

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH IN CAREER GUIDANCE 4.0

How the CAREERS 4.0 project reshaped my Counselling Practice

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From Traditional Guidance to Professional Repositioning

Participating in the *Career Guidance 4.0* Erasmus+ training programme represented more than a professional development opportunity. It marked a significant shift in the way I understand my role as a school counsellor.

Prior to this experience, my career counselling practice was grounded mainly in educational support, personal development and school-to-school transitions. While career guidance and dimension rather than a strategic pillar.



The project challenged this perspective profoundly. It reframed career guidance not as a punctual intervention, but as a long-term, competence-based process closely connected to identity formation, adaptability and lifelong learning. As a result, my professional identity expanded: I no longer see myself only as a counsellor who supports students in the present, but as a facilitator of future readiness.

Developing a Competence-Based Counselling Mindset

One of the most valuable professional gains from the project was the internalization of a competence-based framework for career guidance. The training emphasized that in an unpredictable labour market.



This shift had an immediate impact on my counselling practice. I began to redesign activities, discussions and reflection exercises around transferable competencies such as adaptability, self-awareness, critical thinking, collaboration and digital literacy. Instead of focusing on occupations, I started focusing on skills, attitudes and learning dispositions.

Professionally, this helped me move from a prescriptive approach to a developmental one. I became more attentive to helping students recognize patterns in their interests, strengths and values, and to supporting them in building a coherent personal narrative about who they are and who they want to become.

Strengthening Digital Competencies as a Counsellor

Another major area of professional growth was related to digital competence. The project exposed us to digital career guidance tools, labour market information platforms and data-informed decision-making models.

As a school counsellor, this was particularly important, because students increasingly expect guidance professionals to be fluent in the same digital environments they navigate daily.



Through the training, I gained greater confidence in interpreting labour market trends and translating them into age-appropriate, meaningful discussions with students. I also became more aware of the ethical dimensions of digital counselling, including data protection, informed consent and professional boundaries in online environments. This experience strengthened my ability to act as a mediator between complex labour market data and students' personal realities. Professionally, it reinforced my role as a credible, informed and contemporary guidance practitioner.

Inclusive Career Guidance and Equity Awareness

A central theme of the project was inclusion. The discussions and collaborative activities highlighted the responsibility of career counsellors to ensure equitable access to guidance services, especially for students from vulnerable or disadvantaged backgrounds.



This aspect resonated strongly with my work at CMBRAE. The training helped me reflect critically on my own practices and assumptions, encouraging me to adapt guidance strategies to diverse needs, learning styles and life contexts. I became more intentional in designing counselling activities that empower students who may lack social capital, family support or exposure to diverse career models.

Professionally, this reinforced my commitment to career guidance as a tool for social equity. I now approach guidance sessions with a stronger awareness of structural barriers and with greater sensitivity to the invisible obstacles students may face.

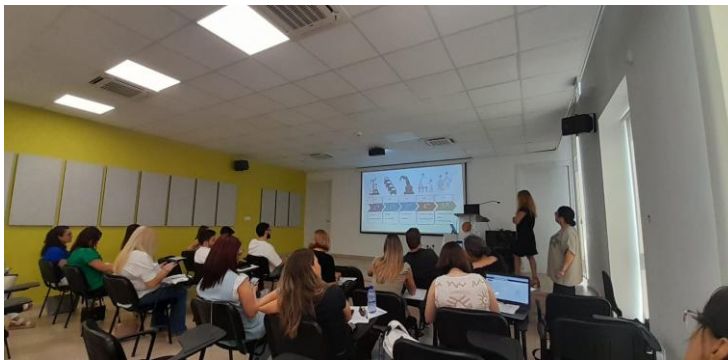
Intercultural Learning as Professional Capital

Beyond the formal training content, the Erasmus+ experience within the CAREERS 4.0 coordinated by CMBRAE provided a powerful intercultural learning context.

Working alongside counsellors from different European countries allowed me to compare educational systems, guidance policies and professional practices.

This exchange had a direct impact on my professional development. It enhanced my intercultural communication skills, broadened my perspective on counselling roles and strengthened my capacity to work in diverse, multicultural environments.

Exposure to different professional cultures encouraged flexibility, openness and reflective practice.



I also realized how essential intercultural competence is in career guidance. In a globalized world, students need to be prepared not only for local labour markets, but also for international mobility, multicultural teams and cross-border opportunities.

This insight has become an integral part of my professional outlook.

From Isolated Interventions to a Lifelong Guidance Perspective



Before the project, career guidance was often linked to specific moments in the educational trajectory: choosing a high school, selecting a specialization or preparing for exams.

The training fundamentally changed this approach.

I now view career development as a continuous process that accompanies students throughout their educational journey. This has influenced how I structure counselling sessions and programmes, encouraging continuity, reflection and gradual skill-building rather than one-off interventions.

Professionally, this has led me to value tools such as portfolios, reflective journals and long-term guidance plans. These instruments support students in monitoring their growth over time and help counsellors maintain coherence in their interventions.

Professional Confidence and European Networking

An often-underestimated outcome of international training programmes is professional confidence. Engaging in meaningful dialogue with European colleagues, contributing to discussions and sharing practices validated my expertise and strengthened my professional self-efficacy.

The project also expanded my professional network, offering opportunities for future collaboration, resource sharing and joint initiatives. Being part of a European community of practice reinforced my sense of belonging to a profession that is evolving, reflective and socially relevant.

A Transformative Professional Experience

The Career Guidance 4.0 project had a lasting impact on my professional development. It reshaped my counselling philosophy, enriched my methodological toolkit and strengthened my confidence as a guidance practitioner in a rapidly changing world.

I return to my daily practice with a clearer professional vision, a stronger competence-based approach and a renewed sense of responsibility toward the students I support.

This experience confirmed that career guidance is not about predicting the future, but about empowering individuals to navigate it with confidence, resilience and purpose.



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