

European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network

Work Package 3:

Co-operation and co-ordination mechanisms in guidance policy and systems development

Peer Learning Activity, Oslo, Norway, November 10-11, 2011

BRIEFING NOTE

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1. Context:

- 1.1. This Briefing Note is based on previous data collections on co-operation and co-ordination in the member states of the members of WP3. Whereas previous WP3 peer-learning activities and field visits have concentrated on national guidance fora and similar co-operation and co-ordination mechanisms, this Briefing Note adds a focus on the regional and even local dimensions of co-operation and co-ordination in career guidance public policy development.
- 1.2. In doing so, it draws upon recent work by CEDEFOP (2011), along with recent evaluations of Norwegian regional partnerships (Nyhus et al, 2011), and it provides an insight into country specific examples of regional/local co-operation and co-ordination in Austria and Norway.
- 1.3. This Briefing Note introduces three dimensions of regional co-operation and co-ordination, examples of which are depicted in the annexes:
 - (1) Intra-regional: linkages within the regional, across structural silos and different sectors
 - (2) Inter-regional: linkages across regional boundaries
 - (3) Cross-national: regional linkages across national boundaries

Of these three, (1) is the most common, (2) is rare, and (3) exceptional

1.4 According to the above-mentioned Norwegian evaluation of regional career guidance partnerships (Nyhus et al, 2011) three main categories can be distinguished:

- Regional/county partnership: the wide cooperation with two or more of the relevant players/ bodies
- Collaboration at the county level: various forms of cooperation where the area of cooperation is not left to a partnership, but controlled hierarchically via the collaborating parties
- Project-based partnerships: a partnership related to specific projects or tasks or for specific purposes, where the parties have been selected for this specific purpose.

2. The present state

2.1 On this basis, the main findings are that some ELGPN countries are still in an early phase of establishing national fora; more are on their way. Some are struggling to fulfil their potential policy-making role on the national level. On a regional and local level such efforts and structures seem more easily established.

2.2 A taxonomy of the intensity of linkages was established during the earlier phase of ELGPN, identifying three levels:

- *Communication*. This might include exchanging information, and exploring possibilities for co-operation and co-ordination.
- *Co-operation* between partners, within existing structures. This might be largely informal in nature, and based on a co-operation agreement, with decision-making powers being retained by each partner.
- *Co-ordination*. This is likely to require a co-ordinating structure, with operational powers and funding (and possibly a contract or legal mandate).

2.3 The CEDEFOP manual (2008) identifies ten “key messages”, i.e. “propositions that merit consideration in the process of establishing and developing national forums”. These relate to the need:

- (1) To make a clear connection to lifelong learning and employability strategies.
- (2) To establish shared definitions and terminology.
- (3) To be selective in determining those invited to participate.

- (4) To have clearly identified tasks and roles.
- (5) To have strong champions, and strong commitment from key parties.
- (6) To define clearly the relationship with the government.
- (7) To have a secretariat which is independent or at least ring-fenced.
- (8) To avoid mission drift.
- (9) To be aware of the risks of role conflict.
- (10) To strive to work from the viewpoint of the individual citizen.

2.4 Some countries have an explicit aim of using their national forum for designing a strategy for lifelong guidance. Some country specific examples (CEDEFOP, 2011): In *Austria* a nationwide platform has been elaborating objectives for a lifelong guidance strategy to support transversal coordination and cooperation in information, counselling and guidance for education and careers at regional and federal levels. In *Luxembourg* a national guidance forum has been drafting a national strategy for lifelong guidance and has submitted its recommendations to the two ministries concerned (Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training, Ministry of Labour and Employment). In *Slovenia*, an expert group on lifelong guidance has been assigned to prepare a proposal for a systemic and holistic approach to lifelong guidance that will incorporate the relevant actors in career orientation. The *Finnish* national guidance policy forum has designed a strategy to develop lifelong guidance. The *Slovak* national guidance forum has defined the aims, priorities and specific goals of lifelong guidance at national level. The *Polish* Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has established a lifelong vocational counselling discussion forum to discuss the challenges of guidance development, along with regional partnerships in several Polish voivodeships (regions). The *Czech* Republic has established a National Guidance Policy Forum as a platform for meetings of professionals in lifelong guidance. The *Danish* Ministry of Education has set up a National Dialogue Forum on Guidance. Most recently, *Norway* has established a National Unit for Career Guidance, with links to the already existing regional partnerships. The three Baltic states, *Estonia*, *Latvia*, and *Lithuania*, all have national fora. In *Croatia* the public employment services - in partnership with other stakeholders - have proposed establishing a national forum for lifelong guidance.

2.5 The representation of members in the national forums varies greatly according to the tasks and goals set for the forum. The *German* national forum has a special status as it was established as a legal association in 2006. It does not receive any direct funding from the government, but the federal and Länder bodies are represented in a linked advisory council. The *Greek* National Centre for Vocational Orientation (EKEP) is the executive authority in charge of planning and monitoring the work of the Greek National Guidance Forum. *Turkey*

has produced a memorandum of understanding in 2009 with the participation of all related stakeholders (public authorities, social partners, NGOs) to update the tasks and roles defined in an earlier protocol.

Some of these fora are merely consultative and reactive, e.g. the Danish National Forum for Dialogue in Guidance, whereas others have a more proactive policy-making and policy-formulating role.

3. Further regional aspects

- 3.1 As mentioned in an earlier Briefing Note, supplementing cross-national peer-learning events in WP3 with the twinning of bordering regions across national borders could be an option for further developing guidance on a *regional* and/or *cross-regional* basis. Such activities would mirror recent developments in educational, labour market and social policies in the European Union, and develop efforts in ELGPN in terms of a regional dimension.
- 3.2 In some administratively and politically sub-divided countries, a cross-regional approach may serve as a vehicle to ease co-operation and co-ordination in the guidance field.
- 3.3 In practical terms this could imply further work on inter-regional and intra-regional matters concerning e.g.:
 - Support the establishing of regional, cross-sectoral co-ordination and co-operation fora
 - Encourage regional, cross-sectoral training for guidance experts, e.g. in the adult guidance sectors
 - Encourage common planning and curricular development of work-experience programmes, workplace visits, workshadowing, educational taster courses, educational/work fairs, etc
 - Encourage coordinated workplace guidance activities, and other common outreach guidance activities.
- 3.4 Earlier experiences with regional co-ordination and co-operation might serve as an example here: 14 regional Danish Guidance Cooperation Networks (known as 'Vejledersamarbejdet') were in existence from 1979-2004, when this setup was terminated as part of the 2004 Danish 'Guidance Reform', and not replaced with similar structures. Over these 25 years, such regional guidance networks were in contact with each other on a cross-regional basis, and, nationally, with the (then)

National Council for Educational and Vocational Guidance through regular meetings. With an aim to create a seamless and more effective life-long guidance offer, the brief of these networks was to support co-ordination and co-operation among guidance practitioners on a cross-sectoral basis within the region. In practical terms such activities included structured cross-sectoral, 200-hours' regional training of (adult) guidance staff; monthly thematic informational meetings for guidance workers across sectors; regional coordination of educational visits, open doors, taster courses, and suchlike for students; along with (small) funding for innovative guidance projects within the decided yearly themes, which were then highlighted as the theme of the annual regional cross-sectoral conference. Based at the regional PES head office, all these activities were run by a part-time career guidance expert, who also served as the secretariat for Regional Guidance Council, which held the formal responsibility for these efforts. Admittedly, some regions were more active in this field than others, but, as an example, one part time guidance expert in Frederiksborg County North of Copenhagen, served a network of 500 guidance workers, ranging from career guidance staff in schools and VET/HE educational institutions, to social workers, PES staff, probation officers in prisons, to guidance staff in the armed forces: a wide range of guidance workers across many sectors and structural silos. The mutual knowledge and trust which was built through the above-mentioned activities meant that referral and practical cooperation and coordination on the day-to-day level was smooth, readily available and non-bureaucratic.

- 3.5 *Austria* has introduced a national lifelong guidance strategy and, as part of it, a nationwide and provider-independent educational guidance system for adults was set up during 2007-10. This system is based on a supra-regional network consisting of regionally active stakeholders. This participatory approach of relevant stakeholders is expected to be beneficial in developing models of quality assurance, and for strengthening knowledge management and the use of statistics to improve guidance service provision for adults. The national lifelong guidance strategy was integrated into the national lifelong learning strategy by decision of the national council of ministers in July 2011. In *Germany*, a government programme Learning regions network has been completed. With funding of the Federal Ministry, local and regional networks were established to initiate a local lifelong learning and employment strategy including guidance and counselling provision. Training providers, employment agencies, chambers of commerce, enterprises, local schools and municipalities, trade unions and other local actors and stakeholders participated in the networks. Guidance services were in most cases an integral part of these networks.
- 3.6 Although countries see much potential in increasing network/partnership based coordination and cooperation across sectors, administrations and organisations, they also see limitations and challenges. Mostly these critical aspects are linked to differences in the operating cultures between the sectors (education and

employment). Sectors also have different structures and specific mandates based on regulations defining their funding, processes, and responsibilities. Occasionally the sectors and administrations may also find themselves in competition over the same limited resources. Moreover, sectoral protectionism may result in lack of synergies as well as a lack of continuity as retaining relationships between organisations becomes too complicated; in the worst case this might only strengthen sector-to-sector stereotypes. One of the main weaknesses is that different elements of counselling aimed at risk groups are not sufficiently interconnected (CEDEFOP, 2011).

- 3.7 In short, many countries have taken concrete steps towards strengthening the role of guidance in their national lifelong learning and employment strategies and policies. The current trend in most countries is towards enhanced cross-sectoral and multi-professional network-based cooperation, increased policy and strategy dialogue and stronger partnerships among all key players and stakeholders. National guidance policy fora or similar coordination mechanisms aim to smoothen horizontal and vertical policy coordination and implementation to harmonise diverse national, regional, local and even sectoral interests. This national cooperation has contributed, for example, to legislative and strategic initiatives, to measures broadening the evidence-base on guidance, and to developing guidance models, structures and qualifications. Working groups are quite widely used in many countries to deal with specific guidance issues, to generate tailor-made reports, proposals and evaluations and to bring guidance related initiatives forward in the policy- and decision-making processes. This is the national level.
- 3.8 In many cases, national/regional/local authorities have been in favour of establishing regional guidance partnerships and alliances as to promote more regionally based cooperation across sectors and administrations (e.g. education, training, employment, youth, social and health care). There is evidence that, by applying this multi-stakeholder approach in a local/regional context, all relevant actors and institutional bodies can be brought together to agree on how jointly to develop guidance services as well as how best to meet local challenges and demands (ibid). Such local level action, in some cases, has given citizens a more active and participatory role in discussions on how guidance services could be designed and implemented to better meet their learning, career management skills, self-development needs as well as widening their access to services. But rhetoric and realities do not align here: the ideal figure of the European active citizen is some way away, and guidance is still in many cases something which happens to people rather than with people (Vilhjálmsdóttir et al, 2011).
- 3.9 During the earlier stage of ELGPN, developments at regional level were also addressed and examples were provided from a number of countries:

- In Austria, provincial guidance networks for guidance in lifelong learning have been established, within a national 'network cluster'.
- In Finland, there were plans to prepare new legislation on compulsory regional co-operation in promoting inclusion and active transitions to the labour market, enhancing the work of the existing regional cross-sectoral fora.
- In Germany, guidance practitioners from education and labour have worked closely together for some time at regional level.
- In Italy, the Ministry of Labour formed an agreement with the regions about a minimum standard system for employment services. It also developed a theoretical framework for a national survey designed to map the structures supporting lifelong guidance policy and system development at local/regional level; the goal was to promote inter-institutional and cross-sectoral co-operation at regional level.
- In Norway, an agreement between the Ministry of Labour and the Norwegian Association of Municipal and Regional Authorities aims to enhance and systematise co-operation between regional/local education authorities and public employment services in relation to career guidance, APEL and VET. Based on this, all regional authorities have signed their own agreements as a basis for their co-operation, known as partnerships. See Annex 1 on one such example, from County Østfold, Norway.

3.10 The CEDEFOP manual (2008) includes a section on regional fora (Section 4.2.5).

4. **Key Messages** (to be revised)

4.1 Information, advice and guidance services need to be co-ordinated and to co-operate to be effective. At present, too much energy is wasted on overlapping guidance activities which are carried out in institutional silos with little cross-sectoral communication. This situation needs to be improved in terms of creating synergies between and among the different guidance actors, both on a national and a regional level.

4.2 Thus co-operation and co-ordination of guidance goes beyond the breaking down of the present silos. It aims at creating a seamless life-long guidance approach, without losing the expertise of the different actors in the guidance process.

4.3 Links to other ELGPN WPs are pivotal, both in relation to validation of prior learning, to career management skills, the integral use of ICT, and to the overall lifelong guidance policies of the EU.

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Annex 1:

Partnership for career guidance: a regional example, Norway

Based on note by regional coordinator Geir Syvertsen, Østfold County, Norway, September 2011

Background

Regional partnerships in guidance were established by decree from central government (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2006) as part of a general competence policy drive, known as Kunnskapsløftet. The brief was: 'Counties are expected to take responsibility to strengthen life-long career guidance through establishing partnerships for career guidance.' A regional steering group was formed with representation from the social partners and the county authorities, along with the regional university college, and the association of municipalities in the county. Østfold County is the leadpartner. Fig 1 (below) is a model of the organisational structure:

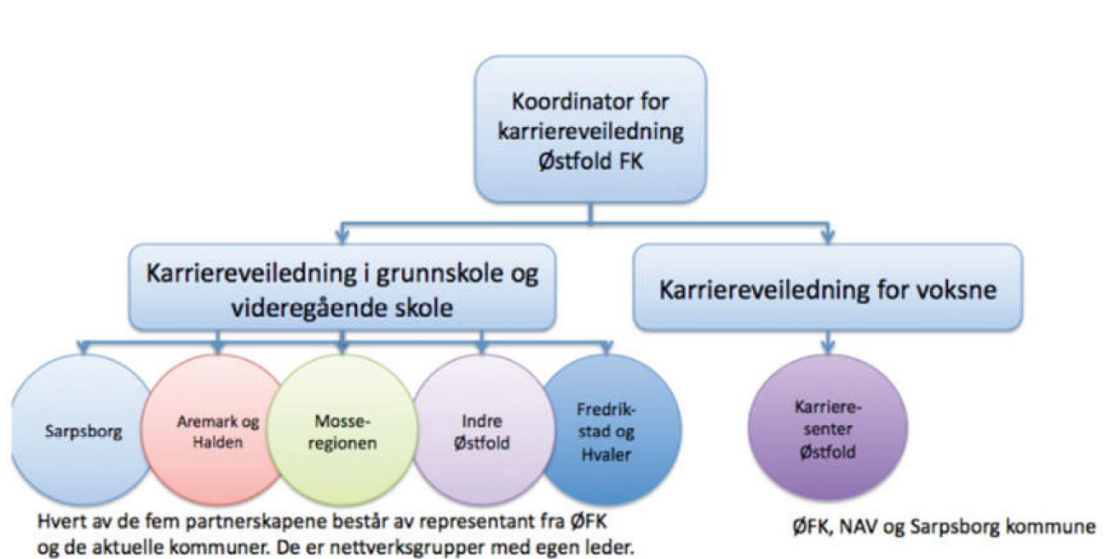


Fig. 1 Model of organisational structure of Partnerskap for karriereveiledning i Østfold, (From Østlandsforsknings notat nr.10/2011)

This shows that Østfold County has six career guidance partnerships, five of which are with municipalities, and one of which concerns adult guidance.

Cooperation takes place in networks among guidance staff from 55 educational institutions (secondary and upper secondary schools). *Karrieresenter Østfold* for adults has its own network, which includes the county authorities, NAV Østfold (PES) and Sarpsborg municipality (see: <http://www.karriereostfold.no/>).

All partnerships are of limited duration: 2-3 years of length, with the view to make them permanent. Three of the longest running partnerships with municipalities have been evaluated. Based on this evaluation, and other experiences made so far, it has been decided that Østfold County shall invite the municipalities to make the partnerships permanent. The evaluation of *Karrieresenter Østfold* is currently taking place.

Challenges

1. Choosing a strategy

Which model? What does 'partnership' imply ?

2. Making decisions

Who decides what?

3. Keeping everything together: coordination

Many actors: who does what?

4. Information flow

The partnership is a complex organisation. No single partner has the power: who informs whom and when?

5. Relationship to other projects and activities

Other coordination projects, e.g in terms educational retention projects: local/regional inside knowledge is essential

6. Social partners

NHO and LO (social partner organisations) are not active in the partnerships at present: work is in progress to find ways to include working life and social partner organisations in the partnership on an operational level.

Experiences - bonuses

- Builds on previous partnerships: an asset
- Practical activities includes courses for contact teachers on the curriculum for the new school subject 'Utdanningsvalg' (i.e. Educational Choice), better knowledge of educational options in the region, mutual study visits, etc, i.e. competence development of guidance professionals

- The chosen decentralised model allows for local differences
- Links have been established between regional and national coordination in career guidance
- Information flows vertically and horizontally
- Better linkages re career guidance developments between the municipalities, the county authorities, the PES, and the career centre

Experiences - minusses

- In some instances there can be long time-lapses from decisions to actions
- Differences in role perceptions can impede coordination
- The coordinator has no executive power, and there is no central decision-maker. This can create some difficulties. These difficulties are countered by the role of Østfold County as lead-partner: this is a pivotal role
- The partnership may be seen as an organisation add-on, whereas much coordination actually takes place directly among institutions. Each partnership has its own steering group which can act as a contact point between different parts of the system
- The establishing of the partnership may have caused some partners to rely on the partnership to organise activities, thus suggesting to terminate some of the established activities with reference to the work being done through the partnerships.

Summary

Based on the evaluation of Østlandsforskning, Notat 10/2011 (pp 37-38):

The aims of the partnerships include:

- Create coherence in lifelong guidance
- Ease access to guidance
- Strengthen coordination in lifelong career guidance, regionally and locally
- Clarify roles and tasks among actors in career guidance
- Strengthen career guidance in schools

- Strengthen links with working life and labour market policies

The evaluation points to the following:

- The partnership in Østfold contributes to lifelong guidance as seen from a holistic perspective
- 'Lifelong' needs defining in relation to guidance
- Mutual knowledge among guidance staff eases referral
- Coordination of career guidance has been facilitated through the activities of the partnership: this has enhanced the quality of guidance work in the region
- The roles of the partnership via-a-vis the regional career centre seem unclear

Annex 2

Main conclusions from a recent evaluation of Regional Partnerships, Norway (2011)

From:

Nyhus, L. et al (2011). *Partnerskap – eller løse forbindelser? Vurderinger av fylkesvise partnerskap for karriereveiledning*. [Partnerships or loose connections? Evaluation of regional partnerships in career guidance]. Lillehammer: Østlandsforskning

- 1) There are various forms of cooperation; county or regional partnerships, traditional interdepartmental / intersectoral collaboration and / or project-based partnerships, such as those related to career centers. "County partnership in career guidance" are not established in all counties, given the way partnerships, as a public governmental form, is understood in this report. The various forms of cooperation can function well in relation to achievement in career guidance.
- 2) The study presents many examples of cooperation, coordination and information exchange within the career field, as a result of the partnership work. It is not, however, possible to state whether there are specific organizational models that are more suited than others to achieve better cooperation and coordination. As expected, formalization of the cooperation seems to enhance opportunities for real coordination in the field.
- 3) The study also presents examples of initiatives, as a result of partnership working, that may have led to improvement in access and quality of services. However, it is difficult for respondents to answer the questions about what kind of effects partnership work has had on access and quality.
- 4) Partnership for career guidance is relatively little known in the counties, especially among some of the potential partners to such cooperation, like the higher education sector and local municipal administration / school professional staff. It must be taken into account that the partnership for career guidance is a relatively new initiative that needs time to be developed and more familiar.
- 5) There are, however, some challenges associated with the parties involved in the field. The report raises some questions about the extent to which organizations such as the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO), The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS), The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) and the Union of Education Norway are concerned as partners or whether they should rather be replaced by "work places". When it comes to the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV), there is a wide variation between the counties in their participation.

- 6) There are some conditions that affect the development of partnerships for career guidance; such as presuppositions, frames and frame setting (appointments, resources, roles, etc.), intentions and motivation (“energy”) and the actual collaborative processes; that is how they are managed, led and followed up. With regard to the presuppositions, the "life-long perspective" seems to be understood differently among the actors – as one example.
- 7) Working in partnership for career guidance is seen as important among the actors in the field. Many of the respondents in the study do not have any opinion about whether the organizational model of the partnership in their county functions well or not. This is because there are relatively few of the players in the field who have a role in partnership work.

Background and aim of the study

Partnership for career guidance is established to strengthen regional coordination, provide formal cooperation and support local needs in the work of educational and vocational guidance. Partnerships can also be a support for counseling in schools and can strengthen the guidance in the transition between primary and secondary education. Career centers are one of several instruments that the partnership for career guidance uses.

The aim of this study is to show to what extent and how partnerships are useful to players in career guidance in the different counties, when it comes to counseling in schools, to career counselors in the higher education sector and to supervisors in the NAV and the workplace. There are also other key questions: what kind of partnership forms or cooperation constellations are developed, and to what extent do these contribute to cooperation and coordination within the career field? The study is primarily an exploratory study with the intention to get a better overview and to clarify concepts to better understand the partnership work in career counseling, and not an actual "measurement" of the status and effectiveness of this partnership work.

The concept of career guidance

The term career guidance is used in the Norwegian context as parallel to educational and vocational counseling. Careers and career development are understood in modern setting as something that is not reserved for the few, but that ought to be available to everyone by the means of the individual's lifelong development in learning and work. It is about the individual's flexibility of employment and career guidance to help this happen. Career guidance is part of a complex field which render services to different target groups which is given by a number of different service providers, both public and private. There seems to be some “grey areas” between career counseling and other forms of counseling services.

Partnerships - what is it?

Inclusion in partnerships are, according to the theory, first and foremost about establishing binding coalitions where one has the resources necessary to solve collective problems. Partnerships are joined by independent parties, and they must to some extent be formalized through an organizational superstructure, agreements and / or contracts that define the purpose, duties, responsibilities and resource contributions. The parties have given the control of the field to the partnership, which governs in accordance to what was agreed between the parties. Partnership exists in contrast to traditional hierarchical management and offers new challenges and opportunities. From the governmental level there is a belief that partnership will contribute to better coordination and formal cooperation in the field. At the same time, there is a desire for a certain degree of national governance, and tensions can also rise between the partners. In practice, it turns out that partnership is a term used for various forms of cooperation and interaction.

Background - national, Nordic and international guidelines

The career guidance field is under design and development, and it has a long history related to educational and vocational counseling in schools. Career guidance is also part of a complex relationship of various types of services, partly associated and regulated through various laws and regulations. Many actors and agencies are involved related to regulated services and voluntary services across the public and private sectors.

Career guidance is a field with complex expectations. It will be valuable both for the individual, society in general and the economy. There are clear European guidelines in the field, and there is consensus in the Nordic countries of a career with a lifelong perspective both for lifelong learning, workforce development and in relation to social equality. The main focus is on the benefits of career guidance, increased access to such guidance for various groups and mechanisms for cooperation and coordination of career guidance services.

Questions and activities

The study underlying this report has three main questions:

- If partnership is established, how is it designed, and what are the roles and responsibilities in the partnerships?
- What are the partnership's contribution to the cooperation and coordination in the career field?
- What are the partnership's contribution to increased access and improved outcomes of career guidance?

The main activities in the study have been

- A review of research literature on partnership and governance in the public sector as well as the discussion of how the Partnership for career guidance can be understood theoretically
- Studies of governmental objectives, international guidelines and previous research, evaluations and surveys in the field
- Interviews with a number of different actors in four counties
- A supplementary national survey on the respondent's knowledge (awareness) of the partnerships

There are trade-offs related to the width and depth of the study. Partnership work is complex, and it has proven necessary to explore more deeply some counties to gain insight into how the work is done more concretely. The survey has contributed to a broader perspective, while there have been challenges related to the respondents' ability to distinguish between partnership working in career guidance and other activities which they are involved in.

What the study shows

The main results are summarized in the following seven points:

Various forms of partnership - the status of the counties

As known from previous research, and from our survey in 2010, the partnership work has developed various forms of organization in the various counties. There is also a diverse player scenario that potentially is involved in partnership efforts; county and municipal agencies, schools, NAV, social partners, training offices and the higher education sector and others. According to state guidelines the counties themselves determine how the work of the partnership is to be formed. This provides a large variety, and it allows for adjustments to local and county needs.

The study confirms that very different forms of organization and cooperation are selected in the various counties. Partnership for career appears to be a complex phenomenon that is difficult to define and keep track of. This is not unexpected, since the partnership work is a result of a diversity of national, regional and local initiatives, where other agreements and partnerships are involved. Informants in this study indicated that it is difficult to distinguish between the partnership for career guidance and other initiatives that they participate in.

The claim that partnerships for career guidance have been established in all counties can be discussed, depending upon the understanding of the concepts. Broadly speaking we can categorize the partnership work in the counties into three main categories:

- Regional/county partnership: the wide cooperation with two or more of the relevant players/ bodies.
- Collaboration at the county level: various forms of cooperation where the area of cooperation is not left to a partnership, but is controlled in the usual way (hierarchical control through the line at the collaborating parties).
- Project-based partnerships: a partnership related to specific projects or tasks or for specific purposes, where the parties have been selected for this specific purpose.

Eastern Norway Research Institute concludes that there are not such a large number of partnerships for career guidance at the county level as previously thought, given the clarification and definition of partnerships that have been made in this report. None of the four counties that were investigated in this study have a county partnership specifically related to career guidance. Many different forms of partner efforts are emerging in the form of network groups, steering groups and partnership groups, information exchange and cooperation have become better organized and more systematized. These various cooperative groups can form the basis for future partnerships. Furthermore, project-based partnerships are established, particularly related to career centers, competence development and more. The report emphasizes that these different forms of cooperation can be functionable forms of organization in relation to the achievement goals in career guidance. There is reason to believe that the counties have selected models that are appropriate in relation to other activities, and that the partnership efforts fit already existing structures of which there are several examples in this report.

Partnership and the importance of information exchange, cooperation and coordination

There are reports of overall benefits associated with participation in partnerships and networks in the career field, which we can find in this study and in previous research. This study provides many examples of how partnerships work, the importance of cooperation and coordination in the field, but without pinpointing that certain organizational models are better than others. Where there are formal partnerships, such as project-based partnerships related to career centers, competence development and more, there is a high degree of formal cooperation and coordination in the field. Coordination can also occur in the more informal networks, while those in general seem to be characterized by information sharing and informal collaboration. This study shows that there is a high degree of exchange of information and of cooperation through various cooperative groups in the career field.

Partnerships and the impact on access and benefits

The results of this study show that respondents have difficulty answering whether the partnership work has resulted in increased access to and better outcomes of career guidance, which is not unexpected. The survey indicates that a number of different activities are initiated; career centers are established, standards and methods are developed, and roles are clarified. There is reason to believe that these measures have actually resulted in improvement both in access and quality. There are many respondents who stated that there has clearly been a positive development in this field as a result of partnership work.

Partnership for career guidance is little known

Partnership for career counseling is relatively little known in the counties, especially among some of the potential partners to such cooperation, such as in the higher educational sector and the municipal administration and the schools' professional staffs. It must be underlined that the Partnership for career guidance is a relatively new initiative that needs time to be developed and become more familiar.

Co-Operators – the challenges

When it comes to the design of partnership work, tasks and roles, it may be appropriate to consider which parties should be included, where, in relation to the level of cooperation in question. At the level of information exchange and various forms of cooperation of the more informal nature, different types of players or bodies might be included. Where cooperation is the type of formal coordination, such partnerships are expected to be doing, this report questions whether the social partners (NHO, LO, KS and The Union of Education Norway) rather should be represented by companies or workplaces that can enter into binding agreements with the other parties such as counties, NAV and the higher educational sector. NAV is taking part in the partnership work to a varying degree. The study shows that there is great variation among counties with respect to participation, and it appears that the importance and contribution to partnership working in career guidance are valued differently in NAV at the county level.

Possible areas of focus for the future

Knowledge with relevance for the development of partnerships for career guidance has been developed based on research related to partnership and governance in the public sector. This applies to presuppositions, frames and frame setting (appointments, resources, roles, etc.), intentions and motivation ("energy") in the cooperation and the actual processes; how they are operated, managed and monitored. We discuss, as an example, how the term "life-long perspective" seems to be understood differently. An understanding of the term has significance for how the parties cooperate in the field and should, therefore, receive attention. The frames of the partnership work must be made clear, regardless of the degree of formalization of the cooperation. Since this is a field that overlaps with other fields, it is especially important that clear frameworks of collaboration are established. To ensure

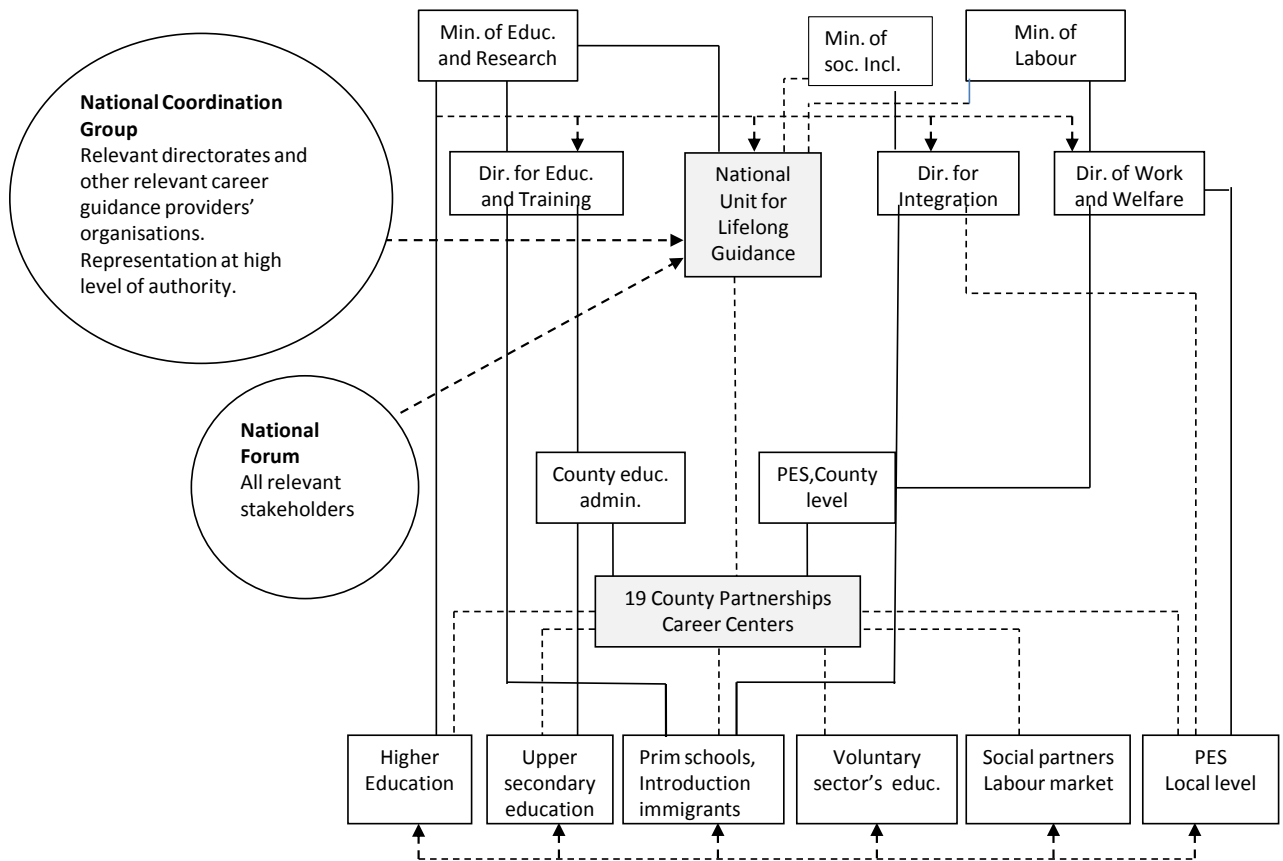
direction and dedication in the work it is important that the right players are at the right level. In the actual process it is a challenge to find good links between governance and management level and those that constitute the basic level in the work.

Important and necessary cooperation

Partnership for career guidance, with the variations of models of cooperation that exist, is seen as both important and necessary among the actors in the field. There are, however, many persons in the field who have no clear opinion on whether the current partnership model in their county is satisfactory or not. We believe this is because there are relatively few of the players in the field who have a clear role in partnership as it is working today.

Annex 3:

National Co-operation and Co-ordination Mechanisms in Norway



Since 1. January 2011 Norway has established a National Unit for Lifelong Guidance at Vox, Norwegian Agency of Lifelong Learning. This unit is given the responsibility of setting up two co-operation and co-ordinating elements; a national forum and a national coordinating group. This text will give a short description of these three constructions, with emphasis on cooperation and coordination, based on the - rather confusing – diagram presented in figure 1.

Figure 1.

An overview of the different elements in Lifelong Career Guidance in Norway. In this diagram the dotted lines indicate cooperation and coordination, the full lines indicate line of command.

The top line shows the governmental level with the three involved ministries; the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion and the Ministry of Labour.

These three ministries have directorates; respectively the Directorate for Education and Training, the Directorate of Integration and Diversity and the Directorate of Work and Welfare. The newly established National Unit for Lifelong Guidance is placed at the same level as the directorates, but has no commanding lines to the other entities. At county level we find the county administration of education and the county administration of PES. At county level we also find the county partnerships, who coordinate and cooperate with the career guidance providers at county level; schools, local PES, voluntary sector and labour market with social partners. The county partnerships also contribute to the establishment of Career Guidance Centres in their county. The two circles indicate the two national

cooperation and coordinating units at national level; the National Coordination Group and the National Forum.

The National Unit for Lifelong Guidance.

The general task of the Unit is described in three main bullet points:

- Coordination of all the different career guidance provisions and involved stakeholders, as figure 1 tries to picture
- Competence development and research, in order to both develop career guidance as a specific profession and to enhance competence development for the professionals
- Quality development and quality assurance

The overall strategy is based on the lifelong perspective; that career guidance is relevant and necessary throughout life, in all the different transitions one person needs to cope with during a lifetime.

The Unit is currently working with a plan for actions for the coming three years. The frame of this plan will be presented at the field visit.

The Unit have established the National Coordination Group and the National Forum.

The National Coordination Group

The Unit chairs a National Coordination Group at directorate level, which is set up to coordinate policy development and implementation in the different sectors. The group consists of representatives at a high level from the Directorate for Education and Training, the Directorate of Integration and Diversity, the Directorate of Work and Welfare, The Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions and The national council for tertiary vocational education.

The National Forum

A National Forum for Lifelong Guidance is established, including all relevant stakeholders. Participation in the National Forum reflects representation in the regional partnerships

already established to enhance development of lifelong career guidance in the regions. The National Unit serves as a secretariat for the forum.

The County Partnerships

Career Guidance Partnerships have been established in most of the 19 counties in Norway. The object is to develop cooperation and coordination between the different career guidance services in a lifelong perspective in each county, as well as to enhance the quality of the services. Partnerships are expected to include regional authorities, the educational sector, the work and welfare sector, the social partners and other relevant public and private stakeholders. The Partnerships are also expected to contribute to the establishment of Career Guidance Centres in their county.

The Career Centres' tasks include

- Providing guidance services for *all adults*, and for youths outside the school system and labour market, in cooperation with services offered by Labour and welfare services (NAV).
- Supporting career guidance in the educational system, both by offering professional support to guidance professionals and by offering additional guidance to pupils and students
- Providing professional support to guidance professionals in local NAV offices.