Types of specialists in pre-school and school education for career guidance and psychological support

Pre-school education and training - Psychologists are engaged with the psychological support and counseling of children and their parents. They provide services for educators in kindergartens or parents outside the school environment upon request. This type of support is rather aimed at the correction of deviations and serious problems in the mental development of children than at prevention and assistance. Teachers with pedagogical training are engaged with consulting problems related to education and the general social development of children. They are the ones who directly communicate with parents regarding the development of their children. Furthermore, career guidance is also offered since early age in order to stimulate the personal potential of the child. There are two ways to deliver this type of services: first, through providing various packages for additional sessions and forms of activities from different centers and organizations; second, through the personal initiative of parents and the participation of children in various activities independent of their school program.

In addition there is a possibility for providing psychological support and advisory services during pregnancy and maternity as well as during birth and breastfeeding. Currently, various forms of consultation are carried out during the hospital stay where social workers or psychologists work. Different initiatives are taken such as prevention of abandonment, acceptance in case of any disabilities of the child and further development of parenting competences. In case of any difficulties regarding the bringing up of the baby it is the social services of “Child Protection” which takes over the responsibilities.

The local committee is the department of “Child protection”, which is working towards the prevention and correction of antisocial behavior of minors and juveniles. Special advisory centers are open in order to combat delinquency. They are called public educators, but in fact they are psychologists, pedagogues, social workers, etc.

School Education and training – the services of professional and career guidance, as well as of psychological support are carried out by several groups of specialists:

- Pedagogical advisors and/or psychologists, who operate in the secondary schools;
- Social workers, who are working in educational centers and institutions in the social work system;
- Career guidance specialists, who are working in professional youth information centers in larger
cities in the country;

- Special educators and psychologists, who assist in redirecting and providing specialized services to children and youth with special needs upon request or signal from the special educators, teachers and parents.

By the OP "Human Resources Development" is implemented and funded a major project "System for career guidance in school education" for the establishment of regional centers for career development in all regional cities.

The project aims to create a system of career guidance in school education to achieve compliance with national and European policy in the field of lifelong guidance. Career development centers operate as close links with the school authorities to compile school programs in career consulting and assistance to students and parents. The main activities of the center are to inform of the profiles of learning professions and specialties in secondary schools and universities, consulting students to choose education and career; methodological support of educational professionals for career guidance of students, implementation of programs for career guidance for students of I to XII grade. The target groups are students, parents, teachers, citizens, local business representatives.

The Centers are focused on skills that are needed in every person's life - information about the world of occupations and the labor market, awareness of opportunities, skills, decision-making, counseling and support skills for career planning, and job application, ability to integrate in a professional environment. By the request of students and parents are held individual consultations and tests. Trainings are held in place in schools or at the Center for career guidance by carrying out diagnostic and consulting of professional interests and abilities.

Experts in career development centers have basic educational and/or psychological education and pass a mandatory certification training course in career consulting on basic counseling skills:

Each activity is consistent with the capabilities of the students. The consultants use interactive methods on an attractive way. The programmes include exercises that support the active participation of students, making decisions about education, vocational training and opportunities for professional development and career after graduation.

- Students (I-IV class) - through the games learn about the jobs of the people from his immediate surroundings, the most common occupations in the community in which they live and the skills necessary for their exercise.
- Students from V to VIII grade (lower secondary education) develop their skills in planning educational and personal time, skills for decision to continue in upper secondary education, knowledge to overcome the typical errors associated with the choice of education and/or profession.
- For students in IX-XII grade (higher secondary education) are included topics on the skills for career planning, to resolve internal conflicts related to professional and personal fulfillment how to “win” a job, interview, how to prepare a CV and cover letter to apply for job, rules by searching job.

One of the initiatives of the Ministry of Education and Science's "Submission of entrepreneurship education in the early stages of education", in co-operation with the Junior Achievement

Under the programme direction "Young Entrepreneur"
Main objectives:

- Formation of knowledge in entrepreneurship, skills and competencies in elementary school;
- Making continuity from primary to lower secondary and upper secondary education;
- Integration of children with special educational needs in schools;
• Support the development of personal, moral and leadership qualities in young people;
• Stimulate the formation of economic thinking and entrepreneurial behavior;
• Encouraging critical thinking in solving problems related to real life situations.

Stimulating the ability to search and discover through practical experience in programming directions "Young Entrepreneur", "Manager for a Day", “Virtual Enterprise”.

Trained already 2,500 teachers through the program direction for entrepreneurship education in elementary school - Grades I to IV

A large project for creating regional career centers was realized in all regional cities upon the Human Resources Development Operational Program [1]. The basic services of career guidance and counseling include:

• professional and career information, diagnosis and consultation of professional interest and abilities;
• counseling and assistance for career planning skills;
• searching and applying for a job;
• integration skills in a professional environment;
• development and coaching for career transition skills and making informed decisions.

The Career centers will work as in a close relationship with school institutions for drawing school programs in career counseling and assistance of children. They will also work with clients - parents, children and students upon personal request. The specialists in the career centers have basic educational and/or psychological education and they are passing mandatory certification training course in career counseling on basic counseling skills.

Professional preparation, training and qualification of the specialists.

The specialist's professional preparation and qualification of career guidance and counseling is performed at several levels:

• Bachelor level of higher education as a counseling profile in education majors or a counseling profile in the preparation of social workers;
• Bachelor level as courses/subjects of career counseling in psychological and pedagogical majors;
• Master programs (pedagogical and psychological studies) with counseling qualifications;
• Passing the qualifying certification course for acquiring the valid international certificate for "career counselor" GCDF – for Bulgaria the licensed organization that provides this training is Foundation “Business for the education”. As of 2011 the certified and trained career counselors in the programs of the Foundation are approximately 1000 people;
• Participation in post-graduate courses with counseling profiles and specializations;
• Training and educational programs organized by authorized institutions in the country, which provide certificate after graduate – issued by: universities and relevant faculties, the Foundation Business for education, HRDC – the Human Resources Development Center or the Bulgarian society of psychologists;
• Educational and training programs, organized within scientific forums, national and international practical seminars and trainings, meetings of professionals from practice, lectures and conferences with international participation.
Pedagogical support to the staff working with children with special educational needs

One of the main goals is - the children with special educational needs to be integrated in kindergartens and schools so that they can be completely socialized in a real educational environment.

Resource centers are created to support integrated education of children with special educational needs, state units - extracurricular educational institutions in the education system. The Resource centers function in all 28 regions in the country.
The Resource Center carries out activities in accordance with the state policy in the field of integrated education by supporting the successful integration and socialization of children and pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in the educational environment.
Specialists Resource Center support full integration of children and pupils with special educational needs in the educational and social environment by implementing corrective therapeutic activities with them, consulting with parents and teachers in consultation with teaching teams, implementation of activities to support the full inclusion of these children and students in public life.
Resource centers are funded by:
1. the state budget;
2. own incomes.

Inclusive education
The project is funded by the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development", co-financed by the European Social Fund of the European Union, Beneficient - The Ministry of Education and Science

Common goal
To provide a supportive environment for equal access to education and open education system with the aim of inclusive education.
Specific aims:

- Early identification of children at risk of learning difficulties, and their successful inclusion in pre-primary and school education, successful socialization and integration.
- Provide a supportive environment of psychologists, resource teachers, speech therapists and/or other specialists for students and children deprived of parental care and using services from residential tip involved in the process of deinstitutionalization.

Activity 1

Early assessment and prevention of learning difficulties in children of pre-primary age
Training of psychologists and speech therapists in the implementation of a screening test for children from 3 years of age, who have a risk of learning difficulties, in children, for which there are indications for the presence of learning disabilities.
Carry out the test by trained professionals - speech therapists and psychologists in all kindergartens with children 3 years of age and determination of the 25 pilot kindergartens in the country, which result from the application of the test groups were formed for children who are at risk of learning difficulties or are indications of the occurrence of learning difficulties.
Development of tests to determine the language development of children of 4 -, 5 - and 6- years old.

Training of 25 pilot kindergartens for the implementation of tests to determine the language development of children of 4 -, 5 - and 6- years old.
Approbation of the test at 25 pilot kindergartens.
Forming a team of speech therapists and psychologists, appointment and training of team members
to work with groups of children who are at risk of learning difficulties or are indications of risk of learning disabilities in the developed sample programs.

**Working conditions and realization of activities**

**School advisers and psychologists** are located in the general secondary and professional schools. Their activities are not yet specified in accordance with the different needs of students in general and vocational education. **Social workers** are located in institutions for upbringing and educating children, who are deprived of parental care and in institutions for social work. **Special educators** are located mainly in schools for children with special needs. The activity of different specialists in Bulgaria is still in a process of transition and adaption to the conditions of integrated education. The development and establishing of places such as the abovementioned career centers, where multidisciplinary team of professionals with different qualifications will work, would allow a more synchronous answer to the different needs and problems arising from the individual’s life and his environment.

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