



CAREER CENTRES ARE CAREER COUNSELLING CENTRES LOCATED ACROSS SLOVENIA THAT PROVIDE INFORMATION ON EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING. USERS DO NOT NEED TO REGISTER WITH THE CAREER CENTRE IN ORDER TO HAVE ACCESS TO CAREER GUIDANCE TOOLS AND COUNSELLING.

Career Centres

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SLOVENIA

The Career Centres are open to everybody and offer free career counselling. They offer users the opportunity to find out for themselves information on employment, training and education. Most of the clients are schoolchildren looking for information about further education opportunities and becoming acquainted with the professions, and unemployed adults looking for job. The presence of a person available to help clients is a key to the success of well-functioning Career Centres.

Name of the PES

Slovenian PES (Employment Service of Slovenia – ESS)

Scope of measure

National

When was the practice implemented?

Since 1996 – ongoing

A pilot project called PHaARE started in Ljubljana in 1996 and lasted until May 1999. The first Career Centre was opened in December 1998. After one year the results were evaluated and other Career Centres were opened across Slovenia in the following years.

What was the driver for introducing the practice? Was it internal or external?

One of the main driver for introducing the Career Centres was the high level of unemployment in Slovenia. Prior to the establishment of the Career Centres, clients could only get the information they needed from PES counsellors, but they often needed to wait for the counsellors to have time to answer questions. The Career Centres give users the opportunity to find the information by themselves, giving counsellors more time for counselling and not just for providing information. The launch of the pilot project was triggered by visits to similar practices in Austria and Germany.

Which organisation was involved in its implementation?

The Career Centres are part of the Slovenian PES and are coordinated by Euroguidance Slovenia. The Regional Career Centres are located in Slovenian PES regional offices and the local Career Centres (“Career Corners”) are located in local Slovenian PES offices. The “Career Corners” are centres where clients can find information about employment autonomously, without the presence of dedicated staff. Even though there are no formal partnerships, the Career Centres cooperate with stakeholders at the national level, such as The Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training and Europass Slovenia. At regional level they work with partners such as regional chambers of commerce and chamber of crafts. They also have good relations with centres for adult education and in many cases they share the same clients. Strong cooperation also exists with schools and universities. The role of these stakeholders is to provide information and sometimes to contribute to the delivery of workshops for the clients or for the staff of the Career Centres.

At European level, the Career Centres network in Slovenia is also a member of the Euroguidance network. The Euroguidance network provides information on international mobility opportunities, education, training and guidance systems in EU and EEA Member States along with candidate countries. It also provides information on European initiatives and programmes within the fields of education, training and mobility.

Which groups were targeted by the practice?

The Career Centres are open to everyone who needs career advice. In particular, the following groups are targeted:

- ▶ Unemployed people searching for a job;
- ▶ Supporting employees who are at risk of being made redundant avoid transition to unemployment;
- ▶ Young people who have dropped out of school, education or training;
- ▶ Young students in transition to a higher level of education;
- ▶ Parents, teachers and guidance practitioners who are also working in career counselling.

<p>What were the practice's main objectives?</p>	<p>The main objective of the Career Centres is to provide free information about careers, training and education to everyone who is planning their career path or wants to change it, in an informal environment where clients do not have to make appointments and can use the services anonymously.</p>
<p>What activities were carried out?</p>	<p>At the regional Career Centres the following activities are carried out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A library is available with information on the following topics: description of occupations, vacancies, educational programmes, vocational training, studies abroad, available financial aid for education and training, scholarships, student residences, as well as manuals on how to write job applications; ▶ Free individual guidance is available with a career counsellor, without the need to set up an appointment; ▶ Group visits are organised in partnership with elementary and secondary schools; ▶ Short, modular workshops are organised on various topics related to how to write a CV, how to write a successful job application, how to prepare for a job interview etc.; ▶ Small career fairs are organised in cooperation with local employers and other stakeholders, where short meetings between employers and unemployed people take place; ▶ Information and advice is available for parents, teachers and career counsellors to help young people in their decision-making. <p>At the local Career Centres (or "Career Corners") there is basic computer-based information about career opportunities and education.</p> <p>In addition, the following information is available online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Video clips of careers are available on YouTube on the Career Centres' channel and on their website¹; ▶ An interactive computer programme called "Where and How" is available in two versions, one for young people and one for adults. The programme is interactive and provides information on career paths and skills. The programme can be used at a Career Centre or online; ▶ The website "My Choice" was developed and maintained in cooperation with the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training. Users can find information on learning opportunities in upper secondary education (general as well as technical opportunities) and in vocational education, as well as short-cycle higher vocational education and adult education institutions and programmes.
<p>What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?</p>	<p>The Career Centres have a central office in Ljubljana. There are 12 regional Career Centres and 44 small local centres ("Career Corners"). The core staff of the Career Centres are Slovenian PES employees. They can receive a multidisciplinary 160-hour modular training in lifelong career orientation from the Slovenian PES. In total, 15 employees work across the Career Centres, not all full time (from 0.5 person in centres located in small cities, to three people in bigger Centres such as in Ljubljana and Maribor). Only three centres have receptionists, in all other locations all the work is undertaken by the PES counsellors.</p> <p>In terms of communication, news about the Career Centres network is posted on the Slovenian PES social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter), the YouTube channel and the website of the Slovenian PES. Posters and leaflets are displayed in primary and secondary schools.</p>
<p>What were the source(s) of funding?</p>	<p>Euroguidance Slovenia, which coordinates the Career Centres network in the frame of Employment service, is co-funded by the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.</p>

¹ Internet: <https://www.ess.gov.si/ncips/cips>

What were the outputs of the practice: people reached and products?

In terms of people reached:

- ▶ In 2017 individual counselling was provided to 1 103 clients, including 350 primary school level children and 128 secondary school level children. Group counselling was provided to 2 764 clients, this figure includes 2 091 primary school level children and 407 secondary school level children. In the same year 293 meetings with parents and 28 meetings with school counsellors took place;
- ▶ In 2017 47 531 unemployed people searched for information in the Career Centres;
- ▶ In 2017 21 481 unemployed people attended short modular workshops of approximately 2 hours duration at Career Centres;
- ▶ According to a survey carried out in spring 2017, 80 % of the clients of the Career Centres use the computer-based information, 19 % use the paper-based information available at the Centres and 1 % watch the videos. Around 72 % of the clients search for information by themselves while 28 % ask for help from the staff. Concerning the frequency of visits to the Career Centres, 41 % of clients visit the Career Centres occasionally, 17 % visit the Centres once per week, 16 % once per month, 13 % several times per week and 13 % had only visited once.

In terms of products:

- ▶ The interactive computer programme "Where and How" is available online which can be used in any location;
- ▶ Communication tools such as posters and leaflets promoting the Career Centres were produced and sent to schools and universities.

What outcomes have been identified?

The Career Centre network offers free guidance to young people and adults in the choice of career path in an informal setting across Slovenia.

After every workshop, clients are asked to fill-in a satisfaction survey. Usually clients are very satisfied with the activity. Every two years approximately 1 000 clients attending regional Career Centres are asked to fill-in a satisfaction survey after having used the facilities/services. Usually the feedback is very positive. According to a survey directed at the employees of the Career Centres², the three most frequent reasons for client visits to the Career Centres are the following: asking for specific information, having an individual counselling session and writing a CV job application. From the results of a client survey³, where 65 % of the respondents were female and 35 % males, almost 300 respondents visited the Career Centres on the basis of having been referred by a Slovenian PES counsellor, more than 100 upon their own initiative, and less than 25 for having visited the website, upon parents' or school counsellor's suggestion. 316 respondents visited the Career Centres in order to access information about employment, 192 wanted advice, 120 wanted to use the computers, 100 out of personal interest, around 88 for information on training, 54 for information on education, 5 wanted information on studying abroad and 5 wanted information on scholarships.

In terms of client satisfaction⁴, the average rating for Career Centres is 4.5 out of 5. The highest ratings (4.7) were given in the regional Career Centres located Maribor, Trbovlje and Velenje. Users particularly liked the fact that counsellors are friendly, professional, and that they can help them immediately whilst able to spend time answering the clients' questions.

² Zlata Šlibar, *Kolegij zavoda – Presentation for regional directors; internal questionnaire for Career Centre staff and users*, 25 May 2017.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

What are the lessons learnt and success factors?

The lessons learnt include the following:

- ▶ The local Career Centres ("Career Corners"), located in the local PES offices, are less active than the regional ones because there is no dedicated person there;
- ▶ There is no formal agreement with Slovenian PES partners. A formal partnership would define more clearly shared responsibilities and facilitate the systematic collection of data;
- ▶ It is very important to signpost rules for users of the Career Centres so as to prevent inappropriate use of the Centres' facilities e.g. printing excessive amounts of material;
- ▶ Few university students use the services of the Career Centres because in general they tend to use the career counselling services at their university;
- ▶ According to the results of a survey carried out in spring 2018, the Career Centre staff need to improve their knowledge of the education system in Slovenia.

The success factors include the following:

- ▶ Users do not need to make an appointment in order to receive individual career counselling at the Career Centres;
- ▶ The Career Centres are more informal places than the Slovenian PES offices: they are open to everybody, clients do not need to register and can access the information and use the facilities autonomously. This allows the service to reach people that are not willing to register with the PES;
- ▶ In the regional Career Centres there is always a member of staff physically present to help clients to find the information they need or to provide them with career counselling;
- ▶ At the Career Centres clients have free access to computers and can ask for assistance to use them. This is very important as in some regions people do not have computers at home;
- ▶ According to a client-satisfaction survey carried out in spring 2017, users appreciate the fact that Career Centre counsellors are professional, friendly and take the time to provide answers to clients' questions.



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