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METHODOLOGY OF CAREER COUNSELLING IMPLEMENTATION FOR REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

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INTRODUCTION

This Manual provides certain indicative guidelines for the process of counselling being implemented as a part of the project IRefSoS. It is evident that, due to the special nature of the target population, certain points and proposals cannot be implemented as described and they may need modifications in order to correspond to reality.

In the beginning, information is provided about the target population, which shall be used by the counsellors in order to specify and develop accordingly the process of Counselling for the beneficiaries.
Consequently, proposals (theoretically and practically established) are developed for career counselling, which should be considered as indicative. The way of use can only depend on the specific profile, traits and individuality of each beneficiary.

TRAITS OF REFUGEES - ASYLUM SEEKERS

Forced migrations are a quite uneven group, constituted mainly by:

• Refugees and asylum seekers of the ecological environment (eco-refugees) having suffered environmental and ecological disasters.
• Victims of industrial accidents or accidents directly related to atomic energy and being defined by their large scale.
• Refugees and asylum seekers victims of violations of human rights, suppressions or conflicts, who, at times, leave at their own initiative and at times - more and more frequently - abandon their land forcefully under the pressure of governments or armed groups.
In this case, the refugees to whom this project is addressed belong to the last category.

Refugee - Asylum Seeker (definitions)

A refugee is defined by the Article 1 of the Convention of Geneva (28-7-1951) as: Every person «who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country». Also, the refugee status can be assigned to any person having no citizenship and living outside the country where he was residing, due to the aforementioned events and he cannot or does not want to return there due to such fear.

Generally, the description of the refugee has three main features:
1) Forced flight
2) Justified fear of persecution
3) Persecution due to race, religion, nationality, social class and political convictions

The legal definition of the refugee entails the possession of the resident permit, which provides its holder with a series of rights in the field of health, employment,

education, civic participation etc. that will be mentioned in detail in the following chapters.

The process for the asylum application is a situation included in the refugee status and therefore, in this document the asylum seeker will be distinguished from the refugee only when there is also a legal separation. According to the P.D 61/1999, the foreigner «...who states orally or in writing before any Greek authority at the entrance points to the Greek territory or within that territory that he requests asylum to our country, or in any way he requests not to be deported to a country from fear of persecution due to race, religion, nationality, social class or political convictions...» is entitled to an asylum application; he is considered an asylum seeker according to the Convention of Geneva of 1951 as amended with the Protocol of 1967 (Spathana, 2003).

Consequently, the definition of the right of Asylum refers to the right given to a person who is at risk or persecuted, due to reasons of politics and it gives him access to a space or territory where he can be safe. The right of Asylum is established with the Convention of Geneva signed by 138 countries around the world.

Main problems of refugees and asylum seekers

The usual problems of asylum seekers include (Sklavou, 2001):

- Lack of residence and necessities.
- Time-consuming and often expensive process of legalisation.
- Unemployment and inability to access the labour market.
- Lack of vocational training or skills for the labour market of the host country.
- Inability to communicate with the public due to the different vocabulary and code of communication.

However, apart from the aforementioned problems, multiple sources of anxiety co-exist, providing further difficulties (Sklavou, 2005):

- The loss of beloved people or the separation from the family
- The social exclusion
- The sudden and in general negative change of the standard of living
- The culture shock
- The forced «modernization»
- The uncertainty for the future.

Nonetheless, it is important to understand from the beginning that the children and teenagers coming from these specific areas face the traumatic events and conflict when they are given the opportunity to participate in organized activities and focus on educational processes.

THE STAGES OF THE COUNSELLING PROCESS - GOALS, MEANS, TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES OF THE COUNCELLING INTERVENTIONS

Since the needs are determined based on the traits of a group, they constitute a prominent issue in the planning and implementation of an education program/ group for adults (Rogers, 1999 Vergidis, Abrahamsson, Davis, Fay, 1999 Vergidis,

Lionarakis, Lykouriotis, Makrakis, Matralis, 1998). Consequently, the educational needs of socially vulnerable groups are determined according to Tsiboukli (Vaikousi and co., 1999) by:

• individual factors (personal experiences, obligations, expectations, personality)
• educational factors (failure at school, early school leaving, negative attitude towards learning)
• social factors (interactions, outlets, formation of social relationships)
• labour factors (prejudices, jobs, social policy, resources).

Especially for refugees, the educational needs shall be examined in conjunction with

•The educational level of the people
•The interests
•Their motives
•The social, cultural problems that they face and especially those of language, education and integration to the Greek society.

According to Cross (1981), in order to provide motives to the adults for learning or participation in education, namely in order to be assisted in fulfilling their educational needs, the following are important:

•The response of education to the changes in their lives
•The creation of opportunities
•The removal of obstacles to learning
•The comprehension of the goals and expectations of the trainees.

The children and adults excluded from the (official) educational activities tend to have a stronger sense of marginalisation and desperation. Such people, who face their refugee status on their own (excluded and marginalised) are basically the children and later the adults, who are not given the opportunity of social integration.

By taking into consideration the aforementioned, the following program of career counselling for the refugees is organized. Career counselling as a process includes the development of a close relationship between the counsellor and counselee, the assessment of the nature of the problem, the determination of the goals, the development of alternative solutions, the selection and implementation of an action plan, the evaluation of the counselling process and its termination. The individual counselling interventions that will be implemented within the contexts of this Action will have the following stages, depending on the features of the people participating in the process.

1.1.1. Pre-stage: Information
1.1.2. A.1 Reception - registration of beneficiaries and needs analysis
1.1.3. A.2 Personal and professional review
1.1.4. A.3 Process of personal and professional development
1.1.5. A.4 Development and processing of individual action plan
1.1.6. A.5. Monitoring/ support of the beneficiaries

For each stage, there is a compulsory provision of 5 individual sessions for each beneficiary apart from the pre-stage of information.

1.1.1. Pre-stage: Information

This preparatory stage provides, firstly, information of the beneficiaries, who would have been located and selected to participate in the program. The aim of the actions

at this phase, is the initial reception and information about the project and generally their support in order to form an opinion about the program in general, the processes being following, as well as their prospects through their participation in it. For every action at the stage of information of the beneficiaries, as well as during the following stages of the counselling process, the cultural and linguistic background of the specific target group will be taken into consideration, so that crucial information about the refugees - beneficiaries can be understood and processed.

More specifically, during the reception of the people the following will be carried out:
A) update about the final selection of the beneficiaries for the program (in person, through mail/ telephone)
B) reception and registration of the beneficiaries
C) actions of individual and group information.

There will be information- response to the questions of the beneficiaries that will occur about the program aiming at the determination of the following:
- Preparation and facilitation of their participation in the program with the best possible terms,
- Development of trust towards the implementing body of the program.

1.1.2. A.1 Reception - registration of beneficiaries and needs analysis

The process of the reception is extremely significant, since, during this phase, there are assembled and registered the most important personal and professional details of the counselee, as well as his initial request. At this stage, it is imperative to make explicitly clear the benefits that the young refugee can obtain through his participation to this phase. The reception of the people is carried out individually in the location of the advice centre.

Clarifications about the time limits of the meetings, the obligations of both parties, the techniques that may be used, the limits of the relationships, the trust, the possibilities and expectations fall into the first meeting and provide the counselees with a framework for this type of counselling. The points of cooperation constitute a first «informal contract» between the counselee and the counsellor.

The relationship between the counsellor and the counselee is one of the most important elements of the process of career counselling. It constitutes by itself an evolutionary process, which starts to be developed already since the first meeting.

In order to build this relationship, certain crucial factors shall be taken into consideration. Firstly, the counsellor must understand that the refugees need to feel safe and confident in the process and the program. Moreover, the counsellors must comprehend the emotional state of the refugees (see aforementioned features of refugee populations). Consequently, it is useful to have a conversation from the start about the management of emotions of each counselee. Furthermore, before the beginning of the process, it is deemed necessary for the counsellor to request to learn about the experiences of the person before him, since they may be traumatic, and they may need a special treatment with support of more specialized personnel. Also, it is very important to give particular attention to the cultural and linguistic differentiation and to the effort of mutual understanding of diversity.

The counsellor, the respectful person and a person with values and the ability to locate obstacles and important issues concerning his career, as well as the ability to learn how he can change them.

In this stage, the request of the counselee is presented. Overall, the goals for this stage are:

- Creation and building of the counselling relationship, Contract – Commitment. Establishment of a climate of mutual trust
- Familiarization of the counselee with the whole counselling process
- Boost of his interest.
- Confirmation of the registered personal details (gender, age, studies, professional experience, family status, etc.).
- Exploration of their attitude towards the process of learning and their readiness for immediate participation in programs of continuous vocational training or specialised training/ education.
- Identification of personal needs and features connected to the general characteristics of specific target groups.
- Information about the e-portfolio.

At this phase, the counsellor can collect valuable information about the basic skills of the counselee in written and oral communication, as well as data occurring from the behaviour of the beneficiary.

The counsellor uses techniques of active listening, understanding, acceptance and encouragement.

Indicative methods used: Interview (Structured, semi-structured, open-ended).

1.1.3 A.2. Personal and professional review

After the completion of the phase of the reception and examination of the individual's request, the second stage of Career Counselling will follow concerning the personal and professional review and the facilitation of the counselee' s self-awareness.

At this stage, the emphasis is given to the support of the counselee in order to acquire a deeper understanding of himself and his behaviour. Such effort is enhanced by using various assisting tools determining the interests, the values, the competences/skills, variables with immediate relationship to the career path of the individual.

The goal at this stage is the organization of experience and the identification of positive elements by the individual himself.

The goals of this stage are:

- The facilitation of the individual to discover and understand himself in order to achieve a deeper knowledge of his problem and be encouraged to try and solve it, as well as a deeper understanding of himself and his potential.
- The reinforcement of self-esteem and confidence of the counselee.
- The examination of the learning rate and his ability to adapt to new situations.
- The examination of the new situations, limitations and obstacles to the professional development of the individuals.
- The identification of his/her needs based on the level of education and the prior possible professional experience.

Such process is based on qualitative methods and tools of career assessment. The counsellor functions more like a biographer interpreting the individual trajectories and courses of the counselee by fostering the active participation of the counselee. The qualitative methods include flexible, holistic and non-statistical techniques.

Indicative methods, tools, techniques used: Interview (Structured, semi-structured, open-ended), written, oral or experiential exercises, questionnaires, role plays etc. The tools and techniques are specialized for every phase of this stage and in some cases for each target group.

The counsellors have to be extremely careful with the use of the support tools. Their mere use without discussion does not offer incentives for research and self-examination.

At this stage, the individuals search explicitly or implicitly for explanation and answers to the following issues/fields:

- Personal characteristics (Who am I?)
- Interests (What does really attract me?)
- Wishes and needs relevant to the career (What do I want? Where would I want to be?)
- Values (What is important for me?)
- Skills (What can I do? What skills do I have? What would I want to improve?)
- Benefits from the past (What have I earned from moments of personal pride and experiences of achievements, satisfaction or enjoyment?)

In more detail, the process of self-awareness includes the examination of the following fields, in order to have the flexibility for further specialization based on the specific needs of the individuals as occurring from the process of counselling.

1. **Identification and understanding of personality traits and determination of their role in various professions.**

The goal of this phase for the individuals is to search for their personal characteristics, the traits determining the way with which they react to different situations. Additionally, the goal is to help the individual to become aware of his personality traits and put into words such traits in order to describe himself.

Indicative tools/exercises which can be used at this phase are:

- Activity: «Who am I?». The goal of this activity for the individual is to develop the skill of clearly stating who he is and what he can do. Such skill is necessary for career and education planning. This activity is appropriate for all age groups, as defined from the present methodological approach.
- Activity: «Inside and outside of the bag» The goal of this activity for the individual is to determine how he considers himself, how the others consider him, how would a potential employer consider him and to understand that the image that someone has of himself may be different from the image the others have of him. Such exercise is appropriate for teenagers and young people according to their current stage of career development and maturity, while has also particular significance for the target group of the program, since the beneficiaries are coming from societies with different cultural background, as well as different working culture.

2. Identification and listing of the individuals' interests and examination of the impact they have on their career choices

At this phase, the counsellor may use indicatively the following tools, exercises, activities:

- Activity «Interests». The counsellor requests from the individual to make a list of the activities he has been involved in before the new situation (ex. fishing,

fixing of appliances, cooking), by ranking them based on what interests him more.

- Tool of Self-Directed Search: Interests: The goal of such tool for the individual is to understand that his interests correspond to specific professions. The individual has job satisfaction, when the relation of personality and profession is successful. This tool is appropriate for adults and those in need of professional reorientation.

3. Evaluation of the potential, the skills and the competences of the individual and assessment of experiential learning.

It is necessary to separate the basic skills, the transversal skills and the particular professional skills. The basic skills are the skills required so that an individual is considered functional within the context of modern society. Ex. be able to observe/ listen, express himself, read, write and perform arithmetic operations They are the skills required for an individual to be considered integrated within a context of a modern society and necessary for the individual to be able to achieve the development of his potential and his participation in society in general. They can be developed in various ways and within different learning environments.

The transversal skills are necessary to achieve the development of the full potential of the individual and his general participation in the society. They are skills that can be developed in various ways and within different learning environments and transferred in new situations. They may include: Self-management, innovation, creativity and initiative, ability to correspond to a changing environment, ability to manage learning by himself, cultural awareness, many management skills etc.

These specific professional skills refer to capacities and forms of knowledge required for a specific project or work (usually technical among others). It is the combination of knowledge and experience required for the performance of a specific task or project or work. Ex. The ability to use various machines or equipment, the sale of products or services, the care of individuals or clients the teaching of people etc.

Most people underestimate the skills they may have, unless they are associated with paid employment and usually the most recent one. Another main difficulty in assessing the skills occurs from the difference in nature between skills acquired through experience and those acquired through education. For the evaluation of the acquired skills, the individuals shall reconstruct and orally present their activities. The evaluation of experiential learning may be viewed as an activity producing a summary of unstructured skills and knowledge based on experience, the individuals' successes and the ways of interaction that they have applied in specific cases.

One way to determine the individual's skills is to search for his previous successes and achievements. The individual is called to identify and determine his successes and the factors contributing to them.

At this phase, the counsellor may use indicatively the following tools, exercises, activities:

- Activity: «Achievements» - The goal of this activity for the individual is to identify skills that he has through his successes and how he can use them to plan his career and determine skills that he shall further develop.
- Exercise «Listing of successes» This exercise aims at helping the individual to identify his successes before this phase and consequently boost his confidence. At the same time, assuming that there are analysed the stages of an action which was successful, this process highlights the necessary actions and methods

to achieve the aims of the individual, as well as the skills that the individual used for this purpose.

- «Questionnaire of Basic and Transversal Skills». It examines the skills in issues of basic and transversal skills, ex. knowledge, communication, cooperation, effectiveness, flexibility, problem solving, information management, planning and organization. The goal for each individual is to locate the necessary skills for career choice and job seeking. Moreover, the aim of this tool is to activate the individual himself, in order to identify and develop the pre-existing professional and social skills, which are necessary for the integration into economic life.
- «Questionnaire of Specific Professional Competences» The competence is a learned skill of someone doing something well as a result of a talent, training or practice. With these two tools we can evaluate the skills that the individual has and examine which ones of them can be transferred to various employment sectors (transferable skills).
- Tool: Tool of Self-Directed Search-Part B: SKILLS The aim of this specific tool for the individual is to identify his skills, associate them to his interests and discover which professions match his personality.
- Tool «Life Skills»: The aim of the specific tool is to explore the attitudes of the individual and the skills he has in fields such as emotion, thought, relationships, labour, free time and health. It does not aim at counting the skills - competences. It is recommended for all age groups of the target group.

It is pointed out that the provision of the aforementioned tools is decided on a case-by-case basis, depending on the profile of the counselee and the determination of his needs, as occurred and developed through the counselling process. Additionally, he may use the activity «Achievements» and the Questionnaire of «Basic and Transversal Skills».

Identification and reaction to various limitations or obstacles that may affect the ability of people to work.

The goal for the individuals is to list and become aware of the limitations and the reservations they experience and that may prevent effective job seeking. The identification of the various obstacles is especially important for the young refugees and at this point, the Counsellor must be prepared to propose solutions to problems that are nowhere near similar problems of the indigenous population.

At the same time, this process determines the attitude and consequent action of the individual towards such limitations.

Indicative tools/exercises which can be used are:

- Activity «Overcoming Obstacles» (Career scope, Norman Amundson). The goal of this exercise for the individual is to realize that the obstacles are a fact of life, but they can be overcome. Through this activity, the counselee develops the skill of flexibility, learns not to overreact, not to blame others, not to resort to the easy solution and not to give up. By taking into consideration the curriculum vitae of the young refugees thus far, the Counsellor must be very careful during this specific activity.

5. Examination of the individual's relationships with the important people of his life.

In order to form a clear picture about the individual and his traits, it is necessary to examine the individual's relationships with the important people of his life, who may affect his career choices. In this case, particular attention should be given to

possible losses of «significant others». The counsellor must be very sensitive to this issue.

- Activity «Significant Others» (Careerscope, Norman Amundson) The goal of this specific activity for the individual is to identify who are the important people of his life and list the career advices that they have given him. Additionally, the counselee is called to express his attitude towards these advices and examine how they have affected his career.

Moreover, at this stage, depending on the needs of the individuals and the initiative of the counsellor, the following fields could constitute part of the process of self-awareness.

- The exploration of self-esteem and confidence of the counselee.
- The examination of the decision-making process.
- The detection of the problem-solving ability.
- The examination of mentality in the case of women.
- The investigation of meaning at work.

- **The readiness examination for mobility and change.**

Indicative tool «How ready am I?». The goal of the tool for the individual is to examine the skills he has that would help him adapt to the new environment. The identification of the skills boosts the individual's confidence. Such tool fits to the traits and needs of both groups.

Summary of the Personal Review - Collection of the Results

During this stage of the counselling process, the individuals collect ample information about themselves and so they acquire more self-awareness. This fact is the starting point for the individual to think about his future choices.
In order to synthesize such information, the individual collects with the help of the counsellor all the results of his personal review.
The collection of these data constitutes a framework based on which the individual can organize the information he has about himself, determine certain career choices, collect information about himself, evaluate these choices and set career goals.
We present the set of forms to the individual with the results of the evaluations and we discuss it.

Proposed tool used: Set of Forms with the Answers.

1.1.4. A.3 Process of personal and professional development

This stage refers to the enhancement of personal and professional development of the counselee. This process includes (A3.1) the development of skills assisting the individuals to manage more effectively their personal and professional life, as well as (A3.2) the career path and information of the individuals in order to become capable of exploring and evaluating all their future prospects.

On one side, the counselling process focuses on the support of the individuals in order to have access to basic knowledge, skills and abilities acquired through school, training, non-formal education, informal education and free time activities and on the other side, on the development of a skills matrix (lifelong career management skills), such as transitions readiness, cultivation of a new perspective about reality, examination of possible opportunities and personal capacities, use of the available learning opportunities, self-efficacy, active commitment to specific goals, conscious insistence, experimentation, innovation.

A.3.1 Development of Skills

The achievement of the goals of the career counselling process requires the development of a great range of complex skills of the individual, which, in their turn, are expanded into an endless chain of simple daily or more specialised skills. The acquisition of competences is necessary for every individual of modern society, because they constitute the basic equipment of the individual for development, adaptation, success and survival. Their development can help the citizens to manage a non-linear career path, as well as improve their employability.

The goal of this stage is to activate the individual himself, in order to develop or upgrade the pre-existing professional and social skills, which are necessary for the possible integration into economic life. Such skills will help the individuals to collect, analyse, synthesise and organize information about one's self, education and professions, as well as decision-making, problem solving and implementation of transitions.

The counselling interventions within the context of this stage will focus on the development of a skills matrix of lifelong career management. The Skills of Lifelong Career Management refer to skills helping us at any age to collect, analyse, synthesise and organize information about ourselves, education and professions, as well as skills to make decisions, implement transitions and be flexible and adaptable.

However, the process is based on the personalized identification of the individual's needs for the development of skills as occurring from the previous stage. Consequently, the approach will be defined by flexibility and emphasis will be given to the skill sectors deemed necessary for each beneficiary.

The cultivation of the skills cannot be carried out through one session; on the contrary it is a process carried out in every meeting in the way the counsellor deems more effective for the individual. Also, it may need re-examination during the development of the individual action plan, mainly as a strengthening process in the individual's life course.

Concerning the development and cultivation of skills, great emphasis is given to skills of lifelong career management for both target-groups, due to the unpredictable, multifaceted, unstable, circular and changing nature of the career, the lifelong relationship of the individual with formal education, instruction, training and retaining, as well as, due to the needs of the two groups. For this reason, the tools that can be used at this specific phase of the counselling process are similar.

Means, tools, techniques for the development of skills

The development of skills is best achieved with an educational approach using problem solving as the main learning strategy. The learning based on problem solving provides authentic contexts for learning by focusing on real problems.

Additional factors facilitating learning from the viewpoint of behaviour are:

- Positive reinforcement (the counsellor praises every correct action)
- Multiple reinforcers (the counsellors ensure equal reinforcement and family support).
- Self-reporting of behaviour (the individuals record their progress after the completion of the project's actions).

Indicative tools, exercises and activities are listed below, which will be used for the development of lifelong career management skills.

- Exercise «Obstacles and bridges» [Nathal &Hill (2006)]. The aim of this exercise is to **develop** the individual's **self-confidence** related to the trust to himself and the effective correspondence to the activities required for the path towards the achievement of his career goals. The individuals learn to develop a sense of personal competency in order to correspond to activities required to achieve their career goals. Technique used: Case study.
- Exercise «Planning the future» This exercise aims at cultivating **skills of planning and achievement of goals** and motivating the individual to adopt the approach «I think of my life with optimism and I form an active attitude of planning the future».
- Exercise: «Life-long learning». The aim of this exercise is **the encouragement for participation in life-long learning, as well as the cultivation of skills of access to learning** and use of the available learning opportunities.
- Activity: «I find strengths - I overcome obstacles». This activity aims at **boosting the sense of competency of the individual concerning his ability to sufficiently deal with career issues of practical or emotional nature.** The counsellor motivates the individual to think of a professional whom he admires and fill in a worksheet. Through this activity, the individual will identify personal traits and skills, which are important for success at work, giving emphasis to the identification of skills assisting him to deal with obstacles and barriers to his career path.
- Questionnaire of Occupational Stress Inventory (OSIPOW). This questionnaire aims at showing where the inventory of the counselee for the management of occupational stress focuses on. It is filled in by the individual on a worksheet and it includes questions with the main axes of recreational activities, care of one's self, social support and cognitive skills.

More specifically, during this stage and depending on the specific needs of each individual, the aim is to **cultivate skills of approaching and navigating the labour market.**

The approach to the labour market, with the purpose to seek and keep a job requires for the individuals to acquire good knowledge of the relevant available tools, resources and processes, as well as to develop skills of job seeking, social networking, writing a CV, selection interview etc.).

The process of job seeking includes the following steps and the counselling interventions aim at the preparation/ training of the beneficiaries concerning each individual step.

- Determination of career goal. Each individual determines one or two career goals. This will determine the activities of job seeking that will follow.
- Sources of job seeking: 1) Formal information channels, 2) Non-communicated job vacancies. This includes information and use of various websites including lists of professions, job advertisements, while it is allowed to upload CVs, be informed about classified ads etc.
- Ways of using the aforementioned sources.
- Ways of applying for a job.
- Curriculum vitae. It refers to the training in writing a curriculum vitae. Curriculum vitae samples are used, such as the sample of the Europass CV among others.
- Cover letter. It refers to the training in writing a cover letter.
- Selection interview. It includes the cultivation of self-presentation skills during the selection interview. The self-presentation skills refer to the ability of the individual to present himself, demonstrate his potential and value and

give good impressions about himself. Additionally, the counselee is informed about the usual questions being asked in a job interview and receives useful advices.

Concerning the training of the beneficiaries at the aforementioned steps, suggested techniques that are used are role-playing, simulation, experiential practice etc., which contribute significantly to the effective learning of adults.

- Exercise: «Overcoming the problems». Each individual follows a personal process of decision-making and often in his career path he faces obstacles during such process.

A.3.2 Vocational Guidance - Information

Based on the information he has about himself, the individual tries to determine certain career choices and collect information about them. The counsellor aids the individual to gain access to sources of information about the labour market, the educational and career trends and choices and encourages him to evaluate the information that is of interest to him. The main objective for the individual is to be able to clarify, explore, evaluate and use available information (educational, professional, labour). The counsellor does not have a directional role, but he assists the individual in seeking and evaluating the information.

This process includes the following actions, which can be implemented within the context of the individual sessions.

Vocational Guidance/ reorientation: It refers to information about groups of professions, demand for expertise and possible prospects, as well as the developmental potential of each field of intervention, so that the individuals acquire a realistic view of the labour market. For this purpose, the experience of various professionals is used, so that the individuals collect clear information about the different professions and their prospects.

Information about issues of labour market functioning: An important element of these interventions will be the facilitation of the unemployed in order to become accustomed to the modern working environment and the conditions in the Greek and especially the local labour market. In this context, issues will be developed about the access to sources of information, institutions promoting employment, the use of the offered means for reliable information about the current developments in the labour market etc.

Information about institutional, labour, business and legal issues: It refers to information of the beneficiaries about these fields, so that the beneficiaries are as aware and updated as possible in order to be able to claim their outplacement to the labour market, in the most effective way.

1.1.5. A4 Development and processing of individual action plan

This stage of the counselling process stands out for the effort to aid the counselee to shape new perspectives for his career path. He will be aided in this effort if he knows that, any decisions he makes will not have a direct impact only to himself, his mood, his motivations and his behaviour; they will also affect directly his social environment, his own life. Within this context and following the previous stages, this stage includes the preparation of the individual career action plan, which determines the required «steps» leading the counselees to achieve the goals that they have set.

The process of development and processing of the individual career action plan follows three basic steps and it is based on the implementation of the tool "SWOTANALYSIS".

The steps of this stage are the following:

1. New perspectives- Alternative solutions

Before the determination of the goals and the preparation of the individual career action plan, the counsellor presents all the prospects opened up to the counselee and he provides him with specific information about the labour market, the career and educational trends and choices.
The role of the counsellor at this stage is very important, because, apart from the different alternative solutions that he presents to the counselee, he must help him choosing the best one.
To conclude, at this phase, the goal is to help the individual through self-awareness to seek information and develop new perspectives in order to make the right decisions.

2. Development and selection of techniques for the achievement of goals.

Additionally, at this stage of the counselling process, an attempt is made to help the counselee to clarify the goals he wishes to achieve and to be supported in the course of the setting and the techniques he will use to achieve them. The selection of the techniques will be affected by factors such as the type of the goal or the goals he pursues, the level of education and the professional maturity of the counselee.

The notions «goal» and «action planning» are often confused. The goals are specific statements about **what** the counselee aims at achieving. The action planning refers to **how** he will act in order to achieve his goals. *The career goal must correspond to a number of criteria, whose initials in the English language form the mnemonic SMART. A «smart» career goal is:*

- *Specific*
- *Measurable*
- *Attractive*
- *Realistic*
- *Time-bound*

More specifically, the goals should not be expressed in general terms. The counsellor can help the counselee to increase the accuracy of a «stated intention» by asking the simple question «how». So, the goal becomes **specific**. Apart from being specific, it must also be **measurable** or verifiable. In other words, the counselee must be able to determine when he will achieve it. Additionally, it is imperative that the goal is **attractive**, because then the individual can be committed to it, as well as **realistic**, namely, not to belong to the realm of fantasy; neither should it be easily achievable, because then, it may not provide a motive for action. It is necessary to be in the value system of the counselee and to have enough importance, so that its achievement constitutes a reward for the individual himself. Finally, the goal must be **time-bound**, since the determination of time limits helps the individual to focus on the goal. The time limits have the ability to work as motives or dates of review, during which the individual will evaluate how much the process of the achievement of the goal has advanced.

After having clarified the goal, the beneficiary will record his own personal analysis with the **method SWOT.** In order to plan the career and achieve the personal and professional goals, awareness of the talents and their use to their fullest extent constitutes a necessary requirement. Moreover, the knowledge of weaknesses makes easier their management, so that they do not impede personal and professional development. The **SWOT analysis** will help the beneficiary to determine his strengths and weaknesses and analyse the opportunities and threats

existing around him. So, he will be able to set realistic professional, educational or business goals.

More specifically, through a series of questions the counsellor encourages the beneficiary to explore the advantages, the weaknesses, the opportunities and the threats and consequently, to record his answers to the relevant tool of personal analysis.

The **advantages** refer to internal, positive traits, which the individual controls and can use, while the **disadvantages** refer to internal negative traits of the personality, which he can control and improve. The **opportunities** refer to positive external conditions that the individual cannot control, but they can affect him, while the **threats** refer to negative external conditions.

The counselee examines his advantages according to his opinion, as well as that of the people around him. For example, he may compare himself with the (ex) colleagues or peers. He must be as objective as he can, avoiding tendencies of modesty and timidity.

Concerning the disadvantages, the beneficiary may face certain unpleasant truths by recalling disturbing experiences at school or previous works. Probably, some of them will even affect professional or personal issues.

Concerning the opportunities, the beneficiary examines his qualifications and he considers if they can offer him opportunities. Furthermore, by thinking about his weaknesses, he examines if by minimizing them, he can create opportunities himself. Opportunities can occur from changes in technology or the market, the government policy, the social networks, the educational institutions and new roles cultivating new skills.

Concerning the threats, the beneficiary must understand that the threat can simultaneously turn into an opportunity. The development of technology constitutes a perfect example. If the beneficiary realises that his outdated knowledge will become a threat, and he commits to be trained in something new and necessary to the labour market, he will create an opportunity for himself and he will eliminate the threat.

After clarifying the goal and making the personal analysis about the goal, the counsellor must encourage the counselee to think about the steps he will need to do to achieve it. In order to clarify the statements referring to his commitment to take action, it is necessary to draft a **written action plan**, which must be **realistic**, **clear** on the goals, **flexible** and **adaptable** to the current conditions in the local and the wider labour market.

In this phase, the counsellor uses the tool «FORM OF INDIVIDUAL ACTION PLAN». This form constitutes the final Action plan of the beneficiary with the counsellor. The individual action plan constitutes a tool which is processed jointly by the Counsellor and the counselee and reminds him his goal and the steps for its achievement and it helps him not to deviate from it.

During the development and implementation of the individual career action plan, it is used every relevant material, information, knowledge and infrastructure of institutions relevant to the labour market and education, while the counsellors give special focus to the motivation and mobilization of the supported unemployed people in order to achieve their individual professional goals.

At this stage, the beneficiary may become anxious, because he is called to make a decision. He may worry that his choice will not be accepted by the Significant Others, or, due to previous experiences of rejection, he may be afraid of the competition existing in the labour market. Additionally, he may worry that the action plan will not work, or his reluctance may be due to the fact that, on second thoughts, he concluded that in his life there are other issues having priority. The counsellor can help the beneficiary by implementing techniques, such as the «**guided imagination**» and the «**positive self-talk**».

To conclude, in case that the action plan includes seeking and claiming a job, the individual is monitored concerning the course of job seeking, where the results of the process of job seeking are recorded and possible problematic situations are detected that are constantly repeated. Additionally, there will be practice of the techniques of job seeking that the counselee aims at using. The selection of the appropriate techniques of approaching the labour market will be carried out based on the personal and socio-demographic traits of each individual, in combination with his career goal. In this way, the effectiveness in the course of job seeking will be supported.

3. Completion of the process

The action planning does not constitute the last part of career counselling. The last meeting may be used as **a way to review the process**, where each obstacle is dealt with, the reduced encouragement is strengthened, and the successes are rewarded.

The Counsellor must prepare the beneficiary for the end of the career counselling, because he may experience feelings of sadness, loss or he may adopt self-annulment paradigms. The individuals can be better prepared for the completion of the career counselling if they record clear goals in their initial contract (ex. Criteria of completion of the process).

So, the **summary** can by a technique keeping the beneficiary alert. The Counsellor can provide the beneficiary with a summary of the process, namely a document of three-pages, that summarizes the progress of the beneficiary during the career counselling, as well as the actions he will need to do afterwards. The summary includes the main point occurring from the exercises, the tools and the meetings, along with the action plan. Such a summary works as an external recording of the process of the career counselling and it provides the beneficiary with a psychological connection to it, while it gives him a boost in the process of action taking. Finally, the recording constitutes a useful process of completion and liberation for the counsellor as well.

1.1.6 A.5. Beneficiaries monitoring/ support

The monitoring mechanism refers to regular meetings with the beneficiaries within the logic of mentoring, in order to develop a strategy of solving their problems in their efforts to approach the labour market, or their career development, with on-site visits at the workplace.

The counselee can return for re-examination of his choices, investigation of new choices that may include retraining and setting of new long-term goals.

The monitoring actions of the beneficiaries will last for a period of six months after the end of all actions described in this proposal, so that it is feasible to keep data about the course of the beneficiaries.

Indicative tools: «Follow-up form». The form aims at evaluating the personal course of the individuals depending on the actions that they participate in and their promotion to employment.