



# National Report: Slovenia

## Wave 1

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## GLOSSARY

Except where otherwise stated, the definitions included here are derived from the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) Glossary: <http://www.elgpn.eu/glossary>.

### *Terms in English*

#### **Adult basic skills**

#### **Definition**

Basic skills may include competences in literacy (reading and writing), numeracy/everyday mathematics, Digital competence/ICT skills, and oral communication. Adult basic skills courses/programmes are literacy and numeracy education for adults who for some reason did not acquire these skills or a level sufficient for everyday adult life when they were at school.

Source: Project GOAL definition.

#### **Basic skills assessment**

An assessment tool that measures skills in reading and/or writing and/or Maths and/or digital skills.

Source: Project GOAL definition.

#### **Career**

The interaction of work roles and other life roles over a person's lifespan, including how they balance paid and unpaid work, and their involvement in learning and education.

#### **Career guidance**

A range of activities that enable citizens of any age, and at any point in their lives, to identify their capacities, competences and interests; to make meaningful educational, training and occupational decisions; and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which these capacities and competences are learned and/or used.

#### **Counselling**

The interaction between a professional and an individual helping them to resolve a specific problem or issue.

#### **Early school leaver**

See **Early leaver from education and training**.

#### **Early leaver from education and training**

A person aged 18 to 24 who has completed at most lower secondary education and is not involved in further education or training.

Source: Eurostat, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Category:Glossary>

#### **Educational counselling/guidance**

Helping an individual to reflect on personal educational issues and experiences and to make appropriate educational choices.

<b>Employment counselling/guidance</b>	Counselling or guidance that addresses one or more of the following domains: career/ occupational decision-making, skill enhancement, job search and employment maintenance. Activities include assessment, development and implementation of an action plan, follow-up and evaluation.
<b>Guidance</b>	Help for individuals to make choices about education, training and employment.
<b>Guidance counsellor</b>	A trained individual delivering guidance as defined above. Guidance counsellors assist people to explore, pursue and attain their career goals.
<b>Guidance services</b>	The range of services offered by a particular guidance provider. These might be services designed for different client groups or the different ways that guidance might be delivered (e.g. face-to-face, online, telephone, etc.).
<b>Interest inventory</b>	An interest inventory is a career guidance tool that assesses an individual's interests in order to identify the employment or educational opportunities that are most appropriate for those interests. Source: GOAL Project Definition
<b>Lifelong guidance</b>	A range of activities that enables citizens of any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which these capacities and competences are learned and/or used.
<b>Lifelong learning</b>	All learning activity undertaken throughout life, which results in improving knowledge, know-how, skills, competences and/or qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons.
<b>Low-educated adult</b>	An adult without upper secondary education
<b>One step up</b>	A priority of the 2007 Action Plan on Adult Learning is to "Increase the possibilities for adults to go one step up and achieve at least one level higher qualification". Source: <a href="http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52007DC0558">http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52007DC0558</a>

<b>Outcome (quality)</b>	Positive or negative longer-term socio-economic change or impact that occurs directly or indirectly from an intervention's input, activities and output
<b>Self-knowledge</b>	Knowledge that an individual has about him/herself. Developing self-knowledge/awareness is considered an important activity in career counselling: many career interventions are designed to increase self-knowledge.
<b>Validation of non-formal and informal learning/ validation of prior learning (VPL)</b>	A process of confirmation by an authorised body that an individual has acquired learning outcomes against a relevant standard. It consists of four distinct phases: (1) identification – through dialogue – of particular experiences made by an individual; (2) documentation – to make visible the individual experiences; (3) a formal assessment of these experiences; and (4) recognition leading to a certification, e.g. a partial or full qualification.
<b>Vocational rehabilitation</b>	A process which enables persons with functional, psychological, developmental, cognitive and emotional impairments or health disabilities to overcome barriers to accessing, maintaining or returning to employment or other useful occupation. Source: <a href="http://www.vra-uk.org/">http://www.vra-uk.org/</a>



## Executive Summary

This report presents the Slovene findings from Wave 1 of the evaluation of the “Guidance and Orientation for Adult Learners” (GOAL) project. These are **interim findings** based on the early stages of the GOAL project. A final evaluation report will be produced in January 2018.

Project GOAL aims to develop or expand guidance and orientation interventions for low-educated adults in six countries: Belgium (Flanders), Czech Republic, Iceland, the Netherlands, Lithuania, and Slovenia. Running from February 2015 to January 2018, GOAL is coordinated by the Flemish Government’s Department of Education and Training. The evaluation is being carried out by the UCL Institute of Education (IOE), London, working with local evaluation teams in each country.

### GOAL Activities

The hypothesis underpinning GOAL is that an independent one-stop guidance service that puts the specific needs of low-educated adult learners at its centre may help to increase the participation of this target group in education and training. Each of the six partner countries is piloting new guidance models to specific target groups within the low-educated adult population. Five intervention strategies are being implemented:

1. **Networks and partnerships** with relevant organisations are being established or improved.
2. **High-quality tools** are being developed which will facilitate the delivery of guidance specifically to low-educated adults.
3. The **competences** which counsellors require to enable them to address the specific needs of low-educated adults are being defined.
4. **Outreach activities** designed to bring guidance services to specific target groups within the low-educated population are being developed.
5. **High-quality guidance services** are being provided with the aim of optimising individuals’ learning and/or employment outcomes.

### Research questions

Four research questions underpin the evaluation:

1. How do existing conditions/resources in the pre-programme environments moderate the relationships among programme operations and outcomes?
2. What programme processes are developed across the various intervention sites and how do these differ? Why do they differ?
3. What service user outcomes are achieved, for what groups, and to what degree?

4. What programme and policy characteristics appear to be associated with improvements in service-user outcomes?

## Evaluation data

During Wave 1 of the evaluation, data were gathered via:

- client monitoring data (to establish baseline, ongoing and exit data)
- client satisfaction and outcome data (user survey and qualitative interviews)
- programme and policy data (literature review; needs and strengths analysis)
- case studies of programme sites (qualitative interviews, document analysis, analysis of quantitative data)
- qualitative interviews with policy actors.

## Dataset

The Wave 1 dataset for Slovenia was collected from fieldwork undertaken between March and June 2016.

The quantitative dataset is comprised of:

- **Monitoring data for 49 clients**
- **49 client satisfaction surveys**
- **10 programme staff surveys.**

The qualitative data set is comprised of interview and focus group data from **two clients; eight programme staff; eight programme partners; and six policymakers.**

## Challenges

In Slovenia fewer (49) clients were involved at Wave 1 than anticipated: one third of the total number of clients programme developers are seeking to involve in counselling during the life of the GOAL project (150 adults). As a result, analysis of the monitoring data do not necessarily provide a reliable and objective portrayal of the guidance approaches and intervention strategies in the project GOAL. At this stage, data on outcomes and benefits is limited, because the clients including in the monitoring data remain in the guidance process.

There were shortfalls particularly in the number of clients aged over 50, and in the number of migrants, two groups targeted by GOAL in Slovenia. In Wave 2 the project team intend to more actively approach

acquiring clients from these two groups: this process will require active involvement from the network partners.

For qualitative analyses, multiple data was collected from focus groups with partners, from counsellors and policy actors, and too little collected from clients, since only two interviews were conducted (one client from each site). The challenge for Wave 2 is to attain more **qualitative data on the process and results of counselling with the clients**. The sample has to be composed in a way that allows for clients from different target groups to be involved in the interviews (50+ adults, migrants and low-skilled adults, both employed and unemployed).

## Findings

### Programme participants and stakeholders

The Wave 1 dataset includes 49 clients who used the GOAL service in Slovenia. The majority were women. Most clients were aged **over 26 years old**. The majority of clients were either **unemployed or in fulltime employment**, other target groups were smaller: 18% of clients were in the target group of over-50s and 10% of migrants. The **vast majority (90%) of the clients are Slovene citizens** and speak Slovene at home. The majority of clients have acquired the level of general upper secondary education or lower; one third have vocational education.

Most clients **were not engaged in any kind of learning or education** in the time of the first counselling session. Of the eight who were engaged in education, only two were in the process of acquiring a qualification.

Of the nine professionals who provide counselling, **two are male and seven are female**. All the programme staff members are over 41 years old, seven of them are between 41-50 years old and three of them are over 50 years old.

### GOAL Guidance service

The vast majority of guidance sessions in Slovenia were **face-to-face individual sessions**. Most clients sought guidance in order to **explore educational opportunities**; another common reason for using the GOAL service was to find links between personal interest and occupational or educational opportunities. A small number of clients wanted to validate existing competences or prior learning. Counsellors were mostly providing information on short courses, on non-formal learning and on formal qualifications.

**The majority of clients had one session, nine clients had two sessions and two clients had four sessions**. Just over half of first sessions (53%) lasted between 21 and 30 minutes; 41% lasted between 31 and 60 minutes, and six percent of sessions lasted more than one hour. Although the number of subsequent sessions is small, the Wave 1 data suggest that **these sessions tend to last longer than the initial session**.

Clients came to the guidance sessions predominantly on their own initiative although some were referred by network partners.

The counsellors and programme partners said that the target group (low-skilled adults, migrants and older adults) need deeper counselling, more personal contact, additional motivation and support for further education and training. They think the partners could support programme staff in many ways in this work: exchanging information about the characteristics and the needs of the clients, and exchanging tools, information and databases. Training workshops could be organised to upgrade the competences staff require for guidance work with certain vulnerable target group.

### Partnerships and Networks

In Slovenia **two networks** were set up in February 2016, one in each region where the intervention is taking place (Ljubljana, in the Central Slovenian region, and Velenje in the Savinjska region). These networks have been organised and are coordinated by the adult guidance (ISIO) centres and school centres where the GOAL programme is being implemented. A national network has not yet been established.

In both networks partners signed an official agreement of cooperation and defined the common goals and tasks of the partnerships. Common activities were planned, such as referring clients to the GOAL providers, presentations and exchange of good practice in adult guidance, exchange of guidance tools and of other information relating to improving the inclusion of clients in GOAL.

Programme partners have quite high expectations from partnerships: they expect benefits for their clients and for their staff. During Wave 1 some of the partners were more active in the partnership than others. I

The partners agreed that the key factors for the sustainability of cooperation in the network are: the benefits of collaboration for each partner in the partnership, effective coordination and managing the network, clear tasks for each partner and regular feedback on what the results and the effects of collaboration for the clients are.

Regarding the possible key obstacles for the GOAL project's aims, policy actors identified two: the **lack of financing of guidance in adult education** and **lack of networking at policy level**. For future collaboration it will be important to develop suggestions through GOAL project **how to manage those obstacles and put guidance as one of the important factors in policy measurements to strengthen the access to lifelong learning of low-skilled adults**.

### Counsellor competences

Slovenia is one of the rare countries that have **no special study programme for a career counsellor**, only separate modules can be found within individual study programmes which include these topics. The development of the professionalisation of the counsellor's work is one of the key tasks in this field and also one of the tasks of project GOAL in Slovenia. Counsellors highlighted that they are aware that

**counselling work with vulnerable groups requires additional knowledge and experience.** The counsellors in ISIO centres have partly acquired this knowledge, but still think they need to keep improving. Counsellors in school centres are aware they need to acquire this knowledge.

Seven of the 10 GOAL staff are full-time counsellors, two perform counselling occasionally and one is a part of the GOAL team performing only organisational and promotional activities. All three of those who are not fulltime counsellors work as project coordinators and managers. Of the nine staff who currently provide counselling, three have worked in counselling for under 10 years, three between 11-15 years and three of them between 16-20 years; **eight of the 10 GOAL staff are educated to at least degree level.** Out of seven full time counsellors, three have their basic qualification from the field of pedagogy or andragogy, one from the field of psychology, two from the field of teaching and one from the field of economics.

Of the nine professionals who provide counselling only one works exclusively as a counsellor for adults. Three spend up to a half of all their weekly working hours on guidance, five counsellors spend one quarter or less of their working hours per week on guidance.

The counsellors highlighted the following competencies as necessary for high-quality guidance work: good communication and social skills; empathy and optimism; knowledge and skills for motivating adults for learning; knowledge and skills of different approaches of counselling, the ability to adapt to different target groups (flexibility); knowledge of different tools and their use for low-skilled adults; knowledge of the system of formal and non-formal adult education and training; being able to search the information; organisational skills; skills for the promotion and marketing of guidance service.

Wave 1 qualitative data show that the **clients were very satisfied with the work of the counsellors.** They especially appreciated that the counsellors devoted enough time to them and that they took into account their needs and interests.

In policy terms, stakeholders emphasised the need for: the professionalisation of the role of the counsellor in adult education, the development of training programmes that will ensure adequate counsellor's competency, the inclusion of resources for counsellor training in the national funding system, and increasing the number of counsellors so that guidance will be more accessible to vulnerable adults in all regions. Working in partnership at the national level will be necessary to facilitate the implementation of these four objectives.

### Guidance tools

Counsellors from all four GOAL providers in Slovenia were already using different guidance tools before the involvement in GOAL project. In January 2016 a list of all tools which they used was prepared and at the workshop in March staff exchanged experiences on when and how they used these tools, with an emphasis on those which work best with = low-skilled adults.

The national team prepared an additional tool for the counsellors, **a protocol for leading the counselling sessions:** this includes guidelines for what has to be done at first session, the next sessions and the

closing session. Local evaluators prepared three questionnaires for more systematic and better quality monitoring of clients data. Counsellors consider the questionnaires and the protocol as useful tools for leading the counselling process. They think the data monitoring tool provides an efficient instruments for gathering more in-depth insights into the client's situation (needs, interests, problems, fears) and goals regarding education/learning and career. Because of the detailed requirements of the GOAL monitoring data template, counsellors reported that they have to take more time for clients. For this reason, counsellors considered the template as an additional tool.

Not all tools have been used in Wave 1, as most clients have experienced only one session.

Partners from both networks emphasised that one of common goal in the GOAL project for partners could be the exchange of guidance tools. Partners suggested the exchange of experiences in using them and upgrade them or find the new ones as a part of the GOAL project.

## Outreach

In the Wave 1 evaluation period no work was carried out on developing and providing outreach guidance. **Mostly clients came to the institution where the counsellors work.** Some were sent by partners in the network, and some were already enrolled in the institution where counsellor works. The exception was in Velenje, where the counsellor from the ISIO centre went to the company RUJ which is a partner in the network and delivered guidance for low-skilled workers there.

In Wave 2, models of outreach that are suitable for the GOAL target groups should be developed. One of the challenges is how to reach the low-skilled employees. Stakeholders emphasised the need for **closer cooperation with human resources departments** within companies, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises. However, it may be challenging to forge working relationships with these departments and/or companies. Representative of trade unions in Slovenia suggested that they could play an important role in motivating employees to seek guidance and to access to learning.

Policy actors are aware of importance of having enough counsellors for outreach guidance, and propose to define the number of counsellors needed in adult education, to define their tasks and competences, and to co-finance their work from the national and the regional budgets.

## Service outcomes

The data collection period of March to April 2016 represents a small time frame in which it was unlikely there would be any significant results or outcomes. The programme model in Slovenia involves multiple sessions and most of the clients included in the GOAL project in Slovenia were still in the counselling process at the time of reporting. Of the eight clients who had finished the programme, four said that they increased their self-esteem, six gained a lot of new and useful information, two had enrolled in an educational programme, and one said that (s)he became more open and communicative. An initial observation made by the programme staff in Slovenia is about the intensity of the guidance: **the more times the counsellor meets with the clients, the greater the effects appear to be.** The reasons behind this will be explored in Wave 2.

It should be noted, however, that the context for the guidance in Slovenia was that no free of charge educational programmes were available during Wave 1, so some clients could not enrol to education because of lack of money. This also seems to be one reasons why data regarding achieving goals are limited. It is expected that from September 2016 providers will get the funds from European Social Fund to offer free of charge training programmes. Providers also plan to design a short training programmes adapted to the needs of their clients.

Wave 2 will provide the evaluators with much more data on outcomes and activities. **The experience in Slovenia raises the question of how the long term outcomes of the guidance can be measured within the life of the project.**

### Service quality

**Almost all service users were very satisfied with the first counselling session.** Programme partners see the quality of service in the opportunity to get additional service for their users. Partners pointed out that GOAL can improve the guidance opportunities for their vulnerable groups of adults with in-depth counselling, to increase the motivation and to raise self-esteem. For partners is also important that they could use the findings from the project, like examples of good practice and the new developed tools, in their practice.

The focus group for programme staff highlighted the problem of **the lack of counsellors in some institutions.** Sometimes only one counsellor works with adults. For a better quality of service, there should be at least two professionals, since their work includes much more tasks than just a counselling. This is also important from the point of conducting professional intervision (solving professional problems that arise in work in a group of peers) which can help resolve issues that arise in process of counselling.

Stakeholders addressed some other suggestions for better quality: more promotion is needed, broader information needs to be available about the guidance possibilities, more information is needed about the partner's collaboration in established two regional networks, and the competencies counsellors require for guidance for low-skilled adults need upgraded.

## 1 Introduction

The ‘Guidance and Orientation for Adult Learners’ Project (GOAL) is a collaboration between six partner countries: Belgium (Flanders), the Czech Republic, Iceland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, and Slovenia<sup>1</sup>. Project GOAL aims to develop existing models of guidance and orientation for adults in the six countries in order that these services specifically reach low-educated adults and address their needs. GOAL is a three year project, running from February 2015 to January 2018, and is coordinated by the Flemish Government’s Department of Education and Training. Project GOAL is being evaluated by the UCL Institute of Education (IOE), London.

This report presents national findings for Slovenia from Wave 1 of the GOAL evaluation. This Wave 1 evaluation dataset consists of quantitative data on GOAL service users collected between the launch of the programme on 1 March 2016 and April 2016; qualitative data collected from programme stakeholders in April and May 2016, and contextual data gathered during a local needs and strengths analysis.

### 1.1 The GOAL project

Funded under ERASMUS+, Project GOAL addresses the European Commission’s priority theme of reducing the number of low-educated adults through increasing participation rates in adult education. As well as contributing to the European Agenda for Lifelong Learning ([http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/adult-learning/adult\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/adult-learning/adult_en.htm)), GOAL will contribute to three priority areas of the 2008 ‘Council Resolution on better integrating lifelong guidance into lifelong learning strategies’ ([http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/104236.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/104236.pdf)), that is, to facilitate access by all citizens to guidance services, to develop the quality assurance or guidance processes, and to encourage coordination and cooperation among the various national, regional and local stakeholders.

Project GOAL is targeted at low-educated adults, that is, at adults without upper secondary education (ISCED level 3<sup>2</sup>). The context for GOAL is that adult education provision in the six countries is fragmented and there is currently a lack of coordination between the different providers and stakeholders that are involved with low-educated adults. Moreover, although the partner countries have some forms of guidance for adult learners, or have specific policy strategies that focus on educational guidance and orientation, the existing services, or the structures on which these services rely, do not reach the adults most in need of education as well as they could or in sufficient numbers.

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<sup>1</sup> Two members of the Turkish Directorate of Lifelong Learning are participating in GOAL as observers, with the aim of learning from the project and identifying opportunities to promote lessons in Turkish guidance policies.

<sup>2</sup> For more on UNESCO’s International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) see <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/isced-2011-en.pdf>



The hypothesis underpinning GOAL is that an independent one-stop guidance service that puts the specific needs of low-educated adult learners at its centre may help to increase the participation of this target group in adult education. To this end, each of the six countries is piloting new guidance models, in two locations, to specific target groups within the low educated adult population (see 1.3 below for more details on Slovenia's target groups). Five intervention strategies are being implemented by the GOAL partners, although not all strategies will be implemented in all countries:

1. **Networks and partnerships** with relevant organisations are being established or improved.
2. **High-quality tools** are being developed which will facilitate the delivery of guidance specifically to low-educated adults.
3. The **competences** which counsellors require to enable them to address the specific needs of low-educated adults are being defined.
4. **Outreach activities** designed to bring guidance services to specific target groups within the low-educated population are being developed.
5. **High-quality guidance services** are being provided with the aim of optimising individuals' learning and/or employment outcomes.

The aim of the GOAL project is that, through developing, piloting and evaluating these interventions:

1. The processes to implement effective guidance services and supporting networks that improve service user outcomes will be mapped.
2. The criteria, success factors and conditions on implementation (processes) that contribute to outcomes of guidance users will be identified
3. Potential generalizable case studies will be made available to be analysed by policymakers to understand and analyse challenges and success factors in establishing 'joined-up' programmes in complex policy fields.
4. The policy processes that play a role in influencing programmes success will be identified and described.

## 1.2 The GOAL evaluation

The GOAL evaluation being carried out by IOE has two aims. Its primary aim is to understand, assess and improve GOAL across the six participating countries. The evaluation also aims to provide country-specific case studies that can be analysed by policymakers seeking to understand challenges and success factors in establishing 'joined-up' programmes in complex policy fields.

The evaluation focuses on processes and outcomes, thereby enabling the identification of success factors across different programme contexts. This evidence can potentially be used to develop a

structural support basis amongst decision makers and relevant stakeholders for scaling up the pilot learning guidance and orientation models in partner or other countries.

Four research questions underpin the evaluation:

1. How do existing conditions/resources in the pre-programme environments moderate the relationships among programme operations and outcomes?
2. What programme processes are developed across the various intervention sites and how do these differ? Why?
3. What service user outcomes are achieved, for what groups, and to what degree?
4. What programme and policy characteristics appear to be associated with improvements in service-user outcomes?

The evaluation is taking place in a series of stages:

1. **Pre-implementation stage** (February 2015 - October 2015): activities centred on needs and strengths analyses in each of the six countries; on reporting the results of these analyses, and generating data collection tools.
2. **Ongoing (cross-wave) data collection** (November 2015 - Spring 2017)
  - a. Client satisfaction survey
  - b. Monitoring data
  - c. Longitudinal follow-up with 30 clients per country
3. **Wave 1 data collection** (with national reporting in June 2016)
4. **Wave 2 data collection** (with national reporting in May 2017)
5. **Data analysis and final reporting** (with final report due November 2017)

Section 2.2 of this report outlines the evaluation methodology in greater details

In Slovenia, the local evaluation is being carried out in-house by the organisation coordinating the GOAL programme. The team of local evaluators are:

**Tanja Vilič Klenovšek**, Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE), is an expert in the field of guidance in adult education. She is responsible for the management of the GOAL project at SIAE level and works as an expert in development and evaluation of planned activities in the project.

**Andreja Dobrovoljc**, Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE), is an expert in the field of guidance in adult education. She works as an expert in the development, training and monitoring of planned activities in the GOAL project.

**Barbara Kunčič Krapež**, Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (IRSVET), works at the IRSVET on the implementation and evaluation of the system of National Professional Qualifications and validation of learning. She is an expert in the development, monitoring and evaluation of planned activities in the GOAL project.

**Katja Kavnik**, Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (IRSVET), works as researcher in evaluation of the system of National Professional Qualifications and works on monitoring of planned activities in the project GOAL and is also local evaluator.

### 1.3 Project GOAL in Slovenia

#### Context

The main challenges in lifelong education in Slovenia are the same as in the majority of European countries: an aging population, social-economic developments, technological developments, and the needs and requirements of the labour market. In order to raise educational levels, employability and the number and range of learning opportunities, particular attention will be given to vulnerable groups of adults, groups that are less educated (with less than four years of secondary schooling), enter lifelong learning less often (or not at all), are less motivated and face different obstacles. To reach these target groups the challenge is to develop and strengthen quality guidance support which will, with specific approaches, increase the accessibility and inclusion of vulnerable groups of adults in lifelong learning.

In Slovenia, adults can access counselling services either at one of 14 regional guidance centres, which provide services for adults enrolled in adult education, or at school centres, where counselling services are available to adults both before and during the learning course. The main weakness in the current system is that counselling activities in the regional guidance centres and the school centres are not linked.

#### GOAL programme

##### *Aims*

The Slovenian GOAL team are working in two local environments, starting from the outreach activity of guidance centres and testing which approach is more suitable for schools.

##### *Activities*

Turning specifically to the five GOAL intervention strategies, the Slovenian pilots will:

- 1) Establishment of **relevant networks**: Focus on holistic guidance through partnerships in a relevant network. Partnerships are being established with key organisations in the region to reach the identified target groups (immigrants, unqualified job-seekers, low-skilled workers, and people aged 50+).
- 2) **Existing tools** are being evaluated and upgraded. Tools and protocols will be developed for validation and recognition of prior learning.

- 3) The **competences of existing counsellors** will be evaluated and a competence profile will be developed based on the existing profiles and the specific needs for working with the target group.
- 4) **Outreach:** vulnerable target groups will be reached through cooperation with local organisations. The network of professionals will be a key factor for reaching the target groups. Special attention will be paid on promotional activities.
- 5) **Quality guidance services:** Specific methods and approaches for recognition of competences and prior learning will be developed and offered to the target group as a part of educational guidance process: raising the motivation and engagement in learning and to enable them to achieve their educational goals faster.

The project partners at the national level are: the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE), the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training (IRSVET), the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Work, the National Employment Service, the Chamber of Trade, the Chamber of Commerce, and representatives of the Trade Unions. At the regional level, GOAL will work with educational organisations, guidance centres for adults in education, non-governmental organisations, the regional employment service, and the regional development agency.

#### *Sites and target groups*

In the central Slovenian region, in the city of Ljubljana, GOAL is focusing particularly on migrants and adults over the age of 50, both in the ISIO Guidance centre and the school centre (in cooperation). In the town of Velenje in the Savinjska region the target group is low-qualified adults – both employed and unemployed. In the Slovenian work plan, there are therefore two interventions sites in each of two locations and the aim is to offer guidance to 150 adults in total over the life of the project.

## **1.4 About this report**

This national report serves as an interim evaluation report for Slovenia. A final evaluation report will be produced in 2017. In addition to national reports, the GOAL evaluation is also producing cross-country reports, which synthesise data and findings from all six participating countries. The first cross-country report has been produced concurrently with the first wave of national reports, and can be found (along with all national reports) on the project website: <http://www.projectgoal.eu/>. Key aims of the cross-country report are to enable participating countries to learn from one another's programme development experiences, and to draw lessons that can support national-level programme improvement.

The following report is comprised of 11 chapters including this introduction. This report is structured as follows.

- Chapter 2 describes the methodological design of the evaluation.

- Chapter 3 provides an overview of the GOAL programme participants and stakeholders in Slovenia.

Chapters 4-10 report on Wave 1 findings, covering the following topics.

- Chapter 4 describes the GOAL services in Slovenia.
- Chapter 5 discusses GOAL partnerships and networks.
- Chapter 6 discusses GOAL counsellor competences.
- Chapter 7 focuses on guidance tools used in the provision of GOAL services.
- Chapter 8 looks at GOAL outreach strategies.
- Chapter 9 provides an overview of programme outcomes to this point.
- Chapter 10 discusses the quality of the GOAL programme.
- Chapter 11 provides a brief summary of the key findings in this report, highlighting the potential implications of these findings for the GOAL service, GOAL partnerships and networks, and policy.

The reporting template on which this national report is based was designed by IOE to be used across all six countries. IOE also contributed generic text to the six national reports, including the material on the GOAL project background and the evaluation methodology. All reporting on national and site level findings is authored by the local evaluation team, with editorial input from IOE.

## 2 Methodology

This chapter summarises the evaluation methodology and how the evaluation requirements are being implemented in Slovenia.

### 2.1 Evaluation design and methods

#### Evaluation design

The methodology for the IOE evaluation is shaped by the complexities of the project design, namely the facts that:

- GOAL is multi-site (12 'sites' or locations, that is, two in each of six countries) and multi-organisational.
- GOAL has multiple objectives.
- GOAL is predicated on cross-organisational collaboration.
- Each partner country has its own unique context and target groups (and target numbers to achieve).
- Programme resources are finite, and should be primarily focused on the interventions rather than the evaluation.

For these reasons it was neither feasible nor advisable to conduct an experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation involving comparison groups. Instead the evaluation draws on two theoretical frameworks: the '**Theory of Change**'<sup>3</sup> and **Realist Evaluation**<sup>4</sup> approaches. Theory of Change approach specifies what programme implementers believe will happen as a result of the intervention, and what processes are required<sup>5</sup>. The articulation of the underlying programme theory serves as the foundation for the initiative's operation as well as its evaluation<sup>6</sup>. Realist evaluation approaches emphasise the central importance of **programme contexts and programme mechanisms**, and focuses on the interplay between these two factors, and their combined impact on outcomes.

The evaluation is **integrated within the project throughout its lifespan**, not only at programme level, but also at policy level: an important element of the evaluation's **multilevel approach** is the description and assessment of the policy processes that play a role in influencing programme success. It is hoped

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<sup>3</sup> Weitzman, B. C., Silver, D., & Dillman, K. N. (2002). Integrating a comparison group design into a theory of change evaluation: The case of the Urban Health Initiative. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 23(4), 371-385.

<sup>4</sup> Pawson, R., & Tilley, N. (1997). *Realistic Evaluation*. SAGE.

<sup>5</sup> Weiss, C. (1997). How can theory-based evaluation make greater headway? *Evaluation Review*, 21, 501-524.

<sup>6</sup> Rossi, P. H., Lipsey, M. W., & Freeman, H. E. (2004). *Evaluation: A systematic approach*. Sage Publications.

that this dual focus on **programme-level and policy-level processes**, and their interaction, will provide useful evidence for a range of policymakers working in complex fields.

**Evaluation data** are being gathered via:

- client monitoring data (to establish baseline, ongoing and exit data)
- client satisfaction and outcome data (user survey and qualitative interviews)
- programme and policy data (literature review; needs and strengths analysis)
- case studies of programme sites (qualitative interviews, document analysis, analysis of quantitative data)
- qualitative interviews with policy actors.

The evaluation includes: a) ongoing data collection (throughout the life of the project) and b) wave-specific data collection.

### Ongoing data collection

**Quantitative client data** are being collected throughout the life of the programme via client surveys and monitoring data. In addition to these two modes of data collection, there will be a third quantitative mode: a **follow-up survey** administered to a planned minimum of 30 clients in each country.

The **data monitoring instrument** gathers detailed information about the clients on the GOAL programmes, thus enabling evaluators to measure target numbers and track a range of programme processes and service user outcomes. This instrument includes a question asking clients if they can be contacted later as part of the evaluation study. Measuring service user numbers allows us to evaluate the fourth intervention strategy: bringing guidance to specific target groups. Measuring client outcomes is part of the evaluation of the fifth intervention strategy – the quality of guidance services: service user outcomes.

The data monitoring instrument is used **each time** a client has a guidance session, although not all fields are completed at every session, with some fields relevant to first sessions only (entrance data) and others designed to collect exit data. Each client is assigned a unique identifier by the counsellor, allowing evaluators to link data for clients who participate in multiple sessions.

The **Client Satisfaction Survey** was designed to gather data from service users about their experiences of counselling services. The instrument is a short, two-page, self-completion survey offered in either paper or online formats. It contains eight questions: two gather demographic information on the client (age, gender); five focus on the counselling session, and the final question asks clients to record if they received assistance in completing the survey<sup>7</sup>. There are small differences between the surveys offered

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<sup>7</sup> It was anticipated that low literacy levels, or migrants' low skills in the national language, might prevent some clients from completing the survey without assistance.

in the six countries, reflecting the different contexts in which the guidance is offered, and the different objectives of various programmes. Measuring client satisfaction is part of the evaluation of the fifth intervention strategy: the quality of guidance services: service user outcomes.

Both instruments were developed by IOE in close collaboration with the country partners in order that the instruments were sufficiently sensitive to the target groups involved and to national data protection regulations and concerns. The tools were finalised in autumn 2015.

### Wave-specific data collection

Programme and policy data are being collected and analysed in two waves, with the findings of **Wave 1** analysed and disseminated amongst programme partners – via this national report and a cross-country report – in order to facilitate service adaptation and improvement. **Wave 2** data collection will repeat the same data collection processes, but with an emphasis on the degree to which expectations have been met, what has been learned and how programmes have evolved. Reporting of Waves 1 and 2 will include analysis of quantitative data collected as part of (a) ongoing data collection.

During each data collection wave, case studies of the GOAL interventions at each location are being collated from document analysis and **semi-structured qualitative interviews** with a range of GOAL stakeholders. In the GOAL Wave 1 data collection, these stakeholder views were captured through either one-to-one interviews (face-to-face and, in the case of some service-users, by telephone) or focus groups. Four topic guides were developed by IOE to assist local evaluators in Wave 1 data gathering and ensure consistency across the programme locations: **1) Programme Staff; 2) Programme Partners; 3) Policy Actors; and 4) Service Users**. A fifth Topic Guide, used in Iceland only, combined questions for Programme Partners and Policy Actors.

In Wave 1, a short quantitative survey was administered to all **GOAL programme staff members** (not only those participating in qualitative interviews and focus groups) to gather some basic data on their educational background, their current employment, and their professional development and training.

## 2.2 Sample

In Wave 1 of the GOAL evaluation, monitoring data were collected from **49 GOAL service users in Slovenia**. Each service user filled in a client satisfaction survey questionnaire.

Table 2.1. presents an overview of all the data collected during Wave 1.

**Table 2.1.** *Type of Participants, Slovenia*

		N of participants
Qualitative	Focus group network partners	8
	Focus group policy actors	6
	Focus group programme staff	8



	<b>Service user interviews</b>	2
<b>Quantitative</b>	<b>Client satisfaction survey</b>	49
	<b>Monitoring data</b>	49

In the programme staff focus group, **eight professionals from four provider organisations** participated: three of these people are not directly involved in counselling in GOAL, but are part of the GOAL team, performing organisational and promotional activities and cooperating in established network.

**Two programme partner focus groups** were held with local partners; one in Ljubljana and one in Velenje. In Ljubljana four representatives from partner organisations participated in the focus group. The organisations included one which employs disabled persons and persons at a disadvantage for employment from marginalised groups, the Local Employment Office, the Social Work Centre and the Slovenian University of the Third Age where, among others things, older people can receive counselling.

In Velenje, four representatives from partner organisations participated in a focus group. The organisations included one that works in the field of occupational rehabilitation and change of employment within a career course, by evaluating the competences of persons who come to them; the Regional Chamber of Commerce, that is the central association that connects the industry entities, and acts as a representative for two thirds of the industry in the region; an educational institution dealing with different target groups; and an organisation that works with different target groups, including the homeless, the disabled, special needs individuals, and new target groups of persons with mental disabilities.

In the stakeholder focus group, the participants were:

- 1) The IRSVET director: IRSVET is participating in GOAL as one of the three national partners. IRSVET, wants the guidance in secondary schools to be developed for adults and to develop connections between the different providers of guidance for adults.
- 2) The SIAE director: SIAE is also one of the three national partners in the GOAL project. SIAE wants existing practices in counselling for adults in education, and guidance models for groups of vulnerable adults, to be upgraded.
- 3) Executive secretary for education and projects at the Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia: the unions encourage education for the low educated and wish to strengthen this activity. They believe that guidance is important for informing their members about the possibilities of education and for motivation, particularly for those with less education (more of them work in industry, blue collar jobs) so they believe that participating in a national partner network for the GOAL project is important for them, too.
- 4) The Manager of the National centre for lifelong career guidance at the ESS: covers primarily the development of career guidance for the unemployed at the ESS. The ESS has low educated unemployed people as one of their priority groups.

- 5) The GOAL project manager, the undersecretary at the Directorate for Education Development at the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport: the ministry is aware of the importance of the development of guidance for the greater inclusion of low educated adults into the LLL and the importance of connecting of the national shareholders in this field. One of the project manager's tasks is to set up a national partnership.
- 6) Head of the Directorate for Adult Education at the Ministry of Education Science and Sport, a member of the national team of the GOAL project. She also has the role of the development planner and the policymaker in the field of adult guidance in adult education.

### 2.3 Data collection methods

To ensure the collection of robust data and the consistency of instrument administration across the six countries, IOE created an **evaluation manual** containing guidelines for the use of the data collection tools. Version 1 of the manual (November 2015) included protocols for two quantitative instruments used in ongoing data collection. Version 2 (March 2016) added guidelines for the administration of the Wave 1 Topic Guides and other instruments, as well as guidance for completing the national reports. Future iterations of the manual will include protocols for administering Wave 2 instruments and writing the final national report.

Local evaluators in Slovenia prepared three paper-based questionnaires from the monitoring data template with the questions to be included in the first counselling session only, in each counselling session and the last counselling session only. The counsellors used these during the counselling sessions and afterwards inputted the answers in the data monitoring template.

The client satisfaction survey was administered to service users after their first session. The paper-based survey was collected in closed boxes and given to local evaluators. **Five of 49 clients reported needing help with filling in the survey**; this was provided by another counsellor on the site.

Two service users were **interviewed face-to-face**, one in Ljubljana and one in Velenje. Both interviews were recorded and analysis was made.

Stakeholders', programme staff and partners' views were captured through focus groups. **Focus groups lasted between two and three hours**, they were recorded and transcripts were made. Each focus group had one leader who steered the conversation and two assistants who were responsible for recording responses. Focus groups were conducted according to the methodological recommendations prepared by Slovene Institute for Adult Education and Faculty of Social Sciences from the University of Ljubljana.

Focus groups were selected for this methodology as these afforded the opportunity for sharing comments, views, and opinions between people who rarely meet (especially stakeholders).

In Wave 1, a short quantitative survey was administered to all GOAL programme staff members (not only those participating in qualitative interviews and focus groups) to gather some basic data on their educational background, their current employment, and their professional development and training.

## 2.4 Data analysis

In this **mixed methods evaluation**, a number of analytical approaches were used. Quantitative data were analysed using mainly **descriptive statistics**, e.g. frequencies, averages, group comparisons and cross-tabulations. For this Wave 1 report, most of the investigation relies on descriptive statistics, as **GOAL programme participant numbers are as yet too small** for any in-depth inferential statistical analysis.

Qualitative data from focus groups and interviews were analysed using mainly thematic analysis around the topic guides that were explicitly linked to the main aims and objectives of the project. In addition some typology analysis and group comparison analysis were also used.

## 2.5 Methodological challenges

### Programme set-up challenges and their impact on the evaluation

Since one of the important goals in the project for Slovenia was to **set up two regional networks** and connect two providers from these environments (an adult guidance centre and a school centre) that do not have a tradition of cooperating, Slovenian activities at the start of 2016 focused on attracting different institutions to join the networks. The intention was to see how an active network could improve the counselling service for different target groups and act as an intermediary for attracting adults in the counselling process. After the networks were set up, it became clear that a relatively large number of partners (one has 10 and one has nine partners) were involved which meant **a considerable amount of work was required from programme staff to make the networks operational**.

As a result, the counselling process within the project GOAL did not start at the beginning of March 2016. This meant that only a short amount of time was available to get clients in to the counselling process for inclusion in the Wave 1 dataset since the data collection ended in April 2016. This limits the chance of any significant results or outcomes at Wave 1.

### Representative sample

School Centre Velenje did not have any clients registered in the monitoring data since they offer primarily formal VET programmes for adults and the school year starts in October. They expect to have clients after the call for enrolment in VET programmes, i.e. in September 2016. There was a particular challenge for all consultants from the school centres in approaching and recruiting clients from the 50+ age range since their clients are usually their former students (dropouts) or those who want to continue their education on a higher level.

### Challenges of collecting data on programme impacts

When clients come to the counselling offered at the adult guidance centres or schools in Slovenia their goals are usually connected to education, training, acquiring a qualification, and when they make a decision **counselling does not stop**. Therefore most of the Slovenian GOAL clients are still involved in the

counselling process, and there is **currently little exit data and information regarding outcomes**. More data and information regarding project outcomes will be available in Wave 2. The national project team will have to define what possible outcomes are for the GOAL clients since in practice counselling could last for a year or more if a person is enrolled in the formal VET programme.

### Challenges associated with the target group

The **qualitative interview schedule for service users was too comprehensive** for some of the clients. One had problems reflecting on his counselling session and on counsellors' competences. The interview needed to be adapted since it worked better to let him talk about his experience with the counselling sessions and later extract the answers from his story.

## 2.6 Key methodological findings

In the first phase of the project GOAL the two regional sites had to set up two regional networks of partner institutions, which would provide important information for the system on whether this type of collaboration could have positive impact on the counselling service provided in regions. Since cooperation between school and adult guidance centres was not a systemic measure and depended on local acquaintances it was important to allocate more time to development of the network.

The establishment of networks and making them operational took more time than envisaged. Because of that our partners started sessions with GOAL clients and collecting data in March 2016 until the data collection cut-off point in April 2016, a short time frame for collecting and getting sufficient data to see any significant results or outcomes. Most of the clients included in the Wave 1 database are still in the counselling process, so we do not have enough significant exit data and information regarding outcomes.

In Wave 1 a total of 49 clients who used GOAL service and were included in the monitoring data template and in client satisfaction survey.

There was a particular challenge for all consultants from the school centres in approaching and recruiting clients from the 50+ age range, since their clients are usually their former students (dropouts) or those who want to continue their education on a higher level.

## 2.7 Methodological implications

In the Wave 1 dataset for Slovenia, there are fewer clients than anticipated, and of the clients who were recruited, most remain in the guidance process. **Therefore data on outcomes and benefits are limited.**

An unforeseen benefit of developing the data collection instruments in English is that **the Slovenian team has used the untranslated versions to good effect with migrant clients**. This approach should be considered in other countries.

## 3 Programme Participants and Stakeholders

This chapter provides descriptive data on the GOAL programme participants and stakeholders in Slovenia. These data are drawn from quantitative and qualitative data gathered during Wave 1. The intention in this chapter is to develop a picture of: a) the target client group in Slovenia, and b) GOAL staff. In doing so, we seek to provide context for the programme's objectives, successes and challenges. Programme partners are discussed in Chapter 5.

In Slovenia, GOAL seeks to provide guidance services to: adults aged 50 and older, migrants and low educated adults, both employed and unemployed. In Slovenia, these target groups are more likely to face social exclusion and to lack the skills that are necessary for successful integration into the labour market.

### 3.1 Service users

#### Socio-demographic characteristics

In Wave 1 data collection a total of **49 clients** used GOAL service in Slovenia.

#### Target groups

In terms of target groups, clients were distributed as follows: unemployed (47%); employed and low educated (26%); over 50 (16%) and migrants (10%) as is shown in the Table 3.3.

As Table 3.1. (and 3.3.) illustrate the 50+ target group is smaller, which corresponds to statistical data on the low level of participation in lifelong education and training of Slovenians aged 55-74. On the basis of data provided by the OECD, the gap in education and training participation between young and old workers is larger in Slovenia than the majority of EU countries.

**Table 3.1.** *Target Group. Slovenia*

	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Job-seeker/unemployed</b>	23	47
<b>Early School Leaver</b>	0	0
<b>Migrant/Refugee/Asylum seeker</b>	5	10
<b>Detainee</b>	0	0
<b>Over-50</b>	8	16
<b>Employed (&amp; low educated)</b>	13	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

#### Gender

The majority of Wave 1 clients were women (71%) as shown in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.1. Gender Profile of Service Users, Slovenia**

	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Female</b>	35	71
<b>Male</b>	14	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

### *Age*

Table 3.3. shows, the biggest age groups in the Wave 1 sample are 26-35 (31%), between 36-45 years (29%) and between 46-55 years (27%). One client was aged over 66 and there were **no clients in the age group 18 and under**. Compared to the active working age in Slovenia which is from 15-64 years we can see that the most passive group are those around 10 years before retirement

**Table 3.3. Age Profile of Service Users, Slovenia**

	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>18 and under</b>	0	0
<b>19-25</b>	4	8
<b>26-35</b>	15	31
<b>36-45</b>	14	29
<b>46-55</b>	13	27
<b>56-65</b>	2	4
<b>66 and older</b>	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

### *Residence*

The **majority of the clients (90%) are Slovene citizens**, 8% of clients are from non-EU countries and have residence permit in Slovenia and 2% come from EU countries (see Table 3.4.).

**Table 3.2. Residence Status, Slovenia**

	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>National/citizen</b>	44	90
<b>EU national</b>	1	2
<b>Non-EU national with residence permit</b>	4	8
<b>Asylum seeker</b>	0	0
<b>Refugee</b>	0	0
<b>Other</b>	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

### *Home language*

**Eighty six percent of clients (see Table 3.5.) stated that they speak the Slovene language at home;** all other languages (Albanian, English, Croatian, Croatian and Slovene, Russian, Serbo-Croatian and Serb and Croatian) mentioned by clients are evenly distributed and present each 2%.

**Table 3.3.** *Language, Slovenia*

	N	%
<b>Albanian</b>	1	2
<b>English</b>	1	2
<b>Croatian</b>	1	2
<b>Croatian and Slovenian</b>	1	2
<b>Russian</b>	1	2
<b>Slovenian</b>	42	86
<b>Serbo-Croatian</b>	1	2
<b>Serbian and Croatian</b>	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

### Education and employment characteristics

#### *Highest educational level*

The majority of clients (see Table 3.6.) have acquired the level of **general upper secondary education or lower**; 35% have vocational education, 27% have primary education, 18% have lower secondary education and 10% have general upper secondary education. Eight per cent of clients have acquired higher levels of education, four per cent have post-secondary education and four per cent tertiary education.

**Table 3.4.** *Education, Slovenia*

	N	%
<b>Not completed primary education</b>	1	2
<b>Primary education</b>	13	27
<b>Lower secondary education</b>	9	18
<b>General upper secondary education (gymnasium)</b>	5	10
<b>Vocational education (upper secondary level)</b>	17	35
<b>Post-secondary education, non-tertiary</b>	2	4
<b>Tertiary education (bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees)</b>	2	4
<b>Total:</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

These education levels, which may be **somewhat higher than expected** given the GOAL target group of low educated adults, can be explained to some degree by the Slovenian context. Data from Slovene

Statistical Office<sup>8</sup> show that in 2014 in Slovenia among the working age population (15-64), 55.2% had vocational education or general secondary education and 22.9% had higher levels of education (post-secondary and tertiary education). The population of those with primary education or less is getting smaller and in 2014 they represented 21.9% of the working age population. Although the level of attained level of education in Slovenia is quite high, as OECD<sup>9</sup> and PIAAC<sup>10</sup> point out this does not necessarily mean highly developed skills. By international comparison, a high proportion of adults in Slovenia have low skills regardless of their attained education level. This can contribute to poorer outcomes on the labour market and low participation on the labour market.

### *Current education and learning*

As shown in Table 3.7., **84% of clients said they were not engaged in any kind of learning or education** at the time of the first counselling session and of the eight who were engaged in education, two were in the process of acquiring a qualification (see Table 3.8.): they represent four percent of all clients included in Wave 1.

**Table 3.5.** *Currently Engaged in Any Kind of Education or Learning, Slovenia*

	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>YES</b>	8	16
<b>NO</b>	41	84
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3.6.** *Working Towards a Qualification, Slovenia*

	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>YES</b>	2	<b>25</b>
<b>NO</b>	6	<b>75</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>

### *Employment status*

Clients' employment status indicates **two big groups; the unemployed (55%) and the full-time employed (35%)**. All other options are represented by one or two clients only. Two of the clients (4%) are retired and one client was entered under 'other' since it was not possible to classify the answer: in Slovenia you can have a special status on the labour market if you are a student (full time or as an adult) and under 27 years old, you have the right to work with limitations regarding time and different taxation.

<sup>8</sup> The Young and the Labour Market, Slovene Employment Office, October 2015.

<sup>9</sup> OECD Skills Strategy – Building an effective skills strategy in Slovenia, Draft Skills Challenges, June 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Slovenia's Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC Slovenia), <http://piaac.acs.si/raziskava/>, 12. 7. 2016.



**Table 3.7. Employment Status, Slovenia**

	N	%
<b>Employed full-time</b>	17	35
<b>Employed part-time</b>	0	0
<b>Self-employed</b>	1	2
<b>Unemployed</b>	27	55
<b>Retired</b>	2	4
<b>Inactive</b>	1	2
<b>Other</b>	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

Comparing the data on clients' acquired education level and their employment status (adding up the number of full time, part time and self-employed) allowed us to examine whether there is a difference between the level of education and employment. Table 3.10. shows that there are no significant differences between unemployed and employed clients in terms of primary or lower secondary education. Bigger differences are observed between those who have vocational education; 67% of those are unemployed and those with general upper secondary education, 80% of those are unemployed. Even a person with tertiary education is unemployed. **The data indicates that higher education level the greater the chance the client will be unemployed.**

Nevertheless, we need to compare this with the institutions that cooperate in the networks. On one side we have companies that employ people with low skills (not necessarily low educated) and they sent their employees in the counselling process and on the other side we have Employment Office, Social Services, rehabilitation services and their clients are mostly unemployed regardless of their attained educational level. **The aim of the network was to activate those who are inactive on the labour market and need more in-depth counselling.** As pointed out above, overall labour force participation is lower in Slovenia than it is in most OECD countries. One in two unemployed persons have been unemployed for more than one year, which in the long term can end in skills atrophy and social marginalisation.

**Table 3.8. Employment Status with Education, Slovenia**

	Not completed primary education		Primary education		Lower secondary education		General upper secondary		Vocational education		Post secondary non-tertiary		Tertiary education		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Employed</b>		0	6	46	5	56	1	20	5	33	1	100	0	0	18	40
<b>Unemployed</b>	1	100	7	54	4	44	4	80	10	67			1	100	27	60
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

### Previous guidance

As Table 3.11. shows, **59% of clients have not received any kind of counselling as an adult.**

**Table 3.9.** *Previously Received Guidance, Slovenia*

	N	%
<b>YES</b>	20	41
<b>NO</b>	29	59
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

### Self-efficacy

In the initial guidance session clients were asked to answer three questions concerning their own judgment about their self-efficacy, i.e. their self-perceived ability to achieve desired outcomes in life. Each question was made up of two statements, one presenting a more positive view and the other a more negative view. The positive statement gave the client a score of 1 point for that question and the negative one gave them a score of 0 points; thus the scores for the whole scale could range from 0-3 points, with 3 representing a client who chose the positive statement for all three questions and who thus had the highest possible score on the self-efficacy scale. The lowest possible score was 0.

**For more than half of GOAL clients in Slovenia (64%) their self-efficacy score was 3** and for 18% it was 2 (see Table 3.12.). For seven of the 49 GOAL clients in the Wave 1 dataset the score was 1 and for one GOAL client the score was 0.

Eight of the 49 GOAL clients had finished the counselling process and for three of them the change in self efficacy score **shows improvement in their perception of their own ability to achieve desired outcomes in life.**

**Table 3.10.** *Self-efficacy rate - Slovenia*

Degree of self-efficacy	N	%
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>99</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

### Attitudes to learning

Regarding clients' attitudes to learning we can see that **69% of clients like to learn new things a lot** and only 2% do not like learning new things at all (see Table 3.13.).

**Table 3.11.** *Attitudes to Learning, Slovenia*

	N	%
No, not really	1	2
Yes, a bit	14	29
Yes, a lot	34	69
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

### Learning goals

More than half of clients (65%) said that their specific learning goal was **to improve skills in specific area**, 27% need learning to find a job, 24% need training for their current job and 16% want to achieve a specific qualification (see Table 3.14.).

**Table 3.12.** *Learning Objectives, Slovenia*

	N	% of responses	% of cases (49=100%)
Yes, I want to achieve a qualification of any sort	1	1.5	2
Yes, I want to achieve a specific qualification	8	12	16
Yes, I want to improve my skills in general	2	3	4
Yes, I want to improve my skills in a specific area	32	46	65
Yes, I need this training for my current job	12	17	24
Yes, I need this learning to find a job	13	19	27
No, I do not have any specific objectives	1	1.5	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>140</b>

### Career goals

Only clients who came to counselling for job guidance were filtered into a question on career goals. (Programme staff reported in focus groups that during the counselling, conversation covers both topics, education and employment.) Table 3.15. shows that **44% of those clients who came to counselling for job guidance have a specific job in mind** and the same proportion (44%) say they know what type of work they want to do.

**Table 3.13.** *Career Goals, Slovenia*

	N	%
Yes, the client has a specific job in mind	4	44
Yes, the client knows what industry/type of work he/she wants to do	4	44

<b>No, the client do not have any specific job or career area in mind</b>	1	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100</b>

### 3.2 Programme staff

A total of 10 staff from participating organisations completed the GOAL pro forma designed to capture quantitative data on programme staff. Seven are involved in counselling in the GOAL project and are full time counsellors. Two perform counselling duties occasionally and one is a part of the GOAL team performing only organisational and promotional activities: all three work as project coordinators and managers.

#### *Gender*

Of the nine professionals who provide counselling, **two are male and seven are female.**

#### *Age*

**All the programme staff members (Table 3.16) are over 41 years old**, seven of them are between 41-50 years old and three of them are over 50 years old.

**Table 3.14, Staff Age Band, Slovenia**

	<b>N</b>
<b>30 and under</b>	0
<b>31 – 40</b>	0
<b>41 – 50</b>	7
<b>Over 50</b>	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>

### 3.3 Key findings

There are 49 clients in the Slovene Wave 1 dataset. The **majority of clients were women (71%), and most clients were in the 26-55 age range**, meaning that those in the last decade before retirement are underrepresented in the client base to date. With respect to target groups, **55% of clients were unemployed and 37% were employed** (including self-employment); **10% were migrants and 18% were aged over 50.** This last target sub-group will demand special attention in the continuation of the project.

In the working age population (15-64) in Slovenia, the percentage of those with only primary education (22%) is lower than amongst GOAL clients (27%). **Those with primary education and those with lower secondary education represent 45% of all clients**, groups considered vulnerable in Slovenia. The 'Resolution on the national programme of adult education in the Republic of Slovenia' for the period 2013-2020<sup>11</sup> states that goal for Slovenia is to raise the average educational level of the adult population from two and three year VET to four year VET. There are indications that four-year secondary education

<sup>11</sup> Resolution on the national programme of adult education in the Republic of Slovenia for the period 2013-2020, SIAE, 2014.

improves the position on the labour market and is a precondition for being more active in life-long learning.

### 3.4 Implications

#### Implications for programme development

Thus far, more than half of clients have been unemployed. When clients come to the counselling offered at the adult guidance centres or schools in Slovenia, their goals are usually connected to education, short training, on the job training, short courses, or acquiring a qualification – all of which could lead to an improved position on the labour market. The programmes can be short and last a day or two or they can last two or three years. It depends what kind of learning goal the candidate has – a key goal of the counselling is to help individuals develop and/or identify appropriate learning goals. As **the development of goals, motivation and plans for the future is a long-term, ongoing process, counselling does not stop with the enrolment or when the decision on acquiring a qualification is made.**

#### Implications for evaluation

The national project team will have to define what possible outcomes are for the GOAL clients since in practice counselling could last for a year or more if a person is enrolled in the formal VET programme.

#### Implications for policy

Programme staff mentioned in focus group as one of the weaknesses in the approach that in Slovenia there are no free educational and training programmes now that they could offer to project target groups since they are not able to finance it by themselves. This is evident in Table 3.7 where 84% of clients said they were not engaged in any kind of learning or education at the time of the first counselling session and of the eight who were engaged in education, two are in the process of acquiring a qualification (see Table 3.8.), representing four percent of all Wave 1 clients. **This finding highlights the importance of broader policy initiatives addressing structural barriers to further education.**

The ‘Resolution on the national programme of adult education in the Republic of Slovenia’ for the period 2013-2020’ seeks to improve the qualification levels of Slovenian adults. Guidance such as that provided by GOAL could potentially play an **important role in this process by providing adults with the support, information and direction needed to move one or more steps up the qualifications ladder.**

## 4 The GOAL guidance service

This chapter provides an overview of descriptive information on the GOAL guidance service in Slovenia, in order to develop our understanding of how the service has been used in the initial stages and why. By analysing quantitative and qualitative data on the GOAL activities and processes to date, the chapter offers preliminary insights into what appears to be working well and less well in the guidance service.

Looking across Europe as a whole, the culture of **adult guidance is underdeveloped**, especially among adults who are traditionally less likely to engage in work-related and other forms of learning, such as those with low literacy and numeracy skills. There is a perception – which to some extent is still borne out by practice – that guidance is almost exclusively a careers-focused service offered in schools at or near the point where students are completing their compulsory education.

According to the ELGPN<sup>12</sup>, **guidance within adult education typically takes three forms:**

- *Pre-entry guidance* which supports adults to consider whether to participate in adult learning and what programmes might be right for them.
- *Guidance as an integral part of adult education programmes.* Some adult education programmes are strongly focused on career planning or on the development of employability and career management skills: in these cases lifelong guidance is often built into the core of the programme.
- *Exit guidance* which supports graduates of adult education programmes to consider how they can use what they have learned to support their progress in further learning and work.

### 4.1 Guidance activities and processes

#### Quantitative findings

##### *Reasons for seeking guidance*

Counsellors had to provide data on client reasons for seeking guidance and that was done in two steps. First the client named several reasons (see Table 4.1.) and secondly client had to choose the main one (see Table 4.2.).

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<sup>12</sup> Hooley, T. (2014) The evidence base on lifelong guidance: A guide to key findings for effective policy and practice. European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network.

**Table 4.1.** *Client Reasons for Seeking Guidance, Slovenia*

	<b>N</b>	<b>% of responses</b>	<b>% of cases (49=100%)</b>
To explore educational opportunities	38	53	78
To validate existing competences/prior learning	8	11	16
To find links between personal interest and occupational/educational opportunities (Interest assessment)	10	14	20
To get assistance with learning technique/strategies	1	1	2
To find financial resources for learning	1	1	2
To get assistance with job seeking	3	4	6
To get assistance with writing a CV	4	6	8
To get information about different institutions and their roles	0	0	0
Because of personal issues	1	1	2
Other	6	8	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>146</b>

**Table 4.2.** *Main Reason for Seeking Guidance, Slovenia*

	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
To explore educational opportunities	32	65
To validate existing competences/prior learning	2	4
To find links between personal interest and occupational/educational opportunities	8	16
To get assistance with learning technique/strategies	0	0
To find financial resources for learning	0	0
To get assistance with job seeking	1	2
To get assistance with writing a CV	2	4
To get information about different institutions and their roles	0	0
Because of personal issues	0	0
Other	4	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

When clients were asked to name all their reasons for seeking guidance the majority answered (78%) that they wanted to **explore educational opportunities**. In 20% of the cases they also wanted to find links between personal interest and occupational/educational opportunities, and the third largest group of answers (16%) was the validation of existing competences or prior learning. Twelve percent of candidates named their own reasons: these included opening their own bakery, needing a work permit, and looking for something to do in their spare time. **None of the clients needed information about different institutions and their roles.**

**For the majority of clients (65%) exploring educational opportunities was the main reason for seeking guidance**, 16% wanted primarily to find links between personal interest and occupational or educational opportunities. Four per cent wanted to validate existing competences or prior learning.

When comparing the influence of gender, age group or target group on main reasons for seeking guidance we can see that **men were more focused on two dominant reasons – to explore educational opportunities and to find links between personal interest and occupational/educational opportunities** – while women had additional reasons for seeking guidance (Table 4.3.). Looking at the age groups we can see that the main reasons are different for those older than 56 than those younger (Table 4.4.). Only three people were included in the counselling sessions in Wave 1 who were older than 56 and for one the main reason was to validate existing competences. For those younger than 56 an important goal was to explore educational opportunities and find links between personal interest and occupational/educational opportunities. For those in the age group 46- 55 it was also important to get assistance in job seeking and help with writing CV. For the all target groups included in the sessions in the Wave 1 was important to explore educational opportunities (Table 4.6.).

**Table 4.3.** *Client's Main Reason for Seeking Guidance, By Gender, Slovenia*

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>To explore educational opportunities</b>	24	69	8	57	32	65
<b>To validate existing competences/prior learning</b>	2	6	0	0	2	4
<b>To find links between personal interest and occupational/educational opportunities (Interest assessment)</b>	4	11	4	29	8	16
<b>To get assistance with job seeking</b>	1	3	0	0	1	2
<b>To get assistance with writing a CV</b>	2	6	0	0	2	4
<b>Other</b>	2	6	2	14	4	8
<b>Total:</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>



**Table 4.4. Client's Main Reason for Seeking Guidance, By Age, Slovenia**

	<18		19-25		26-35		36-45		46-55		56-65		66<		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
To explore educational opportunities	0	0	2	50	10	67	12	86	8	62	0	0	0	0	32	65
To validate existing competences/prior learning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	1	50	0	0	2	4
To find links between personal interest and occupational/educational opportunities (Interest assessment)	0	0	1	25	4	27	2	14	1	8	0	0	0	0	8	16
To get assistance with job seeking	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	0	0	0	0	1	2
To get assistance with writing a CV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	15	0	0	0	0	2	4
Other	0	0	1	25	1	7	0	0	0	0	1	50	1	100	4	8
<b>Total:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.5. Client Main Reason For Seeking Guidance, By Group, Slovenia**

	Job-seeker/unemployed		Early School Leaver		Migrant/Refugee /Asylum seeker		Detainee		Over-50		Employed (& low educated)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
To explore educational opportunities	13	57	0	0	2	40	0	0	4	50	13	100
To validate existing competences/prior learning	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	13	0	0
To find links between personal interest and occupational/educational opportunities (Interest assessment)	7	30	0	0	1	20	0	0	0		0	0
To get assistance with job seeking	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	13	0	0
To get assistance with writing a CV	2	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	2	40	0	0	2	25	0	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100</b>

### Contact type

The vast majority (92%) of guidance sessions in Slovenia were **face-to-face individual sessions** between the client and the counsellor (Table 4.6.).

**Table 4.6.** *Type of Contact, Slovenia*

	N	%
Phone	1	2
Email	0	0
Text	0	0
Face-To-Face Individual	45	92
Face-To-Face Group	3	6
Other	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

### *Length of session*

In Wave 1 the majority of clients (38 out of 49 clients) had one session, nine clients had two sessions and two clients had four sessions.

According to the information provided by the counsellors, the largest share of first sessions (53%) lasted between 21 and 30 minutes. 41% of first sessions lasted between 31 and 60 minutes and six percent of sessions lasted more than one hour. Eleven GOAL clients had more than one counselling session and 53% of the subsequent sessions lasted between 31 and 60 minutes. **Although the number of subsequent sessions is smaller, these appear at this stage to be longer than the first one.** It will be interesting to monitor in Wave 2 whether there is a difference in the length of the first, subsequent and the last session.

**Table 4.7.** *Length of the First and Subsequent Sessions, Slovenia*

	First session		Subsequent sessions	
	N	%	N	%
under 20 min	-	-	-	-
21-30 min	26	53	6	40
31-60 min	20	41	8	53
61 min and above	3	6	1	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100</b>

### *Focus of session*

Data on the focus of the session comes from two sources. In the client satisfaction survey, service users were asked about the focus of their session. Table 4.8. shows that in 88% of the cases clients said they talked about learning/education/obtaining a qualification, 35% talked about jobs and 16% about validation of prior learning.

**Table 4.8.** 'What Did You Talk About With Your Counsellor Today', Slovenia

	N	% of responses	% of cases
<b>Jobs</b>	17	25	35
<b>Learning</b>	43	63	88
<b>VPL</b>	8	12	16
<b>Total:</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>139</b>

In the data monitoring template, the counsellor also recorded the focus of the session.

*Route to guidance: type of referring organisation*

Clients came to guidance session predominantly (45%) on their own initiative; 18% were referred to the guidance process by the rehabilitation centre, 16% were sent to the guidance session by employers and 10% by the employment service. Other referring institutions were also schools, other educational support services and for one client it was their mother and for one were friends.

**Table 4.9.** Type of Referring Organisation, Slovenia

	N	%
<b>Self-referral</b>	22	45
<b>(Un) employment services</b>	5	10
<b>Employer</b>	8	16
<b>Educational institutions (e.g. schools, colleges)</b>	2	4
<b>Educational support services (incl., other adult education centres)</b>	1	2
<b>Rehabilitation institutions</b>	9	18
<b>Other</b>	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

**Referring institutions correspond to the type of institutions included in the local networks:** this indicates that this type of cooperation can have positive impact on activation of vulnerable target groups. The large proportion of clients who self-referred to the service can perhaps be explained by the fact that some counsellors had informational group sessions at the Employment Office or at the employers' organisations or Social Services'. **They presented the service on offer and invited those who could need counselling to arrange one-to-one session.** Candidates were not directly referred to the counselling by Employment Office or Social Services therefore they just got the information there. All the unemployed at the Employment Office have a personal employment plan where all the actions people have to take are written. Since these counselling sessions were not in these plans they did not feel they were referred to the sessions by their employment counsellors.

Table 4.10. shows the relationship between referral routes and client target groups.

**Table 4.10. Type of Referral Organisation<sup>13</sup> and Type of Target Group<sup>14</sup>, Slovenia**

	Self-referral		(Un) employ. services		Employer		Educational Institute.		Educational support service		Rehabilit. Institute.		Other	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Unemployed</b>	15	68	3	60	0	0	0	0	1	100	3	33	1	<b>5</b>
<b>Migrant</b>	0	0	2	40	1	13	1	50	0	0	0	0	1	<b>5</b>
<b>Over-50</b>	5	23	0	0	2	25	1	50	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Employed</b>	2	9	0	0	5	63	0	0	0	0	6	67	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

The findings of this analysis are that:

- most (68%) of those self-refer are unemployed;
- more of those who were referred by rehabilitation institution are employed (67%) than unemployed (33%);
- of those who were referred by an employer, 25% are aged over 50 and 13% migrants;
- of those who were referred by (un)employment services, 60% are unemployed and 40% migrants.

The main conclusion is that different target groups were referred by different organisations, but there is also a notable influence of partner organisations in the regional network, especially the employment offices.

### Qualitative findings

This overview of the service offered at each intervention site is drawn from analysis of the focus group with programme staff, and clients' perspective is summarised from two qualitative interviews with clients, one in Ljubljana and one in Velenje.

In focus groups, counsellors described the typical session. First candidates tell the counsellor why they have come to seek counselling. With additional questions the counsellor discovers what their purpose is, and what their interests are. When it comes to formal education, counsellor helps with enrolment and with preparing portfolios for the recognition of informal knowledge. If necessary, **they also call the candidate on the phone and encourage them to seek help if needed.** Some counsellors have the first meeting with candidates as a group counselling (on how to write applications and CVs) and later they have one or more individual counselling sessions.

<sup>13</sup> Self-referral (1),(Un) employment services (2), Employer (3), Social (welfare) services (4), Educational institutions (e.g. schools, colleges) (5), Educational support services (incl., other adult education centres) (6), Human rights office (7), Integration/migration services (8), Agency for social inclusion (9), Trade union (10), Consultant agency (11), Youth services (12), Local governments (13), NGOs (14), Socio-cultural institutions (15), (National) prison institution (16),Rehabilitation institutions (17),Other

<sup>14</sup> Job-seeker/unemployed (1), Early School Leaver (2), Migrant/Refugee/Asylum seeker (3), Detainee (4), Over-50 (5), Employed (& low educated) (6)

Most counsellors also (not all; depending on the candidate and their goals) make a personal learning plan for candidates<sup>15</sup>. One of the counsellors pointed out that it is good if they talk with candidate in their own language. All counsellors agreed that the conversation with the candidate should be in a completely separate room, with no disturbing factors (phones, other people).

**They all agreed the effect of counselling is better when there are more counselling sessions and they can also be longer. The number of sessions depend on the client's goals and client's needs. The number of sessions and length of the sessions should not be prescribed.**

They also need available and up-to-date database and tools. At the moment they use several different tools such as: record of an introductory session, certificate of registry (if formal programmes), the application for recognition of prior knowledge, personal learning plan for those who engage in formal education, Europass CV, NVQ portfolio, electronic assessment of key competences.

With this target group usually there is the lack of ICT knowledge, so tools on computers are not used: paper forms are. Tools that are used now in counselling are not in foreign languages and that with that they are less useful. In addition, GOAL questionnaire should be translated in clients' languages. Translation must be in the correct terminology.

Turning to the client perspective, service user 1 (female, age group 40-49, long term unemployed) has had several meetings with the counsellor (she did not know the exact number) and she is still in the guidance process. The first contact with the counsellor was when the counsellor came to the group of unemployed (in which she was) and explained the possibility of guiding them to enter education or training. The **presentation was very inspiring** for her so she made an appointment and came to the counsellor for an individual session. At the first meeting, they talked for one hour and started to research her needs and wishes to change the profession and which education/training she would need. Later they started to explore what she had learned in past years, what her interests and goals are. They prepared a learning plan together (a written document) which she is now following. The client also decided to prepare a portfolio with the counsellor's help. In addition, for now she is already included in a computer-training programme (of 30 hours). She emphasised that at each session the counsellor was very kind and explained to her everything she wanted to know. She has mentioned several times that the counsellor gave her a lot of useful information and motivated her a lot to decide for further education. Besides the computer course, she also decided to improve her English by self-directed learning with a mentor in folk high school Velenje and to start a German language course in autumn. She is very interested in learning foreign languages and she is glad that the counsellor supports and helps her do it. She would like to improve her English to communicate better on the Internet and to also know English and German because she thinks that she would need them in administrative work (which is her goal for a new job). At the last (but not yet the final) session she took an English test with an English

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<sup>15</sup> Personal learning plan is a tool used when adult person is enrolled in formal VET programmes. It would be used by those counsellors who work in schools or by those in adult guidance centres where in their institutions they also provide formal VET programmes. Some adult learning institutions use some form of personal learning plan also for non-formal programmes.

teacher (counsellor organised it) to assess her knowledge of English. She is waiting for feedback in the next session with the counsellor this week.

Service user 2 (male, age group 20-29, unemployed) did not know what to expect from the counsellors at the school. He returned to the school he dropped out in the past and now he is entering again as an adult. He was a little bit scared. He did not want to make an appointment with the counsellors; he just appeared at the door. Since they welcomed him without any problems, his fears lessened. At the first session, they explored his reasons to return to school and in what kind of programme he would be interested. He said: *'Counsellors asked me some questions'*. After he decided to enrol in the programme, they guided him through the enrolment procedure and prepared a personal learning plan for him in which they together decided which modules he would take first. **The idea of a learning plan is to motivate newly enrolled adult learner with modules that are more interesting for them.** He will be returning to the counsellors when he needs additional help with either learning or planning exams. Important for him was that the conversation was relaxed, professional but with some personal stories to which he could relate to.

He said he got the help that he needed and a feeling of personal approach. He knows he can always rely on the counsellor regarding his educational process and additional motivation.

## 4.2 Key findings

In Slovenia the majority (92%) of counselling sessions are **face-face individual sessions**, although a minority (6%) are face-to face group sessions. The **majority of first sessions (53%) lasted 21-30 minutes, while the majority (53%) of subsequent sessions lasted 31-60 minutes.** The main reason for seeking guidance was to explore educational opportunities (65%). In the Wave 1 data, the majority of clients (38 clients) had one session, nine clients had two sessions and two clients had four sessions.

**Clients came to guidance predominantly (45%) on their own initiative**, but 18% were referred to by the rehabilitation centre, 16% were sent by employers and 10% by the employment service. The large proportion of clients who came on their own decision can be explained by the fact that some counsellors had informational group sessions at the Employment Office or at the employers' organisations or Social Services. They presented the service and invited those who would like counselling to arrange one to one sessions. Candidates were not directly referred to the counselling by Employment Office or Social Services; they simply got the information from those organisations.

In the focus group, programme staff said that the **candidates faced numerous barriers** such as lack of education, lack of ability to speak the Slovene language, lack motivation, living a long distance from providers, lack of knowledge regarding where or how to get information, lack of confidence, or resentfulness against institutions. All counsellors agreed that the conversation with the candidate should be in a completely separate room, with no disturbing factors (e.g. phones, other people). The number of counselling sessions for this target group should not be limited since it is evident they are more effective when they have more counselling sessions. The sessions can last longer especially when

candidates do not speak Slovene language. The number of sessions and length of the sessions should not be prescribed.

## 4.3 Implications

### Implications for programme development

Guidance Centres have special ISIO standards for adult counselling. School centres have no special standards regarding providing counselling services to adults. With the GOAL protocol, we are **establishing a common ground for counselling sessions**. This provides a good base for policy and programme planning.

One of the Slovene target groups are employees with lower or no qualifications. This group is especially challenging, as **employers usually do not see any benefit in providing additional counselling for adult education to their employees**. The counsellors in the focus group think it is necessary to make initiative from the top. Employers have to be made aware of why it is important for their employees to attend additional education or training programs and counselling. Implications for policy

**Language barriers represent a substantial obstacle for clients in reaching their goals.** Policymakers could help to address this issue by implementing programmes to help people who do not speak the Slovene language to learn the language, so they can be better integrated into the educational system. This is especially important for younger adults.

## 5 Partnerships and Networks

This chapter provides in-depth background information of the partnerships and networks that have been developed to support the work of the GOAL programmes. It also provides a preliminary assessment of the quality and value of these partnerships and networks.

### 5.1 Existence and scope of partnerships and networks

#### Regional level

One of the important goals in the project for Slovenia was to set up two regional networks and connect two providers from these environments (adult guidance centre and school) that do not have tradition of cooperating. Adult Guidance Centres in Slovenia were familiar with forming networks in their local communities but these did not include school centres. The GOAL project is testing how co-operation between schools and guidance centres could work and whether this approach could improve the service provided for adult learners.

When choosing providers of guidance services for adult learners we took into account the two cohesive regions of Slovenia (west and east cohesion region). From each region we chose two types of providers (based on the terms of the call and criteria that were defined in line with the project's goals) – **a school centre and an ISIO guidance centre** for adults. They had to meet the following criteria: the providers had to integrate in their educational programmes and activities the target age groups of 50+ or migrants or the target groups of persons with lower education, both employed and unemployed.

As a part of SWOT analysis we also mapped the existing networks at the four selected providers. After analysis we decided to establish a new network in both sites for the GOAL project. The four providers suggested the partners who could be involved in the network regarding the target groups of adults which will be included to the guidance activities.

The national team prepared the starting point for the establishment of two networks and together with providers finalised the preparation for the establishment the networks in December 2015. In January 2016 both sites started to invite proposed partners to the network. They prepared a final version of agreement of collaboration in the network which were later signed by every partner.

ISIO Guidance centre Ljubljana and Biotechnical School Centre Ljubljana coordinate the network in the Central Slovenian region. In light of the target groups, they decide to invite in the partnership the following organisations:

1. Slovenska filantropija, Ljubljana (Slovenian Philanthropy - migrants),
2. Univerzitetni Rehabilitacijski center Soča, Ljubljana (disabled adults),
3. CenterKontura, Ljubljana (disabled adults),
4. Center za usposabljanje, vzgojo in izobraževanje Janeza Levca, Ljubljana (adults with special needs),
5. Inštitut Antona Trstenjaka, Ljubljana (older adults 60+),



6. Univerza za tretježivljenjsko učenje, Ljubljana (third age university – adults 50+),
7. Center za socialni delo Vič-Rudnik (social service - social excluded adults),
8. Center za socialno delo Šiška (social service - social excluded adults),
9. Mestna knjižnica Ljubljana (library - different target groups of adults),
10. Zavod za zaposlovanje, Ljubljana (employment office – unemployed).

The regional partner's network in the Central Slovenian Region covers all area of Central Slovenian Region. ISIO Guidance centre Ljubljana and Biotechnical School Centre Ljubljana have already collaborated with some those institutions, but not with all.

ISIO Guidance centre Velenje and School Centre Velenje coordinate the network in Savinjska region. Given the target groups included in the guidance, they decide to invite in the partnership the following organisations:

1. Inštitut Integra, Velenje (disabled adults),
2. Invel d.o.o., Velenje (unemployed),
3. Zavod RUJ (disabled adults, unemployed),
4. Zavod za zaposlovanje, Velenje (employment office – unemployed),
5. Center za socialno delo Velenje (social service - social excluded adults),
6. DBSS d.o.o. (company – low skilled employees),
7. BSH Hišni aparati d.o.o. Nazarje (company – low skilled employees),
8. Komunalno podjetje Velenje, d.o.o. (company – low skilled employees),
9. Premogovnik Velenje (company – low skilled employees).

The regional partner's network in the Savinjska Region covers all area of Savinjska Region. ISIO Guidance centre Velenje and School Centre Velenje have already collaborated with some those institutions, but not with all.

From the outset the main objectives for establishing the networks were:

- to establish two new networks for the project GOAL,
- to include some new institutions in the network with which the four GOAL sites had had no previous collaboration
- to exchange information about what can be offered in terms of adult education for selected target group in GOAL project
- to improve attitudes towards selected target groups (migrants, older, unemployed, low-skilled adults, adults with special needs, disabled adults), be aware of the possibilities available to them for education, training, career development, employment possibilities.

The GOAL national team prepared the concept of collaboration in the network. This stressed the importance of it being the counsellors and operative staff who work with the clients (participants at their services) who would participate in the network, not managers. The tasks and goals of collaboration and the method of cooperation have been clearly defined. It is planned, in 2017, to develop common database of information about available educational programmes for the different target groups and

other important data related to employment, career development etc. Another focus is to establish trust between institutions that are not narrowly focused and are afraid that other partners in the network will take over their work (the danger is the conviction that by referring a person to another institution they will lose a client). All four GOAL providers are aware that **exchange of good practice** when working with the GOAL target groups is very important part of collaboration.

In February 2016 both networks were established. All partners signed an agreement on the establishment of the network in which goals and common tasks/agreements are listed. According to an agreement on the establishment of the network, the main line of formal communication will be network's meeting. Informal communication will be conducted through individual personal/ e-mail/phone communications to the individual network partner. Decision-making processes come in the form of the regular network's meetings and it will be implemented with the agreement of all partners.

**All members of both networks collaborate without any additional financial support.** However all financial resources for operating of networks are covered by providers of GOAL project and they are also coordinators of the regional networks. They have decided that the leader/coordinator of the network will be the organisations for one year: in 2016 the leaders are ISIO Guidance centre Ljubljana and ISIO Guidance centre Velenje, and in 2017 leaders will be Biotechnical School Centre and School Centre Velenje.

We are expecting the impact of partnerships on intervention/service in two ways:

- partners in the network will be referral of the clients to the providers of guidance in GOAL project (in both sites)
- exchange of information of the needs and characteristics of the clients (specific needs of certain target group of adults), exchange of good practices, tools, data base and be together in further training will influence on comprehensive and better (quality) guidance process with the clients and results and effects could be better.

### National level

The establishment of a National Advisory Committee is still in process. It was questioned if the establishment of an additional advisory group is needed. There are already different national bodies established for the purpose of strategic questions related to adult learning and some of its specifics, such as guidance. So the main rethinking on the national level and the whole process is to choose one of the existing bodies or establish a new one only for the purpose of the GOAL project. Nevertheless, from the beginning of GOAL project it has already been presented and discussed in different national bodies.

Beside this, local partnerships have already been established and some of these partners' national representative organisations also participate in the national existing bodies (like National employment service): this is a good base for exchange information and good experiences between local level and national level.

## 5.2 Perceived quality of collaboration within networks

### From the perspective of GOAL

An important and related set of goals for programme partners is **to improve guidance opportunities for vulnerable adults and to ensure that clients from partner organisations can join guidance activities.**

The GOAL project provides an additional opportunity for their clients. It is also important that they will **cascade the findings** from the project (examples of good practice) and the tools developed on to all the partners in the network so that their use can continue.

With the help of GOAL, the programme partners wish to further improve the existing guidance system. They want their clients to participate in the project as it represents upgraded counselling for some. For example, a partner from the Regional Chamber of Commerce sees GOAL as a link between industry and education. He thinks it will be his role to motivate employers to recognise the importance of lifelong learning for low-skilled employees.

Partners see GOAL activities as complementary to their own activities, and hope that GOAL guidance leads to **additional training for employed adults.** This includes more basic levels of training for the target groups, e.g. training in occupational safety. Partners see potential benefits through the process of clients taking part in training, and thus becoming more skilled and better able to integrate into the processes in their places of work. This may have knock-on effects on the results (e.g. productivity) of their work organisations. Training may also ease the clients' transition into work and support personal growth. Inter-service cooperation is important, as is the upgrade of their present activities.

Prior to GOAL, some partners were already working with one or both organisations (in Ljubljana and in Velenje). Partners see the possibilities of cooperation in disseminating information about the guidance opportunities, in working together to help different vulnerable groups, and in complementing employment guidance with educational guidance, and vice-versa.

For programme partners the benefits of partnership appear to be: networking, getting to know other organisations, getting information about those organisations, learning about good practices, and accessing tools to carry out guidance. Organisations also talk among themselves. Some partners would like to put more emphasis on particular target groups through network collaboration – for example, the target group of seniors in the Osrednjeslovenska region, where the population is rapidly aging.

Some partners do not have experience in participating in the network yet. All partners expect the exchange of information about their services to others, what is expected is more inclusion of the users into a more directed guidance particularly for the vulnerable groups, because in the field they notice that these persons in particular would need more personal contact. They want to connect more, this would probably allow them find new possibilities for cooperation and at the same time to implement new measures or programmes that could be run for vulnerable target groups.

Partners also expect examples of good practices from the GOAL international partnership. The goal of the partnership should also be to put the results into practice – to upgrade the work and build upon it, and to form initiatives for the future.

The main factors for the effectiveness and quality of collaboration/partnerships are:

- clear defined goals and tasks of the partnership and of each partner and of the coordinator,
- defined form of operating
- common activities, e.g. training workshops, promotional activities, exchange of information, exchange of tools
- follow-up and evaluate the results of GOAL and of the partnership/networking.

### Partner and policy perspectives

A key aspect is coordination: working across organisations to reach an individual and provide guidance through GOAL that will help the individual in other organisations or settings.

Policy actors suggested that the advantages of efficient networking **include a more holistic offer for the client and cross-organisational support for each partner's own activities**. It was argued that partnerships should be strengthened using promoters, multipliers, and the help of the NGOs, and that volunteers could also be included. Another partner said that for a successful partnership it is important that every partner has a defined role within the network.

One policy actor suggested that clients and partnerships might benefit if experts from the field participated in counsellor training. **A good counsellor learns from practice, but also benefits from training.**

Policy actors cited two issues as the primary obstacles from the side of the politics:

1. Financing: insufficient funding either for guidance or for the educational routes highlighted by guidance. Lack of available funding reduces the target group's possibilities for furthering their education. Policymakers need to work together to establish an appropriate mix of state and local funding.
2. Too few incentives from policy to support networking and cooperation amongst partners.

### 5.3 Potential sustainability of collaborative networks

All programme partners agree that partnerships should be sustained in the future. But it is necessary to think how. For the future partnerships it is important to emphasise the importance of guidance for vulnerable groups of adults, which is often overlooked. After collaboration in GOAL's networks, partners will know each other better and they will know to whom they can turn if they would like to exchange a certain experience or to find supplemental services for their clients. This could also have a preventative effect, because through cooperation they could identify individuals' needs for educational guidance and provide it earlier.

Programme staff believe that **if partners see that network is practical and useful they will continue to work and collaborate in the network beyond the life of the GOAL project.** The partners must see the added value of networking and they will stay in partnership.

## 5.4 Key findings

In Slovenia, we set up two regional networks and connected two providers from environments (adult guidance centre and school) that do not have a tradition of cooperating. In the central Slovenia region, ISIO Guidance Centre Ljubljana and Biotechnical School Centre Ljubljana formed a network with institutions that deal with migrants, socially excluded adults (unemployed, with lower education level) and disabled people. In Savinjska region, ISIO Guidance Centre Velenje and School Centre Velenje formed a network that is more focused on employed people but with disabilities or low-skilled employees.

Both regional partnerships are relatively new and will collaborate more intensively over the next year. Nonetheless they have already planned some common activities, like presentations and exchange of tools which are used in guidance, to intensify the promotion of guidance in GOAL project for their clients, and to prepare a new database on educational provision employment possibilities and related opportunities.

Programme partners have quite high expectations from the partnership; they expect benefits for their clients and for their staff. For example the Chamber of Commerce was not previously included in concrete projects in the field of guidance, but they estimate that their presence is needed, because they emphasise social responsibility as one of the values to the employees and also to the employers. Such projects are the easiest way for them to raise employer awareness.

Most programme partners feel that in the past there was not so much cooperation between organisations, **now it is absolutely essential.** It is necessary to build quality partnership and they believe that this is possible within the GOAL project. To build the partnership which maintains open cooperation, transfer of knowledge, information, pledge to common goals, use of knowledge, products, etc. This is where the contribution of this network can be seen, so that you can upgrade their knowledge and experience from their past activities.

There was also a suggestion from the policy actor focus group that partnerships should be strengthened using some counsellors as promoters or mentors for other professionals who partly work as a counsellors for adults. The help of NGOs and their volunteers could also be included in guidance for adult learners.

The initiative for setting up networks comes from the national level, but coordination is on the regional level. A partner contract must be signed and deemed official, the network must be set up formally, because volunteer work doesn't guarantee its continued operation. Each of the institutions entering the network must see and acknowledge the added value of this partnership with institutions. The network needs good organisation, preciseness in notifications, and the sharing of information.

**Partnership should be built upon unification of different policies so the effects can be greater. It is important that people with influence are included in the partnerships at the national level.**

An important factor is also that the project should be managed systematically; coordinators of networks should inform what the partners should do to fulfil their tasks. Programme partners think it is easier to work if the instructions, the mode of operation and the roles of the partners are clearly defined.

Most of those participating in the policy actor focus group felt that the advantage of efficient networking is a holistic offer and support they provide for each other in each partner's own activities. Programme partners also emphasised the meaning of comprehensive and better quality of guidance for vulnerable target groups through collaborating in partnerships. The challenge will be how they will be effective in this given that there are a lot of partners in each regional network: ten in Ljubljana region and nine in Velenje region. The focus will be to reach the vulnerable target groups selected for GOAL, especially those who need further education and training for better employment possibilities, career development or personal development.

## 5.5 Implications

### Implications for programme development

Programme partners talked about the problems of social exclusion of their clients, lack of motivation and the need for more deep counselling, for which partners sometimes do not have enough time and staff), and more sessions for the guidance of one client. Counsellors are aware of this need, and stressed that low-skilled adults (unemployed, employed), migrants, and over-50s, tended to **need deeper counselling, more personal contacts, a lot of additional motivation, and support for further education and training**. Counsellors feel that partners could support them in many ways doing this, e.g. by: sharing information about the characteristics and the needs of the clients; sharing tools, information and databases; and perhaps even providing training workshops to upgrade the competences needed for guidance work with vulnerable target groups.

Policy actors emphasised that in addition to the national partnerships, local ones are also important. The challenge is how to connect the existing human resources on the local level, meaning the human resources in the companies, counsellors at community colleges and secondary schools, and counsellors at the employment services. **Time and financial resources are needed to make and sustain these connections**. Therefore the Ministry of Education is looking for suitable solutions within the frame of legal regulations; for example there is a change prepared in an article of the ZOFVI (The law on organisation and financing of education) which defines the activity of the public service in the adult education, and a new law is also being prepared about adult education. Within the frame of this solution, guidance activities will also be more stable within the system; the goal is also to increase the number of counsellors. But the state level and government funding are not enough, other sources of financing will also be important, for example, from local communities and from the industry.

GOAL partnerships on the local level currently seem to work well; however, local partners argue that **the system should do more to support cross-organisational collaboration**. This is a challenge for the national level and it has been decided that at the national expert group for lifelong career guidance will form a sub-group for GOAL, to monitor the results and formulate systemic recommendations.

One aspect of project sustainability is a better connection between guidance providers. Now we have adult education organised within secondary schools, which ensures guidance within the education process, and we should connect with the counsellors in the ISIO centres and other counsellors, for example at the Employment Service, so there will be better connections between different counsellors.

### Implications for evaluation

As yet it is too early to reach clear conclusions regarding partnerships and their evolution. Wave 2 will provide the opportunity to assess the strength and potential sustainability of these partnerships. This includes addressing many of the issues raised above, e.g. re local and national partnerships, and exchange of information and skills.

### Implications for policy

At the moment a good example of partnership on the national level is the Coordination for Adult Education (working at the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport). In this partnership, different sectors search for common solution and information flow is reciprocal. It will be important to continuously inform this partnership about GOAL project results, both in Slovenia and other countries.

Policy actors identified two possible key obstacles for goals in GOAL project: **the lack of financing of guidance in adult education and lack of networking at policy level**. It will be important to develop suggestions and potentially guidelines through GOAL about how to overcome those obstacles and strengthen the role of guidance as a key component of lifelong learning for low-skilled adults.

Policy actors hope that GOAL will be sustainable, and hope that the outputs and outcomes of the project to be integrated into policies on the national and local levels. When planning the development of national and local institutions it will be important that the results are included into the annual plans. For example, it will be understood which competences the counsellors need, and training programmes will be designed accordingly. But there has to be funding allocated for this purpose. Policy actors believe that the results should be implemented through policies. For this purpose the work of the national coordination for lifelong career orientation can be used, as it is a good example of connecting guidance for youth and adults, for the employed and the unemployed.

## 6 Counsellor competences

This chapter focuses on guidance counsellors: on their job roles and the competences that are required to do that job effectively. This strand of the GOAL project focuses specifically on interventions which seek to define the competences guidance professionals need to work effectively with low-educated adults.

### 6.1 The job of the counsellor

#### Context

In SWOT analysis, we described the role and the required competences for the programme staff in both provider organisations.<sup>16</sup> In general in Slovenia **the competence profile of a counsellor is not defined in adult education**, though individual profiles are defined, or rather, in the profile 'leader/organiser in adult education', the competencies for counselling work are defined as one set of tasks.

In Slovenia there are **no formal programmes intended for counsellors in adult education or for career counsellors**. Some study programmes include contents which provide individual competences but do not provide comprehensive competency. For example a second cycle programme of Andragogy in the Faculty of Arts offers knowledge and skills for counsellor's work. It contains the subject Adult education counselling work. There is also a new study programme at the Faculty of Education Koper called Adult Education and Career Development but its focus is more on careers counselling than on counselling in adult education. Because of this situation SIAE has prepared initial training for counsellors in ISIO guidance centres.

Beside this in Slovenia in the year 2014, the term 'career counsellors' started being used in the context of one of the projects of the National Employment Office, of the unit 'National point for lifelong career orientation'. In 2014, the first whole programme of service training was ready, with the title 'Modular training of career counsellors'. The programme stems from the required competences for counsellor work in different networks for planning and developing a career, though this competence profile/model is not yet wholly defined and recorded. The training programme encompasses 160 hours, in which 140 hours were meant for general modules (Career orientation as a profession, counselee and counsellor in the process of guidance, theories, models and methods, tools and community groups and group-type work in career orientation), and afterwards each participant can choose one of the four specialised modules depending on the target group of users (employed, young, jobseekers, vulnerable groups).

The programme was first carried out in the year 2015 for 59 participants. The training was distinctly practically oriented and supported by theory. A wide set of experts enabled attendees to find out about new methods and techniques of work and the chance to learn about work in career orientation within different environments, organisations and contexts. In other European countries, this kind of education

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<sup>16</sup> Needs and Strengths analysis of existing services and local situations for Slovenia, SWOT analysis. SIAE, IRSVET. Slovenia, September 2015.



for career counsellors ensures higher education institutions, but **Slovenia is one of the rare EU countries that does not offer education for career counsellors.** The training is thus a reminder of the need for properly qualified counsellors for helping individuals in planning and leading a career on the modern and ever-changing job market. The aim is for the programme to qualify as one of the permanent forms of training counsellors in different networks, who, as part of their assignments, also perform the planning and development of careers for either children, youngsters or adults.

### Counselling Activities

For the counsellors from ISIO guidance centre, guidance is their main job. For the counsellors from school centre, guidance is one of the tasks beside other work which is mainly organisational work for education of adults or also they are as a part time teachers.

Of the nine professionals who provide counselling on GOAL **only one works exclusively as a counsellor for adults** and therefore spends all working hours per week for guidance (Table 6.1.). Three spend up to a half of all their weekly working hours on guidance, five counsellors spend one quarter or less of their working hours per week on guidance.

The counsellor who works on guidance only is employed in one of the guidance centres involved in the project and the other person who works on guidance half the week weekly is employed at one of the school centres. This shows us that **the type of institution where they work does not necessarily mean the counsellors will spend more or less time on guidance only.** We can assume that this depends on other activities within the organisation and how they are divided between professionals.

**Table 6.1.** *Hours Spent on Guidance Weekly and Number of Counsellors, Slovenia*

Range of hours	N of Counsellors
0 -10	5
11 - 20	3
21 - 40	1
<b>total</b>	<b>9</b>

When programme staff were asked to estimate the number of hours spent on the GOAL activities, we were given the time span between one and 15 hours (Table 6.2.). Seven answered that they spend up to two hours per week on GOAL activities, one spends 15 hours on GOAL activities which represent almost 40% of all working hours in a week and one only one hour.

**Table 6.2.** *Hours Spent on GOAL Activities Weekly and Number of Counsellors, Slovenia*

Hours	N of Counsellors
1	1
2	7
4	1
15	1
<b>total</b>	<b>10</b>

## Defining Competences

From the view of the goals of the GOAL project, programme developers thought it sensible to use the description of the competences of the counsellors in the ISIO centre. The competencies for work as a counsellor were defined by SIAE in 2013 in compliance with the methodology of a general competence model for professions in adult education.<sup>17</sup> A competence scheme derives from a reflection on basic adult education processes that take place in various working positions in which adult educators operate. As a starting point in defining the basic adult education processes, SIAE used the andragogical cycle – an established process model that defines the phases of adult education work. In doing so, two accompanying or ‘transverse processes’ that cannot be avoided when thinking about the planning and implementation of education in practice were added – these are called the management and the administration of the educational process.

Typical tasks and duties of leaders and counsellors at the ISIO centre are defined in the competence scheme in six different areas:

- 1) Identifying the adult’s needs for counselling in education:
  - identifying the needs of individuals, target groups, local/regional environment.
- 2) Planning and organisation of counselling at the ISIO centre:
  - planning of counselling at the ISIO centre,
  - organisation of counselling at the ISIO centre,
  - encouragement of adults to use ISIO centre services.
- 3) Counselling process:
  - informing and counselling for the integration in education,
  - planning of the personal educational path,
  - counselling assistance for participants during education,
  - learning assistance for adults during education,
  - information and counselling at the end of education.
- 4) Quality evaluation of counselling at the ISIO centre:
  - formative and summative evaluation of counselling quality at the ISIO centre.
- 5) Management of the ISIO centre:
  - working with staff, staff development at the ISIO centre and own development,
  - development work,
  - collaboration with partners,
  - promotion of the ISIO centre activity.
- 6) ISIO centre administration:
  - business and financial planning and work reporting,
  - normative issues regarding the ISIO centre activity,

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<sup>17</sup> Abilities or competences, as we define them in our approach that are necessary for adult educators' work performance become also the guideline for the planning of the training programmes at SIAE.

- documentation management.

The whole description of duties and tasks as well as competences for the counsellor at the ISIO centre can be viewed in SWOT analysis from 2015 in Appendix 1.<sup>18</sup>

The role of school guidance service is defined in general for kindergartens, primary and secondary schools in the Act of Organising and Financing of Education. In the part related to secondary schools, of which school centres are a part, it is defined as the one of the task is advising apprentices, pupils, teachers and parents; it works with educators, teachers and school administrators in planning, monitoring and evaluating school development and realising education work, and in providing vocational guidance (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 16, 2007).

The competencies for providing school guidance service are defined merely with formal requirements regarding education for the employment as a school counsellor/guidance worker. The regulations about the education of teachers and other professional workers in the educational programme for primary and secondary vocational, professional and grammar school define that a guidance counsellor can be anyone with a university degree in psychology, pedagogy, social pedagogy or special and rehabilitation pedagogy (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no.74/2002, 2002, no. 48/2011, 2011, no. 109/2011, 2011). All three regulations state that a guidance worker can also be someone who graduated from social work; the regulations for grammar school state that this is higher education degree while the regulations for primary and secondary vocational and professional schools state that it's a university degree (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no.74/2002, 2002), (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 48/2011). (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no.109/2011, 2011).

The contents of the field are covered with the Programme guidelines for school guidance service. Guidance work, as dictated by the guidelines, should include work with apprentices and pupils (30-40% of all work), work with teachers (20-25%) and work with parents (15-20%) (Čačinovič Vogrinčič et al, 2008). The guidelines thus dictate that counsellors spend 65-85% of their time for guidance work. The counsellors have extensive tasks for which they should be competent. However, the guidelines do not define the actual competencies.

From the above, it can be concluded that the described tasks and competencies are not entirely customised for counselling the low qualified adults, so it is important to upgrade their description from this perspective. With this it is good to start from the established competencies for counsellors in ISIO centres and identified needs of counsellors for different tasks, and consequently for knowledge, skills and competencies for counselling work with different groups of less educated adults. What other tasks and demands for additional knowledge there are, is going to be explored in project GOAL by the national institutions SIAE and IRSVET, together with four selected providers in two regions, and involved partners in the networks of selected regions (and also on a national level). The first information about it was also acquired through interviews of selected providers (four counsellors) and selected network

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<sup>18</sup> Needs and Strengths analysis of existing services and local situations for Slovenia, SWOT analysis, Appendix 1. SIAE, IRSVET. Ljubljana, September 2015.

partners (two – one from each sites) during the preparation of the SWOT analysis in 2015. The second step of analysing the competences which are needed is acquired information by focus group with the counsellors in May 2016 and acquired data from the questionnaire for the counsellors in the Wave 1 evaluation.

## 6.2 Degree to which counsellors achieve competence standards

In most countries, in Wave 1, work on defining competence standards was in its initial stages and thus it is not possible to reflect at this stage in the evaluation on whether the competence standards are being achieved. However, as discussed later in this chapter, a number of questions in the client satisfaction survey and the qualitative interview allowed stakeholders to reflect on various aspects of the counsellor's job.

### Programme staff experience, education and training

Of the nine GOAL counsellors in Slovenia, three have worked in counselling for under 10 years, three between 11-15 years and three of them between 16-20 years (Table 6.3.). Seven have bachelor degrees (European Qualification Framework [EQF], Level 7), one has master's degree (EQF 7), one has higher vocational education (EQF 5), and one has upper secondary technical education (EQF 4).

**Table 6.3.** *Years Providing Guidance, Slovenia*

	<b>N</b>
<b>1-10</b>	3
<b>11-15</b>	3
<b>16-20</b>	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>

Out of seven full-time counsellors, three have their basic qualification from the field of pedagogy or andragogy, one from the field of psychology, two have qualification from the field of teaching and one from the field of economics.

### Service user perceptions

**Data from the client satisfaction survey show that the clients were very satisfied with the guidance sessions.**

As Tables 6.4., 6.5., 6.6., and 6.7. illustrate, 98% of the clients thought that the counsellor explained things clearly, 96% thought that the counsellor gave them helpful information, 94% thought that the counsellor was encouraging, and 90% thought that the counsellor understood their needs.

**Table 6.4.** *'Did The Counsellor Explain Things Clearly', Slovenia*

	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	48	98
<b>Somewhat</b>	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 6.5.** *'Was the Counsellor Encouraging', Slovenia*

	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	46	94
<b>No</b>	1	2
<b>Somewhat</b>	1	2
<b>Missing</b>	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 6.6.** *'Did The Counsellor Seem To Understand Your Needs', Slovenia*

	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	44	90
<b>Somewhat</b>	4	8
<b>Missing</b>	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 6.7.** *'Did The Counsellor Give You Helpful Information', Slovenia*

	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	47	96
<b>Somewhat</b>	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

Nine clients completed an open question that allowed them to provide additional comments on the service. Eight of these statements focused on the work of counsellors, for example:

- *'Counsellor was very friendly, very helped me to solve the problems. One big compliment for her!'*
- *'So far, everything is great.'*
- *'Very well, I released, it was open conversation.'*

One client (of the nine clients who answer on open question) wrote a concrete goal, in which educational programme will enter after the counselling.

Based on the data from Client Survey, it could be concluded that the clients were very satisfied with the counselling, so that on this basis we could conclude that counsellors in the GOAL project have relevant competencies for counselling with low-skilled adults.

Clients who were interviewed for the qualitative strand said the counsellors were kind and had a personal approach what they like very much. One client stressed that it helped him that the counsellor was telling him her personal experience and he got the help that he needed. He has a feeling that he can always rely on the counsellor regarding his educational process or regarding his additional motivation.

The other client thinks that it helps her a lot that a counsellor was (and still is) very kind, accessible, has a lot of information and knowledge how to help her to learn. The counsellor was listening her and following her needs and wishes. She thinks that the counsellor activated her a lot. For the client was important counsellor's 'warm' and personal contact and the fact that the counsellor took time for her, listened her and motivated her to start with learning.

Both clients would not change anything about the guidance sessions, or thought that the counsellor could do something differently.

The qualitative data also show that the clients were satisfied with the work of counsellors, both clients emphasised some characteristics of the counsellor which they like and which is also confirmed by expert opinions, which characteristics or skills should have a good counsellor (SIAE, 2011). They stated that they liked that counsellor:

- has a good personal contact,
- listen them and are focused on their needs and interests,
- have enough time for them,
- know to motivate them for learning (in accordance of their personal and other circumstances and goals),
- has a lot of information which they needed.

These data come from two clients only, so any findings must be regarded with caution. In Wave 2 attempts will be made to choose a random and representative sample of clients to interview, although it is questionable whether it will be possible to persuade those who are less satisfied with the service to participate.

## Staff and other stakeholders' perspectives

### *Programme staff's perspectives*

In the staff focus group, programme staff were asked about the competences, skills and knowledge they thought were needed to provide effective guidance / counselling to the GOAL target group. Answers included:

- communicativeness and social skills,
- nonverbal and verbal communication,
- empathy,
- warmth and optimism,
- motivation, education, knowledge of different approaches of counselling,
- the ability to adapt to different target groups (flexibility),

- experiences with counselling to different target groups,
- knowing the tools and their use,
- knowing the system of formal and non-formal adult education and training and also the systems of education in other countries,
- being able to search the information,
- organisational skills,
- promotional skills,
- client acquisition.

They emphasised that where they have clients from vulnerable target groups, it is very important that clients have the feeling that the counsellor is **not in a hurry** and that they have time just for them.

When questioned if they had specific training and experience relevant to the GOAL target group, programme staff reported that they have some professional education and additional training from SIAE (counsellors from ISIO centres), also some international training and exchange of experience in different projects in which they have been involved and they were focused towards different target groups of adults.

One training in one school centre, focused on specific target groups, was organised for school counsellors (who work with pupils), but counsellors for adult education in school centres did not have any specific training on this topic. Counsellors from ISIO centres have the organised system of further training, which is organised by SIAE (and they also attended training courses in different other organisations). But counsellors in school centres have difficulties to attend the training programmes because of working time.

Programme staff presented how they integrate GOAL protocol into their work and how it affects their work. **They said that effect of the counselling is better when there are more counselling sessions.** Because of the GOAL questionnaires they have to take more time for each session with the candidate (questions are more detailed). Counsellors consider GOAL questionnaire as an additional tool.

Counsellors find protocol of the GOAL questionnaire useful. It is a fast way through which they gain an insight into the individual's problem and goals (causes, problems, fears) regarding career and education.

Counsellors in school centres have not worked with candidate on such a personal level but now with the GOAL protocol, they have to. They see this as a positive and a new way of working with candidates.

One of the counsellors expressed hope that GOAL project will set standards for other projects in the field of counselling for adults. The effects will become evident in the wider community and at national and European level.

Counsellors said they have worked with GOAL target groups previously and there are no specific differences. Now they have to follow GOAL protocol. Most of the times counselling is more about providing information not so much personal counselling (finding educational, personal or career goals)

They all had additional training for counsellors that are working with different target groups. Especially Guidance Centres are having a lot of additional training. However, all (guidance centre and school centres) are stating, that they need additional knowledge and skill for working with migrant (language is a big obstacle). A problem occurs when candidates do not speak Slovenian. In such cases, they use translators.

### *Stakeholder's perspectives*

In the stakeholder focus group there were six representatives of different organisations participating. The leader of the focus group combined two questions relating to competences, thus the answers of those attending are also combined. The questions were:

- What role, if any, should the national government play in formalising competency standards and the professional role of guidance practitioners?
- What practical support (for example in terms of funding and training) can government provide in professionalising the adult guidance workforce?

The answers of those participating were a reflection of the work of organisations that they represented and the kinds of responsibilities they have in the field of adult education:

- At Ministry of Education, Science and Sport they wish **to more firmly place counsellor training into financing of adult education**. For now we have a profile 'education organiser' and in practice, those professionals have to get additional knowledge for work in the field of counselling in adult education.
- It would be important to completely organise the systemisation of all the jobs that developed within adult education in the past years and amongst them is also a counsellor who has a different, specific role as an organiser of education; thus a counsellor in adult education should be a newly systemised job. This should be the role of Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and the government.
- This is why it is important to identify the competences that a counsellor in adult education needs to have and develop modular training for them. Also important are specific characteristics that a counsellor needs to have if they are working with vulnerable adult groups.
- It is necessary to empower the different networks for counselling which we already have and link them together and prepare programmes for training, which would satisfy the needs of counsellors within these networks.
- The counselling services need to be numerically strengthened, so that the counsellors would be able to go out on the field and reach various target groups. It is necessary to identify norms concerning how many counsellors we need.



- A counsellor in adult education needs additional knowledge, which should be one of the tasks of project GOAL and a role which Ministry of education, science and sport would play in this. In this it is also important to connect with counsellors who work under the Ministry of Labour.

If we summarise, it was suggested:

- To identify norms or numerical needs for counsellors; the legislation should follow the needs for counselling to vulnerable groups and at national level should be defined the competence standards of the counsellors in adult education.
- To identify core and specific competences which a counsellor need to have and ensure the further training for these competences, since the professionalisation of the counsellor is key for the quality of counselling activities (and the results and effects of counselling).
- For the country and local community together to ensure sufficient financial resources for counsellor work and training.
- To take into account the specifics of counselling work within different networks and that this needs specific knowledge, skills and competences for counselling work in adult education.

### 6.3 Key findings

Slovenia is one of the rare countries which has no special study programme for a career counsellor; only separate modules can be found within individual study programmes which include these topics. The development of the professionalization of counsellor work is one of the key tasks for further development of this field and also one of the tasks within project GOAL in Slovenia. Counsellors highlighted that they are aware that counselling work with vulnerable groups requires additional knowledge and experience. The counsellors in ISIO centres have partly already been acquiring this knowledge, but still think they need to keep improving their knowledge of this field, meanwhile counsellors in school centres have not yet acquired this knowledge, but are aware that they need it.

Seven of the 10 GOAL staff are full time counsellors, two perform counselling occasionally and one is a part of the GOAL team performing only organisational and promotional activities. Otherwise, all three of them work as project coordinators and managers. Of the nine professionals who provide counselling, two are male and three of them have worked in counselling for under 10 years, three between 11 and 15 years, and three of them between 16 and 20 years.

The counsellors highlighted the following competencies, which are necessary for high-quality guidance work:

- communication and social skills,
- empathy, warmth and optimism,
- knowledge and skills for motivating adults for learning,

- knowledge and skills of different approaches of counselling,
- the ability to adapt to different target groups (flexibility),
- knowing different tools and their use also for low-skilled adults,
- knowing the system of formal and non-formal adult education and training and also the systems of education in other countries,
- being able to search the information,
- organisational skills,
- skills for promotion, marketing of guidance.

## 6.4 Implications

### Implications for programme development

The data on working hours spent on counselling show us that the type of institution where they work does not necessarily mean the counsellors will spend more or less time providing guidance. We presume that this depends on other activities within the organisation and how they are divided between professionals.

One of the prerequisites of quality counsellor work in adult education is to have clearly defined competence standards for their work. Counsellors and clients agreed that a counsellor in education needs specific knowledge, which need to be provided to them with additional training. This should be derived from the experience of different counsellor trainings from different networks in the past years, through which modularly-based training should be built on. Some modules may be common to multiple profiles of counsellors, and some only specific to individual networks.

It is necessary to define and provide at the system level the basic tasks of adult counselling and what counselling should be provided for each client. One policy actor discussed a new training programme for career counsellors (called MUKS) from 2015 which opened new horizons for counsellors in adult education, as they stated the contents were complementary to their training for counsellors at the ISIO centres. Certain contents were applicable for different types of counselling, certain are specific to adult education. It was pointed out that we cannot bundle all vulnerable target groups together, for example, working with the Roma is different from working with the disabled. Therefore she believes that **every vulnerable group must be considered in a specific way, we must know target groups really well, and for this we need additional skills and knowledge, and this must also be included into connections between sectors.** It may also be helpful to form groups for exchange of counselling experience and wisdom.

## Implications for policy

In policy terms, stakeholders emphasised the need for:

- professionalization of the role of the counsellor in adult education
- development of training programs that will ensure adequate counsellor competences of
- inclusion of resources for counsellor training in the funding system
- to define the number of counsellors that the guidance will be more accessible to the vulnerable adults in all regions of Slovenia,
- working in partnership at the national level to facilitate the implementation of the above four objectives.

Counsellors, policy actors and client feedback confirmed the need to continue to work toward the original objectives of GOAL:

- to develop the description of competences for adult education counsellors in who work with low skilled adults
- to prepare additional (appropriate) training programmes in a multi-partnership cooperation (SIAE, IRSVET and other partner organisations included in the network of the GOAL project),
- to train counsellors to work with low skilled/qualified adults
- to facilitate exchanges amongst counsellors with different competencies, in order to support the acquisition of new competencies through cooperation with each other (comparison of competency profiles and their upgrade). This is occurring between four GOAL providers and between GOAL providers and partners in two regional networks,
- additional co-financing for the further training of the counsellors is needed (European Social Fund in the period 2016-2021 could be one of the resources)
- to provide expert support for work with individual target groups in the project by the SIAE and the IRSVET in cooperation with partner organisations on the national level and in selected regions.
- to inform the national group of stakeholders in the GOAL project about the needs of low skilled adults, and how the counsellors' work should run for them to be able to offer clients quality guidance support, and to formulate proposals for the systemic placement of the work of counsellors in adult education with an emphasis on the inclusion of low skilled adults.

## 7 Guidance tools for low educated adults

This chapter provides descriptive information on the tools which counsellors on the GOAL programme in Slovenia use to support and enhance their GOAL guidance programmes and offers some preliminary analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of these tools in terms of impact and quality. In the Wave 1 evaluation, no quantitative data on tools were collected from clients or from counsellors; the findings presented here are based on national reporting of qualitative interview data only.

The range of tools that support staff and clients in adult guidance is broad and can include:

- Traditional, paper-based resources and newer online and digital tools.
- Tools to diagnose and assess levels of skills, including basic skills.
- Tools to support the validation of prior learning (VPL) processes.
- Tools for evaluation and self-evaluation (such as interest inventories, tools for making action plans, goal-setting pro forma).
- Tools that help counsellors to reflect; professional development tools for counsellors.
- Information tools (internal and external sources), including both those which inform the counsellor and those which can be used to disseminate information to clients (such as job-search tools, college websites).
- Data monitoring tools and registrations systems, where analysis of the variables can be used to develop the programme and track outcomes.
- Tools that help to structure the guidance session such as scripts for interview. Data monitoring templates can also support this aspect of the counselling.
- Tools that help clients with job-search, such as tools to assist with CV writing.

From this range, a number of the GOAL partners are seeking to develop a toolbox of resources that can support guidance services for low-educated adults.

### 7.1 Guidance tools for low educated adults

#### Background

The counsellors in ISIO centres use different tools to support the preparation and realisation of the guidance process, but also to identify and evaluate informally and casually acquired knowledge adults have. In 2007 the first comprehensive list of tools for use in ISIO centres was prepared and the tools were introduced in the manual 'Guidance Tools in Adult Education'. They were divided into two groups:

- Tools for managing guidance process and helping adults to enter education (questionnaire, reminders, forms for planning educational goals etc.);
- Tools for efficient organising of learning and support in quality realisation of learning (e.g. a questionnaire for establishing learning styles and learning strategies, a reminder for exam preparation, protocol to improve concentration etc.).

As the activities of ISIO centres developed further, the counsellors studied and trained using other tools, linked to qualities realisation of process of 'andragogic guidance'. Additionally, between 2011-2014 tools for documenting and evaluating knowledge, skills and competencies that adults have already acquired were developed, for example:

- a questionnaire for identifying and evaluating of key competency learn to learn,
- a questionnaire for identifying and evaluating of competency career planning
- a questionnaire for identifying and evaluating of key competency career development,
- a questionnaire for identifying and evaluating of competency digital literacy,
- a questionnaire for identifying and evaluating of competencies of everyday life,
- electronic portfolio.

School centres use the following tools:

- for guidance on entry into education and training: web portal "mojaizbra.si",
- for guidance on obtaining NVQ: NVQ personal portfolio, website <http://www.npk.si>, required form for the procedure,
- for identifying and recognising knowledge: forms for managing and documenting the process of identifying and recognising the already acquired knowledge.

In ISIO Guidance centres and school centres counsellors also use individual tools and databases that were prepared in other Slovenian guidance networks (ESS, CPI etc.) and are accessible at the following web portals, including:

- e-guidance: <https://esvetovanje.ess.gov.si/>
- "knityourcareer": <http://spletisvojobokariero.si/>
- "mojaizbra.si": <http://www.mojaizbra.si/>
- "NVQ": <http://www.npk.si/>

The SWOT analysis explored counsellors' use of these tools in more detail. The main conclusions were:

- most tools are used in the same way for all target groups of adults, they don't have specific tools that would be adapted for particular target groups only,
- some tools are easier, some are more demanding,
- at the SIAE encourage counsellors to participate in training to use more demanding tools,
- the SIAE trains counsellors to use the tools appropriately, that they get enough professional knowledge and experience for their use;
- at trainings emphasise that through experience, the counsellor assesses him/herself which tools she or he knows better and can use them appropriately in a guidance process,
- at SIAE are occasionally organised trainings for the counsellors in the ISIO to use particular tools or familiarise them with the use of suitable professional literature, manuals for the use of tools in the process of adult education,
- at IRSVET for the NVQ system all the counsellors are trained to use the tools,

- monitoring the use of these tools show that they serve their purpose, but that some are used more often than others,
- at the SIAE notice that counsellors more often use the tools for which they have had additional training,
- in the system of the NVQ the tools are prepared for the pre-designed purposes, their use is monitored and they are adjusted to fit the practice,
- tools have added value, they help the counsellor to research the individual's situation, goals, possibilities more comprehensively,
- counsellors obtains more qualitative data for better quality management of the guidance process.

From the point of view of using tools in GOAL project:

- the existing tools have not been developed specifically for the target groups included in GOAL, but some are suitable for them,
- in 2015 SIAE prepared an expert manual about identifying and evaluating knowledge of immigrants, so that it will be useful for guidance work with migrants in the GOAL project too,
- existing tools are suitable for the target groups included in the GOAL but we don't have special standards of quality developed for the tools in guidance in adult education.

In focus group for programme staff counsellors were asked to give a brief overview of any tools they use as part of GOAL work, and how they use them. Because most of them just have the first session with the clients, not many tools were used. They used GOAL documentation for monitoring the guidance sessions, some of them used some tools for recognition of prior learning, personal educational plan, Europass and portfolio. Different tools are used at different sites, different tools are used because the counsellors are trained for the use of certain types of tools, but also because the content of guidance was different.

Evaluators asked staff if these tools have any weaknesses or present any challenges when working with the target groups in GOAL project. One of their remarks is that in these target groups usually there is the **lack of ICT knowledge, so tools on computers are less used**. Tools in paper form are more appropriate. And for migrants it is a problem that tools are not in foreign languages (so in one case the counsellor worked together with translator for client from Kosovo). The counsellors also think that GOAL questionnaires would be required to translated. They also emphasised that the translation must be in the correct professional terminology.

**There is currently no formal processes in place for monitoring the effectiveness of tools.**

## 7.2 Impact of guidance tools

In ISIO Guidance centres and School Centres they decided to use tools in GOAL project for:

- registration (according to the agreed scheme on the level of the GOAL project),

- quality management of the guidance process (protocols, guidelines, reminders ...),
- help for mentees in organisation, realisation and evaluation of learning (questions, checklists, personal education plan etc.),
- for identifying, evaluation and recognition of knowledge, skills and competencies (questionnaires, e-portfolio, personal portfolio NVQ, forms in the SCs etc.).

In January 2016, the GOAL team and the counsellors from four providing organisations prepared a list of tools which will be used in both type of organisations in ISIO centres and in school centres. At the workshop for providers in March 2016, counsellors introduced to each other some tools, which are more used in guidance centre or in school centre. So they exchanged experiences in using some of tools from the list prepared.

In addition to this, the national team of GOAL project has prepared a tool for the counsellors with guidelines for leading the guidance process from first to final session. It is an additional tool for easier monitoring the guidance process and collecting the data.

Partners in both networks said that one of common goal could be the exchange of tools which are used in guidance at different partners (they mentioned at focus group which different tools they developed in the past and that even they do not use all of them after end of certain project in which they developed them). Partners suggested the presentation of tools at the network meeting or at individual presentations. Network of partners in Savinjska region (Velenje) have already decided to manage through next meetings (the first one is planned at the end of June) the presentations of those tools and further on to exchange the tools. Thus good practices could be exchanged and other partners could use them in the future. Partners in Savinjska region also suggested a platform – an application (perhaps for the needs of the GOAL project and wider) where they could have data about their clients. All have different databases about their clients, their knowledge, skills, and different reports etc. These could be efficiently exchanged, without having to obtain information about the clients that are already available in other organisations.

The partners from Osrednjeslovenska region (Ljubljana) expect that the tools developed in GOAL project, could be used also in all partner organisations in the network to improve the quality of their guidance process. The majority of partners have their own established tools and forms, but they are interested to transfer tools that will be developed in the GOAL project to partners. They also recommended creating a new form for data about the client, with their consent, which would allow the counsellors to exchange information regarding where to refer him or her to, level/type of education, how active she or he is, a brief evaluation, what she/he can or cannot do. They will discuss about this option at next partner meeting.

In interview with one client, we got also data about use of tools in guidance process. The client was satisfied with the use of tools, she mentioned two of them: the personal learning plan and the assessment's test of her English that she will get a feedback what she has to improve in her English from.

### 7.3 Quality of guidance tools

There are no findings on the quality of guidance tools at this stage of the evaluation in Slovenia.

### 7.4 Key findings

The GOAL team and the counsellors from four providing organisations prepared a list of tools which could be used in guidance. At the workshop in March 2016, counsellors introduced to each other some tools, which are more used in guidance centre or in school centre. So they exchanged experiences in using some of tools from the list prepared. At this stage of the intervention, counsellors have not used the full range of tools, as most clients have only had one session.

In addition to this, the national team of GOAL project has prepared a tool for the counsellors with guidelines for leading the guidance process from first to end session. It is an additional tool for easier monitoring the guidance process and collecting the data.

Counsellors consider the GOAL questionnaire prepared by IoE to be an additional tool. It provides an efficient means for gaining insights into the client's problems (causes, problems, fears) and goals regarding career and education.

Partners in both networks said that one of common goals could be the exchange of tools which are used in guidance at different partners and also at GOAL providers. Partners suggested the presentation of tools at the network meetings or at individual presentations.

### 7.5 Implications

#### Implications for programme development

In the period from September 2016 to April 2017 the main challenges will be:

- exchange of good practices in using the tools between four GOAL providers in Slovenia,
- exchange of good practices in using the tools between partners in regional networks (both sites),
- exchange of good practices in using the tools between international partners in GOAL project,
- using the new tools from partners in the network (in both sites),
- using the new tools from partner organisations in GOAL project,
- to adapt certain tools for use for low-skilled adults (for the target groups selected for GOAL project in Slovenia).

An important part of collaboration in the regional network of partners will be how to exchange the experience of using different tools and to select the appropriate ones for educational guidance for low-skilled adults (the reliability of the measurement, to measure what is the content of the tools). The guidelines for using the new tools has to be prepared and present to the counsellors through workshop (further training).



It will be also important that both national institutions, SIAE and IRSVET, will support the four providers in exchanging tools and using new ones through further training for them and regular meetings.

In programme models where partnerships are wide and plentiful, the exchange of tools represents a potential productive mechanism both for enhancing programme quality and ensuring the longer term sustainability of tools developed on time-limited projects.

The approach to the use and implementation of tools in Slovenia is sophisticated, emphasising as it does the importance of dialogue, exchange and training; however these elements of successful implementation are resource intensive and must be factored into programme development.

### Implications for evaluation

In Wave 2, the impact of the lack of formal structures for evaluating tools used across the wider GOAL project should be addressed.

In Slovenia it was suggested that there should be proposal mechanism for monitoring the effectiveness of tools (now such a formal process is not in place). The Wave 2 evaluation should include questions for counsellors about which tools are more effective for low-skilled adults, why and what they recommend for future use.

### Implications for policy

As yet, there are no clear tool-related implications for policy. Such implications may arise as more work on tools occurs.

## 8 Outreach

This chapter provides analysis of the outreach strategies adopted by the GOAL programme in Slovenia including a description of the challenges involved and preliminary analysis of the strategy's successes.

By 'outreach' the GOAL project refers to strategies for bringing the guidance programmes to the target group, for example, by setting up drop-in services in locations that are easier for marginalised clients to access, and strategies for bringing the target group to the guidance programmes, such as establishing referral structures, or awareness-raising measures. Outreach may occur through '**reaching out**' to the **target group** directly, but it also will occur through '**reaching into**' **organisations** that serve the target group. At its core, outreach in GOAL aims to identify and attract those adults who would not normally engage with either counselling services or further education and training.

### 8.1 Outreach challenges

In this Wave 1 evaluation period **no work was carried out on developing and providing outreach guidance**. Mostly clients came to the institution where counsellors work. Some of them were sent by partners in the network, and some were already enrolled in the institution where counsellor works. The exception was in Velenje, where the counsellor from the ISIO centre went to the company RUJ which is a partner in the network and had guidance for their low-skilled workers.

In focus group discussion counsellors said that they will cover all selected target groups for the GOAL project in Slovenia (low-skilled job-seeker/unemployed, low skilled employees, migrants/ refugees/ asylum seekers, adults over 50). They emphasised that all these target groups are looking for free of charge educational and training programs and for now this is difficult to provide because of a lack of funding (Slovenian institutions are waiting for new ESF projects). Counsellors in all four provider organisations held guidance and counselling sessions for selected target groups and worked to motivate them for formal or non-formal educational and training programs, to validate prior learning, to help them progress to new qualifications and to upgrade competences for better employability. They also work on social inclusion of these target groups.

Programme partners suggested greater promotion of the project in their organisations, for example on screens in waiting rooms for their clients, and on websites. Partners also emphasised that for low-skilled adults just leaflets (written) materials are not enough.

Policy actors discussed how to reach the vulnerable target groups and agree that more counsellors are needed as well as different outreach approaches to reach them (i.e. to go outside of educational institutions). Some policy actors think that to reach employees it is important to go to the company and give them 'guidance in the workplace'. They suggested using good practices identified in previous

projects (for example the Leonardo da Vinci project Guidance in the workplace – Guidance Merger 2-2007-2009<sup>19</sup>).

Partners emphasised that they will take part in referring clients. They will present the possibilities for guidance to their clients from vulnerable target groups that the GOAL project covers. Partners also emphasised that they would like to have some feedback on what happens to the clients they refer to the providers of GOAL project (ISIO centres and school centres), e.g. the results of guidance sessions. Partners in Ljubljana want to have a document to keep track of referrals of clients between the partners and GOAL providers, but partners in Velenje prefer to take a less formal approach, and say they do not need to record this information. This is because they now know each other very well and can communicate with each other about their clients through partner meetings or by phone or by -mail.

## 8.2 Outreach strategies

### Strategies

The SWOT analysis in 2015 described the experiences with outreach guidance of the four GOAL providers. In both regions, both ISIO guidance centres have already worked at outreach locations in practice (before GOAL project), but this is not the case for either school centre. For school centres this is an opportunity to develop outreach in the frame of the project and to investigate whether there is a need for such activity or if the partner network will be enough to upgrade their guidance activity.

Until now ISIO guidance centres have set up some different methods of outreach activities; this enables greater accessibility for vulnerable target groups and adults in smaller towns, employees at their place of work etc. Outreach location centres are promoted through local media. If possible, counsellors are also present at important local events. Outreach activity allows for a greater familiarity with the needs of adults in local environment. If possible, counsellors are also present at important local events. But there are some weaknesses, such as: due to staffing limitations counsellors are not present in all locations where they are needed and not often enough; if the characteristics of the local environment differ from the environment where the seat of the centre is, the counsellor is less familiar with the traits of the local environment and thus the needs of adults; not all outreach locations have suitable premises for guidance activity. So there is still space for improvements:

- to define some new outreach guidance services regarding the selected target groups in the GOAL project;
- to improve accessibility of the guidance service for selected target groups to find new locations with good premises;
- to improve collaboration with the partners in the network in providing outreach guidance services.

The main goals for further development are:

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<sup>19</sup> [http://arhiv.acs.si/porocila/GWP-Final\\_evaluation\\_report.pdf](http://arhiv.acs.si/porocila/GWP-Final_evaluation_report.pdf)

- Providing guidance outside the headquarters of the organisation (in addition to within-organisation guidance) to reach vulnerable target groups of adults;
- providing enough counsellors at all outreach locations;
- including local partners in the network in the outreach activities;
- with the continuous development of outreach approach in the project, organisations from the local environment will be included and the recognisability of guidance activity will increase;
- in partner cooperation it is sensible to investigate the possibility of having outreach locations in the form of mobile guidance services (i.e. the counsellor would not always be at the same location);
- following up to investigate which outreach locations are effective.

### Impacts

One of two clients was referral to GOAL counsellor from employment office, the other one heard for GOAL counselling as former participant at GOAL provider. Both want to get a new knowledge for better employability in the labour market. One, who wants to get a higher education, needs help to entry in formal adult education. He thinks he will need also motivation and guidance through the educational process. The other one want to improve ICT skills, foreign languages and also thinks for the possibility of re-qualification.

Neither client experienced problems finding the counsellor and arranging the sessions. Both were satisfied with the guidance process to date; they got the help that they needed and a feeling of a personal approach, which they liked very much. Both expect further support from the counsellors to obtain the planned learning goals and they are looking forward for additional motivation for their learning.

It is difficult to generalise from experiences of two clients but also from other experiences with the clients in ISIO centres we could conclude that personal approach is very important from the beginning:

- clients are more motivated to enter to guidance if they meet the counsellor personally before entering to guidance (promotional events with involvement of the counsellor are important, not to have just a paper promotional materials for guidance),
- during the counselling session they need a counsellor with a good empathy, who listening them very well and has time for them and a lot of information which they needed,
- it is good that they arrange next meeting at the end of each session and to make agreement what will be done by the client in the time to the next session (plan with concrete goals are important).

### 8.3 Key findings

Key conclusions are:

- outreach has to be developed to reach selected target groups of adults in GOAL project,

- it is important to **find new locations in collaboration with partners** in regional networks (in both sites),
- promotional activities to motivate low-skilled adults to come to guidance should be **informal and personal** (e.g. personal contact at workshops and events), rather than more formal or print-based (promotional materials are not so effective for vulnerable groups of adults),
- effective collaboration with partners in the referral process is needed,
- regional partners emphasised the importance of following up the client's results from the counselling process.

One of the participants in the stakeholders' focus group argued that GOAL needs more promotion, and greater dissemination of information about guidance possibilities and the work of individual networks. For example, the national expert group for lifelong career guidance provides not only an exchange of information, but also work on joint projects. They need more promotion and information exchange on what is efficient.

## 8.4 Implications

### Implications for programme development

Models of outreach and promotion that are suitable for the GOAL target groups should be developed. One of possibility is closer cooperation with human resources departments within companies, particularly in small and mid-size enterprises. However, it may be challenging to forge working relationships with these departments and/or companies. Representative of trade unions in Slovenia suggest that trade union representatives within firms could play an important role in motivating employees to seek guidance and access lifelong learning. To do so, union representative would have to collaborate with employers and with counsellors from outside of the company.

The ISO guidance centre and school centres plan to cooperate in developing outreach guidance approaches with support from SIAE and IRSVET. Further steps in developing outreach are:

- identifying which outreach locations are needed regarding the selected target groups for each site;
- to develop recommendations regarding how to provide outreach guidance service in both sites;
- to define activities where different partner in the network would be involved in outreach service;
- to evaluate at the end the effectiveness of different outreach models (approaches, locations).

Potential success factors in developing outreach are:

- different way of promotion for guidance, involvement of partners in promotion is needed (they are prepared to collaborate in promotion activities, especially in those for their clients; they offer the possibilities to have the GOAL leaflets in their institutions, to put information on GOAL providers of counselling on their web pages etc.),

- to organise all needed circumstance for outreach guidance: space, premises, tools, data base, to know well the clients,
- to follow up and to evaluate which outreach approach is more effective and which criterial influence on it.

Challenges include:

- having enough counsellors to organise the outreach guidance,
- counsellors have to be trained for organising guidance outside of their educational organisations, to prepare premises, tools and other circumstance to do outreach.

### Implications for evaluation

The evaluation should assess the relatively effectiveness of the range of different outreach strategies proposed by the programme, following up to investigate which outreach locations and strategies are effective, and why. For example, partners have different ideas about the best approaches to outreach, and how formalised the process should be. Partners in Ljubljana want to have a document to keep track of referrals of clients between the partners and GOAL providers, but partners in Velenje prefer to take a less formal approach, and say they do not need to record this information. This is because they now know each other very well and can communicate with each other about their clients through partner meetings or by phone or by email. In Wav2 2 of the evaluation, these approaches can be compared.

### Implications for policy

Policy actors are aware of importance of having enough counsellors for outreach guidance, and propose to define the norms for the number of counsellors needed in adult education, to define their tasks and competences, and to co-finance their work from national and regional budgets. They emphasised importance of further training for outreach guidance and to follow up and evaluate the effectiveness of their work. They are also aware that besides regional networking for effective outreach, networking at national level is important too. National partnerships could support regional networks to be more effective in the implementation of different measurement for an active lifelong learning strategy and active employment policy which are created on national level. When GOAL would like to include employed people, the employers and trade union have to be involved. And for inclusion of the unemployed, the national and regional employment offices have to be part of national and regional networks. To reach low-skilled adults with social problems, the involvement of social care services is important too. Also, other voluntary non-governmental organisations which have services for selected target groups in GOAL project should be included in partnerships to help to reach these target groups and motivate them for lifelong learning.

## 9 Service outcomes

This chapter looks more closely at outcomes for service users. By service outcomes, this report refers both to **hard outcomes**, that is, measurable outcomes such as progression to employment or education, and **soft outcomes**, which may be harder to quantify, such as improved confidence or changes to attitudes.

### 9.1 Outcomes of guidance

#### Quantitative findings

##### *Exit data overview*

As noted previously in this report, the short time period available to the Slovenian evaluators for the collection of Wave 1 data means very little information is available on service outcomes: most clients have not yet completed the guidance process.

##### *Service User Perceptions*

The **client satisfaction survey** recorded information from service users on their awareness about the next steps that were available to them, their plans, and their motivation. Data in Tables 9.1., 9.2., 9.3. and 9.4. show that:

- the largest proportion of positive responses (86%) is on the statement that clients are now more aware of their options
- 86% think that they are more motivated after the counselling session;
- 80% think that the next steps are clearer after the counselling; for those who answered no (2%) or somewhat (15%), we could conclude that maybe those are still in the guidance process;
- 78% think that the counselling helped to plan what they want to do next; again we could conclude that maybe those are still in the guidance process.

**Table 9.1.** *'Are the Next Steps Clearer After the Counselling Session', Slovenia*

	N	%
<b>Yes</b>	39	80
<b>No</b>	1	2
<b>Somewhat</b>	8	16
<b>Missing</b>	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 9.2.** *'Did the Counselling Help You to Plan What You Want to Do Next', Slovenia*

	N	%
<b>Yes</b>	38	78
<b>No</b>	2	4
<b>Somewhat</b>	7	14
<b>Missing</b>	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 9.3.** *'Are You More Aware Now of Your Options', Slovenia*

	N	%
<b>Yes</b>	42	86
<b>No</b>	1	2
<b>Somewhat</b>	5	10
<b>Missing</b>	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 9.4.** *'Are You More Motivated After the Counselling Session', Slovenia*

	N	%
<b>Yes</b>	42	86
<b>No</b>	1	2
<b>Somewhat</b>	6	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100</b>

Answers/opinions on the effect of counselling were interrogated in terms of client background characteristics. Slightly **more men than women** answered affirmative to the first three statements:

- that the next steps are clearer after the counselling answered 88% male and 79% female,
- that the counselling helped to plan what they want to do next: 81% male and 79% female,
- that now the clients are more aware of their options: 94% male and 84% female.

**On the statement that they are more motivated after the counselling session, more females answered positive than males.**

Answers regarding the effect of the counselling are distributed evenly between clients' age groups.

**There are no big differences between age groups.** Clients aged 36 to 55 years are slightly clearer about the next steps after the counselling and that they are more aware of their options.

Based on the answers to this and other issues it is difficult to figure out what are the reasons for these differences in the responses regardless of gender or age. **One reason could be that males who come to guidance have a clearer picture of goals so after the guidance they are more aware of a new options**



**and next steps linked to the goals.** Why the clients aged 36 to 55 have a slightly clearer plan about the next steps we do not know. In Wave 2 we will discuss these findings with the counsellors, what they think what are the reasons for these differences and how it could be taken into account in the further guidance process in GOAL project.

### *Results of the session*

In the data monitoring template, counsellors recorded the results of each session (see Table 4.9.).

**Table 9.5.** *Results of the Session, Slovenia*

	<b>N</b>	<b>% of responses</b>	<b>% of cases (49=100%)</b>
<b>Being informed about what can study and where</b>	9	8.1	18
<b>Information on formal qualifications</b>	11	9.9	22
<b>Information about formal education courses</b>	8	7.2	16
<b>Information about non-formal learning</b>	12	10.8	24
<b>Information on short time courses</b>	33	29.7	67
<b>Information on retraining courses</b>	4	3.6	8
<b>Development of a personal action plan</b>	2	1.8	4
<b>Career plan / portfolio</b>	3	2.7	6
<b>Interest inventory</b>	5	4.5	10
<b>Given information on how to overcome barriers</b>	9	8.1	18
<b>Given information on how to find financial resources for taking up a study course</b>	3	2.7	6
<b>Help in preparing the documentation for validation of prior learning (VPL)</b>	9	8.1	18
<b>Other</b>	3	2.7	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>223</b>

In analysis, answers were grouped into seven areas:

1. **Giving information** about short courses, trainings and formal education programmes and National Vocational Qualifications
2. Giving information on how to **find financial resources** for taking up a study course
3. Development of personal learning plan and procedure for validation of non-formal learning prior to **entering the formal education programme**
4. Acquisition of **National Vocational Qualification**; preparation of personal portfolio
5. Help with writing **CV and job application**

6. **Motivation and identification** of skills and competences, assessment of key competences, exploration of interests

7. **Learning help**

We can see from the results of the session that the most selected answer (67%) was giving the **information on short time courses** and second one (24%) was giving information on non-formal learning and the third one (22%) was giving information on formal qualifications. If we compare with the counsellors' answers on focus of each session where we need to 'translate' their answers from Slovene context into the pre-coded responses provided in the monitoring data table, we see that there is match between them.

### Stakeholder perspectives

An initial observation made by the programme staff in Slovenia is about the intensity of the guidance: **the more times the counsellor meets with the clients, the greater the effects appear to be.** The reasons behind this will be explored in Wave 2. Because of the detailed requirements of the GOAL monitoring data template, counsellors reported that they have to take more time for clients. For this reason, counsellors considered the template as an additional tool. Through it they are learning more about the clients and regard the questionnaire as a good practice that they would like to use also in the future. They also have used the questionnaires developed from the template in English versions which has helped with migrants or other foreigners with a limited understanding of Slovene language. Some clients (eight clients of the total 49 GOAL clients) who were included in counselling have already accomplished some of their goals (enrolment in formal education, validation of informal knowledge, gained self-esteem, got information etc.).

Programme partners from the focus group in Ljubljana highlighted that the project means an additional opportunity their clients can use. Programme partners from the focus group in Velenje said that their clients could benefit from the additional counselling service provided through the project GOAL since they do not have enough time for in-depth counselling. Their clients have low developed skills from different areas but most importantly, they **lack the ability in exercising their rights as citizens.** The majority of them are also long term unemployed and therefore inactive on the labour market and traditional trainings focused only on development of professional skills are not successful. They need programmes where the focus is primarily on changing their beliefs and values and motivating them to be more active in social life and consequently on the labour market. In their opinion, the GOAL project should offer new approaches and services for these target groups.

All partners expect the exchange of information about their services to others. What is expected is bigger inclusion of the users into a more directed guidance particularly for the vulnerable groups. In practice, they notice that these persons in particular would need contact that is more personal. They want to connect more. This would probably allow them to find new possibilities for cooperation. At the same time, we can try to find new measures or programmes for vulnerable target groups. They can achieve this during project GOAL. Networks are already established and partners are attending meetings

where they share information regarding different needs of target groups and what they can offer to them (mostly for free).

Within the scope of the GOAL project, some of the short-term goals could be realised. For example the list of existing programmes targeted for vulnerable groups can be developed, effect of in-depth counselling will be evaluated from the point of the clients' ability to achieve desired outcomes in life. **Long-term goals, such as change in employment status, development of more complex professional competences or gaining formal VET qualification are not feasible in the duration of the project and their realisation depends, among other things, on structural changes on the labour market in Slovenia.**

### Benefits of guidance

GOAL clients in Slovenia are supposed to be included in multiple sessions so we cannot offer information regarding outcomes at this stage. Outcomes such as finishing education cannot be measured in such a short time. During the project we can only see if the candidate finishes exams and is engaged in educational work he had planned with his counsellor. Within the life of GOAL project we do not expect to see the long-term outcomes which the counsellors are working toward. Counselling will take more time than the duration of project. The counselling in Slovenia does not stop with enrolment in an educational course at the counselling institution or when the decision on acquiring a qualification is made. We do, however, expect to see shorter term goals realised, and indeed some clients have already achieved these, but because fewer than 10 candidates had their last session, no exit data on goals are included in this Wave 1 report.

## 9.2 Meeting expectations

### Meeting expectations

Evaluators conducted two individual interviews with two different clients. The first interview was with a younger unemployed man, age group 20-29, and the second was with an older unemployed woman, age group 36-55. They both entered into GOAL counselling for different reasons and goals. The male client (service user 2, see chapter 4) wanted to finish his high school education. With the help of counsellors he explored his reasons to return to school and the kind of programme he would be interested in. A lot of time client do not know where to start or even if there are any educational possibilities open to them (especially for target groups we have in the project).

He decided to enrol in the programme. He started to feel really motivated and he knows he can always rely on the counsellor regarding his educational process and additional motivation. The educational process in this case is his formal enrolment in the educational programme (in the institute in which his counsellor works in). During that time he can reach to counsellors if he needs help regarding his other information regarding education.

The female client (service user 1) was referred to counselling by a local employment office to attend in some forms of free non-formal programs and to improve her chances of getting a job. She is now attending some computer courses. Besides the computer course, she also decided to improve her

English through self-directed learning with a mentor in the folk high school Velenje and to start a German language course in the autumn. With the counsellor she started to explore what she had learned in past years, what her interests and goals are. They prepared a learning plan together (a written document) which the client is now following. The client also decided to prepare a portfolio with the counsellor's help. She became more motivated and optimistic.

In the GOAL project we will not see long-term outcomes to which our Counsellors aim. Counselling usually takes more time than the duration of project.

### 9.3 Key findings

The data collection period of March to April 2016 represents a small time frame in which we are unlikely to see any significant results or outcomes. Most of the clients included into GOAL project in Slovenia are still in the counselling process. Eight clients had finished counselling sessions during the first wave of data collection. Regarding outcomes, four said that they increased their self-esteem, six of them gained a lot of new and useful information, two had enrolled in an educational programme and do not need more counselling, and one also said that (s)he became more open and communicative.

An initial observation made by the programme staff in Slovenia is about the intensity of the guidance: the more times the counsellor meets with the clients, the greater the effects appear to be. The reasons behind this will be explored in Wave 2.

The counsellors and programme partners said that low-skilled adults (unemployed, employed), migrants and over 50 age, need deeper counselling, more personal contacts, a lot of additional motivation and support for further education and training. They think the partners could support them in many ways doing this: to exchange the information about the characteristics and the needs of the clients, to exchange the tools, information and data base, even some training workshops could be common to upgrade the competences needed for guidance work with certain vulnerable target group.

### 9.4 Implications

#### Implications for programme development

Wave 1 counselling was taking place at a time when no free educational programmes were available, so some of clients could not enrol to education because of lack of money. That is also one of the reasons why data regarding achieving goals is missing. We expect that from September 2016 providers will get the funds from EU/ESF programmes to organise free educational and training programmes. Providers also plan to organise short training programmes adapted to the needs of their clients.

#### Implications for evaluation

Wave 2 will provide the evaluators with much more data on outcomes and activities.

The experience in Slovenia raises the question of how the long term outcomes of the guidance can be measured within the life of the project.

Most of the Wave 1 GOAL clients are still in the counselling process, so we do not have enough significant exit data and information regarding outcomes. The national project team will have to define the end session for those GOAL clients who will be enrolled in the formal VET programme since in practice counselling could last for more than one year in this case.

At this stage of the evaluation, males and clients aged 36 to 55 appear to have a slightly clearer plan about their next steps, but we do not yet have sufficient data to understand why we (or if this is a true effect rather than an artifact of the small sample to this point). In Wave 2 we will discuss these findings with the counsellors, and discuss how they might be taken into account in the future guidance sessions.

### Implications for policy

There are no free educational and training programmes currently available in Slovenia. That could produce setbacks for the GOAL target groups (unemployed, low educated, migrants) since they have experienced social exclusion and this only reaffirms their status.

When it comes to guidance for seniors, programme partners find that there is little on offer in terms of non-formal education; seniors would need other knowledge and skills. Programme partners are interested to know more about providers of education for seniors. They need even more information about programmes available for seniors, and how to activate them even more – for example, to develop volunteering for older people.

Counselling for adult learners can only be effective if combined with other incentives like active employment policy with measures for integrating vulnerable groups back to the labour market. If there is no offer of further training, courses and programmes, or financial incentives, the counselling itself is unlikely to have sustainable effects.

## 10 Service quality

One of the five intervention strategies piloted in GOAL is the implementation of high-quality guidance services. This chapter provides some preliminary findings on the quality of the guidance service provided by GOAL in Slovenia. It draws on quantitative data from the client satisfaction survey as well as qualitative data gathered from the range of GOAL stakeholders in interviews and in focus groups.

### 10.1 Service user perspectives on guidance quality

In the Wave 1 dataset for Slovenia there are 49 clients who came to the GOAL service: nine of these clients came to the counselling twice and two clients four times: most clients have not yet completed the guidance process. All 49 completed the client satisfaction survey once, at the end of the first session. Data on questions from Client Survey show that overall clients were very satisfied with the guidance sessions (Table 10.1.).

**Table 10.1.** *'Overall, Were You Satisfied with the Counselling Session?', Slovenia*

	N	%
<b>Yes</b>	48	98
<b>No</b>	0	0
<b>Somewhat</b>	1	2
<b>Missing</b>	0	0
<b>Total</b>	49	100

Clients' perspectives on and experiences of GOAL are summarised from two interviews with clients, one in Ljubljana (service user 2) and one in Velenje (service user 1).

Service user 1 said he got the help that he needed and a feeling of personal approach. For him it was important that he could always rely on the counsellor regarding his educational process and additional motivation. When asked whether he would have enrolled in the programme without the guidance process he said he probably would not. For him guidance was useful for the progress he had made. He would recommend the counselling to his friends. He was not able to describe methods used in each session. For him it was important he felt personal involvement from both counsellors.

Service user 2 said the guidance sessions met her needs and she is very motivated to follow up the learning plan which she prepared together with the counsellor. She also said that now she is more self-confident to reach future goals. Guidance helped her to start with learning and to define the learning goals (and prepare a learning plan) which could help her to find a new job or even to get a new profession for administrative work. For the last goal, the main obstacle is money; she does not have the financial resources for scholarship. The counsellor will explore if there will be any active policy measures for unemployed for such an education in the future.

She thinks that it helped her a lot that a counsellor was/and still is very kind, open, has a lot of information and knowledge how to help her learn, to listen to her and to follow her needs and wishes.

She thinks that the counsellor activated her a lot. The client stressed that for her, "warm", personal contact and the fact that the counsellor took time for her, listened to her and motivated her to start with learning was very important.

She recommended the service to her son who dropped out of higher secondary school (he is 20 years old). Moreover, she will recommend it to others if they will ask her about her experience with the guidance.

Both clients' comments on guidance sessions and counsellors were focused on emotional perspective, how they felt during the session and how they connected with the counsellors. Both of them made a step forward and reached some of their goals at this moment and they did not find any weaknesses.

## **10.2 Programme staff perspectives on guidance quality**

### **Programme staff's perspectives and insights**

Focus groups with programme staff provided additional insights into service quality and clients' experience with the service.

All counsellors agreed that the conversation with the candidate should be in a completely separate room, with no disturbing factors (phones, other people).

A problem of the lack of counsellors was mentioned during the focus group meeting. It is necessary that more people are trained to provide counselling so they can share work and expertise. Counsellors think that each service should have more professionals responsible for counselling since it is individual work and it should not be limited by time.

Guidance Centres stressed that they have special ISIO standards for adult counselling but School centres have no special standards regarding providing counselling services to adults. At the system level it would be important to set up a common basic standard for counselling of adult learners.

To provide high quality guidance to adults they would need available database and tools that could be shared among institutions. Because of the GOAL monitoring data questionnaire they have to take more time for candidates (questions are more detailed).

Target groups in GOAL are challenging. Each session can be longer, they often need translators, they need to build trust and that takes time. An obstacle at the moment in Slovenia is that they do not have many free of charge programmes for these target groups. In addition, employers are usually not interested in providing counselling in adult education to their employees.

At this point, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of partnerships in GOAL project. They found that they have lack of information on partners' activities and available educational programmes.

### 10.3 Partner and policy stakeholder perspectives on guidance quality

From the focus group with partners, we only have some indirect mentioning about service quality.

Partners pointed out that GOAL can improve the guidance opportunities for the vulnerable, and that also the clients from partner organisation can join the guidance activity. The project means an additional opportunity their clients can use. It is also important that they will pass the findings from the project (examples of good practice) and the tools developed on to all the partners in the network so that they can go on using them.

The benefit would be to disseminate the information about the work in guidance centres and school centres, so that other providers and institutions learn about them. Their clients (vulnerable target groups) receive proper treatment, additional guidance, because many institutions (especially social work centres) have excessive paper work they need to deal with, so they can direct the client for guidance at the specialised centres where they can get additional service.

The focus group with stakeholders addressed the obstacles for provision of services. Two issues were pointed out as the main obstacles from the side of the politics: financing (insufficient funding either for financing free education possibilities for vulnerable groups of adults, so that they even have a chance to enter education); when the talk was about funding, one of the participants pointed out that the state cannot be expected to finance all courses, some funding has to come from the local community, too; and the obstacle of too little incentive for networking and cooperation between partners from the part of the policymakers.

It was also pointed out that one thing is that we have good guidance service, the other is that we should also have possibilities to educate the vulnerable groups, because their access to paid education is difficult, so we have to think about that further. As for the GOAL project, it was stressed that whatever is developed should be implemented into practice. For example, if new knowledge and skills for counsellors are necessary, this must be included in training. MUKS training was mentioned as an example – modular training for career guidance, which took place in 2015 and its added value was that it was offered for different profiles of but following common modules with additional modules specific to individual guidance profile(s). It is also important that counsellors hear from each other what they are working on, this is added value, because it makes it easier for them to connect in professional guidance for the clients.

### 10.4 Key findings

**The majority of service users (98%) were satisfied with the first counselling session.**

Data on quality of the counselling process was also gathered through focus groups with programme staff, programme partners and stakeholders.

Programme staffs' view on quality is practical. They see the quality of the service in how the counselling is provided and in the material conditions that have to be fulfilled. They also think they would need



available database and tools that could be shared among institutions to provide high quality guidance to adults.

Programme partners see the quality of service in the opportunity to get additional service for their users. Partners pointed out that GOAL can improve the guidance opportunities for the vulnerable, and that also the clients from partner organisation can join the guidance activity. The project means an additional opportunity their clients can use. It is also important that they will pass the findings from the project (examples of good practice) and the tools developed on to all the partners in the network so that they can go on using them.

Stakeholder addressed mainly the obstacles for provision of services. However, one of the participants in the stakeholders' focus group said if the individual is content, the service was performed well; we need more promotion, broader information availability about the guidance possibilities, the work of individual networks. It was also pointed out that one thing is that we have good guidance service, the other is that we should also have possibilities to educate the vulnerable groups, because their access to paid education is difficult, so we have to think about that further.

## 10.5 Implications

### Implications for programme development

Partners suggested the presentation of tools at the network meeting or at individual presentations. Thus, good practices could be exchanged and other partners could use them in the future.

Partners also suggested a shared platform: an application (perhaps for the needs of the GOAL project and wider) where they could have data about their clients. All have different databases about their clients, their knowledge, and reports. These could be efficiently exchanged, without having to obtain information about the clients that are already available in other organisations.

The focus group for programme staff highlighted the problem of the lack of counsellors in some institutions. Sometimes only one counsellor works with adults. For a better quality of service, there should be at least two professionals, since their work includes much more than just counselling. This is also important from the point of conducting professional intervision (solving professional problems that arise in work in a group of peers) which can help resolve issues that arise in process of counselling.

### Implications for evaluation

As the GOAL programme had only been running in Slovenia for a few months at the time of data collection, it is not yet possible at this stage to make judgements about service quality. Wave 2 will provide these.

### Implications for policy

Due to limited data at this stage, it is not yet possible to cite policy implications regarding service quality.

## 11 Conclusions

### 11.1 Summary of key findings

From a methodological point of view, in Wave 1 of the GOAL project, the greatest challenge was achieving the target number of clients included in the process of counselling. **Reaching the target group »50+« has been especially challenging.** This is the most passive target group on the labour market and in education and training in Slovenia.

The Wave 1 dataset includes the clients who usually come to the four selected providers (ISIO centre or school). These people are primarily dropouts from the formal educational system or unemployed people with different levels of prior education. Data regarding clients acquired education show that it is more likely for the person, in the observed group, to be unemployed with higher level of education (higher than lower vocational school). This target group is more likely to take the initiative in seeking assistance outside the employment office and perhaps therefore more satisfied with guidance services.

In the Wave 2 of the GOAL project, **partners and local partners need to be more focused on the with aim of reaching clients that represent also other target groups such as migrants, older than 50 years and employees with less developed skills** that do not come to counselling on their own initiative. At the same time, it will be essential to assess which methods are motivating these target groups the most. Consultant's current experiences are showing that the personal approach and removing barriers to access the counselling have the best results.

In the Wave 1 national team and regional GOAL service providers invested more effort in the establishment of the two regional networks. The challenge in this task was especially cooperation between the school and the ISIO centres, as they needed to find common objectives and ways for cooperation that could offer comprehensive service for clients. Partners who have been included in the two regional networks were generally interested in cooperation and exchange of experience and information directed towards their target groups. However, partners that were interested the most in the participation in the network were those that are working with disabled and permanently unemployed clients, who need longer and more personal counselling.

Counselling process in the GOAL project was conducted using the same procedures as the counsellors in their work do it with other clients with the exception of the monitoring questionnaire. The counsellors pointed out that the questionnaire developed by the IOE to monitor the effects of guidance gave them the possibility to have a more in depth counselling session which is not the practice in their daily work.

As shown in the client's satisfaction questionnaire, clients were satisfied with the process and got the information that they needed. However, we must stress that most of the clients in the Wave 1 have had only first session and their expectations were primarily to get basic information. It could be assumed that satisfaction with counselling could decrease in longer period if other goals would not be realized, such as: inclusion in education, obtaining qualifications, etc.. At the same time it should be mentioned that in the Wave 1 the counselling was carried out at the time when not a lot of free or co-financed

educational or training programs were available in the field of active employment policy. The latter is a precondition for achieving the long-term effects of counselling.

The data obtained during the first phase of the project GOAL about the work of counsellors show that the share of hours devoted by counsellor exclusively to counselling in adult education largely depends on the organization of work in each organisation. The policymakers also pointed out that is necessary to resolve the issue of professionalisation and regular funding of guidance in adult education. Currently this runs parallel with other tasks carried out by an individual in an organization or as project-based activity.

## **11.2 Implications for the GOAL service**

In the first phase of the project there were no major problems with obtaining clients with the exception of one provider, the School Centre in Velenje, which had no clients. The main reason for that was the time of collecting the data was not consistent with their regular activities, which depend on enrolment of adults in formal vocational training programmes. In Slovenia, adults are enrolled in education in autumn, in the months of September or October, so we expect a larger number of clients in Wave 2 phase of the project.

In cooperation partners, programme developers will have to intensify the definition of outreach locations to reach target groups. This is particularly the case in the Savinjska region, if the client targets are to be met. Counsellor will also have to put more effort in to motivating those target groups who were not included in the first phase. Only then can the effects of counselling on vulnerable groups be evaluated.

In the next phase of the project more focus will have be given also on monitoring the use of tools that are available to counsellors and have been developed in various projects. At the moment counsellors have a lot of tools available that they are using according to their own discretion. It will be necessary to direct counsellor to use only some of the tools, which could represent the standard in guidance in adult education. Other tools should be used by counsellors if they really need them and if they are professionally trained to use them. There is also a lack of monitoring and ensuring the quality and effectiveness of the tools used by counsellors in their work.

## **11.3 Implications for partnerships and networks**

Regional partnerships just began their cooperation and now it will be necessary to intensify their work and take into account the expectations expressed in focus groups. They expressed the need to exchange best practices and tools and are prepared to refer their customers to GOAL service but they want a feedback on the effects of the counselling. Now it seems that the most vulnerable target groups can be reached only through the active cooperation of regional partners and the referral of their clients.

National partnership is just being set up. There are several challenges: how to get adequate funding and outreach strategies to achieve vulnerable groups and how to effectively cooperate at the national level and also support cooperation at the regional level.

Both regional partners and stakeholders highlighted the importance of increasing the promotion of counselling activities and finding different ways of reaching the vulnerable groups.

The regional networks are quite large in number of partners. Local network in Ljubljana with ten partners and in Velenje with nine partners that cover different target groups will require more work in collaboration with various partners. It has been noticed that counsellors will need more professional support in the implementation of the partnership with the national team.

### **11.4 Implications for policy**

Policy in the field of counselling in adult education should firstly introduce the counselling service as one of the central measures in the system of adult education. Meaning that the counselling service for adult learners that exist now in schools and adult guidance centres (ISIO) should transition from sporadic and project based into professional and budgeted service.

System should also define what the basic tasks of adult counselling are and what should be provided by educational institutions or what kind of service for adult counselling should be provided for each client.

National partnership would have to prepare a proposal for systemic solutions: number of counsellors, the necessary financial resources, training system for counsellor. Sectoral integration at the national level can contribute to facilitating the integration of various counselling networks in practice.

We should not forget the involvement of trade unions at the level of policy when we are trying to reach less educated employees. They are those who advocate less educated employees in particular in sectors where education is low, and employers do not invest in knowledge.

### **11.5 Implications for data collection and programme evaluation**

Counsellors have adopted the current method of recording client's data and counselling sessions. In their opinion, the GOAL protocol contributes to a more in-depth preparation for counselling and a more in-depth guidance. But they need more time to prepare for it. The three questionnaires prepared by local evaluators based on monitoring data table were useful and they work like a counselling tool.

Focus group methodology proved to be very efficient method for the stakeholders group and should be used in the Wave 2 phase of the GOAL project but it was too time consuming for staff and program partners. It could be useful to have an in-depth interview with those local partners that would prove to be more active in the Wave 2 period instead.

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