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**THE CHANGES AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
CAREER ORIENTATION IN PARTICULAR THE PROCESS  
OF INFORMATION IN PUBLIC EDUCATION FROM THE  
REGIME CHANGE TO NOWADAYS**

Theses of Doctoral (PhD) Dissertation

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## **Subject and purpose of the research**

The importance of career orientation as the process preceding the decision to choose a profession is generally not questioned; however, its status and recognition varies due to the constant changes in legal and institutional conditions. Everyone is (or at least they think that they are) familiar with the topic, still, it does not always receive proper emphasis in public education. International and domestic researches have shown, however, that the process leading to a good career choice means a way out not only by solving a given life situation, but a decision that is made in possession of a sufficient knowledge about the self and the society influences the whole career path.

Public education and career choices have been closely interrelated since the beginning, as career choice dilemmas started to arise concurrently with the introduction of mandatory education and the arising and organised education of the ever more differentiated structure of professions, at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Teachers assumed a significant role in handling the problem and, until the 1990s, they were key actors in the process of career choices. After the change of regime, career orientation was included in the legal regulations on public education in a varied quality and with varied emphases; at present, the National Curriculum and the Act on National Education list it among the development objectives and the tasks of teachers.

The approach according to which career guidance and career orientation are justified only in case of students, can be considered obsolete by now. It is typical of the domestic practice that the career management skills that have not been acquired in the young age need to be developed – in lack of prior education – when people are already young adults or even later, in the frameworks of institutions or programs provided by the state (e.g. labour organisations, labour market trainings) or by other actors (e.g. adult education). Therefore, in recent days we can talk about career, work and lifelong guidance, which follow through the individual's whole life. As of the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in the international literature this lifelong process is called Lifelong Guidance (LLG), meaning a human service that

establishes and follows through the whole professional life path. The translations and terminology used by Hungarian researchers is not coherent: the terms ‘pályatervezés’ (career planning), ‘pályafejlődési tanácsadás’ (career development guidance), ‘életpálya-tanácsadás’ (life path guidance), ‘életút-támogató pályaorientáció’ (career orientation to support life path) and ‘élethosszig tartó pályaorientáció’ (lifelong career orientation) highlight content elements that the respective researchers consider as priorities.

The differences in interpretation clearly show the complexity of the concept: this supportive service process is presented in varied forms and at several points during a person’s life path, right from the elementary school, at the time of taking up and changing jobs and also when leaving the labour market. The topic is very complex. In this work we focus on the institutional frameworks of public education; and, due to the limitations of the research, we do not study the special services provided to young people with special needs.

The stock of knowledge of career orientation contains both static and dynamic elements; the ever renewing contents are easy to find thanks to the available tools of information technology. However, it is necessary to carry out new research regarding the scientific establishment of the search process: the results of the research can be added to the career orientation methodology. Regarding the ways to convey static elements (e.g. self-knowledge, qualification level, school system), there is a wider scope of methodologies which have been already developed, as a significant number of textbooks, pedagogical aids and books have been prepared in the past decades. Still, its methodology is known to a few only, and there are only a few examples for its scientific research and publication in Hungary. The innovativeness of this research results from the fact that, on basis of analysing the actual situation, it presents new opportunities as to how to assist the school and career choices of students in public education, and gives an insight into how the methods and practices applied in schools actually work, as well as into the presence and flood of information related to career orientation. The timeliness of the topic is also signified by the changes in laws taking place in the last few years.

The basic goal of the research is to clarify the place and role of career orientation in the public education system focusing on the information processes. Our fundamental purpose is to present whether the career orientation activity was able to keep up with social challenges and whether its methodology and set of tools have changed, and if yes, how.

### **Structure of the dissertation**

The structure of the dissertation reflects on the classical approach. In the first part of the work the most important theories and research results relating to the topic are presented. The literature chapter comprises 6 sub-chapters, the first is set the objective to define the concept of career orientation. Due to the complexity of the concept, it is indispensable to present its psychological and pedagogical dimensions as well, and to take account of the factors that have their effects on this complex process. The sub-chapter also presents how the concept of career orientation changed in time, and then it closes with its interpretation presently accepted by the profession and the affected policies. In the second part of the chapter we summarise the content elements of the career orientation process, and then we take account of the methodological opportunities available in public education. After the clarification of the category and methodology of career orientation, the third sub-chapter presents the international policy statements and guidance relating to this specific field, and provides an overview of the international practices of the career orientation process that are realised in public education.

The fourth sub-chapter reviews the antecedents, institutional system and present realisation frameworks of domestic career orientation activities, separately dealing with the legal regulations relating to the field, and gives an overview of the public educational tasks connected to career orientation in the curriculum web. The career orientation process has several actors, and therefore the chapter is closed with an account of the actors on the field and its organisational frameworks. In the sub-chapter, we separately deal with giving an account of who carry out career orientation tasks in public education, and also reveal which other institutional frameworks support this process.

We have developed our hypothesis after reviewing the theoretical and literature backgrounds. On the basis of the open questions in the literature, the empiric chapters of the dissertation are based on essentially four hypotheses. We assume that the career orientation activity is sensitive to social changes (H1). We think that information is playing a determinative role in the process (H2). We assume that although young people turn towards digital tools to an increasing extent, quality information regarding career choices is still obtained by them through personal connections (e.g. parents and teachers) (H3). Last but not least we assume that there are age group specific methods and tools available for this in the public education system (H4).

The empiric chapters of the work focus on information relating to career orientation: we examine where/to whom students mostly turn for information they need for their career choices (student research), what experiences teachers have regarding the practices realised in public education, and how they can support students (teacher research). We also examine what assistance the available career orientation textbooks can provide in this process (textbook research). In the course of student research, we processed the results of a questionnaire survey examining the circumstances of the career choices made by 3945 students participating in public education between 2002 and 2013, while the teacher research was realised through a questionnaire survey of teachers working in public education, with 264 teachers interviewed. The third method in our research was the analysis of the textbooks published after the change of regime and whose contents are related to career orientation, during which we examined the characteristics of 23 education tools. Our comparative textbook analysis focused on textbooks prepared for the 9<sup>th</sup> class of vocational school students, during which we undertook to carry out the comparative analysis of the (5 pieces of) educational materials prepared for this age group.

In the summarising chapter, after presenting the research results we examine the justification of the hypotheses, and finally, we draw our consequences and articulate our proposals in light of all the above.

## **Results**

Career orientation as a process of obtaining and processing knowledge has been increasingly gaining ground in the past years, and, today, it is related not only to career choices anymore but has become a form of services following through people's whole life path. Its concept is becoming more and more integrated in society's terminology but its availability is limited in many places. Career orientation is essentially a learning process about ourselves and our environment, and a technique how we can integrate this knowledge in our decisions made in our career. In our days, to know one's way around the world of careers and employment requires such special knowledge that is available for only a few. This is especially true for disadvantaged regions or regions in bad economic situation, where education may be the only way out, not only for the individual but also for their closer or wider environment.

As the significance of career orientation activities has already been recognised, today the accessibility of this kind of services is ensured by a legal background that is considered good even in international comparison. However, a proper legal environment is of no use if the actors of public education themselves do not ensure the operation of the function or do not monitor its realisation and efficiency. Cooperation between the players responsible for career orientation and the harmonisation of their work is problematic, although it would be fundamental for a successful process. At the same time, we were able to see on the basis of the overview of literature that the institutional frameworks of career orientation have been established in public education, with the National Curriculum as one of their corner stone.

After the change of regime, it was first of all terminology where there were changes in public education (in addition to the opinion on the importance of career orientation). The term "career orientation" is getting more and more accepted; however, it was not until the last few years that an actual change in terms of contents and attitude took place, as we can see in several legal regulations now that the concept is becoming diversified and is getting filled with contents. It is problematic that the interpretation of the concept is still not coherent,

neither within professional circles nor in legal documents. At many places, career orientation is still considered as a tool to prevent problems relating to change of schools, and not a tool to develop and establish the knowledge and competence that can be used even during the later periods of one's life path. The legislator is including a growing number of organisations in the provision of career orientation activities and services, however, as their operation is not comprehensive and systematic, it is down to teachers again (similar to the 1960s and 1970s) to manage the process that prepares students for their career choices. The Hungarian practice, however, is not suitable to ensure the provision of services with a life path approach and coherent procedure, as the regulation and the available opportunities focus only on decision making points, and beyond them, do not really deal with the area.

The fact that career orientation as an independent professional field came to existence in Hungary can be correlated with the social and economic processes connected to the change of regime. The last 25 years saw the establishment of conditions to train experts who can assist both the young and the adult in planning their careers. In relation to this, several career orientation centres have been established at the universities throughout the country, in order to ensure the human resources necessary to provide human services available to everyone. Accordingly, such a system of training experts has been set up in relation to career orientation in the last few decades in Hungary that is capable to provide the services related to career orientation and that is relevant also by European standards. The success of the activity is, however, greatly influenced by its accessibility as well. However modern approach a few number of experts is following in their work in a certain field, it will still be unavailable for the wider public. The results of the surveys pointed out that the services, the availability of experts as well as the demand for the same differ by areas. When it comes to disadvantages resulting from different chances, they can be decreased only through the involvement of qualified experts who are prepared to provide assistance in the making of adequate choices.

In today's social and economic environment, due to the instability of previous experiences and insecurity of use of information, it is

indispensable for the upcoming generations to receive assistance, one form of which are the human services provided by career orientation experts. As opportunities grow and the inherent risks and slips also appear, individuals cannot be left alone in a situation where not respective persons but the lack of social practice is responsible for socialisation disadvantages. With its elaborated methodology, career orientation as a multidisciplinary field of science can decrease the difference resulting from social inequalities, and, with its complex approach, it has the chance to slow down and correct the multiplying effects of the disadvantaged situation.

In our research, we studied the current place and role of career orientation in the institutions of public education, with particular attention to the source and direction of the information relating to the area. To become familiar with this subject, we laid down 4 hypotheses for the empiric chapters of our work, on basis of the open questions of the literature reviewed. We intended to prove our assumptions through the use of three research methods, namely statistic data analysis (student research), questionnaire survey (teacher research) and textbook analysis (textbook research).

**We assumed that the career orientation activity realised in public education is sensitive to social changes. (H1)**

With the change to market economy, the determinant role of the labour market has strengthened in the past period. Beyond self-expression and the satisfaction of individual needs, in the modern age, the selection of schools and careers carries also the career expectations and objectives articulated by the individual's immediate surroundings.

The demand for information relating to school and career choices has always been strong. Although, while in the 20<sup>th</sup> century obtaining the relevant information required personal investment and activity, the information and technological tools available today make this process a lot easier: essentially all relevant information can be obtained through the Internet by a few clicks. Changes in social expectations can therefore be detected, among others, in the increasing role of Internet use in the area.



In the last 25 years, competency-based education and the cross-curriculum concept have gradually appeared in the documents regulating the contents of education (National Curriculum, general curricula). Career orientation appears on varied levels and in varied forms in the respective cross-curriculum versions, and the teaching centred approach of the area is increasingly replaced with the competence approach that is based on practical application. Therefore, although in theory the possibility to realise the learning-centred paradigm in the Hungarian public education system is given, it remains a question how prepared and able teachers and public education experts are to apply them in practice.

Accordingly, the changes in public education greatly modify also the roles and tasks that public education has in career orientation. Parallel to that, the role of teachers continuously transforms and widens as well. Due to this, their function cannot be limited to assist students in making their further education choices and filling the necessary papers – to handle career orientation as a process also has to become their task. And this requires that they help students plan and create their careers by choosing the tasks and methods fitting the students' age.

Research results show that recently, the concept and scope of activities of career orientation have become parts of school life in the institutions of public education. The majority of the tools and methods presented in the literature review reappeared also in the teacher research. This is also indicated by the facts that teachers are familiar with career orientation activities in the school, they assume roles in the process, and know many tools and methods. Data analysis, however, also reveals that teachers are not always conscious of some of their activities having career orientation contents as well. This refers to the fact that the system level coordination, and so the systematic nature and organised processes of the activities are not ensured.

The results of the research allow to establish that the social and economic changes had significant effects on the contents and structure of the information related to the field, and also on the methods and tools of conveying the knowledge. The content analysis

of the textbooks examined also permits to conclude that the authors and publishers seek to define the contents of the books along social challenges, processes and trends. A good example for that is that we found reference to work abroad even in books published 10 to 12 years ago, and they also integrate computers in the learning process.

In view of all the above it is clear that the career orientation activity realised in public education has reacted to the needs articulated by the society, and the relating institutional and legal environment has also been established. However, no massive demand for the services has arisen parallel to the development of the area – the level of individual needs of parents and users lags behind the available opportunities.

*Our first hypothesis has been confirmed*, as, in recent years, with the development of the area the possible ways for using the services have also been created, and, in addition, the way how the career orientation activity has changed well demonstrates the diversification of social needs.

In our second hypothesis **we assumed that the demand for information has grown in career orientation activities.** (H2)

As a result of the social and economic changes at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, information started to play a more and more important role in the career orientation activity due to the increased amount of opportunities. Today, the Internet provides a measureless amount of data and knowledge as inputs for decisions, however, beyond their quantity, the accuracy and reliability of the information is becoming more and more important.

The demand for targeted information signifies the diversification of the available sources of information regarding career orientation and also that of problem and competence focused tasks, tool and method choices. The needs have significantly increased not only on part of the users (e.g. students, parents) but also on part of teachers in this area. Research results also support all this. This is indicated by the age differences we experienced during the student research concerning the use of information tools, as well as the differences in the use of sources by teachers, and the variety of tools and methods known for them. At the same time, we also observed a tendency of

content diversification in the case of the textbooks examined and in the case of the elder age group.

Data show that the immediate surroundings as the primary source of information for career choices also carries a certain kind of expectation as to quality. The role of information tools in career orientation is significant due to their accessibility and volume.

On basis of the results of the teacher research, we can say that in the current practice of public education, teachers mostly know the information sources and opportunities connected to career orientation but rely on support by external institutions and experts only to a smaller extent (37%) which may be the result of them lacking stable information. At the same time, they search for and use information for the fulfilment of their task in a very wide range of sources, but still, in most of the cases (60%) they rely on previously followed practices and experiences. The question arises, at the same time, to what extent schools and the professionals working there are able to keep up with the changes in the school system and the professional training system. The career orientation activities carried out in schools could be more effective if each public education institution had its own, qualified career choice professional. Alternatives to realise this are offered not only by higher education institutions (e.g. ELTE – Eötvös Loránd University, SZIE – Szent István University, SZTE – University of Szeged) but several other organisations hold longer or shorter trainings in the topic.

The colourfulness of the results experienced during the research permits to conclude that career orientation has individual contents. This is partially due to the fact that each student has their own life path and series of own decisions, and the teachers dealing with career orientation also support young people in this process in individual ways (also because of their different needs). The question arises, at the same time, whether they are able to provide the support to each student that is necessary to be prepared to make the decision (given how overloaded teachers currently are with all their tasks).

The results of the research have clearly demonstrated that the demand for information regarding career orientation is growing, on the part of both students and teachers. Several forums and services

have appeared to meet this demand; however, the accessibility of information does not mean that they are also reliable, and so, it is up to users to filter and process such information. The vast amount of available information raises the question of quality, and, in relation to that, also whether it is necessary to verify it. A prominent area of this is the information base available on the Internet, a professional control of which – beyond the sites operated by state organisations – is not in place. In view of all the above, *our second hypothesis can be considered confirmed as well.*

**We assumed that although young people turn towards digital tools to an increasing extent, quality information regarding career choices is still obtained by them through personal connections (e.g. parents and teachers). (H3)**

The results of the student research have shown that the primary source of information for young people is their immediate surroundings (35%), and so their career choices are most influenced by their family and peer groups. Students use information tools to obtain information for their career choices in a similarly high proportion (33%), among which the role of the Internet is prominent. School as an information source is only at the third place (24%). At the end of the list we can find information services by external institutions and persons (8%), who are contacted for information mostly in connection with changes in education or in the legal environment.

A certain kind of shift can be experienced towards the use of information tools in upper classes, while primary school pupils tend to listen rather to their family members or teachers when making school or career choices. In spite of the spread of information tools, however, the importance of obtaining information through personal connections did not lessen, what is more, a certain kind of strengthening can be seen in the past few years. All this is due to an internal rearrangement of personal connection-based information sources, where the immediate surroundings (first of all the family) is taking on an increasing role in the making of the student's career decisions. Due to this, career choices and the preparation to make them increasingly belongs to the family's competence again, which

reclaims these areas from the school and external institutions and persons.

In the analysis, a certain kind of geographical difference can be observed in the proportion of how information sources are used: while students in the Central Hungarian Region rely on information tools in a bigger proportion, students in the country prefer obtaining information through personal connections.

School as a source of information for career choices represents a relatively stable proportion in all examined dimensions. As one of the sources, it ensures that everyone gets the fundamental information necessary for their career choice, independently from their family and social background. However, how a public educational institution is able to satisfy the students' appetite for information concerning career choices, mostly depends on school management and last but not least on teachers' attitude and how well informed they are regarding the area.

The results of our research go beyond factual data. The young people we surveyed have double personal preferences regarding the obtaining of information (also because of the characteristics typical of their age). One of these is the world of adults, where family and teachers have a primary role, but, on the other hand, the opinion of their own peers is also significant. Regarding the latter relationships, a significant change has taken place in recent years: friends increasingly withdraw into virtual space, which brings a new aspect into the research on the topic. Can the virtualisation of the obtaining of information lead to the reevaluation of friendships in the digital world? On the other hand, in connection with the topic it would be important to examine how it is connected to career orientation: what can the current practice of career orientation do with the career orientation dimension of the virtual world, with particular attention to the needs of the digital generations (Y, Z)? Today, we have reached a social era where family and the Internet play nearly equal roles; however, the technological changes and the needs of the new generations signify that the virtual world will shortly become dominant. Therefore, due to the current characteristics of education,

the world of public education is increasingly lagging behind in the area, and its role is decreasing.

At the same time, school as a tool to balance different life chances can become a significant actor in the process, through career orientation. A background where parents have low qualifications is increasingly causing disadvantages in the career orientation activities which are shifted towards the digital world. Therefore, the roles assumed by teachers will be determinant in fighting the disadvantages caused by different chances. However, in relation to the contents of career orientation the question also raises a social dilemma. Is it the task of career orientation to satisfy social needs through public education, or the responsibility of the individual and the family will become stronger in the process, where school is present as a provider of career orientation services?

On basis of the above, *our third hypothesis was also confirmed.*

**We assumed that due to the development of career orientation activities in the last few years, age group specific methods and tools are available also to teachers (H4)**

On basis of the results of the research it can be established that educational materials relating to career orientation have been extensively developed in past years: during the 25 years since the change of regime, several tools and methods have been elaborated in connection with career orientation, as a result of different targeted programs. Beyond the textbooks and workbooks available in schools, many programs offered methodological support and tools for the education of the field. There were several trainings within the school system and also accredited further training programs to support that these are mastered and integrated in public education. However, due to the project nature and financing solutions of the programs, this knowledge and these methods were not generally implemented in the career orientation activities realised in public education institutions.

The aim of our research was not to examine the realisation and effects of the respective programs but to assess the information carrier learning materials that have been developed, along with the textbooks and workbooks related to the area. On basis of analysing

the 23 textbooks that were published after the change of regime and that deal with career orientation, we can establish that the available textbooks cover all classes between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades, however, the publications made for vocational education are overrepresented among them.

The results of the analyses permit to establish that the developments that have taken place regarding educational materials in the last few years followed legal changes only to a small extent, and the elaboration and publication of a textbook has mostly depended on the publisher's decision. Publishers and authors are striving to collect and publish the age group specific knowledge; the current textbook list, however, does not fully cover the demands. As for the composition of textbooks we can say that the main emphasis lies on the end of elementary school and the first years of vocational schools, and also most textbooks target these age groups. The contents of the textbooks can be characterised by the widening of lexical knowledge rather than practice oriented approach, however, due the peculiarities of the area the authors of the textbooks try to include interactive tasks.

On basis of the above, it would be worth urging decision makers and textbook publishers to develop educational materials that meet the demands of the modern age and the expectations of the new (digital) generation, and that are comprehensive, age group specific and follow a practice oriented approach. For this, it would be indispensable to extend life path planning competences and the career orientation activity as a process determining people's life paths to less frequented age groups as well. And further, in parallel to this, to widen the list of textbooks registered in the public education textbook register and that deal with the topic of career orientation.

An important finding of the research is that although the legal environment and the development of textbooks has created the theoretical conditions for students to learn the competences necessary for planning their career, and also created relating service opportunities that are available for a wide scope of users, still, the legislator left it to teachers to coordinate the process. General curricula make the fulfilment of this task easier by determining the

main topics to be processed at classes in the respective years of elementary school, however, these are partially or fully missing in the case of the general curricula for secondary schools. Neither the frameworks of teacher education can provide sufficient guidance to the performance of career orientation activities, as there are plenty of other tasks for which teachers need to be prepared. Therefore, whether and how students in public education obtain career planning competences today, mostly depends on the consciousness and attitude of teachers. For this reason, not only would it be indispensable to integrate career orientation skills in teacher education, but it is also justified to develop such a further education system that is able to properly prepare teachers to convey these competences not only in career orientation classes but also at other fields of education.

In view of the above we can see that the realisation of career orientation activities has not become professional in public education: most activities in public education still fall on teachers, and the involvement of external experts in the area is less typical.

The recent programs launched and legislative decisions made in support of the area induced the elaboration, realisation and integration into the school system of pedagogical methods and tools that can be well used also in public education. The frameworks for career orientation activities in public education are given, most teachers are aware of these opportunities; their use, however, is not typical due to the lack of financial and other resources, and so they have not been coherently integrated. On basis of the above we can establish that *our fourth hypothesis has been partially confirmed*.



## **New results of the doctoral dissertation**

As a result of those summarised in the dissertation we can establish that, based on our current research, the role of career orientation has recently changed. The results of the surveys show that our research go beyond those presented in the literature, and reveal new elements and facts. In view of this, we can summarise the new results of the dissertation as follows:

- We have demonstrated that career orientation as a concept has become accepted in the institutions of public education. The spread of the usage of this concept was greatly supported by the legal environment, as the legislator has used this terms since the middle of the 1990s in different legal regulations. The actual contents of the concept were not determined and non coherent definition for it was adopted either. Due to this fact, we found significant differences regarding the interpretation of the concepts not only among teachers but also among experts; the diversification of the concept, however, well reflects how the area is developing.
- Due to the changed economical and social situation, the number of available career orientation tools and methods has increased since the change of regime. However, in lack of institutional and system level developments the focus of how to fulfil the task shifted towards the institutions of public education. Due to this, the role of schools has become more emphasised. Schools are able to fulfil this role but the necessary financial and human resources are not ensured.
- Among the sources of information, Internet has leading position in getting information, serving as a base for young people's school and career choices. In relation to this, however, we have established that personal connections cannot be replaced with any tool: students do have a need for personal connections in the decision making phase.

- The need for personal support in connection with career choices is not directed towards the school. The legal environment adopted in the past decades delegated the tasks relating to career orientation to public education institutions in the case of young people. Its concrete contents, however, were not accurately determined, and the available knowledge and practice is not able to satisfy the students' needs. All this led to the role of families and immediate surroundings coming into the foreground. Due to this, at present, the school is only able to support the process through the tools available in public education, but we have to accept that the role of families has strengthened in the field.

In view of the above we make the following proposals.

- In relation to pedagogical activities in schools, it would be necessary to clarify the concepts relating to career orientation, and define the contents of the same. It is desirable to differentiate the terms, so that activities can be identified more easily, and misunderstandings and misinterpretations may be avoided. All of these should be based on the cooperation between the experts active in the field, the elaboration of a joint professional debate and then background material on the terminology, and the establishment and operation of information and knowledge sharing forums.
- The tasks of career orientation activities to be solved in public education institutions needs to be concretised, with particular attention to its process nature, as a significant percentage of students acquire at least secondary qualification. Therefore, it is justified to organise ability-focused workshops presenting the school system to elementary school pupils, to help them make their school choices. In the case of the elder age group, in addition to convey knowledge regarding the labour market, their areas of interest and the role of values relating to work should be clarified. In addition to all this, it is indispensable for all age groups to become familiar with the world of professions, and they should be supported in obtaining information through their own experiences in this respect.

- Due to the role of the family and parents playing in the career orientation process, it is indispensable to elaborate and widen the scope of outside-the-school services. It seems justified to offer separate services in relation to the area to the actors of the immediate surroundings. A tool for this may be the further extension of targeted information sources available on the Internet.
- The potential inherent in the strengthened role of the immediate surroundings could be well used in elaborating a system in the field of career orientation, similar to the system of peer supporters that has already proven useful in different prevention areas. This is because we think that the accounts given by young people going (back) to schools about the different trainings and the world of labour, and the fresh and first hand experiences may motivate the audience, without the differences of perception and interpretation resulting from generation gaps disturbing the communication.
- Making teachers more sensitive and prepare them for the task. For this, it is indispensable to clarify the competences, tasks, and the institutional frameworks of cooperation of the actors in the area, especially teachers, counselling teachers and external experts. Teachers are key actors in the process, therefore a more intensive mentoring system should be established in the area to support teachers in their activities, and, for this, it would be indispensable to ensure the availability of tools and methods (if not else than those elaborated during previous programs) that are accessible for all teachers, and to create an open-access knowledge base.

According to the above, information plays a prominent role in the process of career orientation. Obtaining information in connection with career options, however, is only the first step in making career choices. It is a topic less addressed, however, whether young people are able to interpret, process and organise the information obtained by them on their own or with someone's help, and whose task it is to teach them how to do that. Do teachers have a role in this, and if yes,

how large? What theoretical and practical information can they give to students who are about to make their career choice?

Having recognised its importance, the National Curriculum names career orientation, as the process preceding the making of career choices, separately among development objectives. On the other hand, the Act on National Education makes it the task of teachers to carry out career orientation activities. The task, however, comprises not only simple and frontal information transfer: the amount of standard lexical knowledge is relatively low, rather it requires the development of the students' skills and competences. The teachers' responsibility to prepare students to their career choices still does not stop here. They play a role not only regarding their own students but also in the recruitment of new students on open days and at different school events.

Teachers have huge responsibility in connection with their career orientation tasks as well. The teacher as a reliable source of information may be the base for the student's primary information medium, that is, the family's activity to prepare the student for their career choice. It may be important to prepare the parents for the pitfalls of school and career choices at parent and teacher meetings or individual consultations. The teacher's recommendations and the sharing of their good or bad experiences has such information value that may help in making the adequate career choice. However, the question arises, how much of this tasks and on what level teachers should fulfil? Does and can the current teacher education prepare prospective teachers to fulfil these functions at all?

All this permits to draw the consequence that career orientation has a place and significant function in the current teacher education, as teachers play an important role in students' career choices. Therefore it is justified to place more emphasis on career orientation in the professional education of teachers, and, the updating of teachers' information regarding school and career choices must have an important role also in the further education system of teachers. The results of this research may serve as adequate bases for such further trainings.

Preparing students for their career choices, however, is not only the responsibility of teachers; school is only a medium where this process can take place among institutional frameworks. Our research revealed that school occupies only the third place among the information sources for career choices, preceded by family and friends, and the use of information tools. Next to these two factors, the role of schools, and therefore also teachers, is almost infinitesimal. Therefore, in the interest of the development of society and future young generations, we need social responsibility where, by involving the actors of the career orientation activity, namely family, the different information carriers and especially the media, we can establish a support system that is able to operate in accordance with the complex approach of career orientation.

### **Further possibilities, directions of the research**

The possibility to continue the research results of the complexity of the topic: by widening the scope of teachers and students involved in the survey, we can receive a more detailed picture of the career orientation processes taking place in public education. The trends and findings established on basis of our research can serve as a base for the professional and methodological development of the field in public education. The tasks and functions of public education that require renewal may include the development of students' information gathering and processing competences, one pillar of which may be the elaboration of a methodology for processing information relating to career orientation.

Furthermore, it would be worth examining the personal and material factors of the existing and available career orientation services, and to assess demands by involving both sides, namely teachers and users (parents, students). We believe that adequate career orientation services and service systems can be established only in possession of this knowledge, by also taking account of special areas.

The results of the research show that family plays an important role in the process of career orientation; and one of the most important sources of information for the family, especially in the case of elementary school students, is the school and the teacher. The relationship of teachers and parents, however, is not always without

hiccups, and therefore, in a further research it may be worth examining cooperation between teachers and parents in the career orientation process.

Data show that the career orientation activities currently realised in public education may work as individual experiments or voluntarily assumed tasks, but not as part of a system. Regarding the Hungarian practice, results reveal that, at present, there are two stable points in career orientation activities in public education: homeroom classes and teacher-parent meetings. Both the composition of the sample and the results signify that, in public education, the preparation of students to their career choices depends on how motivated teachers are and what responsibility they assume for the topic, and this is the case irrespective of the types of schools, the level of experiences and subjects. The career orientation activity related to the homeroom teacher's job description, however, does not ensure that information are kept up to date, and therefore, instead of the fixed status ensuring the process nature, the present system supports the re-training of the career choice knowledge in every four years. At the same time, there are several organisations and experts today who support career orientation activities in public education, which can be effectively and successfully realised in a matrix system, through mutual support and information supply, with a long term financing base and through cooperation. It is therefore justified to examine the forms and frameworks of effective cooperation opportunities, in the system of public education and also beyond.

It is important to be aware that career orientation is not limited to public education but it follows the individual through their entire life path. Therefore, it is important to develop a system in connection with adults and the world of labour that, similarly to public education, is able to assist the individual with adequate methods and reliable information in solving the blocks they may face along their way in the labour market. In view of all this, the education of career orientation experts and a coherent (central) methodological governance of the process may be the pledge for the successful career and life paths of the upcoming generation.

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