the subject Personal Development is part of the curriculum area Counselling and Guidance, with 2 hours per week in the preparatory grade and 1 hour per week in the first and second grades. It is developed according to the competence-based curriculum design model and includes the following sections: introductory note, general competences, specific competences and examples of learning activities, contents and methodological suggestions.

Table 18 General competences, specific competences and examples of learning activities aimed at familiarising pupils with hobbies and occupations in the school subject Personal development, preparatory class, 1st grade and 2nd grade

| Preparatory class | Grade I | Grade II |
|--|--|--|
| General competence: <i>use of specific learning skills and attitudes in a school context</i> | | |
| <p>CS3.3 Identify favourite hobbies, games and activities</p> <p>Examples of learning activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - presenting to the group personal objects that best express what each child likes to do, in order to enhance the skills of each child, whatever the field; - riddles, collages about hobbies and favourite activities: „What do I like to do? ”; - games/activities/contests to identify children’s skills, native predispositions/talents in various areas: music, dance, sports, drawing, mathematics, relating to others, etc. | <p>CS3.3 Explore known or preferred occupations</p> <p>Examples of learning activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - role-playing games about crafts; - games/guessing to identify tools specific to certain trades; - presentation of professions by specialists invited to the class: doctor, artist, mechanic, painter, policeman, etc. - visits to different places of work of parents or near the school; -organising events (“Carnival of Trades”) where groups of children promote different trades, to which parents, grandparents, school and community representatives are invited. | <p>CS3.3 Present the usefulness of known trades/occupations</p> <p>Examples of learning activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - didactic games about professions „Salesman”, „ TV anchor”, „The cook”, etc.; - visits to interesting places of work for children (chocolate factory, dentist’s office, town hall, newsroom, fire station, etc.); - creating original posters about the specifics of the trades and their benefits to community members - debates about the products/results of certain jobs, the usefulness of jobs (the mechanic fixes a broken car, the doctor treats us when we are sick, etc.). |

The contents are grouped into the following categories: Self-knowledge and healthy lifestyle, Emotional and social development, Specific aspects of the organisation of learning and life skills for young schoolchildren.

Table 19 Content - Specific aspects of the organisation of learning and life skills of the young learner in the school subject Personal development, preparatory class, class I and class II

| Domains | Subdomains | Preparatory class | Class I | Class II |
|---|-----------------------|--|---|---|
| Specific aspects of the organisation of learning and life skills for young schoolchildren | Exploring professions | Favourite hobbies and activities Personal portfolio with learning outcomes/evidence | Known trades: name, main activities, tools and instruments, venue | What are jobs for? Social utility of crafts: products realised, benefits to self and community |

Annex 4 Curriculum for the subject Counselling and Personal Development in grades 5-8

According to the Framework Plan for lower secondary Education (MENCS, 2016), *Counselling and Guidance* is a distinct curricular area and a common core subject (compulsory subject), called *Counselling and Personal Development*, which is allocated one hour/week for each year of study (grades 5-8), starting from the school year 2017-2018. Also at lower secondary education level, *Counselling and Guidance* may be allocated an additional hour as an optional subject.

The *Counselling and Personal Development* discipline contributes to the achievement of the lower secondary education pupil's educational profile in terms of five dimensions: self-knowledge skills, socio-emotional skills, learning management skills, **career management skills**, adoption of a healthy lifestyle.

The curriculum of the subject *Counselling and Personal Development* (Ministry of National Education, 2017) has the following sections: introductory note, general competences, specific competences and examples of learning activities, contents and methodological suggestions. The general competences targeted to be developed in pupils during grades 5-8 consider:

1. adopting positive attitudes towards oneself and a healthy and balanced lifestyle;
2. adopting harmonious relationships with others in school and extracurricular contexts;
3. reflecting on the motivation and effectiveness of strategies for learning progress;
4. making decisions about further education and career by using information about self, education and occupations.

Example 5th grade

General Competence 4: Making decisions about further education and career by using information about self, education and occupations.

Table 20 Specific competences (SC), examples of learning activities and content for the school subject Counselling and personal development, grade 5

| Specific competences | Learning activities | Contents |
|--|---|---|
| 4.1. Recognising the opportunities that education offers for career choice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pair/team discussions: „Why do we go to school? ”, „My school – what would I like my school/class to be like?”, „What do I like most/least about school?”; - exercises linking school subjects to professions for which it is necessary to study them: „What is the use of studying history/mathematics/music etc.?", „If I were a driver/nurse/engineer etc. what would I need to know/ to do/learn at school?” and entering the results in the personal learning portfolio; - organising exhibitions of posters, photo collages, materials from pupils' favourite school and extra-curricular activities: „What I like to do at school”, „What I like to do in my free time” and entering the results in the personal learning portfolio | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The role of education in career choice - Occupations and fields of activity - Benefits of occupations for the individual and society: remuneration, employment prospects, lifestyle, prestige, global problem solving |
| 4.2. Identifying occupations in different fields of activity and their benefits for the individual and society | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - pupils' documentation and presentation of occupation sheets „If I were a driver/nurse/engineer/researcher etc. where would I work/under what conditions/what personal qualities/what training would be needed/what lifestyle would I have/could I find a job/what salary would I have/could I invent something new” and entering the results in the personal learning portfolio; - organising an event presenting traditional, current and future professions, such as the „Carnival of Professions”; - organising local visits to: libraries, banks, law offices, companies to familiarise them with different fields of activity and working environments; - developing and solving a crossword puzzle in pairs, containing occupations from different fields of work. | |

Annex 5 School Curriculum Counselling and Guidance for Vocational Education, grades 9-11

The school curriculum for the school subject Counselling and Guidance, differentiated curriculum for State vocational education, 3 years, grades 9-11 was approved by the Order of the Minister of Education no. 4437/29.08.2014 (Ministry of National Education, 2014a). The school discipline Counselling and guidance aims to support pupils in vocational education for: identification of personal resources, use of learning techniques, use of information acquired in various contexts to develop a personal education and career project, development of a lifestyle conducive to change and adaptation to new learning and work contexts.

Table 21 General competence, specific competence (SC), contents and examples of learning activities in the school subject Counselling and guidance, grade 11

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| General competence | Developing a personal education and career project |
| Specific competence | Building a personal education and career plan for the short, medium and long term by using personal resources and labour market information |
| Contents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education and/or career plan: goal, objectives, strategies for achievement, resources, obstacles, outcomes. - The role of personal resources and labour market information in developing an education and/or career plan |
| Learning activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - exercises to build the education and/or career plan: goal, objectives, strategies to achieve, obstacles; - discussions, interviews with employed, successful people about career planning; - exercises, discussions about the decision to continue your studies or find a job, by answering questions such as: <i>What if you found your preferred job/no job?</i> |

Annex 6 County/Bucharest Municipality Centres for Educational Resources and Assistance

| CJRAE/CMBRAE | | Description |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Specifics of the CJRAE/CMBRAE | | <p>The County/Bucharest Municipality Centres for Educational Resources and Assistance continuous (C.J.R.A.E./C.M.B.R.A.E.) are related units of pre-university education, with legal personality, subordinated to the Ministry of Education, coordinated by the County/ Bucharest Municipality School Inspectorate and financed by the County/ Bucharest Municipality Council.</p> <p>C.J.R.A.E./C.M.B.R.A.E. develops horizontal/network relations with educational institutions at all levels.</p> <p>The coordination of the psycho-redagogical counselling and educational guidance activities, of the specific activities within the Educational Resource and Assistance Centres is ensured by the Special Education and Social Inclusion Service within the Directorate of Curriculum Strategies, Assessment and Monitoring, which is part of the Directorate General of Pre-University Education (Ministry of Education, 2022c).</p> |
| Regulatory framework | | <p>The regulatory framework that currently governs the organisation and conduct of the work of the CJRAE/ CMBRAE includes the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Education Law No 1/2011, as amended and supplemented; • OMECTS no. 5555/2011 on the approval of the Regulation on the organization and functioning of the county/Bucharest municipality centres for Educational Resources and Support, with subsequent amendments and additions; • OMECTS no. 5573/2011 approving the Regulation on the organisation and functioning of special and integrated special education; • GD No 1251/2005 on some measures to improve the learning, training, compensation, recovery and special protection of children/pupils/young people with special educational needs within the special and integrated special education system; • Order No. 1985/1305/5805/2016 of 4 October 2016 on the approval of the methodology for integrated assessment and intervention for the classification of children with disabilities as disabled, for the school and vocational |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | guidance of children with special educational needs, and for the habilitation and rehabilitation of children with disabilities and/or special educational needs. |
| Organisational structure | | <p>The organisational structure of the CJRAE/CMBRAE includes the following categories of staff (Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport, 2011):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • management staff: director, CJAP/CMBAP coordinator, inter-school speech and language centre coordinator, etc.; • teaching staff; • auxiliary teaching staff: financial administrator, social assistant, secretary, property administrator, IT specialist, librarian, etc; • non-teaching staff: caretaker. |
| Educational services offered by CJRAE/CMBRAE | | <p>CJRAE/ CMBRAE) offers the following educational services (Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport, 2011):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • psycho-pedagogical counselling and educational and vocational guidance services, through the County Centres and Psycho-pedagogical Assistance Offices – provided by school counsellors- teachers; • language disorder therapy services, through the Centres and through the inter-school speech therapy offices – provided by speech therapy teachers; • assessment, guidance/reorientation services from special school to mainstream school and vice versa for children/pupils with special educational needs (SEN), through the Educational and Vocational Guidance Commission, at the proposal of the Educational and Vocational Guidance and Assessment Service of the CJRAE, based on the provisions of art. 54 (2) of Law no. 1/2011 – starting from 2012; • school mediation services provided by school mediators; • training services, through partnerships with institutions entitled to provide initial training, in accordance with framework agreements, on the basis of the provisions of Art. 239 (2)-(4) of Law no. 1/2011; • information and counselling services for teachers, children, parents, other community members; • counselling and prevention of juvenile delinquency and pre-delinquency. |
| Types of counselling | | Counselling for pupils is done through: |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>programmes for pupils and parents</p> | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • career guidance programmes for lower secondary education and high school pupils; • self-/inter-knowledge programmes; • programmes to prevent school drop-out; • emotion management programmes and emotional and communication skills development; • learning management programmes; • programmes to prevent violence/juvenile delinquency in the school environment; • programmes to prevent illegal/legal drug use among pupils; • programmes to prevent human trafficking; • healthy lifestyle education programmes. <p>Counselling activities for parents take the form of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individual counselling activities for parents on issues related to: knowledge of the child’s age, optimisation of child-parent, school-family relations, support of children by parents in choosing a career, reduction of factors leading to school failure/dropout; • collective/group counselling activities for parents, carried out within the framework of programmes. |
| <p>Teaching positions that can be filled in the Psycho-pedagogical support Centres and Offices</p> | | <p>The status of teaching staff (Romanian Parliament, 2011) specifies the teaching positions that can be filled in the Psycho-pedagogical Assistance Centres and Offices: teacher-psycho-pedagogue, teacher-psychologist, teacher-sociologist, teacher-speech therapist, schoolcounsellor, as well as the conditions for filling the position (e.g. initial theoretical training in the speciality, carried out by universities, within the framework of programmes accredited according to the law; 2-year teaching master’s degree; practical training lasting one school year, carried out in an educational establishment, under the coordination of a mentor teacher; competition for vacant/reserved posts/positions; assignment by the county/Bucharest municipality school inspectorate to the posts not filled following the competition).</p> <p>Within the County/Bucharest Municipality Centres for Psycho-pedagogical Assistance (CJAP/CMAP) school counsellors- teachers work (Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport, 2011), classified as teaching staff, according to their initial training: teacher-psycho-pedagogue, teacher-psychologist, teacher-sociologist, teacher-pedagogue. The post of teacher-counsellor is</p> |

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| | | filled through a tenure competition, based on a specific theme in the field of psycho-pedagogical counselling ⁸⁷ . |
| Didactic norm of the teacher- school counsellor | | <p>The didactic norm for the position of teacher- school counsellor within CJAP/CMBAP is established on the basis of the provisions of Article 262 of the Education Law no. 1/2011 (Romanian Parliament, 2011) and comprises a number of 40 hours/week, distributed as follows (Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport, 2011):</p> <p>a) 18 hours/week consisting of: psycho-pedagogical support activities, carried out individually and collectively with pre-schoolers/pupils, counselling, guidance, educational and vocational reorientation, counselling activities for parents and teachers; of the 18 hours/week, teaching activities (teaching obligation) include 2-4 hours/week;</p> <p>b) 22 hours/week consisting of: methodological-scientific and complementary training activities, establishing measures and drawing up intervention and psycho-pedagogical assessment programmes, scientific documentation activities, collaboration with local communities, participation in meetings with parents, methodological committees and pedagogical councils with specific themes, centralisation of data for the preparation of information materials on educational and vocational guidance at county level, drawing up and carrying out information and career counselling programmes, preparation of socio-psycho-pedagogical studies.</p> |
| Specific tasks in career counselling and guidance of the County/Bucharest Municipality Centres for Psycho-pedagogical support (CJAP/CMAP) within CJRAE/CMBRAE | | <p>The teachers- counsellors in the school psycho-pedagogical assistance offices and the inter-school psycho-pedagogical assistance offices have numerous tasks (MECTS, 2011), among which those concerning career counselling and guidance stand out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • propose and organise career guidance programmes for pupils in schools; • works with staff from local employment and vocational training agencies; • develops psycho-sociological studies on the choices of final year pupils regarding vocational and high school qualifications and the types of schools within the local and national school network; • submits to the ISJ, through the County Resource and Educational Assistance Centres, specialist studies on forecasting and analysis elements relating to the labour market supply in the area (evolution, dynamics, disappearing |

⁸⁷ <https://www.titularizare.eu/legislatie-examen-titularizare/programe-titularizare-consiliere-psihipedagogica.html>

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| | | <p>professions, new professions), with a view to educational, vocational and career guidance for pupils in the county;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • coordinates the implementation of projects/programmes, internal or international educational partnerships, carried out at local level, concerning the issues of counselling, educational and vocational guidance, and career counselling of pupils in partnership with educational authorities, local authorities, associations and foundations with concerns in this field. |
| <p>Duties of the teacher-school counsellor (acc. to Job description)</p> | | <p>The teacher-school counsellor has duties, as mentioned in the Job description (MECTS, 2011):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - establishing, approving and posting the working hours at the psycho-pedagogical assistance office; - presentation of a half-yearly activity report to the teaching council of the educational establishment, including information on: the number of children/pupils, parents, teachers who have benefited from counselling and psycho-pedagogical assistance services, proposed improvement measures for crisis situations, special situations and measures taken to resolve/improve them, other information requested by the educational establishment; - collaboration with the teaching staff of the educational establishment in which they work; - organisation of lectures for parents on specific topics; - participation, at the request of the educational establishment, in various educational projects and programmes. |
| <p>Documents used by teachers-school counsellors for monitoring and assessment, quality assurance</p> | | <p>Teachers-school counsellors working in the psycho-pedagogical assistance offices and in the inter-school psycho-pedagogical assistance offices use the following documents (MECTS, 2011): activity plan, activity record book, counselling sheet/psycho-pedagogical sheet, career guidance sheets and other documents specific to the counselling activity.</p> <p>The duties of management staff, teaching staff, auxiliary teaching staff and non-teaching staff in the psycho-pedagogical assistance centres and offices are laid down in the organisational and operational regulations and the internal rules of the CJAP/CMBAP, as well as in the job description and are monitored annually by CJRAE/CMBRAE.</p> <p>Job descriptions are approved annually by the Director of the CJRAE/CMBRAE or by the coordinator of the CJAP/CMBAP, with the opinion of the Board of Directors, for the staff of the psycho-pedagogical assistance offices (MECTS, 2011).</p> |

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| | | The areas of competence of the teaching staff in the CJAP/CMBAP and in the psycho-pedagogical assistance offices are stipulated in the job descriptions , accompanied by assessment sheets . The job descriptions and assessment sheets are drawn up and approved annually by the Director of CJRAE/CMBRAE, with the approval of the Board of Directors, on the proposal of the CJAP/CMBAP Coordinator. The annual appraisal of teachers-school counsellors is carried out on the basis of these documents. |
| Professional competences of the teacher-school counsellor (According to the NQA occupational standard) | | <p>According to occupational standard 235903 (National Qualifications Authority, 2010), the professional competences required for access to and practice of the occupation of teacher-school counsellor are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general competences (required for all specialists working in the education system): career management, implementation of domain-specific quality standards, integration of ICT in education and training; • specific competences (applicable only to this qualification): analysis of problems specific to the school environment (including pupils' career guidance needs), organisation of educational counselling/vocational guidance activities, vocational guidance, career education, promotion of health education programmes, application of educational/vocational guidance principles, methods and techniques. |
| Initial training of teachers- school counsellors - | | Bachelor's degree in: psychology, educational sciences, psycho-pedagogy, special psycho-pedagogy, sociology Master's degree in school/career counselling |
| Continuos training for teachers- school counsellors | | <p>The Continuos training of teachers- school counsellors is achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - participation in in-service training courses organised by structures of the national education system (teachers' associations, universities) specialised in teacher training, as well as participation in training courses, workshops or conferences held by institutions and organisations with expertise in the field of counselling; - methodological activities/teaching circles/exchanges of experience within the CJRAE/CMBRAE, e.g. on the theme of <i>Career Counselling and Guidance. Dual education-legislation, case studies and examples of good practice, Importance of career counselling. Educational and vocational guidance</i>⁸⁸. |

⁸⁸ CMBRAE Bucharest. *Annual Activity Report 2019-2020*:
http://www.cmbrae.ro/2017/transparenta/raport_cmbrae_2019_2020

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| | | <p>The teachers- counsellors are obliged to participate periodically in continuous ongoing training programs (MECTS, 2011), so that they accumulate, at each consecutive interval of 5 years, considered from the date of passing the final exam in teaching, at least 90 transferable professional credits. Apart from the regulations concerning teaching staff, there are no national regulations concerning the continuous vocational training of school advisers, and practitioners are free to choose the training courses they attend.</p> |
| <p>Assessment standards of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education (ARACIP) regarding the provision of guidance and counselling services for pupils in schools</p> | | <p>The assessment standards of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-University Education (ARACIP) (Government of Romania, 2020) aim to provide guidance and counselling services for pupils in schools. The requirements for the reference standard (which defines an optimal level of achievement of an activity by the organisation providing education) cover aspects such as: working, on the basis of procedures, with specialists from the County Centre for Educational Resources and Assistance/County Centre for Psycho-pedagogical assistance, to carry-out knowledge and self-knowledge activities for children/pupils; carrying-out activities and disseminating information materials on opportunities for further education, labour market integration, training and further professional development; providing psycho-pedagogical counselling services to families of pre-pre-schoolers/pre-schoolers/pupils and/or teachers, etc.</p> <p>The requirements for the accreditation standard and periodic external assessment (minimum mandatory requirements for the existence and functioning of any educational establishment, as defined by the legislation in force) take into account aspects such as (Romanian Government, 2020): access for all, pre-schoolers and pupils in the educational establishment to psycho-pedagogical/psycho-educational support services, respectively to guidance and counselling services for pupils, as appropriate, informing all parents/legal representatives about counselling activities, etc.</p> |
| <p>Resources and examples of good practice of CJRAE/ CMBRAE</p> | | <p>Resources and examples of good practice of CJRAE/ CMBRAE</p> <p>Analysis of individual CJRAE/CMBRAE activity reports and websites provides many examples of good practice. For example, at CJRAE Iasi⁸⁹⁹⁰ the following have been achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Youth and Adult Support Services Map platform, a valuable resource for parents and young people in |

⁸⁹ <http://www.cjrae-iasi.ro/>

⁹⁰ CJRAE Iasi. *Annual Activity Report 2021-2022*: <http://www.cjrae-iasi.ro/info/cjrae/documente-interne>

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| | <p>selecting organisations with a specific psycho-pedagogical focus;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HELPLINE platform – The Counsellor at your side!, an effective counselling tool for users in educational establishments without a psycho-pedagogical support office; - psychological assessment laboratory with a network of 10 laptops and validated assessment platforms/tools. <p>National counselling guides and collections of good practices</p> <p>In recent years, counselling guides and collections of good practices have been produced at national level, including examples of counselling programmes and activities, including career counselling, designed and implemented by teachers-counsellors in different counties of Romania and Bucharest Municipality.</p> |
| <p>Other institutions with a role in counselling pupils, students and monitoring higher education graduates</p> | <p>Career counselling and guidance centres (CCGC) in higher education</p> <p>According to the provisions of the Education Law 1/2011 (Romanian Parliament, 2011) art. 351, the State ensures free access to career counselling and guidance services to all pupils, students and job seekers. In order to implement the provisions of this law, as well as to facilitate the correlation between the education system and the labour market, career counselling and guidance centres for final-year pupils, undergraduates and graduates have been set up and are operating in all higher education institutions. Career Counselling and Guidance Centres in higher education operate on the basis of OMEN no. 650/2014 for the approval of the framework methodology (Ministry of National Education, 2014b).</p> <p>The market analysis and forecasting units of labour market requests within CCGC</p> <p>The Ministry of Education facilitates the linking of the education system with the labour market through career counselling and guidance centres for final-year pupils, undergraduates and graduates in higher education institutions, where units for the analysis and anticipatory management of labour market demands operate (Romanian Parliament, 2011; Ministry of National Education, 2014b).</p> <p>The Executive Unit for the Financing of Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation (UEFISCDI) was designated by the Ministry of Education as the institution responsible for piloting the employability monitoring system for higher education graduates in Romania through OMed no. 4504/2021, the national reference point for monitoring the career path of graduates and the body designated to carry out the Eurograduate pilot survey (Deaconu and Hâj, 2022).</p> |

Annex 7 Responsibilities of the teachers-counsellors of the school psycho-pedagogical assistance offices and inter-school psycho-pedagogical assistance offices (MECTS, 2011):

- a)** to provide information and advice to pre-schoolers/pupils, parents and teachers on various issues: knowledge and self-knowledge, adaptation of pupils to the school environment, adaptation of the school to pupils' needs, optimising school-pupil-parent relations, etc.;
- b)** to ensure, by means of specific methods, procedures and techniques, the prevention and mitigation of factors leading to behavioural disorders, risk behaviours or psychological discomfort;
- c)** to carry out the psycho-pedagogical investigation of children and pupils;
- d)** to propose and organise educational, **vocational and career guidance programmes for pupils** in the educational establishments where they work;
- e)** to propose within the curriculum at the school's discretion optional courses aimed at the personal development of pupils;
- f)** to provide counselling services and courses for parents;
- g)** to support and provide methodological support and advice to teachers;
- (h)** to develop **psycho-sociological studies on the choices of final year pupils for vocational qualifications in vocational and high school education**;
- i)** to recommend parents to consult other institutions for problems that do not fall within their competence - speech therapy centres, expert commissions, medical offices, psychological offices, etc.;
- j)** to collaborate with the speech and language therapy clinics;
- k)** to collaborate with itinerant and support teachers;
- l)** to collaborate with school mediators;
- m)** to provide counselling and psycho-pedagogical assistance for children with special educational needs;
- n)** to collaborate with various institutions and non-governmental organisations providing services and activities in the educational sphere.

Annex 8 Organisation of Effort

Department responsible: Educated Romania Ministry of Education

Contact person: Valentin Popescu

Composition of the Working Group, Ministry of Education:

Valentin Sorin Popescu, General Manager
Mirela Gabriela Toma, General Manager
Mihai Păunică, General Manager
Daniela Vasilica Burghilă, General Manager
Mariana Chivu, General Manager
Mihaela Tania Irimia, General Manager
Corina Marin, General Manager
Alexandru Szepesi, Director
Eugenia Jianu, Head of unit
Adriana Pop, Senior Adviser
Laura Chira, Adviser

Participants in Working Group meetings:

Maria-Cristina Marin, Inspector
Mona Tabacu, Adviser
Silviu Paragina, Senior Adviser
Marilena Stroescu, Adviser
Raluca Sandu, Adviser
Felicia Man, Senior Adviser
Liana Mitran, Inspector
Livia Neculai, Expert
Victor Iliescu, Adviser
Robert Florea, Director, CMBRAE
Levente Szocs, Director, CJRAE Covasna.

The composition of the Working Group was updated in 2023, according to the Order of the Minister of Education no. 3890/27.03.2023, as follows:⁹¹

Coordinators: Ionel-Florian LIXANDRU, Secretary of State;

Antoneta-Georgina BOLCHIȘ, Secretary of State;

Members:

Octavia Borș-Georgescu, ministerial adviser
Valentin Sorin Popescu, Head of unit - Public Policy Unit;
Silviu Paragină, Public Policy Unit Inspector;
Maria-Cristina Marin, inspector of the General Directorate for the Implementation of the „Romania Educated” Project;
Raluca Sandu, Adviser, Directorate General Human Resources Management and School Network;

⁹¹ Ministry of Education (2023). Order no. 3890/27.03.2023 amending the Order of the Minister of Education no. 3079/01.02.2022 on the establishment of the Working Group to support the implementation of the activities of the project *Impact studies for better regulation - code SIPOCA 603*.

Mona Tabacu, Adviser, Directorate General for the Implementation of the „Romania Educated” Project;
Victor Iliescu, Adviser, Directorate General for University Education;
Levente Szócs, Director of the Covasna County Centre for Educational Resources and Assistance;
Adriana Cerghedi - Director of the Mures County Centre for Educational Resources and Assistance;
Valeria-Ecaterina Purcia- Director of the Sibiu County Centre for Educational Resources and Assistance;
Oana-Elena Nechita, Schoolcounsellor, Maramureş County Centre for Educational Resources and Assistance.

The World Bank team was composed of:

Andreja Marusic, Task Team Leader
Lorenzo Allio, Senior RIA Expert
Angela Andrei, Senior Expert
Arabela Aprahamian, Senior RIA Expert
Geomina Richardson, Senior Expert
Răzvan Antonescu, Local Program Coordinator
Monica Marin, Senior Expert
Loredana Pară, Project Assistant

General Secretariat of the Government

Anca Lupu, Adviser
Daniel Rucareanu, Expert

Participants in the Problem Identification Consultation Meetings:

- Levente Szócs, director of CJRAE Covasna,
- Adriana Cerghedi, director of CJRAE Mureş
- Valeria Purcia, director of CJRAE Sibiu
- Ioana Ardelean, program officer, Heks Foundation/Eper Romania;
- Liliana Preoteasa, director, Oana Moşoiu, systemic interventions coordinator, Laura Popa, Rose mentor, school inspector, Constanta county, Carmina Vakulovski, Rose mentor, teacher, Brasov county - Romania Secondary Education Project (ROSE), Management Unit for Externally Funded Projects, Ministry of Education
- Marian Crăciun, president and Andreea Szilagyi, vice-President of the Romanian Association of Counsellors (ACROM)
- Narcisa Şerban, director of AJOFM Ilt;
- Rareş Cotoi and Alexandra Popescu, National Council of Students
- Irina Munteanu, Elena Pâslaru-Hubati, Oana Botolan and Sonia Rusu, Romanian Business Leader

Annex 9 Key actors involved/affected by the career counselling process

Pupils

Pupils are the primary beneficiaries of pre-university education and are consulted in major decisions through their representatives, i.e. the National Pupils Council or other representative pupil associations. The Pupils ' Statute is approved by OMENCS no. 4742/2016, published in the MO No. 645 of 23 August 2016. Pupils are part of the school community and have the right to be heard and have their opinions taken into account, thus contributing to the betterment of the community.

In 2019, the early school leaving rate was 15.3% for the 18-24 age segment, 5 percentage points above the European average of 10.3%, one of the highest in Europe, with a sinuous evolution, without significant progress towards the national target of 11.3% for 2020 (Ministry of Education, 2021a).

Parents/legal representatives

Parents/legal representatives are secondary beneficiaries of pre-university education and are consulted in major decisions through parent representative association structures. Parents/legal representatives, as stakeholders in the education system, are part of the school community and of the board of directors, considered the governing body of the educational establishment.

The educational establishment concludes an educational contract with parents/legal representatives at the time of enrolment of pre-preschoolers, respectively preschoolers or pupils, in the Single Register, in which the mutual rights and obligations of the parties are recorded. The standard education contract is approved by order of the Minister for Education and is made more specific for each educational establishment by decision of the Board of Directors.

Parents/legal representatives may be involved in the life of the school in various ways, which vary according to the degree of consultation and participation in the decision-making process.

Educational staff with a counselling role: - teachers –classmasters, teacher-counsellors

The teachers-class masters coordinate the activity of the classes in gymnasium, high school, vocational education and post-high school, their activity being regulated by the OME no. 4183 of 4 July 2022 for the approval of the Framework Regulation on the organization and functioning of pre-university educational establishments, published in the Official Gazette no. 675 of 6 July 2022.

The teachers-class masters carry out educational support, counselling and career guidance activities for the pupils of the grade, the topics being established in compliance with the specific age, interests or requests of the students, based on the school programmes in force developed for the curriculum area "Counselling and guidance". The educational themes are also in compliance with the provisions of national regulations and strategies, as well as on the basis of partnerships concluded by the Ministry of Education with other ministries, institutions and organisations.

The classmaster is the chairperson of the class council, which is the forum through which meetings with parents/legal representatives and pupils can be organised whenever necessary.

The teachers-school counsellors (teachers in the psycho-pedagogical assistance centres and offices) work in the offices of the educational establishments and support pupils in one or more school units, which sometimes have several levels of education. This activity is complex: information, prevention and intervention, in team with teachers, auxiliary staff, school management, working with parents/legal representatives, but also with various specialists (doctors, clinical psychologists, social workers, police, etc.) from different governmental and non-governmental institutions involved in child protection and education.

Teachers-school counsellors provide counselling and psycho-pedagogical support in order to facilitate pupil's knowledge and self-knowledge, personal development, support for pupils and pre-schoolers in case of emotional, social and behavioural difficulties, learning difficulties, in situations of non-adaptation to the educational environment, in situations of conflict, bullying, violence, etc. The work of the teachers-school counsellors is carried out in the school, according to a timetable that is posted and known to pupils, teachers and parents and drawn up according to their needs with the approval of the principal of the educational establishment and the opinion of the director of the CJRAE / CMBRAE. This number of activity hours is often exceeded, with many activities carried out on a voluntary basis (due to the number of requests and the extremely diverse needs).

Teachers-school counsellors ensure, by means of specific methods, procedures and techniques, the prevention and mitigation of factors leading to behavioural disorders, risk behaviours or psychological discomfort, carry out psycho-pedagogical investigations of children and students, propose and organise educational, vocational and career guidance programmes for pupils in the educational establishments where they work, propose optional courses aimed at pupils' personal development in the curriculum at the school's decision, provide counselling services and courses for parents, support and provide methodological assistance and counselling for teachers, draw up psycho-sociological studies on the choices made by pupils in the final year aiming at vocational qualifications in the vocational and high school education; SEOSP's school counsellors are also psychologists with the right to practise and are certified in clinical psychology, psychological counselling, psychotherapy, special psychology, educational psychology, school and vocational counselling, and they carry out school guidance assessments for pupils with special educational needs/ home-schooled for medical reasons.

Counselling and psycho-pedagogical assistance services are provided in compliance with OMECTS No. 5555 of 7 October 2011 approving the Regulation on the organization and functioning of County / Bucharest Municipality Centres for Educational Resources and Assistance, published in the Official Gazette No. 759 of 27 October 2011, with subsequent amendments and additions.

Educational establishment principal

The principal shall exercise the executive management of the educational establishment, in accordance with the education legislation in force and the decisions of the Board of Directors of the educational establishment. The position of principal in State educational establishments is filled, according to the law, by public competition, supported by tenured teachers, members of the national body of experts in educational management. The competition for the position of principal is organized according to the methodology approved by the order of the Minister of Education. The principal of the educational establishment has executive management, authorising officer and employer functions.

In exercising the function of executive management, the principal has the following duties (Ministry of Education and Research, 2020):

- a) to be the legal representative of the educational establishment and carry out its executive management;
- b) to organize all educational activity;
- c) to be responsible for the application of the legislation in force at the level of the educational establishment;
- d) to ensure that the specific objectives of the educational unit are linked to those set at national and local level;
- e) to coordinate the process of obtaining the legal authorisations and approvals necessary for the operation of the educational establishment;
- f) to ensure that occupational health and safety rules are applied and complied with;
- g) to enter into partnerships with economic operators to provide practical training for students;
- h) to annually submit a report on the quality of education in the educational establishment; the report is presented to the teachers' council, to the parents' representative committee and/or to the parents' association management; the report is brought to the attention of the local public administration authorities and the school inspectorate.

The principal also has other duties, such as:

- a) to propose to the school inspectorate - for approval - the draft schooling plan, approved by the board of directors;
- b) to coordinate the activity of elaborating the educational offer of the educational establishment and to propose it for approval to the board of directors;
- c) to coordinate the activity of collecting statistical data for the national system of indicators for education, which he/she sends to the school inspectorate and is responsible for entering the data into the Romanian Integrated Education Information System (SIIR);

d) to propose the internal rules and regulations of the educational establishment to the Board of Directors, for approval;

e) to coordinate the census of children/pupils in the school district in the case of pre-school, primary and gymnasium education units, etc.

Director of CJRAE / CMBRAE

The conditions for filling the position of director of the CJRAE/CMBRAE and coordinator of the CJAP/CMBAP, as well as the organization of the competition are regulated by the methodology for filling management positions in pre-university education, approved by order of the minister of education. The position of director of the CJRAE/CMBRAE is filled only by graduates with a bachelor's degree or a master's degree, specialising in psychology, pedagogy, special psycho-pedagogy or sociology, with a minimum of 5 years' experience in the field and at least grade II. The Director of the CJRAE/CMBRAE is partially released from teaching duties, with a didactic norm of 4-6 hours, consisting in psycho-pedagogical counselling activities.

The teaching staff and the auxiliary teaching staff of CJRAE/CMBRAE will be employed by the director of the CJRAE/CMBRAE, in compliance with the legal provisions in force (MECTS, 2011).

The Director of the CJRAE/CMBRAE shall draw up and approve the job descriptions and staff appraisal sheets, respectively, annually, with the approval of the Board of Directors. The annual appraisal of the Director of the CJRAE/CMBRAE shall be made by the Board of Directors of CJRAE/CMBRAE on the basis of a job description and a specific appraisal sheet drawn up by the Board of Directors.

Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education is a specialized body of the central public administration, with legal personality, which is organized and operates under the Government. The Ministry of Education is organized and functions on the basis of GEO no. 57/2019 on the Administrative Code, with subsequent amendments and additions, in conjunction with the provisions of GD no. 369/2021 on the organization and functioning of the Ministry of Education, has a role of synthesis and coordination in the field of education, vocational training, university scientific research. As a State authority, the Ministry of Education designs, bases and implements national strategies in the field of education, vocational training and university scientific research, in compliance with the provisions of article 14 (1) of the National Education Act No 1/2011, with subsequent amendments and completions.

The Ministry of Education organizes and manages the national system of education, vocational training, university scientific research and exercises the powers established by laws and other normative acts within its sphere of activity. As a specialised body of the central public administration, it develops and implements national policy in the field of education, vocational training and university scientific research and has the right of initiative and execution in the field of financial policy and human resources policy in the field of education, vocational training and university scientific research.

County school inspectorates and the School Inspectorate of the Municipality of Bucharest

The County School Inspectorates and the School Inspectorate of the Municipality of Bucharest are deconcentrated public services of the Ministry of Education, they are organized at county level and act to achieve the educational objectives set by the Education Law in the field of pre-university education. They carry out all their activities on the basis of the Education Law, the Statute of the teaching staff, the decisions and ordinances issued by the Romanian Government, all normative acts deriving from the content of the Education Law, as well as the orders/precisions issued by the Ministry of Education. They implement policies and strategies, control the application of legislation and monitor the quality of teaching and learning activities and compliance with national standards/performance indicators, through school inspection, control, monitor and evaluate the quality of the management of educational units and institutions, ensure, together with the local public administration authorities, the enrolment of pupils and monitors their participation in courses during compulsory education, coordinate admission to high schools, national assessments and school competitions at the level of educational units in the county and in the municipality of Bucharest respectively.

Universities

Higher education is organised in universities, study academies, institutes, schools of higher education, hereinafter referred to as higher education institutions or universities that have obtained provisional operating authorisation or accreditation.

Higher education institutions are education provider organisations that carry out educational activities on the basis of study programmes authorised to operate provisionally/accredited under the law, initial and continuous training at university level, programmes that operate on the principle of quality and correlation of the educational offer with the labour market.

The national higher education system includes all accredited higher education institutions. A higher education institution authorised to operate provisionally, according to the legal procedures in force, becomes part of the national higher education system only after accreditation. Higher education institutions may be State, private or denominational. These institutions have legal personality, are non-profit and non-political. Higher education institutions are legal persons under public law or, where appropriate, legal persons under private law and of public utility.

University autonomy is guaranteed by the Constitution. Academic freedom is guaranteed by law. Public accountability is also regulated for any higher education institution, State or private.

Youth

Young people who have graduated or dropped out of education are not directly involved in the counselling process in schools, but they have been included in this analysis because they are the main beneficiaries of this activity as well as the main affected by its failure. An inference on the effects of career counselling can be made by looking at relevant statistics on: continuation of studies, insertion rate, time to labour market insertion, assessment of the correlation between education and current job requirements, probability of becoming NEETs.

In 2019, the early school leaving rate was 15.3% for the 18-24 age segment, 5 percentage points above the European average of 10.3%, one of the highest in Europe, with a sinuous evolution, without significant progress towards the national target of 11.3% for 2020 (Ministry of Education, 2021a).

The rate of integration one year after graduation varies from 34.3% for high school graduates to only 14.6% for gymnasium graduates, primary school graduates or those who have not completed any form of education⁹². However, it is worth noting that the employment rate 24 months after graduation is close to the national rate.

According to the same source, less than half (44.1%) of all employed people aged 15-34 feel that their level of education corresponds to a large extent to the requirements of their current job, and another 35.3% feel that their education corresponds to some extent to their current occupation. The remaining 20.6% said that their education was only very slightly or not at all relevant to their job.

Currently, Romania ranks unfavourably among European Union countries in terms of the NEETs indicator (acronym for “Not in Education, Employment or Training”), calculated according to the number of young people aged between 15 and 24 who are neither in education nor in employment, say representatives of the National Institute of Statistics. “Statistics show that 17% of young people aged 15-24 are neither in education nor in employment, and the level of this indicator is very high compared to other countries. The percentage is much higher among girls in this age group, given that one fifth of them do not do anything at all”, according to the report by the Directorate-General for Demography and Social Statistics of the NIS.

The situations that can lead a young person to become a NEET are diverse, but they are all related to dropping out of school. In most cases, it occurs before a young person has completed an educational cycle and, in this case, their chances of gaining a qualification and therefore a job are significantly reduced. Reasons for dropping out can include financial circumstances, the desire to start earning a living, lack of self-confidence, lack of family support and others. In all cases, for a pupil to achieve personally and professionally, support is needed from both parents or legal guardians and the school, including counselling.

There are currently 1,028,776 young people aged 15-19 and 1,003,276 young people aged 20-24 living in Romania.

National Agency for Employment (ANOFM)

Bucharest Municipality Agency for Employment/ County Agencies for Employment (AMOFM/AJOFM)

ANOFM is a public institution of national interest, with legal personality under the authority of the Ministry of Labour. ANOFM is organised and operates on the basis of the tripartite principle and is governed by a Board of Directors made up of representatives of the Government, as well as representatives of the nationally representative trade union and employers’ confederations.

⁹² NIS survey „Access of young people to the labour market”, complementary module to the Household Labour Force Survey (AMIGO) 2016, 2nd quarter

The National Agency for Employment (ANOFM) has under its subordination the Bucharest Municipality Agency, 41 county agencies (within which 70 local agencies and 141 work points operate), 8 county centres for vocational training of the unemployed, 8 regional centres for vocational training of adults, as well as the National Centre for Vocational Training of Own Staff Râşnov.

The National Agency for Employment implements the policies and strategies on employment and vocational training of job seekers developed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Justice and has as one of its main objectives to stimulate the employment of young graduates of educational institutions as part of a coherent process of transition from the educational system to the labour market.

The National Agency for Employment (ANOFM) was included among the main actors in the analysis of career counselling for two reasons.

First of all, the above-mentioned objective places ANOFM immediately after school, and in this area ANOFM carries out a range of actions, initiatives and projects, such as job fairs for graduates, strategies dedicated to the labour market insertion of young people from vulnerable categories or NEETs young people, as well as numerous employment services, including career counselling, and vocational training, relevant to young people.

Secondly, there is also an area of action of ANOFM in high schools and vocational schools as part of efforts to prevent youth unemployment, which can be divided into two broad categories:

Regular visits to high schools. The aim of the visits is to support pupils in their final year to make a smoother transition between school and after graduation, to help them clarify their career goals and aspirations and to make informed decisions. Sometimes visits to high schools and vocational schools consist of a questionnaire to assess the pupils' interests, always followed by information on AJOFM services and legal conditions for access, presentation of job vacancies registered with AJOFM.

Visits to high schools in the final year are among the AJOFM performance indicators and are monitored at national level. They are mainly carried out in technological high schools, usually at the initiative of the teacher-class master. It should be noted that during these visits, the AJOFM does not come into contact with parents and is therefore not in a position to inform them directly about the evolution of the demand for labour in their county of residence. It is also worth noting that the information provided by AJOFMs to pupils is limited to local or international opportunities, mobility within the national territory is not otherwise stimulated by awareness of the national labour market.

Stimulating the employment of pupils and students during holidays, for a maximum period of 60 calendar days, in compliance with Law 72/2007. These programmes facilitate the transition of young people into the labour market by gaining work experience.

In September 2022, the ANOFM statistics included 35,191 people under 25 years of age (16% of the total number of registered unemployed), of which 7,620 people with primary education or no education, 7,047 people with lower secondary education, 3,895 people who have graduated from vocational education or schools of arts and crafts, 15,175 high school graduates.

Civil society organisations

There is a very large number of initiatives from the non-governmental sector that aim to support pupils in the career guidance process. These initiatives range across the spectrum of support solutions, from exploring young people's options, to providing tailored multi-functional support to pupils with special needs, to connecting them with the concrete reality of different professions.

Funding comes mainly from external funds, but not infrequently from national sponsorship. A special category is international organisations such as UNICEF or WorldVision.

The involvement of the non-governmental sector is very welcome and well received by the education system with which it works. On the other hand, the offer is fragmented - these projects are not aggregated into a coherent landscape with national coverage, they are often punctual, both in time and geographically, and there is no collective memory of good practice cases or even a register of initiatives, their promoters, providers, funders, implementation and results, and the pupils advised are the target group.

One of the main reasons for the difficulty in creating such a register is that the profession of career counsellor is not standardised and regulated in the Romanian state system, there has been only a private standardisation initiative, covering the whole process from training to certification and ongoing education, but which due to lack of funds has not been maintained. The lack of standardisation and professional accreditation is also a risk to the quality assurance of these educational activities, which may be beyond the control of the school or high school principal who approves their implementation.

Employers' associations/business community

Employers are directly interested in the quantity and quality of the available workforce, including graduates, and indirectly in the quality of career counselling in schools, to the extent that counselling is seen as an activity with the potential to influence the career choices of future employees.

One direct way in which employers support the training of young people in skills needed by their own businesses is through dual education. Dual education is a tripartite form of organisation of vocational and technical education based on a partnership contract between the economic operator, the educational establishment and the administrative-territorial unit, as well as individual practical training contracts between the economic operator, the pupil/parent-guardian and the educational establishment.

The first generation of dual education graduated in 2020 with 1847 graduates with an insertion rate at graduation of 53%, well above the national average. The total number of economic operators involved in the practical training of this first generation of certified dual education graduates is 236 economic operators.

Beyond this, employers are very open to organising internships for pupils and students, employing pupils and students during summer and accepting pupils' visits as part of career counselling processes in schools and high schools.

Last but not least, employers' associations, businessmen associations and individual employers sponsor NGO projects in the field of career counselling.

At the end of 2020, there were 57,471 firms with more than 10 potential employers, including 9,619 firms with more than 50 employees, 11 employers' associations with national representation and numerous businessmen associations.

From the consultations carried out in the framework of this project, a general opinion emerged regarding the real involvement of the private sector, primarily NGOs, but also employers, in supporting career counselling in schools.

National Penitentiary Administration

The National Administration of Penitentiaries, subordinated to the Ministry of Justice, carries out through the education and psychosocial assistance structure, tasks related to the organization and implementation of psychological and social education and assistance activities and provides qualified support in order to improve/resolve the psychosocial problems faced by persons deprived of their liberty in penitentiary and to prepare them for social reintegration after release. The time spent in detention changes the way of life and the person loses all social roles. Society is constantly changing which leads to increased competitiveness and changing standards and criteria for admission of employees.

Qualification/vocational retraining, following training and specialisation courses, training and retraining are advantages for finding and taking up a job. The counselling and vocational guidance programme meets the socio-professional reintegration needs of ex-offenders, helping both to change their negative views of work, law, responsibility and society and to facilitate their efforts to regain their place in the community lost when they entered the penitentiary.

The counselling and career guidance programme for minors and young people in rehabilitation centres, penitentiaries and probation services aims to encourage young people to make realistic choices in compliance with their abilities, skills and personal possibilities, thus supporting the process of stimulating intrinsic motivation to adopt pro-social behaviour.

National Anti-Drug Agency

The National Anti-Drug Agency under the Ministry of Administration and Interior approaches the drug problem from an interdisciplinary perspective, in this sense, the institution's team includes doctors, lawyers, psychologists, sociologists, social workers, pharmacists, chemists, specialists in education and crime prevention, etc.

Within the Agency there are regional structures, without legal personality, which are composed of one or more regional centres for prevention, assessment and counselling on drugs/integrated support programmes in addiction, depending on the type of services provided to consumers, and whose organisation is established by the Agency's organisational and operational regulation.

A centre for drug prevention, assessment and counselling and/or integrated assistance programmes in addiction is provided with at least 3 posts, corresponding to specialisation in one of the following fields: medical, psychosocial and social work and, where appropriate, also with posts corresponding to specialisation in the fields of crime prevention and education and training.

National Centre for Mental Health and Drug Abuse Control

The National Centre for Mental Health and Drug Abuse Control is a specialized public institution subordinated to the Ministry of Health, ensuring the coordination, implementation and assessment of mental health policies at national level.

The World Health Organization describes mental health as: „A state of well-being in which each person realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work usefully and productively, and is able to contribute in turn to the development of the community to which he or she belongs“.

Romanian Police

The Romanian Police carries out studies and research on the dynamics of crime in Romania and proposes measures to prevent it, and organises its own database, according to the law.

The Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the National Probation Directorate and the National Administration of Penitentiaries are public institutions that can provide data and information of interest to support recommendations, measures and public policies formulated in the field of prevention and social reintegration of persons deprived of their liberty.

The National Strategy for Social Reintegration of Detainees 2020-2024 was approved by GD no. 430 of 27 May 2020.

Annex 10 Theoretical models in career counselling and guidance

The literature review highlights a number of theoretical models used in career counselling and guidance (Botnariuc, 2019):

- the person-environment fit model, which predicts career success based on the diagnosis of personal traits;
- the development model, which stresses the importance of lifelong career development;
- model that highlights the role of learning in career development;
- the cognitive approach model which emphasises individual learning plans and cognitive restructuring;
- the model of adaptation to the client typology by diagnosing inter-individual differences (decision making).

Zunker (2016) specifies that regardless of the model used, it is the client's responsibility to carry out the career counselling process by going through steps such as: gathering, interpreting and diagnosing information, using intervention and decision-making strategies.

Annex 11 Mapping career counselling services in Europe (including Romania)

The mapping of career counselling services in European (including Romania) was most recently carried out in 2019 within CareersNet, a European network of career counselling experts created in 2017 and coordinated by Cedefop, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, an agency of the European Union.

Experts in each CareersNet member country have been producing, from 2019-2020, Inventories of Lifelong Guidance and Counselling Systems and Practices, which contain relevant information on coordination and collaboration between stakeholders at national, regional and local level, access to career counselling and guidance, quality assurance, career management competences, evidence, monitoring and assessment of effectiveness in career counselling and guidance, use of ICT in career counselling and guidance, training and qualifications, funding.

CareersNet provides access to harmonised and comparable career counselling and guidance practices, promoting their transfer and adaptation; it facilitates comparative and transnational analysis of systems and initiatives; it supports countries in developing national policies in this field (Andrei, 2021a).

Annex 12 International trends in career counselling and guidance

An international report (ETF, 2020) made by the European Training Foundation (ETF) examines the trends currently facing career counselling and guidance, focusing on: the use of information and communication technologies (ICT), the development of career management competences (CMC) and their link with social and emotional competences, the cooperation and coordination mechanisms used in career counselling and guidance, the role of parents in supporting children's career choices, community counselling, social justice counselling, Green Guidance and counselling.

The role of information and communication technologies in career counselling systems addresses issues such as: online career information (e.g. digital career information systems, digital labour market information systems, interactive web-based systems), the use of big data, chatbots, apps, social media, career simulators with artificial intelligence in the provision of career advice and guidance; professional development of practitioners in the use of ICT.

Another innovative trend is the creation of theoretical and practical models linking **transversal career management competences and social and emotional competences**, which play a key role in helping people find a job. For example, one of the skills in demand by employers is the ability to adapt to change, mentioned in 3 out of 4 job ads/ out of 30 million job ads analysed (Cedefop, 2019).

Innovative trends in **coordination and cooperation** in the field of career counselling underline the need for cooperation within multi-professional and inter-sectoral networks, the creation of mechanisms to support cooperation between education institutions and employment agencies, between career counselling services and employers, trade unions, NGOs, youth organisations, etc.

Innovative trends in the **role of parents/guardians in supporting children's career choices** include: systematically involving parents in their own children's career decision-making; providing expert support for parents from educational/counselling institutions so that they feel confident and well-informed about the educational, occupational and career opportunities available to their children.

Community counselling (Thomsen, 2012) promotes reflective career counselling practices conducted in the community, not in the counselling office, through collaboration between beneficiaries and practitioners. It offers the opportunity to work with young people in their own environment (classroom, school, canteens, local libraries, cafes or youth clubs).

Counselling for Social Justice (Hooley, Sultana and Thomsen, 2018) focuses on creating new theoretical models and practices of career counselling that provide answers for social injustice and emphasizes the role of social solidarity, social inclusion, and the right of citizens to decent wages.

Green Guidance focuses on raising young people's awareness of the importance of "green careers" and choosing environmentally friendly occupations/jobs, as well as the need to ensure a balance between

work and other aspects of personal life. In occupations requiring low skills, there is a need for greater awareness of environmental issues or even adaptations of the work process (ILO, 2019).

Also, a recent ETF report (ETF, 2020) presents **48 innovative examples of policy, practice and research** from the European Union (EU) and internationally, grouped into: use of information and communication technology (23 examples), **career management competences** (6 examples), cooperation - coordination mechanisms (6 examples), role of parents in their children's career decisions (8 examples), other trends (5 examples). Each **good practice example** is structured according to the **criteria**: context and introduction, content, impact, effectiveness and success factors, challenges and future developments.

Annex 13 National counselling guides and collections of good practice

In recent years, counselling guides and collections of good practices have been produced at national level, involving researchers, university professors and teachers-counsellors from different counties of Romania.

Counselling and guidance in lower secondary education curriculum. Comparative study

A comparative study on how counselling and guidance is included in gymnasium curriculum in different countries (e.g. Romania, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, South Korea, USA) was conducted in 2016-2017 by a team of researchers from the Institute of Education Sciences, with support from Euroguidance Romania (Țibu et al, 2018b).

Guide to teaching the school subject Counselling and personal development in lower secondary education

A guide to support the teaching of the school subject Counselling and personal development in **lower secondary education** by class masters and teachers-counsellors (Țibu et al, 2018a) was produced in 2017-2018 by a team of researchers from the Institute of Education Sciences, with support from Euroguidance Romania. The guide has been validated by counselling practitioners and provides theoretical information, examples of learning units, learning activities and worksheets that can be used by teachers during lessons in grade 5, complementary to the textbook commonly used in the classroom and other types of additional resources.

Programmes and counselling activities for the development of social-emotional competences of pupils in primary/gymnasium /high school/vocational education. Guide for teachers-school counsellors

In May 2020, the Ministry of Education commissioned the Education Research Unit of the National Centre for Policy and Assessment in Education to produce a guide for teachers (Andrei, 2020) to support them in developing the social-emotional competences of pupils at all levels of education. A national call was made to school inspectorates (ISJ/ISMB) and CJRAE/CMBRAE throughout the country, asking for examples of good practices, presented on the basis of common structures (the presentation sheet of a counselling programme and the presentation sheet of a counselling activity) and systematised using the international CASEL model. A total of 268 examples of counselling programmes and activities were received in a short time, from which 132 relevant examples were selected on the basis of criteria for inclusion in the paper.

With the contribution of 107 teachers-counsellors from 28 counties and Bucharest, three volumes (665 pages) were produced, including descriptions of 132 counselling programmes and activities, accompanied by 193 worksheets created by the authors. Of the 132 counselling programmes and activities, 26 were aimed at primary school pupils, 58 at gymnasium pupils and 48 at 3-year high school/vocational school pupils. These counselling programmes and activities were implemented in schools by teachers and teachers-counsellors in Romania, in order to develop the social-emotional competences of primary, gymnasium / and high school /vocational school pupils. This guide illustrates the types of counselling programmes and activities designed and implemented in schools by teachers-counsellors in Romania, with the resources available in the Romanian educational context. These counselling programmes and

activities can be carried out: face-to-face, online, face-to-face and online (in a blended manner) and can be implemented by teachers-counsellors in the CJRAE/CMBRAE or in teams composed of teacher-counsellor and teachers/other collaborators (families, companies, NGOs, etc.).

The paper provides support and ideas for school teachers-counsellors in **designing, conducting and evaluating counselling programmes and activities** with pupils at all levels of education, suggests potential **educational partners and ways of collaborating** with them, facilitates communication (including *CJRAE/CMBRAE contact details and email addresses of the authors*), **mutual learning, exchange of ideas and best practices** among CJRAE/CMBRAE school teachers-counsellors. The paper contributes to the **understanding of existing counselling practices** and the **needs for improvement and innovation** to be implemented in the school counselling system in Romania.

Collection of best practices for school counsellors and teachers

With the support of Euroguidance Romania, a work (Andrei, 2021b) was produced that includes 38 contributions by school counsellors and counselling researchers, structured as: reflection journals (26); pupil social and emotional competence development programmes (6) and pupil social and emotional competence development activities (6), which are aimed at primary, gymnasium and high school pupils. The programmes and activities presented in the form of reflective journals focused on objectives related to **career counselling and guidance**, such as:

- facilitating young people's access to a job in line with their vocational profile;
- development of self-knowledge, emotion management, interpersonal and communication skills, social awareness, adoption of a healthy lifestyle and career management skills in primary, gymnasium, high/vocational school pupils.

It is important to note that the **impact of** some of these counselling programmes has been measured by:

- feedback reports, organised in each educational unit involved in the project, with programme participants (pupils, teachers and parents) being interviewed about their experience of participating in the project activities;
- by means of a questionnaire for parents, administered prior to the organisation and implementation of the counselling activities (pretest stage) and then one month after the last activity with the pupils (post-test stage).

Career counselling and guidance. Guide for high schools

The paper was developed in 2020, within the framework of the Romania Secondary Education Project – ROSE, funded by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The guide for high schools (Lițoiu, 2020) focuses on assisting teachers in their efforts to support pupils through specific counselling and career guidance actions. Teachers provide pupils with information, applications and methodological

and practical benchmarks on issues such as: awareness of personal resources and how they can be improved; understanding decision-making mechanisms; the need to develop career planning or job search skills, as well as exploring possible pathways to the labour market.

The electronic platform "Choose your path!"⁹³

The "Choose your path!" platform, created by the National Centre for the Development of Vocational and Technical Education (CNDÎPT), is an information portal for students, parents, teachers and company representatives who are interested in pursuing a vocational and technical education pathway and in developing an education and training option aimed at making it easier for future graduates to integrate into a constantly changing labour market.

It contains information about the vocational education offer, news in the field, the latest regulations issued by the Ministry of Education, information about qualifications and the documents required for pupils (enrolment forms, practical training contracts, etc.), teachers (curricula) and companies.

In order to increase the importance given to the direct link with the labour market, this portal is also an important tool for companies wishing to become partners in the vocational and technical education route, thus having the possibility to be directly involved in the training of pupils, from the selection stage to the assessment and organisation of the professional certification exam.

⁹³ <https://www.alegetidrumul.ro/>

Annex 14 Individualised Education and Career Plan

- It gives pupils the opportunity to identify career and life goals and propose customized ways to achieve them;
- It aims to prepare pupils for further education, career and life by developing the skills of: self exploration; career exploration; career planning and management.
- It provides pupils with access to work-based learning and documentation.
- It requires the creation of a physical document/ e-portfolio that stores all the activities carried out by the pupils (Solberg, 2019; Andrei & Solberg, 2020).

Box 24 Individualised education and career plan (sample format) (Andrei, 2019)⁹⁴

| |
|---|
| <p>1. My school results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School results in the subjects covered by my educational and career aims and objectives• Learning progress sheets for specific school subjects and the need for remedial/recovery support• Plans to follow certain optional subjects during high school• Results in competitions, extracurricular activities |
| <p>2. Results on my career path</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Results of the documentation of career goals and educational requirements to be met• Career options identified as a result of the assessment of interests, skills and values• Documented results of career exploration• Understanding forecasts of local, county, national labour needs• Evidence of participation in career counselling classes/activities• Evidence of participation in work experience, job shadowing, internships, etc. |
| <p>3. My results regarding the continuation of my educational/academic pathway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence of understanding of admission requirements to different types of schools, e.g. post-secondary schools, universities, etc.• Comparison sheets of offers of some post-secondary education institutions• Financial assistance plans• Personal CV for further studies/employment etc. |
| <p>4. My results on participation in extra-curricular activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clubs and organisations• Sports and leisure activities• Opportunities in the arts• Volunteering, civic and community service activities• Work experience, job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships• Leadership opportunities |

⁹⁴ This example of an Individualized Education and Career Plan was conducted as part of the Fulbright Postdoctoral Research on “Evaluation of career guidance programs” by Dr. Angela Andrei in 2018-2019 at Boston University, Wheelock College of Education and Human Development, USA.

Annex 15 Presentation conference (Andrei, 2019)⁹⁵

Purpose: to help pupils and parents make informed decisions to achieve educational and career goals

How it works:

- presentation of the Individual Education and Career Plan in the form of a conference by each pupil in grade 12;
- inviting parents/guardians to the school to attend the presentation of their child's Individual Education and Career Plan in the form of a conference;
- presentation by the pupil of the aim pursued and the individualised education and career plan;
- discussing the purpose and the individualised education and career plan with the teacher-class master, school counsellor and parents/guardians.

Participants: pupil, class master, schoolcounsellor, parents/guardians

Duration: 45 minutes

Presentation conference – structure (example)

Complete the sections below and present them at the conference with the teacher-class master, school counsellor and parents (duration: 45 minutes):

- *My educational and career dreams...*
- *Educational and career goals and objectives...*
- *Self-assessment of dreams, purpose, educational and career goals...*
- *Activities that help me achieve my goals and dreams (e.g. selecting courses, extra-curricular activities; obtaining certificates, certificates during high school; setting graduation requirements, plans after high school graduation, etc.) are...*
- *The people/groups that help/helped me to achieve my goals and dreams....*

⁹⁵ This sample of Conference Presentation was conducted as part of the Fulbright Postdoctoral Research on "Evaluation of career guidance programs" by Dr. Angela Andrei in 2018-2019 at Boston University, Wheelock College of Education and Human Development, USA.